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Psychosocial Effects of Shared Book Reading

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PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF SHARED BOOK READING

by

Amy Halling

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ABSTRACT

Psychosocial Effects of Shared Book Reading

by

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Many studies have examined the academic benefits of shared book reading, but few studies have looked at the psychosocial benefits, and even fewer have related the quality of shared book reading to psycho-social benefits. This study looked at whether positive and negative reading interactions during shared book reading predicted parent-child relationships, child social skills, and child academic skills. Twenty-five parents of 4-year-olds read a story with their child and completed parent relationship and child social skills questionnaires. The reading interactions were then coded into two separate composite scores: positive and negative. Positive interactions did not significantly predict any of the variables studied, but negative reading interactions predicted lower parent involvement ($p = .025$), lower child engagement ($p = .002$), and lower child communication skills ($p = .048$). Reading behaviors approached significance for predicting child's phonological processing ($p = .063$), but not child letter knowledge ($p > .05$). Implications and future research are discussed.

(53 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Psychosocial Effects of Shared Book Reading

Amy Halling

Many studies have examined the academic benefits of parents reading with their children, but few studies have looked at the psychological and social benefits, and even fewer have related the quality of shared book reading to psycho-social benefits. This study looked at whether positive and negative reading interactions during shared book reading predicted parent-child relationships, child social skills and child academic skills. Twenty-five parents of 4-year-olds read a story with their child and completed parent relationship and child social skills questionnaires. The reading interactions were then coded into two separate composite scores: positive and negative. Positive interactions did not significantly predict any of the variables studied, but negative reading interactions predicted lower parent involvement, lower child engagement, and lower child communication skills. Reading behaviors approached significance for predicting child's ability to understand the sounds that make up a word, but not child letter knowledge. Implications and future research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Parents today are often encouraged to read with their children. Elementary schools are flooded with posters that encourage 15-30 minutes a day of shared reading to provide children with long lasting benefits. Unfortunately, parents can be prevented from reading to their children due to lack of time, skills, or other deterrents. Before making parents feel overwhelmed or guilty, it is important to know whether there are certain aspects of shared book reading that are important for a child's overall socio-emotional and academic growth.

One motivation behind the increasing encouragement for parents to read to their children comes from the perceived educational benefits. A number of studies support the belief that children who have more exposure to reading perform better in school (K. Anderson, Atkinson, Swaggerty & O'Brien, 2019; R. Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Barnes & Puccioni, 2017; Holloway, 2004; Kotaman, 2008; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Smetana, 2005). Children's early literacy skills are particularly important in the prediction of their overall academic performance. Research shows that children who begin school with limited literacy skills often do not catch up to their peers (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; Mol & Bus, 2011). Because the early years are a critical period in a child's development, parents are encouraged to engage in practices such as shared book reading to increase their child's likelihood of academic success in subsequent years.

Another reason parents are often encouraged to engage in shared book reading

with their preschool-aged children is the perceived social and emotional benefits associated with the time spent together. When parents read with their child, they are also socializing with their child, providing feedback, discussing themes, and physically interacting with the child. Research has shown that parents who engage in shared book reading have children with stronger social emotional skills than those who do not (Baker, 2013; O'Farrelly, Doyle, Victory, & Palamaro-Munsell, 2018). These interactions are especially important during early childhood when parents are the primary agents of socialization. The importance of parental involvement in their child's socialization extends to the schools as well. Parent involvement in their child's education has been extensively studied and is linked to fewer behavioral problems (Kingston, Huang, Calzada, Dawson-McClure, & Brotman, 2013), better social skills (Mcwayne, Hampton, Fantuzza, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010), and increased language skills (Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008). This positive parental involvement, especially in the early childhood years, can be facilitated through shared book reading, which provides guided learning interactions that are not apparent in other parental interactions such as caregiving or play (Baker, 2013; Senechal, 2006). These perceived social effects are important to a child's developmental outcomes and are another reason why parents are often encouraged to participate in shared book reading with their preschool-aged child.

While the possible benefits of shared book reading are currently being studied, the benefits of a secure parent-child relationship have been widely and extensively researched. Children with more secure attachments with their parent or primary caregiver

have more social, emotional (Rispoli, McGoey, Koziol, & Schreiber, 2013), and

cognitive skills, which commonly lead to peer acceptance (Verissimo, Santos, Fernandes,

Shin, & Vaughn, 2014). Secure attachment is also linked to more compliance

(Lickenbrock et al., 2013) and fewer externalizing behaviors in preschool children (Boldt,

Kochanska, Yoon & Nordling, 2014; Brook, Lee, Finch, & Brown, 2012; Roskam,

Meunier, & Stievenart, 2011). In a review of the literature relating shared book reading to

attachment, only one study was found that examined the link between these constructs. In

this study, parents of 44- to 63-week-old infants with more secure attachment also

demonstrated more frequent and higher quality book reading interactions (Bus & van

Ijzendoorn, 1997). The importance of parent-child attachment is well known and

understood; however, much less research has been done looking at whether shared book

reading helps to promote secure attachment between parent and child, specifically during

the preschool years.

While there is much that is known about shared book reading and its effects on

child development, there are still areas that need further exploration. Overall, studies on

shared book reading have been focused on the quantity of the reading rather than the

quality, particularly when looking beyond academic benefits. Research examining the

quality of shared book reading and its effects on psychosocial benefits has previously

been overlooked. The research on psychosocial benefits of shared book reading, such as

the connection between shared book reading and attachment in preschool-aged children,

in general, has been limited. The majority of the studies relating shared book reading and

social emotional skills has historically also been done with toddlers, though there is

current research on this area expanding into the preschool age. This study's aim is to

examine the quality of reading interactions and psychosocial benefits of shared book

reading with mothers of preschool-aged children. This study also aims to add to the

previous research on academic benefits associated with shared book reading. Specifically,

this study addresses the following research questions.

1. Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger parent-child relationships?

2. Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger child social-emotional and behavior skills?

3. Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger early literacy skills in preschool-aged children?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Shared Book Reading?

According to Pillinger and Wood (2013), shared book reading "encompasses various read-aloud methods and book related activities that support children's language and literacy development" (p. 557). During traditional shared reading the parent typically sits with the child and reads the text while the child sits and passively listens (Justice & Kadervak, 2002). However, research shows that children whose parents engage with them more during the reading using a style called Dialogic Reading have more benefits in early literacy skills compared to children of parents who passively read (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Pillinger & Wood, 2014). Dialogic Reading turns the child into an active participant by asking varying types of questions that require child verbalizations (Pillinger & Wood, 2014). While Dialogic Reading is a more preferred form of shared book reading, studies have shown increased expressive language skills (measured through imitation, pointing, etc.) related to shared book reading in general, as early as eight months, indicating that it may be beneficial for parents to read to their child before the child can understand what is being read (Karrass & Braungart-Rieker, 2005). Parents engage in shared book reading for a variety of reasons, including academic and social perceived gains.

Many studies have shown that when shared book reading is introduced into a home that previously did not engage in shared book reading, the preschool and

kindergarten children's reading assessment scores went up within 1-7 weeks (Holloway, 2004; Kotaman, 2008; Morgan & Meier, 2008; Roberts, 2008; Smetana, 2005). Aside from increased literary skills, children under the age of seven who engage in shared book reading also demonstrate language growth, enhanced comprehension, and improved listening and expressive language skills (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992; Saracho, 2002; Wade & Moore, 2000; Weinberger, 1996). These academic gains encourage parents to implement shared book reading into their household routine. This literature review will further discuss these potential academic and prosocial benefits.

Academic Benefits from Shared Book Reading

Two key early literacy skills that may be impacted by shared book reading are letter knowledge and phonological awareness. According to the NELP (2008), letter knowledge consists of the knowledge of the letter name, and different sounds associated with the letter. Phonological awareness refers to the ability to break down a word into its sound units, such as syllables, rhymes, and phonemes, and manipulate these units (Sandberg, 2002; Gillon, 2004). These skills, letter knowledge and phonological awareness, are important for a child's overall educational learning.

Because letters are the foundation for reading, it is especially important that children are proficient at identifying and comprehending the various letters. Letter knowledge can also assist children in later phonological awareness (Foy & Mann, 2006; Justice & Ezell, 2004; Justice, Pence, Bowles, & Wiggins, 2006; Paris, 2005; Share, 2004; Treiman, Sotak, & Bowman, 2001). Letter knowledge in preschool and

kindergarten is also a significant predictor of later reading skills (Schatschneider, Fletcher, Francis, Carlson, & Foorman, 2004; Share, Jorm, Maclean, & Matthews, 1984; Stage, Sheppard, Davidson, & Browning, 2001). Correlational and longitudinal studies have shown that phonological awareness is concurrently and predictively related to the child's reading performance (Castles & Coltheart, 2004; Evans & Shaw, 2008).

Participation in shared book reading can lead to increases in phonological awareness in preschool- and kindergarten-aged children (Bennett, Weigel, & Martin, 2002; Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, 2002) which promote increases in reading and writing achievement in second and fourth grade (Catts, Gillispie, Leonard, Kail, & Miller, 2002). Shared book reading, between a parent and child, particularly reading alphabet books, has also been shown to lead to gains in the child's letter knowledge (Greenewald & Kulig, 1995). Martini and Senechal (2012) state that gains in letter knowledge are more prevalent during formal book reading, when the focus is on the print rather than informal book reading, where the focus is placed on the story. Children who engage in shared book reading in the home have demonstrated increases in both language development through vocabulary acquisition in kindergarten (Ewers & Brownson, 1999) and literacy skills, including reading vocabulary and reading fluency, in kindergarten through second grade (Saracho & Spodek, 2010; Pillinger & Wood, 2013). Therefore, by helping children acquire phonological awareness and letter knowledge, shared book reading can function as a stepping stone for better reading and writing achievement.

Psychosocial Behaviors and Skills

Prosocial behavior and skills are important for a child's development. According to Baker (2013),

> Social emotional development reflects the capacity of young children to demonstrate positive emotions during social interactions, regulate positive and negative emotions, and form secure relationships with parents, teachers, and peers. (p. 186)

Prosocial skills are positively related to overall school success (Ladd & Price, 1987) as well as being negatively related with peer rejection, behavior problems, and poor academic achievement (Cooper & Farran, 1988; Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 1999; McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000; Wentzel, 1993). Research shows a link between literacy, language, and reading competence in young children and better social skills and emotional adjustment during childhood (Baker, Cameron, Rimm-Kaufman, & Grissmer, 2012; Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006; Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty, & Franze, 2005). The relationship between socio-emotional skills, academic achievement, and behavior problems demonstrates the importance of developing each of these aspects to improve a child's overall wellbeing.

Several studies have been found relating problem behaviors in the classroom and overall academic problems. A recent study showed that first grade children who were identified by their teacher as demonstrating aggressive/disruptive behavior, oppositional behavior, and/or attention concentration problems were more likely to have co-occurring academic problems as well as continued behavior problems, including substance use, in adolescence (Reboussin, Ialongo, & Green, 2015). Likewise, reading problems in first

grade were correlated with third grade teachers' reports of aggression (Miles & Stipek, 2006; Morgan, Farkas, Tufis, & Sperling, 2008), as well as other acting out behaviors (e.g., arguing, acting impulsively, disturbing classroom activities; Morgan et al., 2008). A longitudinal study of an ethnically diverse cohort of 693 six-year-olds demonstrated that internalizing behavior, externalizing problems and attention problems at age 6 predicted reading deficits at age 17 (Breslau et al., 2009). Externalizing behavior was measured using the Teacher's Report Form and accounted for delinquent and aggressive behavior. This study's results were maintained when adjusting for IQ, inner-city community, maternal education, and marital status. Externalizing problem behaviors also decrease the effectiveness of academic interventions (Hagan-Burke et al., 2001) with teacher's report of problem behavior being the number one predictor of low growth in reading skills despite interventions implemented (Torgesen, 1999).

While it is clear that academics and behavior are connected, it is unclear how shared book reading impacts behavior as studies are found in this area. Only two studies specifically addressed this link between shared book reading and behavior. Baker (2013) found that children whose parents read to them at 24 months demonstrated better social emotional skills in preschool than those whose parents did not. Similarly, a recent study by Betawi (2015) showed that toddlers who had story time from a nursery teacher as part of their regular routine had significantly higher social and emotional skills, and suggested that shared book reading may assist a toddler in forming social bonds and attachment; however, attending a school that engages in story time could be indicative of a higher quality nursery school which may relate to higher social-emotional skills in itself.

Parent-Child Attachment

Attachment theory was founded by British Psychoanalyst John Bowlby who stated that children will have either a secure or an insecure attachment with their primary attachment figure. According to his son, Richard Bowlby (2007), the primary attachment figure is "the person with whom a child develops their main lifelong emotional bond, and whom they most want to be comforted by when they are frightened or hurt" (p. 309). This person is typically the mother, though can be another caregiver, and the child can also create secondary attachment bonds with others with whom they have a close relationship. R. Bowlby defined a secure attachment as having a "predictable, safe, and affectionate bond with the attachment figure" (p. 309).

A secure parent-child attachment is related to many benefits throughout a child's life. Research indicates that parent-child attachment can have a strong influence on the child's later relationships with his/her peers (Bowlby, 1973). Rispoli et al. (2013) conducted a study showing that children with more secure attachment at age two demonstrated more social competence in kindergarten than those with a less secure attachment to parents. Schneider, Atkinson, and Tardif (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 63 studies, totaling 3,510 children, reporting correlations between parent attachment and peer relations. Peer relations were assessed by direct observation, peer report, and teacher report. Results of this study reported an effect size of $r = .20$, indicating children with stronger attachment also had better peer relations. In addition, secure mother-child attachment at 24 and 36 months was negatively correlated with internalizing and externalizing behavior problems in first, third, and fifth grade (O'Connor, Scott,

McCormick, & Weinberg, 2014).

Aside from missing the benefits accompanied with secure parent-child attachment, there are also a number of disadvantages associated with having an insecure attachment. A meta-analysis of 69 samples (n = 5,947) showed that boys who have an insecure or disorganized attachment, specifically with their mothers, were more likely to have externalizing problems including aggression and hostility (d = 0.35; Fearon, Bakermans-Kranenburg, van Ijzendoorn, Lapsley, & Roisman, 2010). The increase in externalizing problems was only shown in boys. Another meta-analysis of 46 studies, including 8,907 children found that children who had insecure attachment to their parents were more likely to develop anxiety disorders later in life (r = .30; Colonnesi et al., 2011). In addition, other studies found higher depression levels in preadolescents who had had insecure patterns of attachment with their parents as preschoolers (Priddis & Howieson, 2012), as well as lower self-esteem (Lecompte, Moss, Cyr, & Pascuzzo, 2014).

While it is commonly believed that shared book reading is related to parent-child attachment, there have been relatively few studies done specifically in this area. One study conducted by Bus and van Ijzendoorn (1997) examined the relationship between attachment and shared book reading. In this study, researchers videotaped 82 mothers reading to their 44- to 63-week-old infants, then employed the Strange Situation procedure to measure attachment security. Results of this study indicated that mothers who had more secure attachment with their infant evoked more responses by asking questions during the reading and had children who responded more by pointing,

gesturing, and laughing. While mothers in this study did not differ much in verbalizations and interaction style, mothers of insecure-avoidant children tended to give more negative feedback and control child's motor activity by putting an arm around the child or keeping the book out of reach.

Conclusion

There has been substantial research conducted on shared book reading in relation to academic benefits and also considerable research on the importance of secure attachment and social-emotional skills; however, there has been very little research relating shared book reading and social-emotional skills. Previous research has also focused primarily on the quantity of shared book reading rather than the quality particularly in regards to psycho-social benefits. This study addresses the gap in the research by assessing the relationship between parents' shared book reading interactions and the preschool-aged child's socioemotional skills and the parent-child relationship. This study also furthers the research by investigating the relationship between shared book reading interactions and the child's early literacy skills.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

Participants were 25 mothers with an average age of 35 years old ($SD = 4.07$ years) and their 4-year-old children recruited from local day care centers, preschools, and other community locations via fliers. This is a preliminary study in this area, and in order to recruit a large enough sample, participants needed to be restricted to only mothers rather than recruiting and comparing both fathers and mothers. Also, due to the rapid development that happens during preschool years it was necessary to restrict the child participants to only 4-year-olds. To reduce confounding variables, the children in this study could not be enrolled in formal schooling (i.e., kindergarten), though they may have been enrolled in preschool. Due to the nature of this study, the parents must have been able to read and speak English. No additional inclusion or exclusion criteria were used. See Table 1 for demographic characteristics of the sample.

Materials and Coding

Participants were asked to read one of three books to their child while being recorded. They were asked to choose a book with which they were not familiar, or the one they were least familiar with. The recordings were then transcribed and coded.

Reading Books

After consulting with an early childhood literacy expert, the books selected to be

Table 1

Demographics Characteristics

Characteristic	*n*	%
Child gender		
Male	8	33
Female	16	67
Child race		
White	23	92
Pacific Islander	1	4
Other	1	4
Marital status		
Married	23	92
Divorced	2	8
Religion		
LDS	20	83.3
Atheistic/Agnostic	2	8.3
Protestant	1	4.2
Other	1	4.2
Education		
Some college/trade/associates	3	12.5
College graduate/bachelor's	10	41.7
Graduate or professional degree	11	45.8
Income		
$15,000-30,000	1	4.2
$30,000-45,000	1	4.2
$45,000-60,000	4	16.7
$60,000-75,000	5	20.8
More than $75,000	13	54.2
Parent received mental health service		
Yes	6	25
No	18	75
Parent taken parenting class		
Yes	5	22.7
No	17	77.3
Child enrolled in preschool		
Yes	21	87.5
No	3	12.5

Characteristic	*n*	%
How often parent reads to child		
1-3 x week	1	4
4-5 x week	2	8
Daily	22	88
Why do you read to your child?		
Psychosocial benefits	15	62.5
Attachment/bonding	10	41.6
Communication	4	16.6
Involvement	6	25
Academic benefits	13	54.2
Love of reading	13	54.2
Part of routine/wind down	4	16.6

used in this study include: *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds (2003), *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein (2010), and *Spoon* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (2002). According to O'Sullivan (2004), a good children's book encourages the reader to develop a critical understanding of the book and contains moral dilemmas, admirable, but believable characters, and has a diverse representation of characters. These three books selected each had a prosocial theme and were difficult enough to challenge children while also providing simple text that parents could refer to.

Coding

The recordings of the book reading were transcribed verbatim. Items were then coded based on four different categories: Positive Behaviors, Negative Behaviors, Positive Reading Interactions, and Negative Reading Interactions (see Table 2). Codes were inspired by several previous studies (Barachetti & Levelli, 2010; Kucirkova, Messer, & Whitelock, 2012; Pillinger & Wood, 2013; Vandermaas-Peeler, Sassine, Price, & Brilhart, 2011) and modified for the purposes of this study. Past studies that have

coded shared book reading interactions have varied in how they analyze their codes. Vandermaas et al. used an overall composite score, while Barachetti and Levelli analyzed each code separately using a multiple variable analysis. In this study, two separate composite scores were calculated: positive and negative. A positive composite score was comprised of Positive Behaviors and Positive Reading Interactions while a negative composite score was comprised of Negative Behaviors and Negative Reading Interactions. During the coding, if a parent rephrased a question multiple times with no qualitative difference (e.g., "Where is he going? Where is the chicken going?") the interaction was coded as one occurrence. Likewise, repeating back the child's comments in question form or clarifying (e.g., child: "He fell down!" Mother: "He fell down?") was not counted as asking a question under Positive Reading Interactions. The data were taken as frequency counts for each code, tallying the number of occurrences during the entire reading, to allow for multiple codes to be possible at any given time.

Table 2

Reading Behaviors Coding System

Code	Definition and example
Positive behaviors	Positive physical interactions between parent and child (e.g. smiles, laughter, physical touch), or praise.
Negative behaviors	Child or parent disengagement (yawns, restless movement, looking away from the book), negative physical interactions.
Positive reading interactions	Asking the child questions about the book (e.g. "What is this?" "Where is he going?"). Relating the story being read to the child's life (e.g. "You had pancakes this morning too")
Negative reading interactions	Parent correcting child's response (e.g. "No, this isn't a dog, it's a cat")

Measures

After finishing the reading, parents were asked to complete three separate questionnaires: a Demographic Questionnaire, the Parenting Relationship Questionnaire-Preschool form (PRQ-P; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015), and the Social Skills Improvement System-Rating Scales (SSIS-RS; Gresham & Elliott, 2008). The child was also administered two subtests from the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement-Third Edition (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2014) as an early literacy measure.

Demographic Questionnaire

Parents were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire (see the Appendix). The questionnaire contained items pertaining to the parent and child's respective ages, socioeconomic status, education, as well as previous services that have been received for parenting, behavioral, or mental health issues. The information was used to describe the sample.

The Parenting Relationship Questionnaire-Preschool Form

The Parenting Relationship Questionnaire-Preschool Form (PRQ-P; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015) was designed for parents of children ages 2-5 and measures attachment, discipline practices, involvement, parenting confidence, and relational frustration. The questionnaire has 45 items and takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The responses are on a Likert scale having parents select never, sometimes, often, or always in describing aspects of their child's behavior. Scores are presented as t-scores, with an

average score of 50 (*SD* = 10). However, for the purposes of this study, only raw scores

from the Parent-child Attachment, Relational Frustration, and Parental Involvement

subscales were used for data analysis.

The PRQ-P shows reliability coefficients ranging from .82 to .93 indicating that

the questionnaire is a reliable measure. The Attachment, Involvement, and Relational

Frustration subtests each also demonstrated good reliability with alphas of .87, .91, and

.90 respectively (Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015). This is similar to the current study,

which found that the recent version of the PRQ-P demonstrated good overall internal

consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of .82. As reported in the manual, The PRQ-P

demonstrated intercorrelations among subtests ranging from .07 to .69 (Kamphaus &

Reynolds, 2015).

Interscale correlations of the previous version of the PRQ-P and the Parent-Child

Relationship Inventory (PCRI) were moderate with the highest correlation coefficient

being *r* = .57 between both measures' Involvement Scale. Correlations between the PRQ-

P and Parenting Stress Index (PSI) were mostly negative and weak, though it was

determined by the authors that although both scales measure parenting stress, they do so

under different circumstances, which account for the difference in scores (Rubinic &

Schwickrath, 2010).

The Social Skills Improvement System-Rating Scales

The Social Skills Improvement System-Rating Scales (SSiS-RS; Gresham &

Elliott, 2008), which can be completed by parents or teachers, contains three main scales:

social skills, problem behaviors, and total academic competence. For the purpose of this

study, only the parent assessed social skills and problem behaviors portions of the questionnaire were administered. This questionnaire measures empathy, engagement, communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, and self-control. The SSIS-RS items are rated on a four-point Likert scale as well as a three-point importance rating (0= not important, 1 = important, 2 = critical). The overall social skills score is normed with the average score being 100 (SD = 15; Gresham, Elliott, Vance, & Cook, 2011). For the purposes of this study, only the raw scores on the communication and child engagement subscales were used for analyses.

Coefficient alpha values were in the mid to upper .90s and interscale correlations between the SSIS-RS and its predecessor, the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS), were moderate to high. Test-retest indices for the parent form were .84. Studies of concurrent validity have also demonstrated support for the validity of this questionnaire (Gresham et al., 2011). In the current study, the SSiS-RS demonstrated good overall internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha scores of .82.

The Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Third Edition

The Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Third Edition (KTEA-3; Kaufman & Kaufman, 2014) is a measure of academic performance designed to be used with ages 4-25. The individual subtests take 10-35 minutes. Scores are presented as standard scores with an average score of 100 (SD = 15); however, for the purposes of this study, only raw scores were used. This study utilized only two subtests. Phonological Processing was used to measure phonological awareness and Letter & Word Recognition

measured letter knowledge.

The KTEA-3 represents a substantial revision of the KTEA-2 (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004), including updated norms and artwork, as well as new items and subtests. The KTEA-3 was normed on two separate, representative nation-wide samples, one collected in fall, and one collected in the spring. According to an independent evaluation, the Academic Skills Battery composite coefficient was very reliable at .97 for internal consistency. Internal consistency correlation coefficients for composite scores ranged from .70s to .90s (Frame, Vidrine, & Hinojosa, 2016).

Intercorrelations between the subtests and corresponding composite scores ranged from .70s to .80s. In assessing concurrent validity, all corresponding subtests and composite scores were correlated at moderate to high levels, when comparing the KTEA-3 to the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Second Edition (KTEA-II; Kaufman & Kaufman, 2004), the Wechsler Individual Achievement Tests, Third Edition (WIAT-III; Wechsler, 2009), the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Third Edition (WJ-III Ach; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001), and the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, Fourth Edition (CELF-IV; Semel, Wiig, & Secord, 2003; see also Frame et al., 2016)

Procedure

After receiving IRB approval, participants were recruited via fliers posted at local day care centers, preschools, and other community locations containing contact information including email and phone number to schedule a time to come to complete

the study in a university clinic or community agency facilities. At their local clinic/agency, participants were taken into a private room, where, after discussing and signing an informed consent form, they were asked to select one of three possible book choices: *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds, *Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein, or *Spoon* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. To maintain consistency, participants were asked to select a book with which they were unfamiliar. Participants were then left alone with their child to read the book and this interaction was recorded. Participants were given no other instruction other than to read to their child how they would typically interact with them. Upon conclusion of the book reading, parents were asked to fill out the demographic questionnaire as well as the PRQ-P and SSIS-RS questionnaires. While the parents completed the questionnaires, the child was administered the Phonological Processing and Letter Word Recognition subtests of the KTEA-3.

Upon completion of participation for the study, parents were compensated with the book read during the study. The recordings were then transcribed, and the videos coded and analyzed by trained CITI certified coders. The researcher coded all of the responses, while the second coder was randomly assigned 20% of participants to code to assess for interrater reliability. The second coder was given a copy of the coding system and verbal training prior to coding. The two sets of ratings correlated very highly with a Pearson bivariate correlation coefficient of .924 (p = .000) and a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of .922 (p = .000) indicating very strong interrater reliability.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study was designed to examine the psycho-social effects of shared book reading between mothers and their 4-year old children. Specifically, this study looked at whether behaviors observed during shared book reading predicted stronger parent-child relationships, stronger child social-emotional and behavior skills, and/or stronger early literacy skills in the children.

Preliminary Analyses

After coding the reading behaviors, it was found that parents displayed on average 18.2 positive interactions and 1.68 negative interactions (see Table 3). The readings averaged approximately 6½ minutes, ranging from 4 minutes to 11 minutes.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Reading Behaviors

Reading behavior	Mean	*SD*	Range
Positive behaviors	6.84	3.80	1-21
Negative behaviors	1.04	1.70	0-8
Positive reading interactions	11.36	8.20	1-41
Negative reading interactions	0.64	1.00	0-4
Positive composite	18.20	10.60	4-49
Negative composite	1.68	1.86	0-8

Descriptive statistics for the individual subscales of the Parenting Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ-P) and the Social Skills Improvement System (SSiS-RS) are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Psycho-Social and Academic Measures

Outcome variable	Mean	*SD*	Range
Parent-child Attachment (PRQ-P)	34.25	5.16	24-42
Relational Frustration (PRQ-P)	13.00	3.31	5-18
Parental Involvement (PRQ-P)	18.29	3.68	11-27
Child Engagement (SSiS-RS)	15.21	4.10	7-21
Child Communication (SSiS-RS)	16.17	1.95	13-21
Phonological Processing (KTEA-3)	14.88	7.08	2-31
Letter Knowledge (KTEA-3)	11.96	7.77	1-26

Research Questions

Research Question 1 asked: "*Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger parent-child relationships*?"

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict parent child relationships based on observed reading behaviors with the positive and negative composites as the predictors and attachment, relational frustration, and parental involvement as measured by the PRQ-P as the outcome variables. The overall regression equations for parent-child attachment, $F(2, 22) = 0.760$, $p = .479$; and relational frustration, $F(2,22) = 1.208$, $p = .318$, were not statistically significant. This indicates that the positive and negative behaviors observed during the reading did not significantly predict the parent-child attachment or amount of relational frustration reported by the parent. However, a significant overall regression equation was found for parent involvement, $F(2, 22) = 4.193$, $p = .029$, with an R^2 of .276 showing reading behaviors significantly predicted parental involvement (see Table 5). Only the Negative Composite was a significant

predictor of parental involvement. Participants' report of Parent Involvement decreased

.85 for each negative reading interaction observed ($p = .025$).

Table 5

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Parental Involvement

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p value
Positive composite	-.104	.062	-.306	-1.684	.106
Negative composite	-.850	.353	-.437	-2.406	.025*

* $p < .05$.

Research Question 2 asked: "*Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger child social-emotional and behavior skills?*"

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict child social-emotional and behavior skills based on observed reading behaviors with the positive and negative composites as the predictors and child engagement and communication skills as measured by the SSiS-RS as the outcome variables.

A significant overall regression equation was found for child engagement, $F(2, 21) = 6.751$, $p = .005$, with an R^2 of .391 showing reading behaviors significantly predicted child engagement (see Table 6). Only the Negative Composite was a significant predictor of child engagement. Participant's report of child engagement decreased 1.339 for each negative reading interaction observed ($p = .002$).

An overall regression equation approaching significance was also found for child communication skills, $F(2, 21) = 2.76$, $p = .086$, with an R^2 of .208 showing reading behaviors may predict child social skills (see Table 7). Only the Negative Composite was

a significant predictor of child social skills ($p = .048$). Participant's report of child social skills decreased .425 for each negative reading interaction observed.

Table 6

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Child Engagement

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p value
Positive composite	.039	.065	.103	.607	.550
Negative composite	-1.339	.373	-.612	-3.589	.002**

$** p < .01.$

Table 7

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Child Communication Skills

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p value
Positive composite	.033	.035	.184	.948	.354
Negative composite	-.425	.203	-.408	-2.099	.048*

$* p < .05.$

Research Question 3 asked: "*Do behaviors observed during shared book reading predict stronger early literacy skills in preschool-aged children?*"

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to predict child early literacy skills based on observed reading behaviors with the positive and negative composites as the predictors and child phonological processing and letter knowledge as measured by the KTEA-3 as the outcome variables.

An overall regression equation approaching significance was found for child phonological processing skills, $F(2, 22) = 3.286$, $p = .056$, with an R^2 of .230 showing reading behaviors may predict child phonological processing skills (see Table 8). While

neither positive nor negative reading interactions were a significant predictor of

phonological processing skills, negative reading interactions approached significance ($p =$

.063). Child's phonological processing skills decreased by 1.391 for each negative

reading interaction observed.

Table 8

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Child Phonological Processing

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p value
Positive composite	.199	.125	.298	1.594	.125
Negative composite	-1.391	.711	-.367	-1.958	.063

The overall regression equations for child letter knowledge, $F(2, 22) = 1.404$, $p =$

.267, was not statistically significant. This indicates that the positive and negative

behaviors observed during the reading did not significantly predict the child's ability to

identify letters and their corresponding sounds.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Parent-child interactions during storybook reading were examined to study if shared book reading behaviors had an impact on the children's psycho-social, and/or academic skills. While there have been many studies on the academic benefits of shared book reading, few studies have looked at the psycho-social benefits and even fewer have related the quality of shared book reading to psycho-social benefits. With over half of the parents in the current study citing psychosocial benefits as a primary reason why they engage in shared book reading, it is important to see if these benefits exist, especially with the pressure often put on parents by schools and communities to read with their child.

Major Findings and Implications

Overall, positive reading interactions did not significantly predict better child outcomes across the domains studied. This may be due to the fact that parent-child attachment and social skills are complex constructs created by many variables and interactions and reading behaviors are too narrow to influence the overall construct. Baker's (2013) study showed that shared book reading related to stronger child social emotional skills; however, the focus of that study was on the quantity of shared book reading rather than the quality. The additional stress of being "good" at reading (e.g., asking questions) may not be necessary as the importance should be placed on ensuring the reading happens rather than the positive behaviors parents may feel pressure to be

engaged in during the reading.

However, negative reading interactions did predict poorer child outcomes. Unsurprisingly, negative reading behaviors predicted lower parent involvement, and lower child engagement and communication skills. The Parental Involvement composite looked at how often parents spend time with their child and teach their child new things. Previous studies have found that high parent involvement in their child's schooling—as evidenced by visiting the school and placing value on education—was linked to fewer behavioral problems (Kingston et al., 2013), and better social skills (McWayne et. al., 2004; Nokali et al., 2010). While the current study was not looking at parent involvement in a school context, the concept of a value on learning can begin before a child enters formal schooling and carry over into later years. Therefore, decreasing negative interactions during shared book reading could be important for the child's overall social-behavioral wellbeing. It is also possible that parents who show less involvement are generally more negative in the limited interactions they have with their child. Effort should be made to decrease negative interactions and increase amount of time spent together in an effort to increase child social-behavioral skills.

The communication skills composite looked at social communication skills such as "says please and thank you" and "makes eye contact while talking." Parents who themselves demonstrate poor communication skills by focusing on the negative during reading with their child and disengaging from the activity may not expressly teach these positive skills or provide an adequate example for their children to follow, perhaps resulting in poor child communication skills.

Overall, while positive reading behaviors did not significantly predict better outcomes negative reading behaviors did predict poorer outcomes. Therefore, it seems that less emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the parent engages in positive reading interactions, such as praising and asking questions, during shared book reading so long as negative interactions are kept to a minimum. Additionally, while the current study involved only a short interaction between parent and child, it is probable that parents who displayed more negative interactions during the reading tend to be more negative with their child in general. Therefore, rather than focusing specifically on avoiding negative interactions during book reading, parents should work on being overall less negative in order to avoid the poor outcomes associated with negative parent-child interactions. Additionally, not all parents may know how to effectively read to their children. Workshops on how to select an appropriate book, create a reading environment, and engage the child in the reading process may prove helpful.

Academic Benefits

The current study provided additional support to previous findings that shared book reading is positively correlated with improved child phonological processing (Burgess et al., 2002). In this study, while the observed reading interactions did not significantly predict child's phonological processing skills, the results approached significance.

Behaviors observed during shared book reading did not significantly predict child letter knowledge. Because the current study focused on the interaction between parent

and child during informal book reading it is not surprising that behaviors observed did not relate to improved letter knowledge. As Martini and Senechal (2012) found, informal book reading—where the focus is placed on story—tends not to improve letter knowledge like formal reading and discussion of alphabet books would. So, while quantity of shared book reading may be linked to better letter knowledge, the quality of storybook reading does not seem to improve child letter knowledge. Also, as this study only looked at storybook reading, it may not have been reflective of general reading done in the home. Some parents may engage in more formal alphabet reading than others which may have impacted the study.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study was the use of a convenience sample, limiting the diversity of the participants. The sample was fairly homogenous with the participants being predominately white and affluent. The sample was also well educated with all of the participants having completed at least some college education and 46% having a graduate or professional degree. Parents who self-select to participate in a study about reading may also more likely to read more frequently with their child and engage with their child in a positive manner. In general, similar to Bus and van Ijzendoorn (1997), participants in the current study had similar reading patterns, without much variability. With the exception of two outliers who produced more positive interactions than the others, most mothers had a similar number of positive interactions and very few negative interactions. This is not surprising when parents who volunteer to participate and be

recorded reading to their child may produce more positive interactions and fewer negative interactions than they perhaps would in their own home. More variability in the sample could have increased the generalization ability of study rather than looking primarily at parents who have positive interactions during reading and have high levels of attachment. The restriction of range in the variables may also have impacted the ability to find significant relationships between constructs.

A larger sample size may have produced more variability in responses, however, by requiring participants to schedule time to come in to participate, mothers who have the time to participate may be more likely to be more affluent. Future researchers could consider conducting the study in participants homes or at the local preschools to accommodate for parents' busy schedules.

This study also did not take into account variations due to child age. While attempts to reduce this limitation were made by restricting the age range to only 4-year-olds, that age is a time of rapid development and there is significant variability in pre-academic and social-emotional skills between a young 4-year-old and an almost 5-year-old. Therefore, it is possible that despite the restriction in age, differences may have occurred due to child's age and developmental level.

The time participants spent during the reading could also have impacted the number of reading interactions observed. Future research could look to see if total time spent reading correlated with the number of positive/negative reading interactions that took place. Research could also evaluate if the total time read independently predicted the outcomes.

This study focused on mothers rather than both parents because mothers' and fathers' interactions with their children differ and therefore should be observed independently from each other. Fathers have been shown to engage in more clarification, confirmation, and discuss reading protocol (e.g., "let's read the next page") compared to mothers who tend to engage in more elaboration on the text (J. Anderson, Anderson, Lynch, & Shapiro, 2004). Because fathers' involvement has also been associated with fewer behavior problems (Ramchandani et al., 2013) future research on shared book reading could focus on fathers too in order to get a better understanding of the role gender plays in shared book reading.

Conclusion

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the benefits of shared book reading. The majority of these studies have focused on the quantity of reading and academic benefits. This study provides slight support that the quality of the book reading may predict stronger child phonological processing skills. However, in regards to creating strong child social-emotional skills, less focus should be on ensuring that parents are engaging in positive reading interactions such as asking questions and relating the book to the child's life, and should instead be focused on minimizing negative interactions during shared book reading.

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APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your relationship to the child?
   - ○ Biological Parent
   - ○ Step Parent
   - ○ Adoptive Parent
   - ○ Legal Guardian

2. Your gender
   - ○ Male
   - ○ Female

3. Child's gender
   - ○ Male
   - ○ Female

4. Your Age

   _____

5. Child's Age

   _____

6. Race/Ethnicity
   - ○ Black/African American
   - ○ Latino/Hispanic
   - ○ Asian
   - ○ White/Caucasian
   - ○ Native American
   - ○ Pacific Islander
   - ○ Other _____

7. Marital Status
   - ○ Single/Never married
   - ○ Married
   - ○ Divorced
   - ○ Widowed
   - ○ Separated
   - ○ Divorced/Remarried
   - ○ Other _____

8. Religion
   - ○ Catholic
   - ○ Protestant
   - ○ Latter Day Saint

❍ Muslim
❍ Jewish
❍ Eastern (e.g., Buddhist)
❍ Atheistic/Agnostic
❍ Other _____

9. Education
   ❍ Less than High School Graduate
   ❍ High school graduate/GED
   ❍ Some college/Trade School/Associate's Degree
   ❍ College Graduate/Bachelor's Degree
   ❍ Graduate or Professional degree

10. Annual Household Income
   ❍ Less than $15,000
   ❍ $15,000-30,000
   ❍ $30,000-45,000
   ❍ $45,000-60,000
   ❍ $60,000-75,000
   ❍ More than $75,000

11. Has the child that you are completing these measures for ever received mental health services or medication for behavioral or mental health issues?
   ❍ Yes
   ❍ No

12. Have you ever received mental health services or medication for behavioral or mental health issues?
   ❍ Yes
   ❍ No

13. Have you ever participated in parenting classes?
   ❍ Yes
   ❍ No

14. How many children under the age of 18 do you currently have living in your household?

   _____

15a. Does your child attend preschool? _____

   15b. how often? _____

   15c. Since when?_____

16. How often do you read to your child?
  - ❍ Never
  - ❍ 1-3 times a month
  - ❍ 1-3 times a week
  - ❍ 4-5 times a week
  - ❍ Daily

17. If you do read, when did you start reading to your child?
  - ❍ Birth
  - ❍ 6 months
  - ❍ 1 year
  - ❍ 18 months
  - ❍ 2 years
  - ❍ 3+ years

18. Why do you read to your child?