

Cross-Lagged associations between oppositional behaviour and teacher-student bond during adolescence

Dr Sara Valdebenito (sv331@cam.ac.uk)
Research Associate, Violence Research Center

Oppositional Behaviour

- A recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient, and hostile behaviour towards authority figures, which leads to impairment.



Behaviour

- Comorbid CD, ADHD, Aggression
- Pathway of CP

Academic results

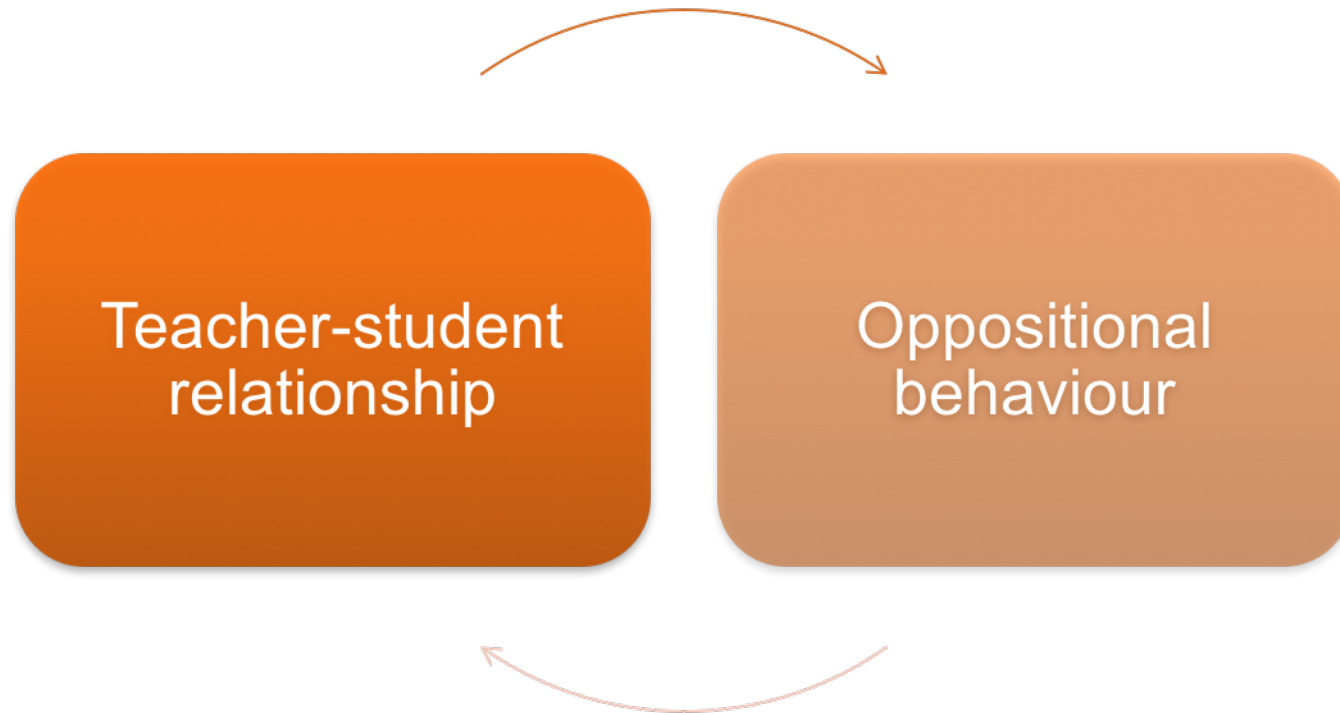
- Low engagement with school
- Low motivation
- Low achievements

Student-teacher relationships are key

- Positive student-teacher relationships increase children's engagement with school and has a positive impact on their academic and behavioural outcomes (e.g., Baker, 2006; Roorda et al. 2014).
- Students showing internalising and externalising problem behaviour are at risk of having problematic relationships with teachers.



The bidirectional hypothesis



Limitations of previous research

- Focused on students in the **first years of education**.
- Analyses are based on **teachers' reports only**.
- **Small samples**, with subsequent limitations to run sub group exploration, such as gender-based analysis.

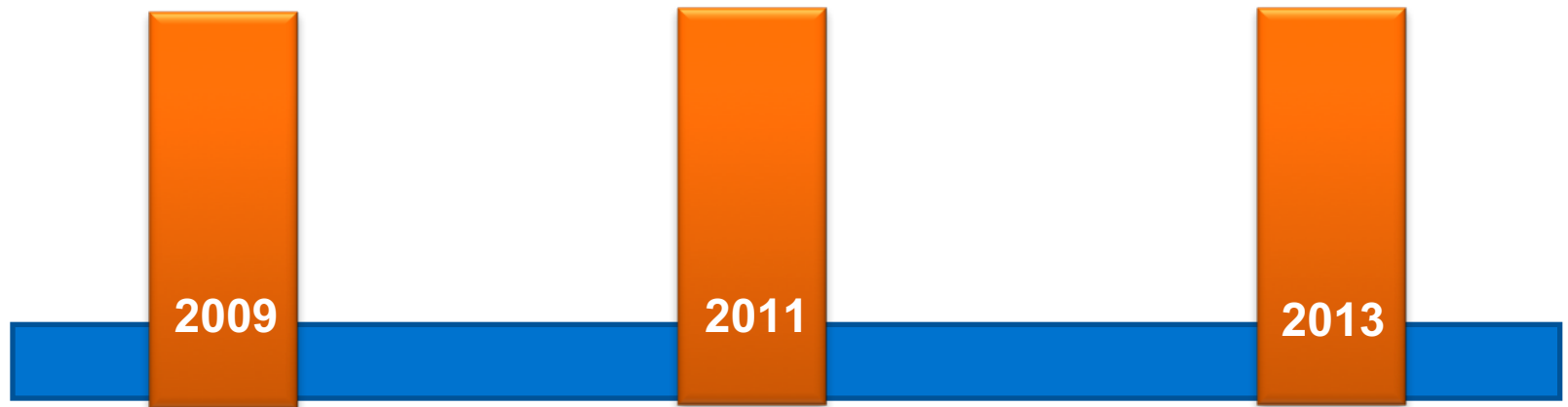


Aim of the study



The present research investigates the bidirectional cross-lagged associations between teacher-student bond and students' oppositional behaviour in a longitudinal population sample of 1527 adolescents from Zurich (z-proso study).

- The sample involved 1527 schoolchildren (48.5% female).



Wave 4

$M_{age}=11.32; SD=.36$

Teachers N=274

Wave 5

$M_{age}=13.67; SD=.36$

Teachers N= 265

Wave 6

$M_{age}=15.43; SD=.36$

Teachers N= 258

Measures

- **Oppositional Behaviour towards Teacher (OBT)**
 - Scored by teachers (SBQ; Tremblay et al. 1991).
 - Four items: “the child is disobedient”; “the child ignores the teacher”; “the child behaves impertinently”; and “the child disrupts the class”.
 - At ages 11, 13 and 15 the composite measures yielded Cronbach’s alphas equal to .90, .88 and .91.

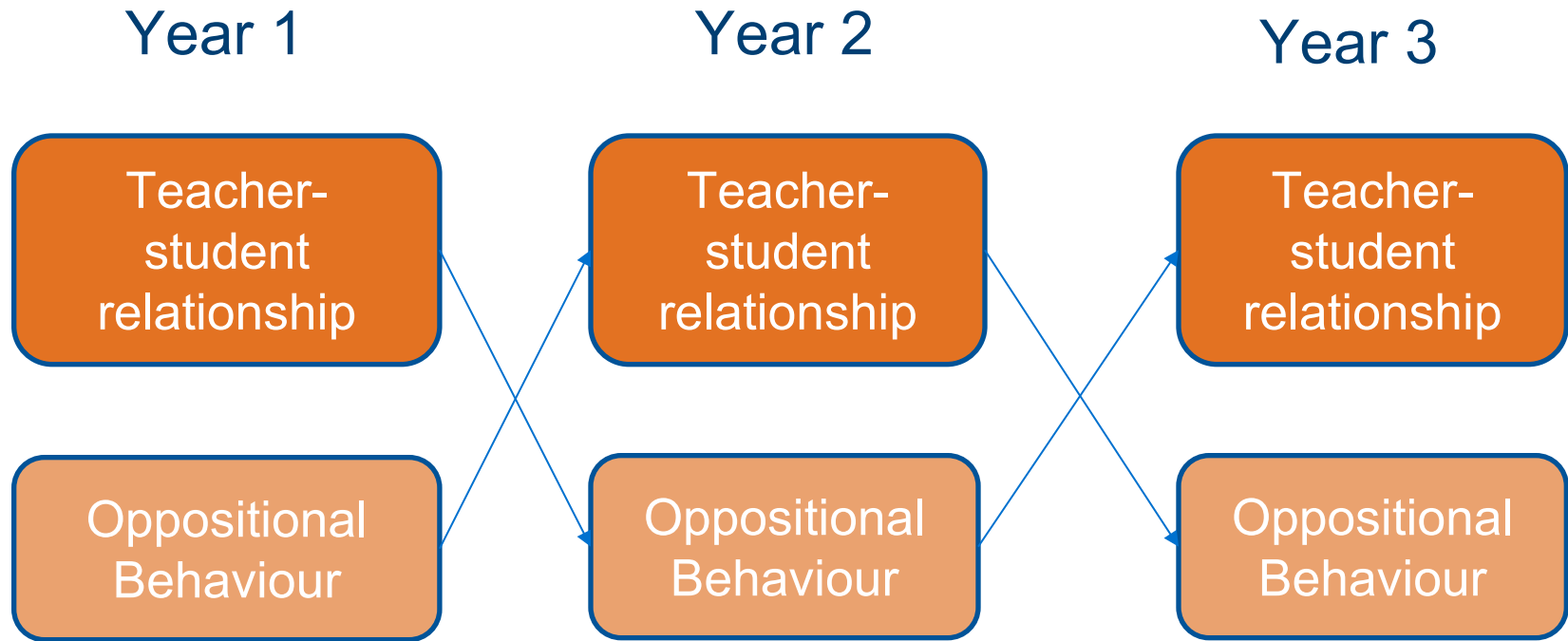
Measures

- **Student-Teacher Bond (STB)**
- Rated by students
- Three statements: “I get along with my teacher”; “the teacher is fair to me”; and “the teacher supports me”.
- At ages 11, 13 and 15 the composite variable yielded a Cronbach’s alpha equal to .78, .77 and .82, respectively.

Methods

- **Autoregressive and cross-lagged analysis** (Mplus Version 7.3, Muthén & Muthén, 2013)
- Results were **moderated by sex** of the student.
- Goodness-of-fit was evaluated using appropriated indicators (e.g., RMSEA, CFI, TLI, SMRM).
- To deal with missing data, analyses use the Full Information Maximum Likelihood estimation (FIML) procedure.

Methods: Plan of analysis



Results

	Boys			Girls		
Path	β	SE	p	β	SE	p
Autoregressive						
OBT ₁₁ →OBT ₁₃	.365	.044	<.001	.243	.048	<.001
OBT ₁₃ →OBT ₁₅	.397	.035	<.001	.328	.039	<.001
Cross-lagged						
STB ₁₁ →STB ₁₃	.218	.044	<.001	.250	.045	<.001
STB ₁₃ →STB ₁₅	.262	.036	<.001	.355	.035	<.001
OBT ₁₁ →STB ₁₃	-.105	.045	<.05	-.058	.048	ns
OBT ₁₃ →STB ₁₅	-.078	.038	<.05	-.037	.041	ns
STB ₁₁ →OBT ₁₃	.034	.046	ns	-.037	.047	ns
STB ₁₃ →OBT ₁₅	-.113	.037	<.010	-.042	.039	ns

Model fit: CFI= .98, TLI=.91, RMSEA=.05, SRMR=.02

Implications

- In our analysis, students showing a better attachment to teachers reported less oppositional behaviour.
- These findings are consistent with previous evidence suggesting that intergenerational positive relationships can function as a **protective factor for children** (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004)

Implications

- This reduction on oppositional behaviour can also work as a **protective factor for teachers**.
- Students disciplinary problems are associated with teachers' **high levels of stress** (e.g., Wilson, 2002), **burn-out** (e.g., Aloe, Shisler, Norris, Nickerson, & Rinker, 2014; Kokkinos, 2007) **and teacher turnover** (e.g., Torres, 2014).

Implication

- **Early screening and intervention** for students displaying behavioural problems seems relevant to stopping vicious cycles of poor relationships and oppositional behaviour, particularly for boys in late adolescence.
- The effort concentrated on improving students' social skills and violence reduction would be **accompanied by some actions focused on teachers' skills, and teacher-child positive interactions.**
- Early interventions must be enhanced by a **permanent effort** to reinforce a nurturing attachment between both participants of this dyadic relationship (Pakarinen et al., 2017)

Strenghts

- Uses a **large sample** drawn from a multi-ethnic longitudinal study
- Disentangle the reciprocal effect between teacher-child bond and oppositional behaviour for **boys and girls** separately.
- To the best of our knowledge, no previous study had analysed this association at **this developmental stage**.
- In contrast with most previous studies, our study uses **multiple informants** in assessing teacher-child bond and oppositional behaviour.

Thanks