

How do maternal behaviors affect child mental health in Pakistan?

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Why study this relationship?

- Child mental health issues gaining global interest, especially in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) like Pakistan
- Parental involvement could protect against maladaptive mental health outcomes
- Important to study parenting across different cultures



Pakistani mother and child playing Jenga together

Facets of parenting:

Warmth: positive touch, affect, and statements

Harshness: negative touch, affect, and statements

Hypothesis

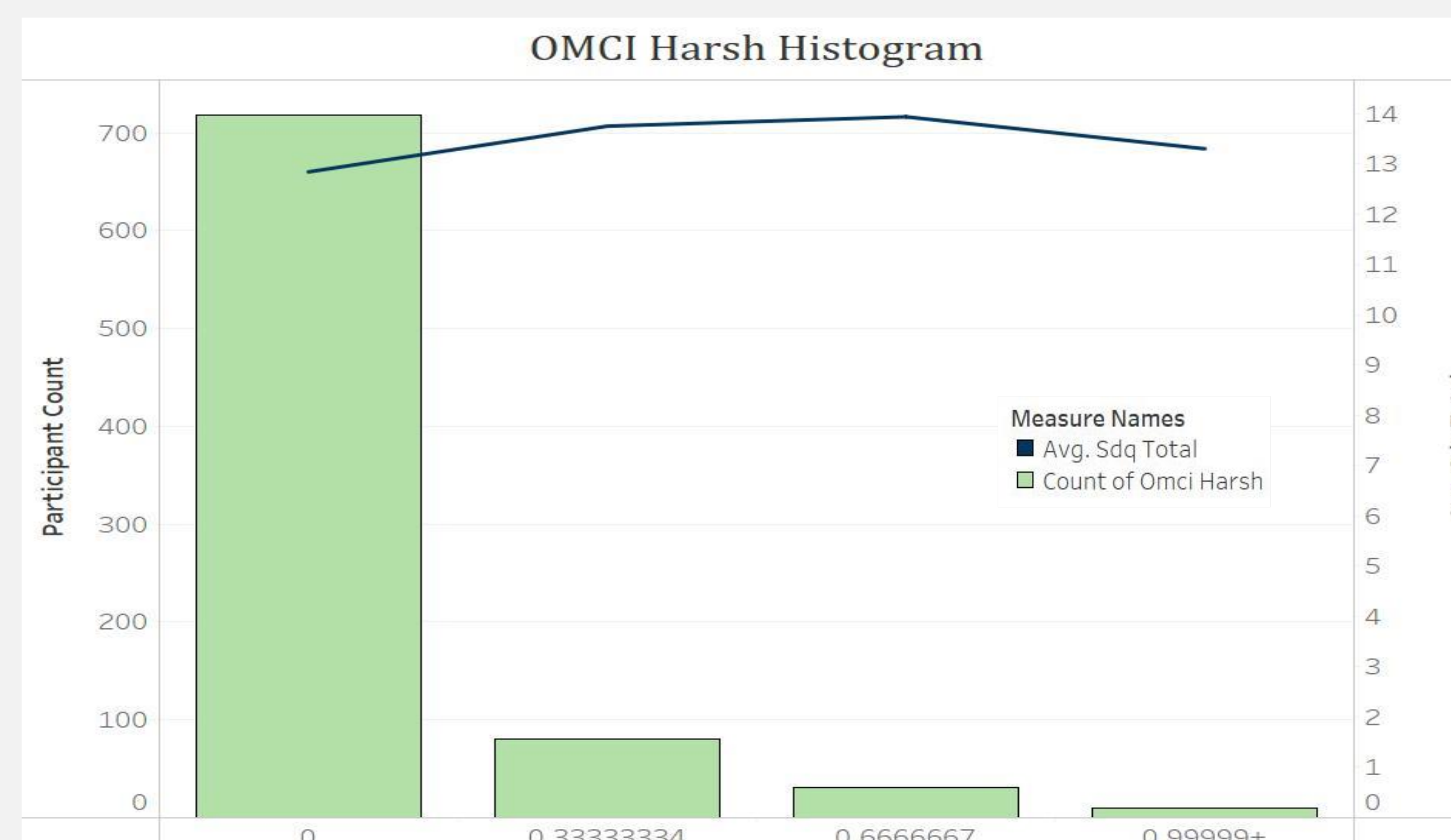
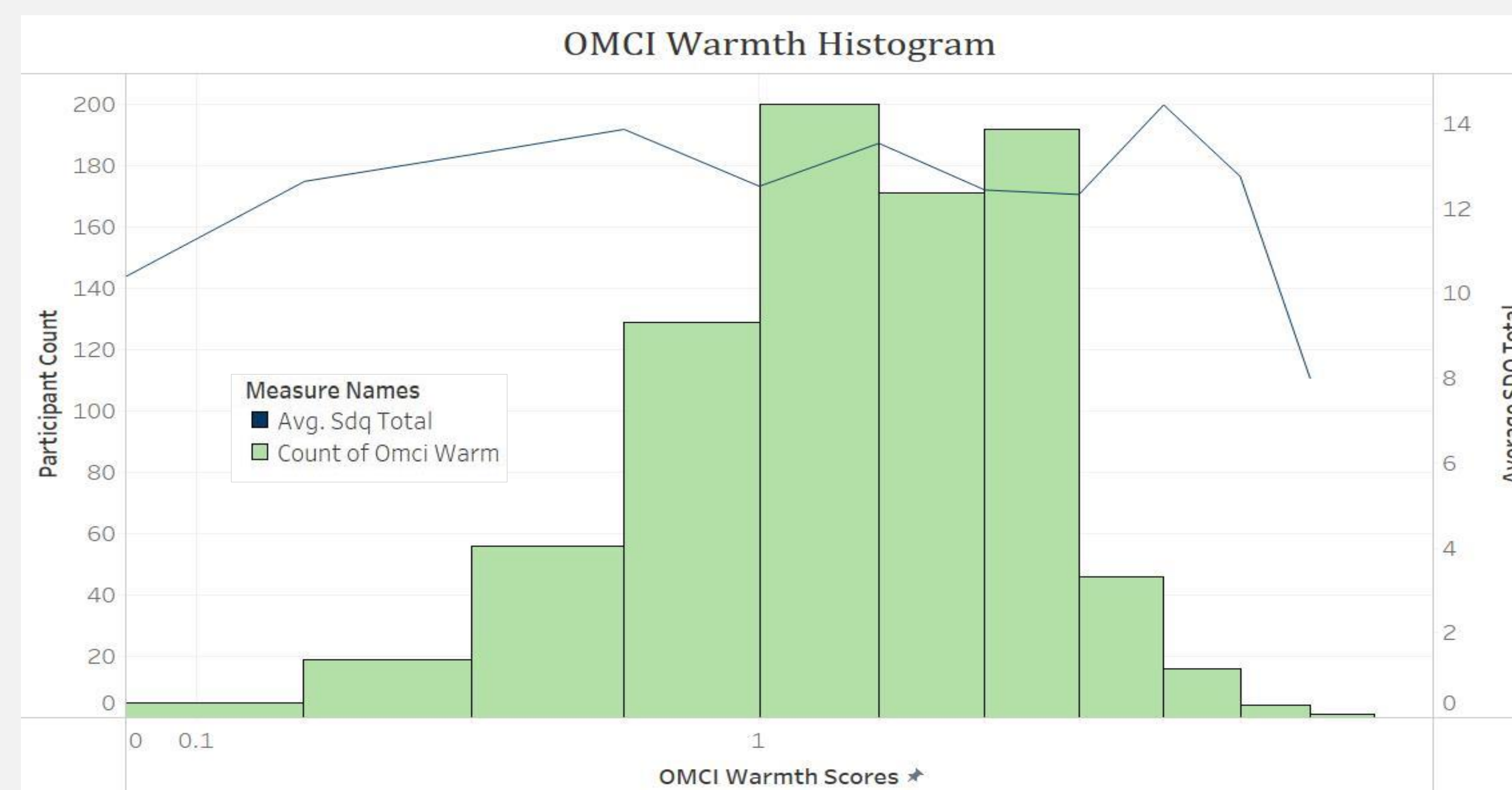
Warmer and less harsh maternal behaviors are associated with better child mental health outcomes.

Methods

- 806 Pakistani mother-child dyads (child age = 7)
- Maternal behaviors measured with Observation of Mother-Child Interactions (OMCI)
- Child mental health outcomes measured with Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- Controls: interpersonal violence (IPV), maternal depression, child gender, socioeconomic status (SES)

Results

Null association between either type of behavior and child mental health outcomes when controlling for external factors.



Discussion

- Warmth scores demonstrated ceiling effect, while harshness scores demonstrated floor effect
- Null association points to a more complex relationship between maternal behaviors and child mental health

Strengths & limitations:

Strengths	Limitations
Rich data set	Mother-report child mental health measures
Observational nature & cultural adaptiveness of OMCI	Cross-sectional analysis

Future directions:

- Studying potential bidirectional or moderating impact of parenting on child mental health.
- Investigating nuances of Pakistani parenting.



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Acknowledgements: Thank you to my mentors above for your constant support, as well as to Vicki Chanon¹ for approving the project. Special thanks to the families of the Bachpan study for their participation throughout the years.

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