

Original Paper

Cingulo-opercular and Cingulo-parietal Brain Networks Functional Connectivity in Pre-adolescents: Multiplicative Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and Parental Education

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Abstract

Introduction: A growing body of research has shown a diminished association between socioeconomic status (SES) indicators and a wide range of neuroimaging indicators for racial and ethnic minorities compared to majority groups. However, less is known about these effects for resting-state functional connectivity between various brain networks. **Purpose:** This study investigated racial and ethnic variation in the correlation between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the cingulo-opercular (CO) and cingulo-parietal (CP) networks in children. **Methods:** This cross-sectional study used data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study; we analyzed the resting-state functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (rsfMRI) data of 8,464 American pre-adolescents between the ages of 9 and 10. The main outcome measured was resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks calculated using rsfMRI. The independent variable was parental education, which was treated as a nominal variable. Age, sex, and family marital status were the study covariates. Race and ethnicity were the moderators. Mixed-effects regression models were used for data analysis, with and without interaction terms between parental education and race and ethnicity. **Results:** Higher parental education was associated with lower resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. Race and ethnicity both showed statistically significant interactions with parental education on children's resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks, suggesting that the correlation between parental education and the resting-state functional connectivity was significantly weaker for Black and Hispanic pre-adolescents compared to White and non-Hispanic pre-adolescents. **Conclusions:** In line with the Minorities' Diminished Returns

theory, the association between parental education and pre-adolescents resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks may be weaker in Black and Hispanic children than in White and non-Hispanic children. The weaker link between parental education and brain functional connectivity for Blacks and Hispanics than for Whites and non-Hispanics may reflect the racism, racialization, and social stratification that minimizes the returns of SES indicators, such as parental education for non-Whites, who become others in the US.

Keywords

socioeconomic status, parental education, brain development, youth, pre-adolescents, MRI, functional MRI, functional connectivity

1. Introduction

Advancement of neuroimaging modalities, such as resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging (rsfMRI), has led to the advancement of our understanding regarding children's brain development¹⁻³, and how early life experiences such as childhood socioeconomic status (SES) influence brain development⁴⁻⁷. Several rsfMRI indicators correlate with the higher-level cognitive function of children, including but not limited to, memory, learning and executive function⁸. Altered MRI measures may reflect a wide range of cognitive disorders from attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)^{9,10}, autism spectrum disorder (ASD)¹⁰⁻¹², Alzheimer's¹³, and other conditions in which working memory^{14,15}, executive function^{14,16}, language development^{14,17} and emotion regulation¹⁸ are altered.

Socioeconomic status (SES) indicators, such as parental education, are linked to function and structure of the brain^{15,19-22} which correlate with various aspects of emotion and cognitive development in domains such as language²³, self-regulation (the ability to monitor and control one's behavior and emotions)^{20,24}, memory²⁵, socio-emotional processing²⁵, and behaviors²⁶. High SES is a proxy of high-quality parenting and lower exposure to stress, adversity, trauma, and poverty, with all of the aforementioned being risk factors of poor brain development²⁷. High parental education is commonly linked to high parenting quality²⁸ and cognitively stimulating environments^{29,30}. Children from highly educated families are more likely to be raised in *low-stress environments*, with parental support and engagement, promoting brain development^{31,32}. High parental education is also linked to the availability of material and financial resources to the child²⁹. As a result, high parental education is shown to reduce the risk of substance use^{33,34}, such as alcohol addictions^{35,36} and smoking^{37,38}. Similarly, high parental education is linked to a lower risk of antisocial behavior³⁹, aggressive behavior⁴⁰, behavioral problems⁴¹, mental disorders^{42,43}, and cognitive problems⁴⁴ in children and adolescents. Recent research, however, has suggested that parental education may have far fewer effects for minority status, while income causes more equal outcomes across racial and ethnic groups⁴⁵. In fact, people of color with high education are much more likely to be discriminated against in the workplace⁴⁶. As a result, Black and Hispanic families may earn less income and generate less wealth compared to non-Hispanic White families⁴⁷. However, most research has indicated that parental education is likely

to generate fewer outcomes for Black and Hispanic people than non-Hispanic White individuals^{45,48,49}. Income tends to lead to equal outcomes across different racial and ethnic groups²⁹. A cross-sectional study of children between 3 and 20 years of age showed an association between many brain regions that have implications for reading, language, executive functions, social cognition, and spatial skills with the number of years of parental education⁵⁰.

Early life experiences, such as childhood SES, may impact neural changes that can be measured using MRI⁵¹. Many studies to date have established a link between SES indicators and structural and functional aspects of the brain^{52,53}. For example, parental SES is linked to cortical thickness, surface area, and volume⁵⁴. Studying MRI changes in function and structure of brain regions may help us better understand problems such as anxiety⁵⁵, obstructive sleep apnea⁵⁶, obesity⁵⁷, chronic stress⁵⁸, ADHD⁵⁹, major depressive disorder⁶⁰ and learning disorders⁶¹. Unfortunately, little is known about how childhood SES indicators, such as parental education, influence functional connectivity of the brain at rest. Similarly, there is a need to examine whether racial groups differ in the associations between parental education and pre-adolescents resting-state functional connectivity between cingulo-opercular (CO) and cingulo-parietal (CP) networks.

Most of the existing studies on SES impacts on brain development have focused on average effects overall, without comparing groups for such effects. Similarly, most of the literature has reported on predominantly middle-class White people. In addition, most of the studies have considered structural or functional measures of single regions of interest. This has been the case for most neuroimaging studies during the past two decades^{52,53,62,63}. There is no report on whether racial groups are different or similar in the association between parental education and pre-adolescents resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks. Even when the studies have included race as a variable, they have mainly focused on the additive influences of race and SES, rather than multiplicative effects that allow SES effects to vary by race. While SES and race overlap (i.e., they are both proxies of stress, trauma, and adversities)⁶⁴⁻⁶⁶, SES effects seem to be lesser for Black and Hispanic families than non-Hispanic White families⁶⁷⁻⁶⁹. Thus, it is essential to test how race and ethnicity alter what we know about the effects of SES on brain functions^{64,66}, particularly connectivity between various networks and structures, which is rarely studied^{70,71}.

A growing literature on Marginalization-related Diminished Returns (MDRs) framework^{49,72} has documented weaker beneficial influences of SES indicators, especially parental education, on developmental, behavioral, and health outcomes in racial and ethnic minority families because of discrimination, racism, racialization, stratification, othering, and marginalization²⁹. Weaker effects of SES on depression⁷³, attention⁷⁴, impulse control⁷⁵, social and behavioral problems^{76,77}, inhibitory control⁷⁸, suicidality²⁸, anxiety⁷⁹, and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)⁸⁰ are shown for Black and Hispanic children than non-Hispanic White children. As a consequence of these MDRs, we observe sustained disparities in behavior and development in Black and Hispanic families with high SES, while the risk drastically drops for high SES non-Hispanic White individuals⁵⁰. As mentioned before, to

our knowledge, we are not aware of any previous studies examining the relationship between parental education and pre-adolescents resting-state functional connectivity between brain networks by race.

Among various functional connectivity measures evaluated by rsfMRI that are linked to SES are connectivity between CO and CP brain networks⁸¹. Analysis of connectivity between various brain networks is important because they reflect cross-system-level measures that reflect harmonious brain function across networks. The functional connectivity between CO and CP and other brain networks are linked to higher-order cognitive function of the brain, and their altered connectivity across these networks may be documented in the presence of altered cognition, emotions, and psychiatric disorders⁸².

Among various brain networks is the CO network. The CO network is composed of the thalamus, dorsal anterior cingulate cortex, and anterior insula/operculum, and is involved in self-monitoring in the cognitive control and sensorimotor processing⁸³. The CO function is central to monitoring one's performance, which helps detect errors so the individual can prevent future cognitive and motion errors and mistakes. The CO network, however, has pervasive activity, co-activation, and connectivity with several other control-related networks that has made it difficult for scientists to characterize CO brain network's specific function. However, its elevated performance is linked to elevated monitoring, and its altered connectivity and function are characteristics of multiple psychiatric disorders, including psychotic conditions. Heightened brain connectivity between the CO network and other networks may result in higher levels of performance monitoring⁸³.

Another brain network is the cognitive/attention network⁸⁴. Disorder and different activation and connectivity of this network is shown in attention disorders⁸⁵. In the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development research (ABCD) study, an increase in connectivity between CP network and other networks has been linked to less psychotic symptoms, even after accounting for family history of psychotic disorders, internalizing symptoms, and cognitive performance⁸².

1.1 Aims

This study assessed data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development research (ABCD)^{82,86-89} to explore racial variations for the association between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks in a national sample of 9-to-10-year-old pre-adolescents. In this study, we went beyond testing additive effects of race, ethnicity, and parental education on the resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks. Instead, we explored multiplicative effects of race and ethnicity with parental education on resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. This allows the effects of parental education to vary by race and ethnicity, which is in line with the MDRs. Built on the MDRs theory^{48,77}, we hypothesized that parental education would have a weaker effect on resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks for Hispanic and Black pre-adolescents compared to non-Hispanic White pre-adolescents. This means that we considered Black and Hispanic pre-adolescents' resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks to remain at risk regardless of their parental education, whereas we expect the lowest risk in resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks

among non-Hispanic White pre-adolescents with high parental education.

2. Methods

Design and Settings

This secondarily cross-sectional analysis was based on the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study^{82,86,87,89,90}, which is a guiding light of examining children's brain development with a considerable SES, sex, racial, and ethnic diversity in the United States^{86,91}. We briefly reviewed critical aspects of the study, even though there is some comprehensive information regarding ABCD samples, methods, measures, and imaging techniques⁹¹.

Participants and Sampling

The ABCD study participants were 9 to 10 years old and were selected from 21 sites across 15 states, encompassing over 20% of the total United States population of 9-10-year-old children^{91,92}. For sampling and selection, school selection was guided by sex, race, ethnicity, SES, and urbanicity. These recruitment processes were precisely designed, implemented, and evaluated across the 21 study sites⁹³. In fact, although the ABCD sample was not representative or random, due to careful sampling, it is a near estimation of U.S. children over sociodemographic and demographic factors. The results therefore are reliable in regard to age, SES, ethnicity, sex, and urbanicity. Garavan et al. carefully described the sampling procedure of the ABCD study⁹². 8,464 children, aged 9 to 10-year-olds, participated in the study, regardless of race, ethnicity, and psychopathologies, which means that participants were not excluded based on the presence or absence of any psychopathology⁹². However, we only included participants with complete data and those who met criteria for rsfMRI. The formula for selection of our participants was: (fsqc_qc="pass") and (rsfmri_cor_network.gordon_ntpoints>375)

Brain Imaging

Resting-state (task-negative) functional MRI (rsfMRI) was used to estimate pre-adolescents' resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. Brain imaging in the ABCD study was based on three 3 tesla (T) scanner platforms: Philips Healthcare, GE Healthcare, and Siemens Healthcare⁹⁴. T1-weighted and T2-weighted brain images, carefully harmonized, were drawn from The MRI devices⁸⁷. In order to reduce bias due to variation in imaging sites, images were corrected for gradient non-linearity distortions⁹⁵. These available pre-processed structural data were calculated based on T1- and T2-weighted images that maximize mutual information's relative position and orientation across images⁹⁶. By using tissue segmentation and sparse spatial smoothing, the ABCD performed intensity non-uniformity correction. Moreover, images were resampled with 1-mm isotropic voxels into rigid alignment within the brain atlas. Furthermore, using FreeSurfer software, version 5.3.0 (Harvard University), volumetric measures were constructed. Images had also undergone surface optimization^{97,98} and nonlinear registration to a spherical surface-based atlas⁹⁸.

Study Variables

The study variables included parental education (independent variable), race and ethnicity (moderator),

age, sex, family structure (confounders), and resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks (dependent variable).

Independent Variable

Parental Education: Parental education was a five-level nominal variable: less than high school diploma, high school diploma/GED, some college, bachelors' degree, and graduate studies. Less than a high school diploma was the reference group.

Dependent variable

Resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks: The outcome was resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks, measured by resting-state (task-negative) functional MRI. This variable was a continuous measure and reflected Pearson correlation test between the BOLD measures of the two networks over time. CO and CP were defined according to the Gordon parcellation scheme that divides brain networks into 12 predefined resting state networks (RSN)⁹⁹. In this study, we only used data of CO and CP. To calculate this information, the ABCD completed 4–5 five-minute resting state scans (eyes open). This was used to ensure at least eight minutes of relatively low-motion data. Preprocessing was carried out by the ABCD Data Analysis and Informatics Core using the standardized ABCD pipeline¹⁰⁰. Next, fMRI time courses were projected onto FreeSurfer's cortical surface. Using these time courses, both within- and between-network connectivity (Pearson correlation) were calculated on the basis of standard protocols based on the Gordon scheme⁹⁹. For more information regarding these processes, please see here^{100,101}. Family SES is shown to be correlated with the functional connectivity between CO and CO⁸². **Appendix Figures** show that our outcome is inversely correlated with memory/executive function and reward responsiveness.

Moderators:

Race. Race was reported by the parent and was considered as a moderator. It was treated as a nominal variable: Black, Asian, Other/Mixed, and White (reference group).

Ethnicity. It was a dichotomous variable coded as Hispanic = 1 and non-Hispanic = 0 **Confounders:**

Age. Age was a continuous variable. Parents reported the child's age as months.

Sex. It was a categorical variable with 1 for boys and 0 for girls.

Parental Marital Status. It was also a dichotomous variable, self-reported by the parent interviewed, and coded 1 vs. 0 for married and unmarried (any other condition).

Data Analysis

Data Exploration and Analysis Portal (DEAP), which is a user-friendly online platform for multivariable analysis of the ABCD data, was used for data analysis. We reported mean (standard deviation (S.D.)) and frequency (%) for descriptive purposes. We also performed ANOVA and Chi-square for bivariate tests, including comparing racial groups for study variables. We used mixed-effects regression models; given participants are nested to families and families are nested to sites. The primary outcome was the children's resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. The independent variable was parental education; race and ethnicity were the moderators.

Moreover, age, sex, and family marital status were the covariates. To run multivariable analyses, three mixed-effects regression models were run (**Appendix Table**). *Model 1* tested the additive effects of parental education, race, and ethnicity, with the same covariates, without interaction terms. *Model 2* tested the interaction term between parental education and race on resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. *Model 3* tested the interaction term between parental education and ethnicity on resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. Before running models, we checked the normal distribution of our outcome, lack of collinearity between predictors, and the distribution of errors for our model. Regression coefficient (b), SE, and p-value were reported.

Ethical Aspect

While the original ABCD research protocol went through an Institutional Review Board (IRB) in several institutions, including the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), our analysis was found to be exempt from further IRB review by the Charles R Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU). Moreover, several institutional IRBs approved the study protocol. All children provided assent. Parents provided consent ⁹¹.

3. Results

This study was performed on 8,464 children aged between 9 to 10 years old. From this number, 3,699 (51.4%) were male and 3,669 (48.0%) were female. The participants were White (5,665; 66.9%), 1,197 (14.1%) were Black, 187 (2.2%) were Asian American, and 1,415 (16.7%) were other/mixed race. From all, 1,673 (19.8%) were Hispanic and 6,791 (80.2%) were non-Hispanic. Racial groups did not differ in age; however, ethnic groups did differ in age. Racial groups did differ in sex; however, ethnic groups did not differ in sex. Black and mixed/other race participants showed lowest parental education respectively compared to White children. Hispanic adolescents showed lower parental education than non-Hispanic adolescents. Racial and ethnic groups also varied in family structure. Also, resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks was significantly different across racial and ethnic groups (**Table 1**).

Table 2 summarizes mixed-effects regression models' fit statistics, performed in the total sample. *Model 2* and *Model 3* showed a better fit when compared to *Model 1*, suggesting that interaction between parental education and race or ethnicity helped explain the variance of the outcome.

As shown by **Table 3** and **Figure 1**, when all confounders were controlled, parental education showed a positive association with the resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks. *Model 2* showed that parental education had interactions with race on the outcome. This interaction was negative, suggesting that the positive effect of parental education was lesser for Black than White children. *Model 3* showed that parental education interacted with ethnicity on the outcome. This interaction was also negative, suggesting that the positive effect of parental education was lesser for Hispanic than non-Hispanic children.

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics Overall and by Race (n = 8464)

level	Overall	White	Black	Asian	Other/Mixed	p	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	p	
n	8464	5665	1197	187	1415		6791	1673		
	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)		Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)		
Age (month)	119.44 (7.53)	119.50 (7.54)	119.35 (7.29)	119.99 (8.00)	119.23 (7.61)	0.463	119.56 (7.50)	118.96 (7.64)	0.003	
RsfMRI Functional Connectivity CO and CP Networks	-0.01 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.11)	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.09)	0.003	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.10)	0.002	
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)		n(%)	n(%)		
Parental Education	< HS Diploma	335 (4.0)	142 (2.5)	96 (8.0)	5 (2.7)	92 (6.5)	< 0.001	125 (1.8)	210 (12.6)	< 0.001
	HS Diploma/GED	701 (8.3)	272 (4.8)	268 (22.4)	2 (1.1)	159 (11.2)		440 (6.5)	261 (15.6)	
	Some College	2149 (25.4)	1171 (20.7)	484 (40.4)	14 (7.5)	480 (33.9)		1576 (23.2)	573 (34.2)	
	Bachelor	2237 (26.4)	1693 (29.9)	172 (14.4)	47 (25.1)	325 (23.0)		1914 (28.2)	323 (19.3)	
	Post Graduate Degree	3042 (35.9)	2387 (42.1)	177 (14.8)	119 (63.6)	359 (25.4)		2736 (40.3)	306 (18.3)	
Race	White	5665 (66.9)	5665 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	< 0.001	4654 (68.5)	1011 (60.4)	< 0.001
	Black	1197 (14.1)	0 (0.0)	1197 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)		1137 (16.7)	60 (3.6)	
	Asian	187 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	187 (100.0)	0 (0.0)		170 (2.5)	17 (1.0)	
	Other/Mixed	1415 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1415 (100.0)		830 (12.2)	585 (35.0)	
Hispanic	No	6791 (80.2)	4654 (82.2)	1137 (95.0)	170 (90.9)	830 (58.7)	< 0.001	6791 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	< 0.001
	Yes	1673 (19.8)	1011 (17.8)	60 (5.0)	17 (9.1)	585 (41.3)		0 (0.0)	1673 (100.0)	
Sex (%)	Female	4263 (50.4)	2792 (49.3)	636 (53.1)	111 (59.4)	724 (51.2)	0.005	3418 (50.3)	845 (50.5)	0.919
	Male	4201 (49.6)	2873 (50.7)	561 (46.9)	76 (40.6)	691 (48.8)		3373 (49.7)	828 (49.5)	
Married Family	No	2519 (29.8)	1126 (19.9)	832 (69.5)	29 (15.5)	532 (37.6)	< 0.001	1858 (27.4)	661 (39.5)	< 0.001
	Yes	5945 (70.2)	4539 (80.1)	365 (30.5)	158 (84.5)	883 (62.4)		4933 (72.6)	1012 (60.5)	

Notes: Source: Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study; * Chi-square test; ** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 2. Effect Sizes and % Variance Explained

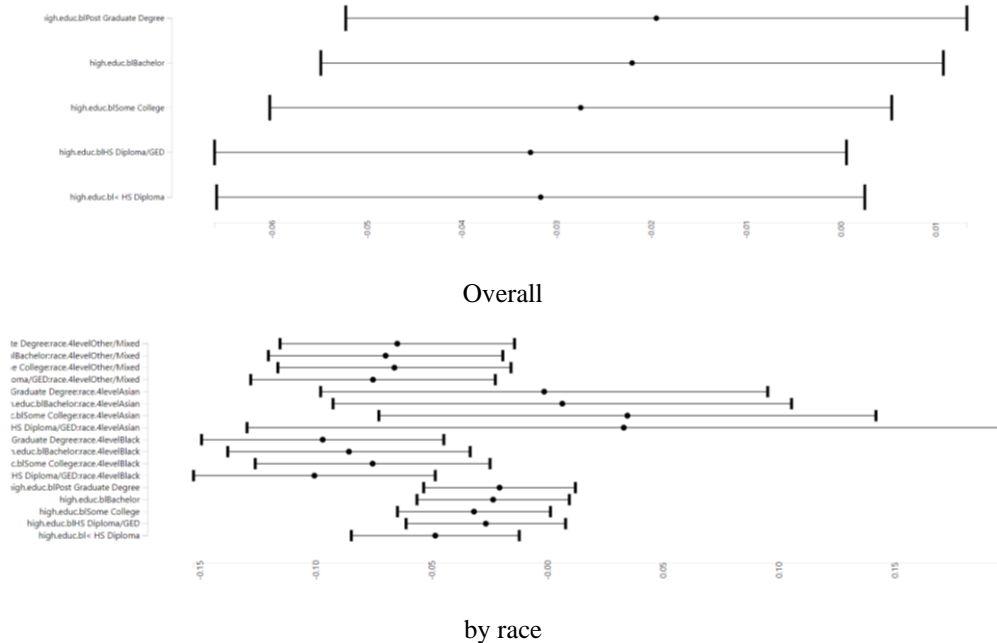
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i> M1 + Race x Parental Education	<i>Model 3</i> M1 + Ethnicity x Parental Education
N	8464	8464	8464
R-squared	0.00741	0.01005	0.00876
Δ R-squared	0.00154	0.00526	0.00387
Δ R-squared %	0.15%	0.53%	0.39%

Table 3. Regressions in the Overall Sample and by Race with CO and CP Networks Functional Connectivity as the Outcome

	<i>Model 1</i>				<i>Model 2</i>				<i>Model 3</i>			
	Estimate	Std. Error	Pr(> t)	sig	Estimate	Std. Error	Pr(> t)	sig	Estimate	Std. Error	Pr(> t)	sig
Parental Education (HS Diploma/GED)	-0.00108	0.00642	0.8669451		0.02182	0.00997	0.0287088 *		-0.02283	0.00976	0.0193869 *	
Parental Education (Some College)	0.00422	0.00576	0.4635545		0.01671	0.00868	0.054267 #		-0.01816	0.00908	0.0455952 *	
Parental Education (Bachelor)	0.00964	0.00595	0.105509		0.02498	0.00868	0.0039954 **		-0.01257	0.00924	0.1735315	
Parental Education (Post Graduate Degree)	0.01219	0.00594	0.0400468 *		0.02775	0.00862	0.0012923 **		-0.00891	0.00920	0.3326101	
Race (Black)	-0.00429	0.00346	0.2153322		0.03140	0.01298	0.0155597 *		-0.00549	0.00354	0.1214157	
Race (Asian)	-0.01648	0.00713	0.0208414 *		-0.06731	0.04321	0.1192914		-0.01622	0.00713	0.0229061 *	
Race (Other/Mixed)	-0.00147	0.00297	0.619932		0.01693	0.01280	0.1859848		-0.00162	0.00297	0.586294	
Hispanic	-0.00490	0.00290	0.0910679 #		-0.00364	0.00295	0.2181547		-0.03841	0.01112	0.0005538 ***	
Sex (Male)	0.00994	0.00209	1.9e-06 ***		0.00992	0.00209	2e-06 ***		0.00996	0.00209	1.8e-06 ***	
Married Family	0.00146	0.00263	0.5792842		0.00186	0.00264	0.4815058		0.00175	0.00264	0.5065686	
Age (Month)	0.00009	0.00014	0.5045614		0.00010	0.00014	0.4873677		0.00009	0.00014	0.4995918	
Black x Parental Education (HS Diploma/GED)	-	-	-	-	-0.05220	0.01519	0.0005919 ***	-	-	-	-	-
Black x Parental Education (Some College)	-	-	-	-	-0.02706	0.01382	0.0502717 #	-	-	-	-	-
Black x Parental Education (Bachelor)	-	-	-	-	-0.03729	0.01502	0.0130876 *	-	-	-	-	-
Black x Parental Education (Post Graduate Degree)	-	-	-	-	-0.04863	0.01493	0.0011287 **	-	-	-	-	-
Asian x Parental Education (HS Diploma/GED)	-	-	-	-	0.08140	0.08018	0.3100006	-	-	-	-	-
Asian x Parental Education (Some College)	-	-	-	-	0.08296	0.05022	0.0985438 .	-	-	-	-	-
Asian x Parental Education (Bachelor)	-	-	-	-	0.05485	0.04545	0.2276022	-	-	-	-	-
Asian x Parental Education (Post Graduate Degree)	-	-	-	-	0.04703	0.04413	0.2866676	-	-	-	-	-

Other/Mix x Parental Education (HS Diploma/GED)	-	-	-	-	-0.02689	0.01600	0.0928644	-	-	-
Other/Mix Parental Education (Some College)	-	-	-	-	-0.01765	0.01383	0.2017625	-	-	-
Other/Mix Parental Education (Bachelor)	-	-	-	-	-0.02145	0.01408	0.127556	-	-	-
Other/Mix Parental Education (Post Graduate Degree)	-	-	-	-	-0.01642	0.01391	0.2380349	-	-	-
Hispanic x Parental Education (HS Diploma/GED)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.03561	0.01321	0.0070317 **
Hispanic x Parental Education (Some College)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.03784	0.01192	0.0015061 **
Hispanic x Parental Education (Bachelor)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.03842	0.01251	0.0021487 **
Hispanic x Parental Education (Post Graduate Degree)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.02919	0.01251	0.0196688 *

#p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001



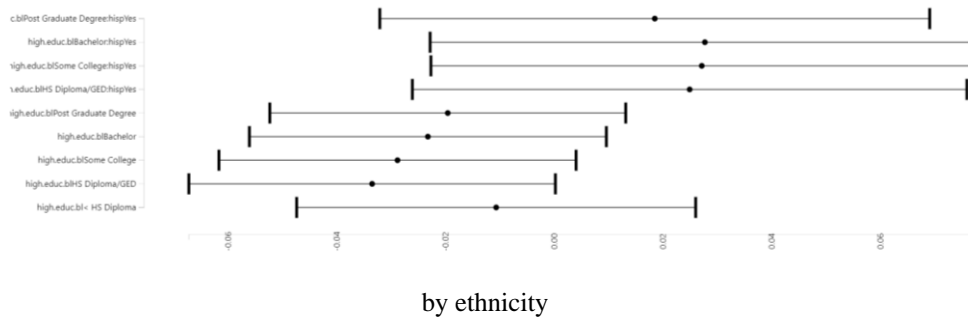


Figure 1. Effects of Parental Education on Pre-adolescents Resting-state Functional Connectivity between CO and CP Networks Overall and by Race and Ethnicity

4. Discussion

We found a positive association between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. In line with the MDRs phenomenon, there were racial and ethnic differences in the associations between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. The correlation between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks was larger for White and non-Hispanic children than Black and Hispanic children.

Our first finding aligns with the well-described effects of SES indicators, such as parental education on brain structure and function in adolescents and young people. However, most of this work has been conducted on single brain structures such as the hippocampus, cerebral cortex, thalamus, and amygdala^{62,102-104}. High SES, for example, is linked to the activity of brain structures that correlate with emotion regulation and process¹⁰⁵. Among children between 5 and 18 years old, family SES is associated with gray matter volume in the hippocampus⁶² and hippocampus functional connectivity. In a cross-sectional study of 1,099 3-20-year-old children, parental education was associated with children's left hippocampal volume⁵⁰. A strong relation is known between the number of years of parental education and the function and structure of the brain region involved in language, reading, social cognition, executive functions, and spatial skills⁵⁰. Hanson et al. reported correlations between parental education and right hippocampal size¹⁰³. However, very few studies to date have explored the relationship between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. One exception is a recent ABCD study that showed SES is linked to the CO-CP functional connectivity at rest⁸¹.

The association between parental education and resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks may be because parental education is a proxy of parents' low-risk behaviors¹⁰⁶ and high-quality parenting^{107,108} as well as lower stress¹⁰⁹. As such, parental education, parenting, and parental behaviors can substantially affect the brain development of children³². Indeed, parenting and home environment may be some vehicles by which parental education influences child development. In addition, parenting and parental quality are linked to children's behavior problems¹¹⁰, psychopathologies¹¹¹, and cognitive performance^{48,112}.

In line with the MDRs, our second finding suggests that parental education is more strongly linked to resting-state functional connectivity between CO and CP networks for non-Hispanic and White children than Hispanic and Black children. Similar MDRs are reported for social and behavioral problems¹¹³, attention⁷⁴, impulsivity and inhibitory control¹¹⁴, ADHD⁸⁰, anxiety¹¹⁵, depression¹¹⁶, and suicidality²⁸ in Black and Hispanic adolescents.

Parental education and race and ethnicity have multiplicative rather than additive effects on resting-state functional connectivity between the CO and CP networks. Thereby, Black and Hispanic pre-adolescents, regardless of their SES, remain at high risk. Conversely, high parental education reduces the risk in non-Hispanic White pre-adolescents. Several MRI and behavioral studies, for example, provide evidence that hippocampus and associated areas are linked to attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD)¹¹⁷, intermittent explosive disorder¹¹⁷, emotional disorder¹¹⁸, bipolar depression¹¹⁹, autism¹²⁰, schizotypal disorder¹²¹, motor neuron disease¹²², functional neurological disorders¹²³, memory^{124,125}, and executive function¹²⁶.

Several questions should be further addressed in future studies. First, it will be crucial for future research to explore societal conditions where parental education strongly affects pre-adolescents' brains across all racial and ethnic families. Such information may provide useful insights into new policies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. To equalize racial and ethnic brain development, there is a need to equalize SES. However, there is also a need to equalize the marginal returns of SES. We need social and economic policies to deal with racial inequalities in brain development of middle-class Black and Hispanic families. Thus, policymakers should test policies that may equitably promote brain health for all people, regardless of their race and ethnic background. Elaboration of effective strategies requires a full understanding of underlying mechanisms for diminished returns of SES in Black and Hispanic families. Equity will not be achieved by closing the SES-based gaps across racial and ethnic groups. Social justice-promoting activities and policies are needed to equalize the returns of SES in different racial and ethnic minorities.

In this study, race and ethnicity were social rather than biological determinants. Race and ethnicity are social factors in all the MDRs literature, including studies on adolescents' brain development. Subsequently, racial and ethnic differences reported here have resulted from the differential treatment by society, which is preventable, not differences due to genes that are innate. Race and ethnicity here are proxies of racism, including labor market discrimination, low school quality, segregation, and differential policing, leading to the reduced effect of parental education, even for high SES and successful people who have secured economic and human resources. Thereby, the results should not be read as biological inferiority of any race or ethnic group due to genes¹²⁷.

5. Limitations

A few limitations should be mentioned before we can interpret our findings. First, a strong conclusion concerning the direction of the causal paths is limited in a cross-sectional design. Longitudinal studies

are needed to fully understand how parental education, race, and their interactions impact changes and trajectories of brain function. Second, several SES indicators were not included here, which may change brain function and structure. These may include homeownership, wealth, and the occupational status of parents. Neighborhood-level SES indicators, such as home value, residential-area income, and area-level education level, were also not included. Third, the sample was not random. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to the entire population of US pre-adolescents. In addition, the sample was smaller for Black and Hispanic than White and non-Hispanic children. This is a common problem in almost all national studies. Finally, a wide range of relevant functional and structural features of the brain was not included. Behavioral manifestations were also not included.

6. Conclusions

Parental education shows stronger links for non-Hispanic and White pre-adolescents than for Hispanic and Black American pre-adolescents. These variations might be in part due to differences in the living experiences of racial and ethnic diverse groups of middle-class families, in line with the Marginalization-related Diminished Returns (MDRs). It will be crucial for future research to examine whether and how racism, social stratification, and segregation reduce the effects of parental education in Hispanic and Black communities compared to their White counterparts. It is yet unknown which social processes may contribute to a reduction of the benefit of SES indicators in Black and Hispanic communities.

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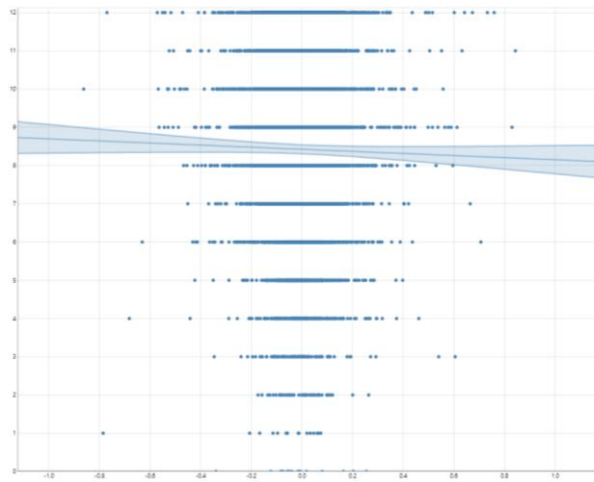
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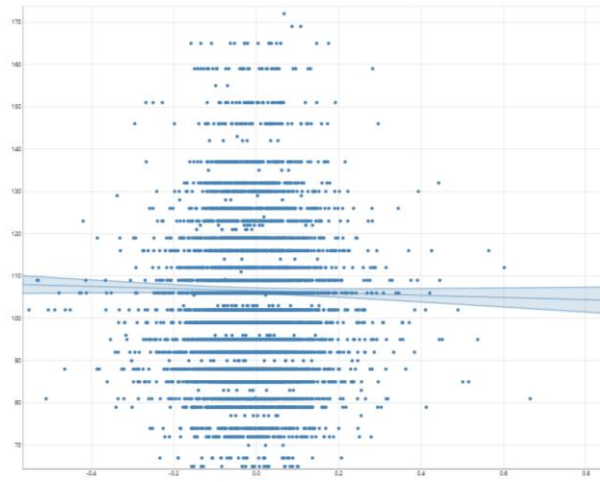
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Supplementary Table 1. Model formula in DEAP

<p>Model 1</p> <p>rsfmri_cor_network.gordon_cinguloparietal_network.gordon_cingulooperc ~ high.educ.bl + race.4level + hisp + sex + married.bl + age Random: ~(1 rel_family_id)</p>
<p>Model 2</p> <p>rsfmri_cor_network.gordon_cinguloparietal_network.gordon_cingulooperc ~ high.educ.bl + race.4level + hisp + sex + married.bl + age + high.educ.bl * race.4level Random: ~(1 rel_family_id)</p>
<p>Model 3</p> <p>rsfmri_cor_network.gordon_cinguloparietal_network.gordon_cingulooperc ~ high.educ.bl + race.4level + hisp + sex + married.bl + age + high.educ.bl * hisp Random: ~(1 rel_family_id)</p>



Correlation between CP CO functional connectivity and reward responsiveness (bisbas_ss_basm_rr) (y axis)



Correlation between CP CO functional connectivity and memory/executive function (nihtbx_picture_agecorrected) (y axis)

Figure Appendix: Validation of CP CO functional connectivity