

Effortful Control and Early Academic Adjustment: The Moderating Role of Classroom Chaos

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Effortful Control and Academic Adjustment



- Definition: Academic adjustment
- Effortful control (EC) is related to…
  - teacher-child relationships (TCR)
  - children's cooperation in school
  - school attitudes

Chaos in the Classroom



- Definition: Classroom chaos
- Classroom chaos is related to academic achievement and classroom compliance
- Stressful classroom environments are associated with poorer TCRs

Hypotheses



- Children with high EC will be more likely to:
  - Have positive TCRs
  - Have positive feelings about school
  - Cooperate in school
- Children with low EC will have more difficulties with academic adjustment in high chaos classroom

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Method: Participants



- 271 kindergarteners
  - 53% female
  - 54% Hispanic
  - 76% two-parent households
- 29 classrooms
- Teachers
  - 8 years average teaching experience
  - 62% bachelors degree in education

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Method: Measures



<u>Observer reported in the fall of kindergarten:</u>

- Children's Behavior Questionnaire (Rothbart et al., 2001)

<u>Teacher reported in the spring of kindergarten:</u>

- Chaos Order and Hubbub Scale modified for classrooms (Matheny et al., 1995; Wachs et al., 2004)
- Teacher-Child Relationship Scale (Pianta & Steinberg, 1991)
- School Liking and Avoidance Scale (Ladd & Price, 1987)
- All $\alpha > .80$

EC and Academic Adjustment



Correlations and Descriptives

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. EC	-						
2. Classroom chaos	-0.13*	-					
3. TCR: Conflict	-0.53**	0.21**	-				
4. TCR: Closeness	0.10	-0.20**	-0.40**	-			
5. School liking	0.32**	-0.27**	-0.51**	0.46**	-		
6. School avoidance	-0.22**	0.05	0.24**	-0.07	-0.52**	-	
7. Cooperates in school	0.51**	-0.18**	-0.74**	0.39**	0.50**	-0.32**	-

Note. EC= effortful control. TCR=teacher-child relationships. p<.05*. p<.01**.

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Classroom Chaos and Academic Adjustment



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Analysis: Moderation



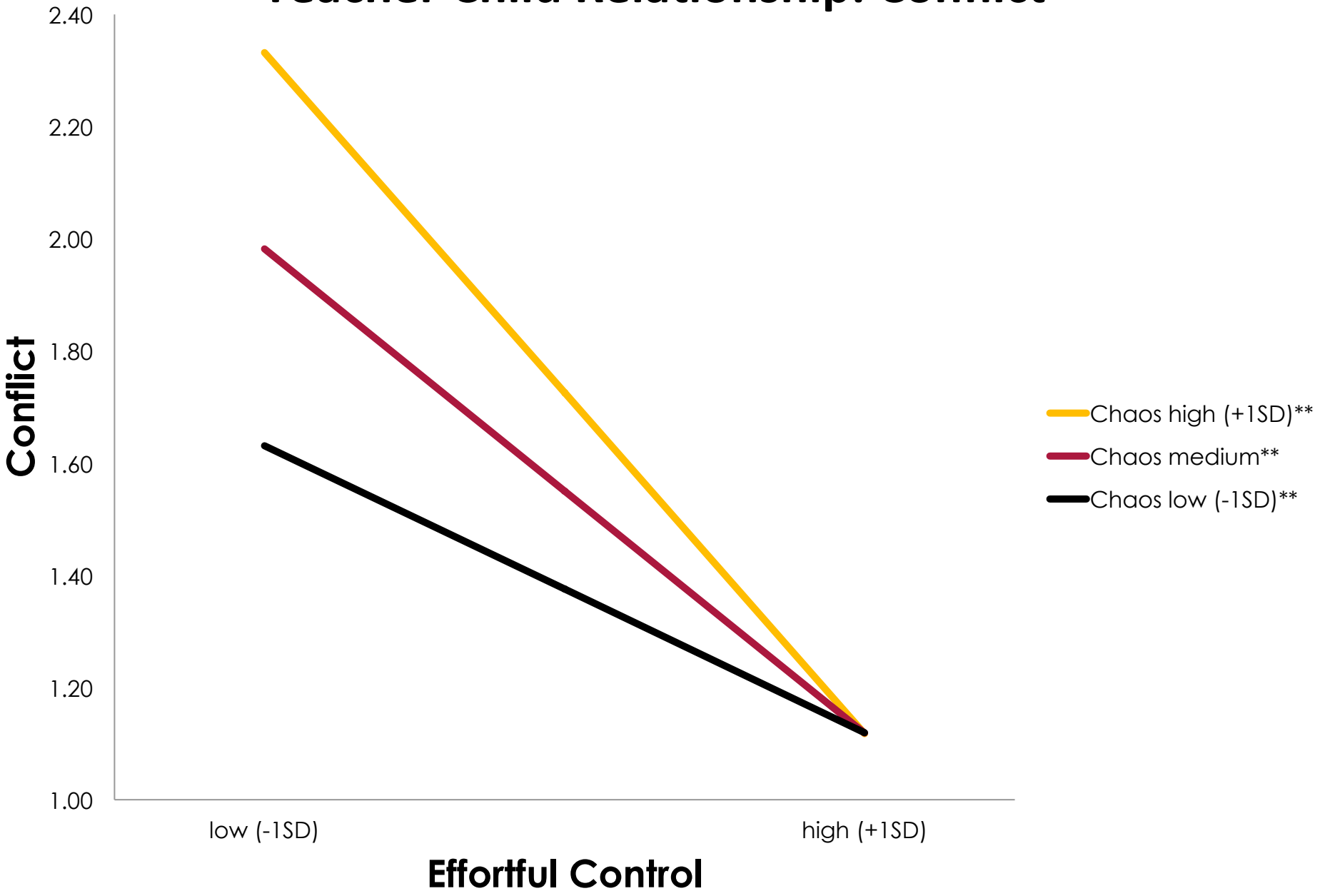
- Accounting for classroom nesting
  - Mixed model regressions
    - Cluster variable: spring kindergarten classroom
  - EC centered at the cluster mean
  - Classroom chaos centered at the grand mean



Results

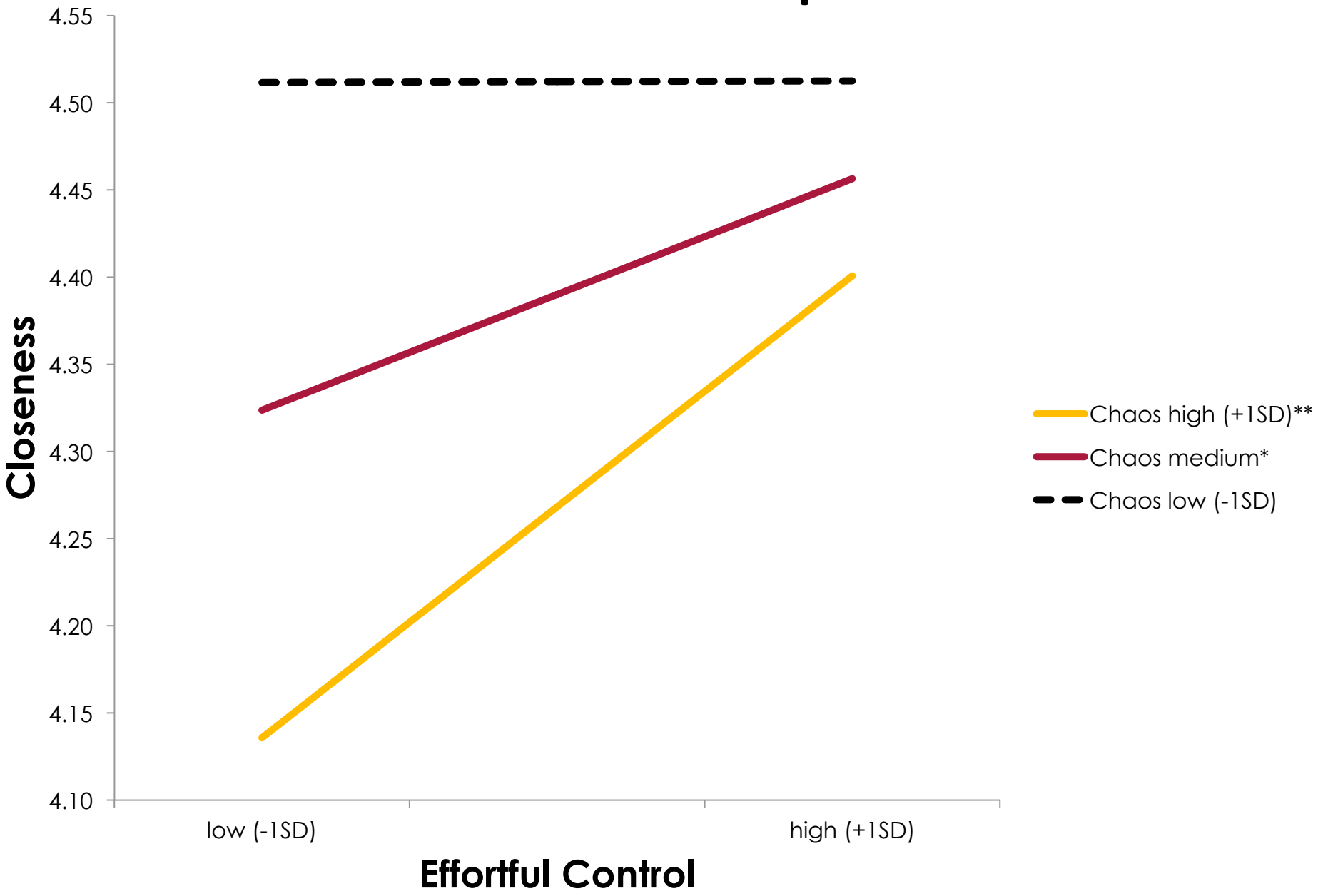
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Teacher Child Relationship: Conflict

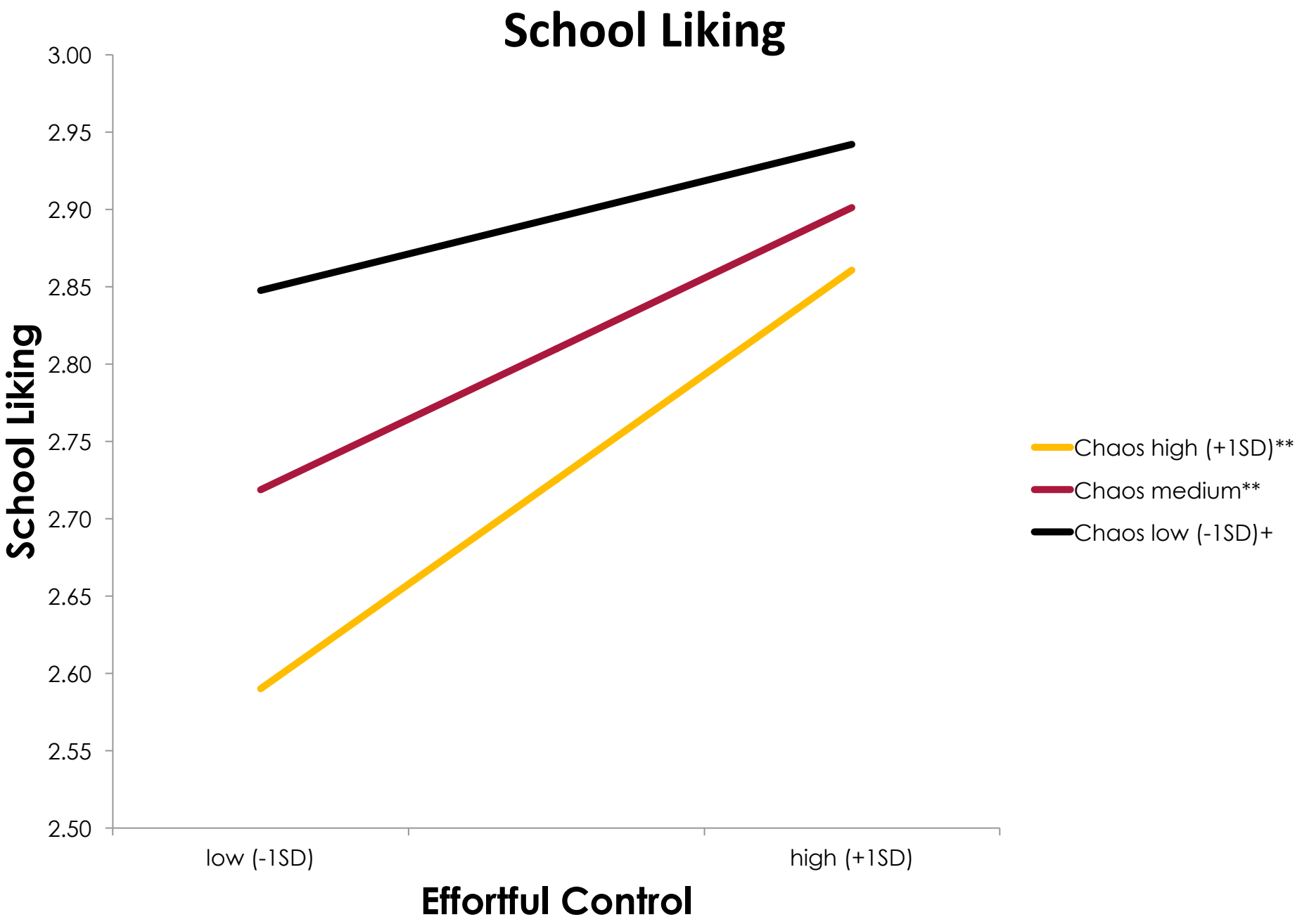


Note. p<.10⁺. p<.05*. p<.01**.

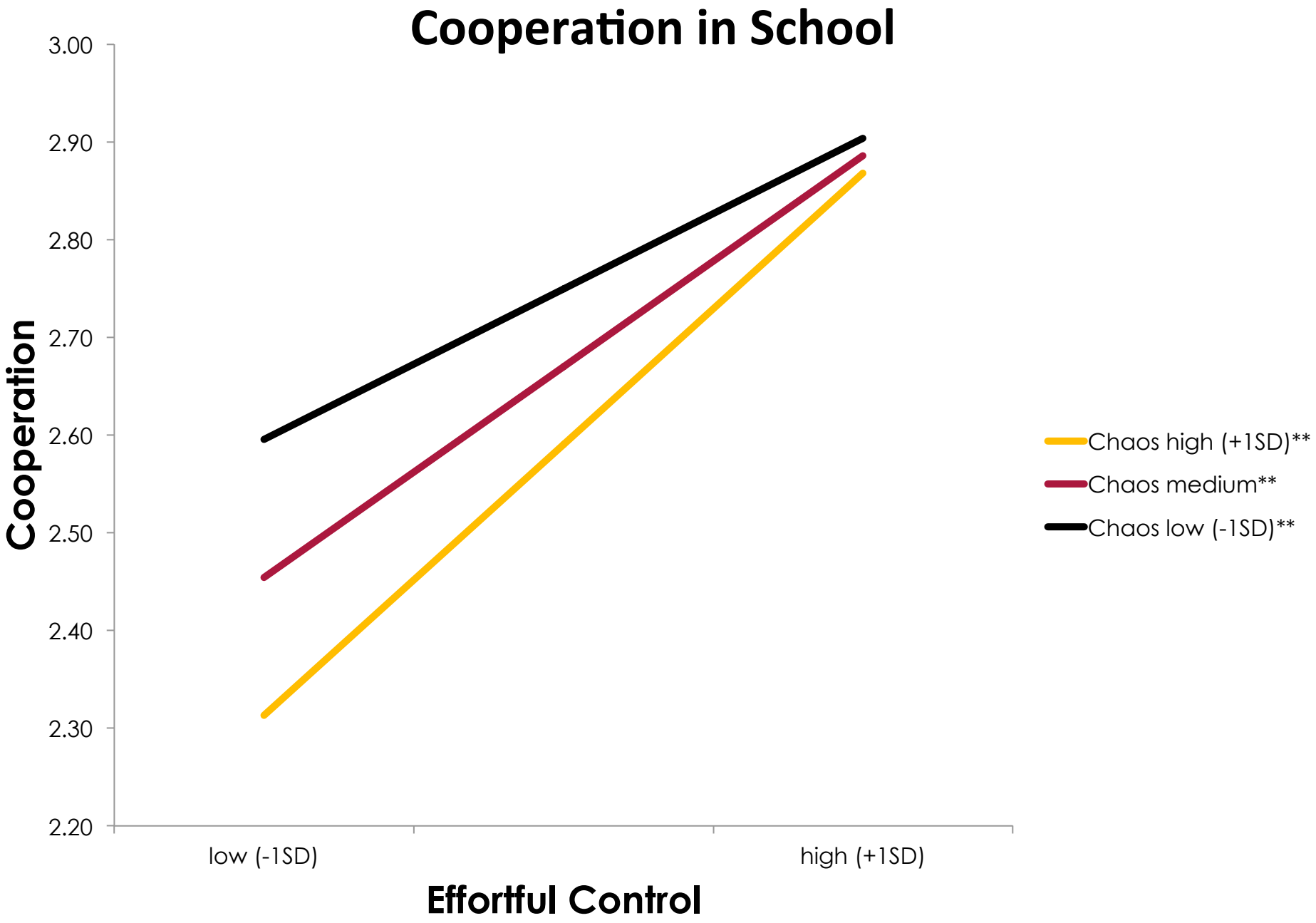
Teacher Child Relationship: Closeness



Note. p<.10+. p<.05*. p<.01**.



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Note. p<.10⁺. p<.05*. p<.01**.

Discussion



- Consistent direction of effects
  - High chaos and poor adjustment
  - Low effortful control and low chaos associated with better adjustment
- Limitations
  - Teacher reports of classroom chaos
  - Small classroom sample size
  - Reporters

Conclusions and Future Directions



- The importance of classroom context
- Transition to kindergarten and classroom chaos
- The longitudinal effect of chaotic kindergarten classrooms on later academic success



Thank you

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