

# Parental Monitoring and School Motivation During High School Years: A Transactional Model

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## Introduction

### School motivation

- plays a crucial role in maintaining a *successful educational path* throughout adolescence and beyond (Gottfried et al., 2017)
- 3 types:

**autonomous**  
driven by a sense of volition and choice

**controlled**  
driven by coercion or external pressure

**amotivation**  
lack of motivation and purpose

### Parental monitoring

- aims to keep track of adolescents’ whereabouts (Lionetti et al., 2018), and includes

**parental solicitation**  
asks how, where and with whom their adolescent spends their free time

**parental control**  
controlling adolescents’ activities and friendships (e.g., imposing rules like strict curfews)

Several studies suggest that **parental monitoring** may increase **autonomous** school motivation (Affuso et al., 2017; Lowe & Dotterer, 2013).

- However, past research did not consider
- the unique contributions of solicitation and control
  - the effects of monitoring on different types of motivation
  - that adolescents can also influence parental monitoring

This study **aimed** to examine the bidirectional associations between parental monitoring and adolescents’ school motivation, using a transactional model.

## Method

### Participants

- 328 participants (212 girls; 65%), *M* age at T1 = 15.8 years
- Recruited in two high schools located in high-poverty neighborhoods
- Questionnaires filled during class hours at T1 (Grade 9 or 10) and again, one year later at T2 (Grade 10 or 11)

### Measures

#### Parental monitoring (Keijsers & Poulin, adapted from Stattin & Kerr, 2000)

2 subscales

- solicitation* (4 items) and *control* (6 items)

#### School motivation (Vallerand et al., 1989)

3 subscales

- autonomous* (16 items), *controlled* (8 items), *amotivation* (4 items)

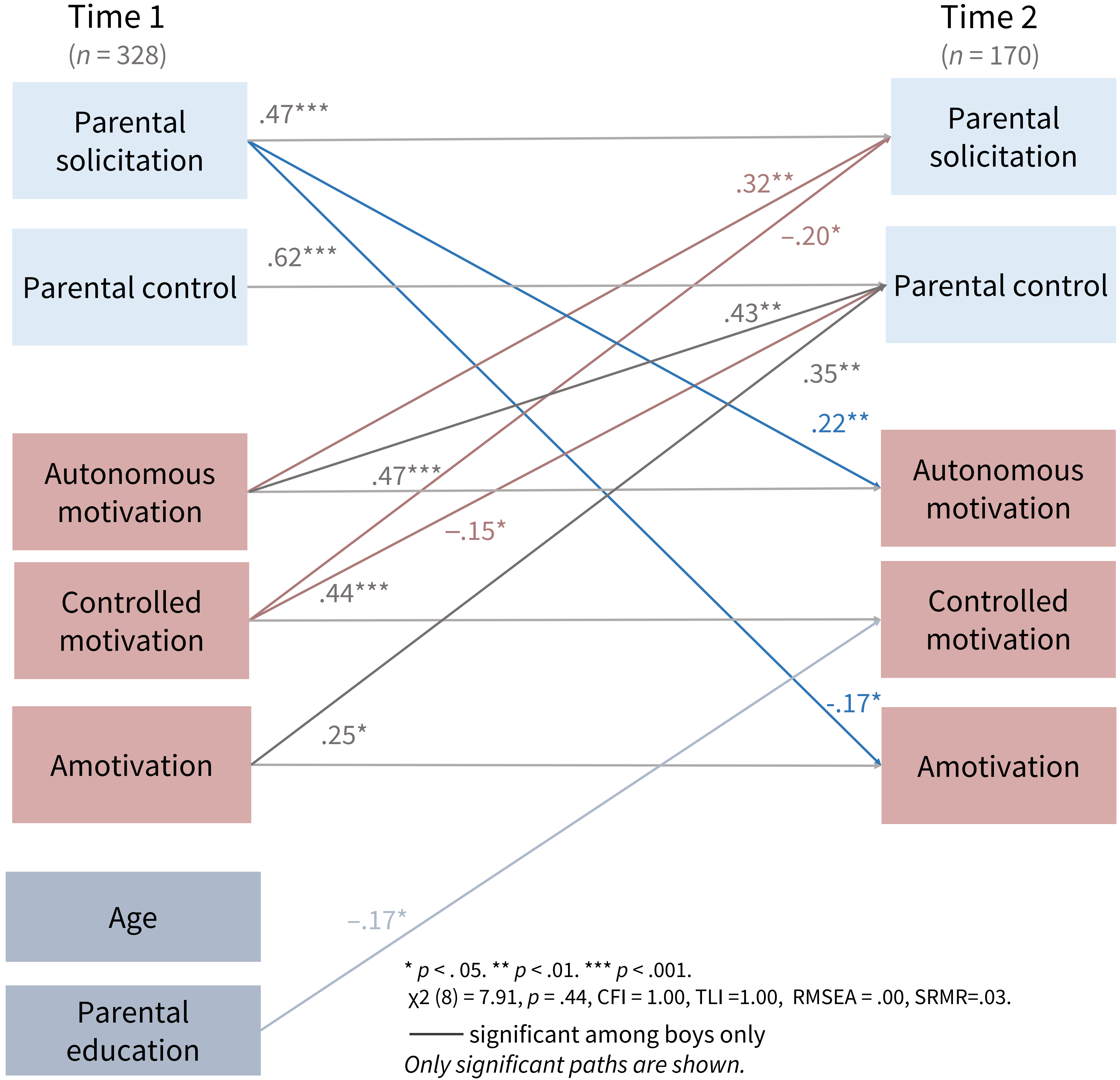
**PARENTAL SOLICITATION IS BENEFICIAL FOR AUTONOMOUS SCHOOL MOTIVATION.**

**ADOLESCENTS’ SCHOOL MOTIVATION IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN PARENTAL MONITORING BEHAVIORS.**

## Analyses

Structural equation modeling (cross-lagged panel) with Mplus  
Missing data handled using the robust full-information maximum likelihood estimator (MLR)

## Final model



## Results

- Over a one-year period,
- parental solicitation** predicts
    - ↑ autonomous motivation
    - ↓ amotivation
  - autonomous motivation** predicts
    - ↑ parental solicitation
  - controlled motivation** predicts
    - ↓ in *both* parental solicitation and control
- Multigroup analyses revealed **significant gender differences**,  $\Delta\chi^2(27) = 44.27, p < .05$
- among **boys** only, *both* amotivation and autonomous motivation at T1 predicted ↑ parental control

## Discussion

The *bidirectional effects* between parental **solicitation** and **autonomous** motivation may reflect a *positive* parent–child relationship.

Parental monitoring ↓ when adolescents show high controlled motivation.

- Parents may use monitoring behaviors particularly when they perceive their adolescents’ motivation to be **problematic**. Controlled motivation may *complement* autonomous motivation, because not all school tasks are inherently interesting.

Parents react *differently* to their adolescent’s school motivation, depending on their **gender**.

- Parental *control* tends to change more in reaction to **boys’** school motivation.
- May be due to gender differences in amotivation, which is higher among boys

**Interventions** aiming to improve school motivation during adolescence should

- target **parental solicitation**
- support parent–child communication

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