

The role of mother and father attachment in children's socioemotional-adjustment: A Bayesian model comparison approach



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The Present Study

Theoretical background:

- Attachment relationships play a key role in children's socioemotional adjustment (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016)
- Both mother and father attachment are considered important. However, research to date has largely focused on mother-child attachment.

Objectives:

- Evaluate the contribution of mother and father attachment to children's socioemotional-adjustment in middle childhood.
- Simultaneously compare diffrent theoretical prospectives within a Bayesian model comparison approach.

Method

Participants: 166 children (mean age = 9 years and SD = 7 months, 54% girls) were recruited from Italian primary schools.

Instruments:

- Security Scale (SS; Kerns et al., 2001); Self-report measuring attachment towards mother and father separately.
- Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 2001); School theachers evaluated children internalizing and externalizing problems.
- Family Affluence Scale (FAS; Boyce, et al., 2006); Self-report for measuring socioeconomic status.

Results

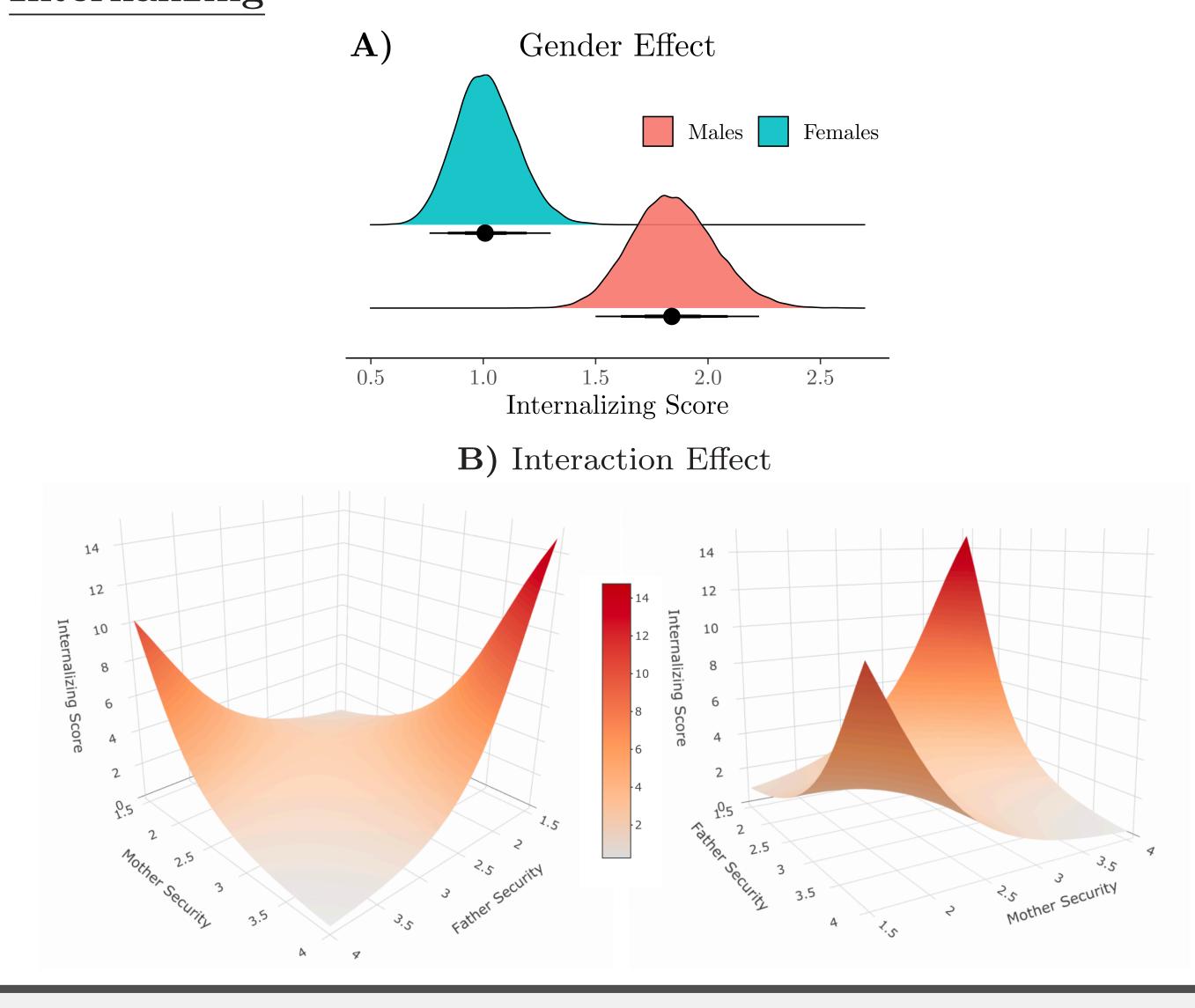
• Model comparison

Weights for internalizing and externalizing problems

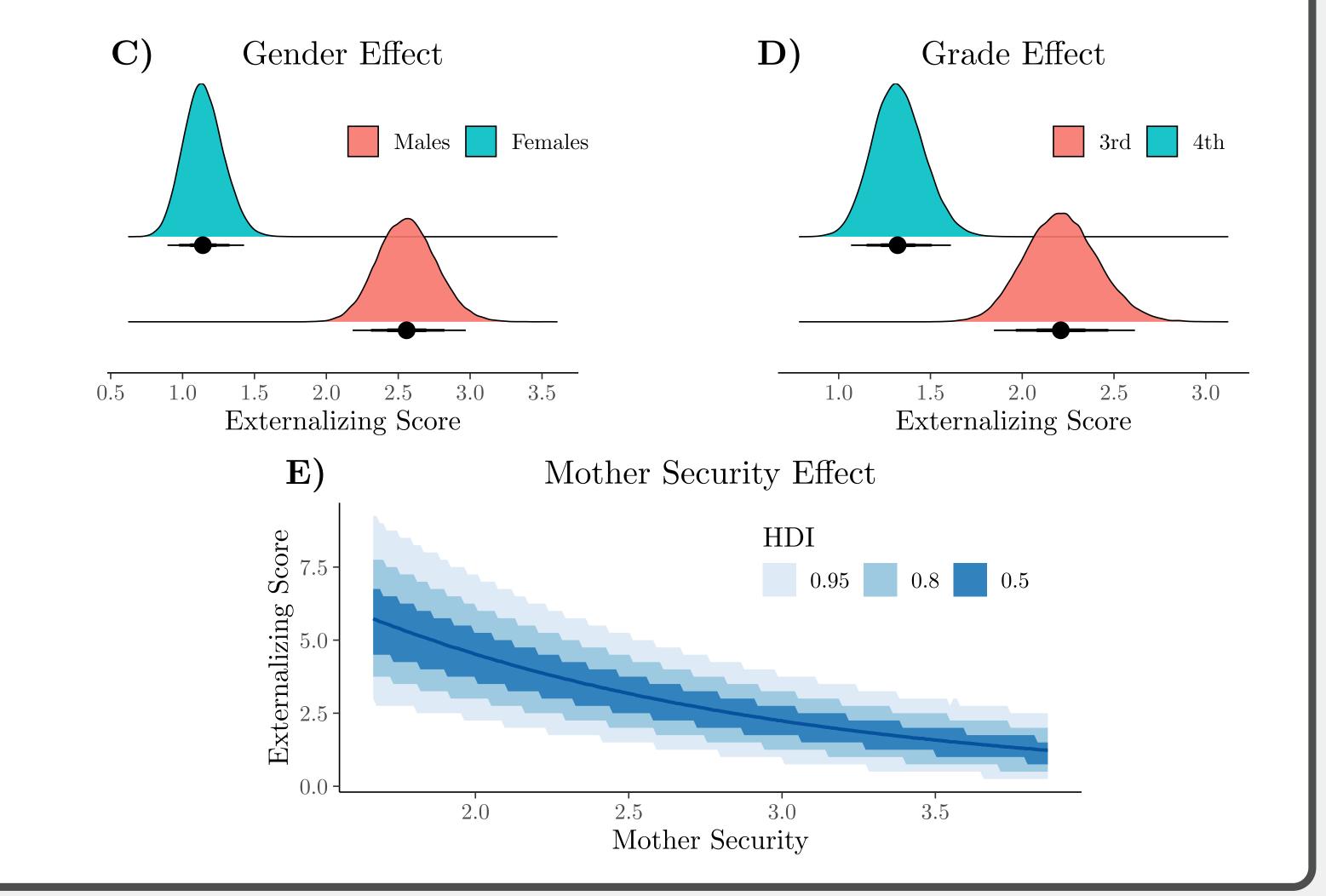
Model	Variables	Int_w	Ext_w	Int	Ext	
Base	$\mathbf{Gender} + \mathbf{Grade} + \mathbf{FAS}$	0.00	0.00			1.00
Mother	Base+SS mother	0.00	0.90			0.75
Father	Base+SS father	0.34	0.00			0.50
Additive	Base+SS mother+SS father	0.03	0.10			-000000000000000000000000000000000000
Interaction	Base+(SS mother*SS father)	0.63	0.00			0.00



Internalizing



• Externalizing



Conclusions

Father and mother attachment play a complementary role in children's socioemotional adjustment.

- Internalizing Problems: boys have more problems than girls. Greater discrepancy between the maternal and paternal levels of security are assocaited to more problems.
- Externalizing Problems: boys have more problems than girls. Younger children have more problems than older children. Low levels of maternal security are associated to more problems.





