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Are Parents' Gender-Related Interests and Attitudes Associated with their Children's Gender-Related Interests?



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Abstract

We examined relationships between parents' own gender-related interests and attitudes and their 3- to 11-year-old children's gender typical traits and interests. Parent interests were not often related to child characteristics, but parent attitudes were, especially attitudes about child behavior. Conservative parents had more gender typical children.

Introduction

Many theories, social cognitive theory in particular (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), propose that experiences in the family contribute to the development of children's gender development.

In this study we examine relationships between parents' gender-related interests and attitudes, and their children's gender-related characteristics.

Method

Participants

There were 113 parents (29 M, 84 F; *M* age = 32.27; *SD* = 5.59) of 3- to 11-year-old children (46 M; 67 F; *M* age = 6.62; *SD* = 2.83).

Measures

Pre-School Activities Inventory (PSAI; Golombok & Rust, 1993), a measure of children's masculine and feminine interests and traits.

We also examined masculine and feminine interests separately (PSAI-M & PSAI-F).

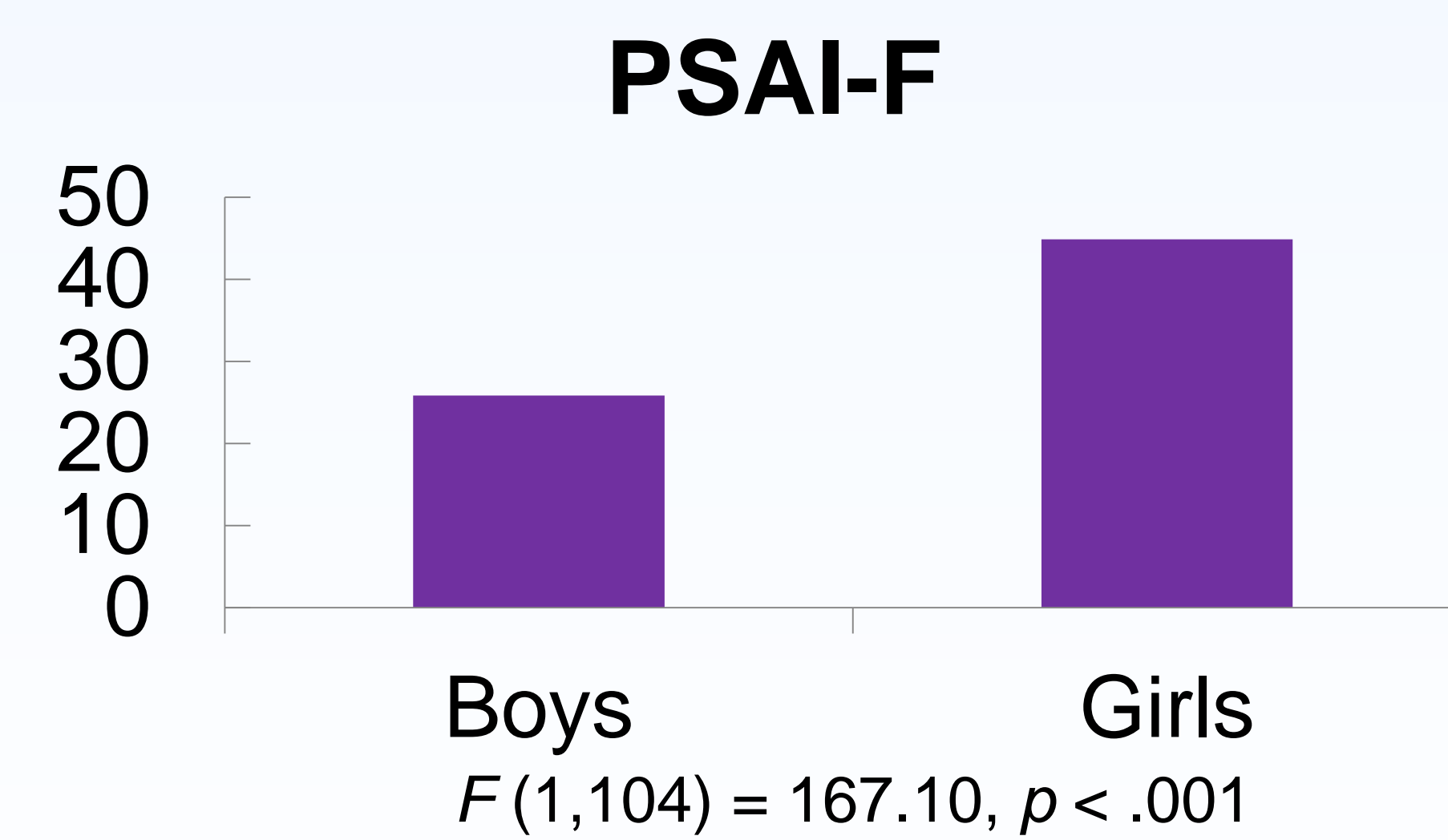
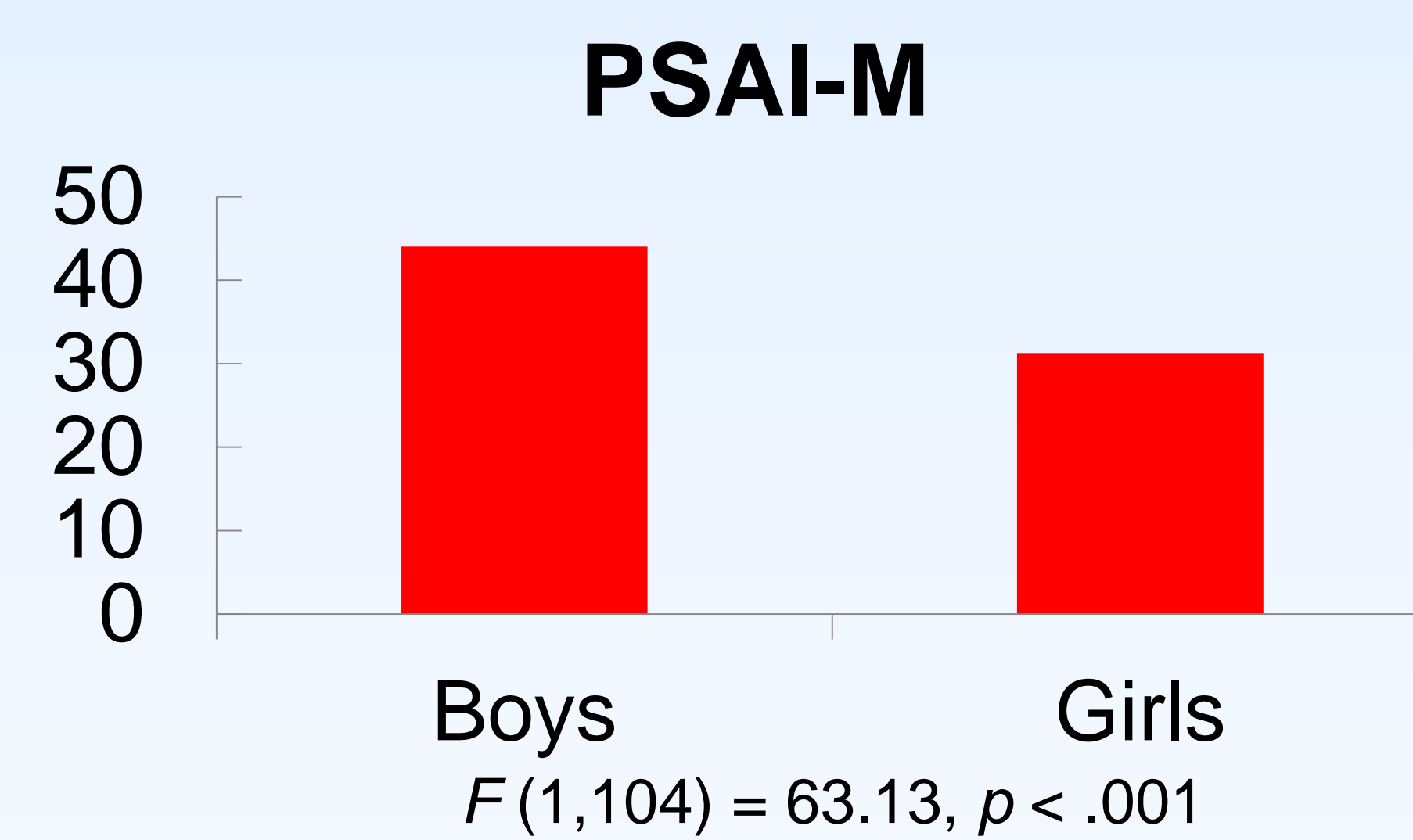
The Child Gender Socialization Scale (CGSS; Blakemore & Hill, 2008): Measures parents' attitudes about gender-related behaviors in their children.

Occupations, Activities & Traits Scales (OAT; Liben & Bigler, 2002): Measures parents' gender-related attitudes and preferences for activities and occupations.

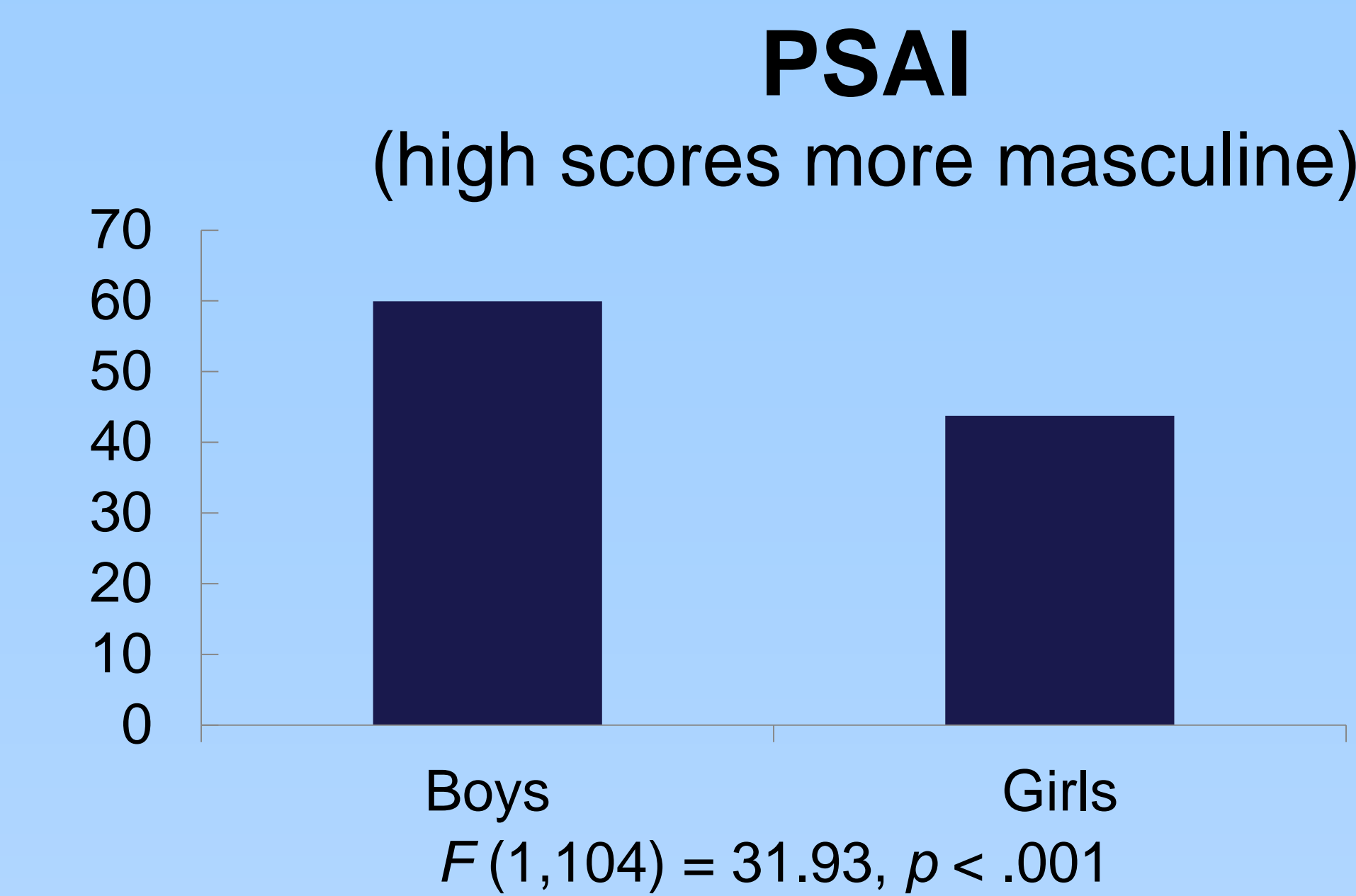
Procedure

Parents completed the PSAI followed by the CGSS, and finally the OAT. Measures were completed online.

Results



Poster presented at the annual meeting of the *Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, May 2013*



Parent – Child Correlations

A. Parent Interests & Child PSAI

	PSAI-M	PSAI-F	PSAI
Boys	ns	ns	ns
Girls	.45***	.34**	ns
Combined	.20*	ns	ns

Parent Feminine Interests
No significant correlations

B. Parent Attitudes & Child PSAI

	PSAI-M	PSAI-F	PSAI
Boys	ns	ns	-.45**
Girls	ns	ns	ns
Combined	ns	.26**	-.22**

	PSAI-M	PSAI-F	PSAI
Boys	ns	.58***	-.30*
Girls	.29*	.46***	-.34**
Combined	-.34***	.75***	-.54**

	PSAI-M	PSAI-F	PSAI
Boys	.44**	-.33*	.50***
Girls	.56***	ns	ns
Combined	.68***	-.44***	.43***

Disapprove Other Gender Characteristics

	PSAI-M	PSAI-F	PSAI
Boys	ns	-.65***	.35*
Girls	-.37**	ns	-.28*
Combined	ns	-.46***	.23*

Higher scores = more disapproval
p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001

Regressions: PSAI

Predictors: Child gender and age, parent OAT M and F interests, OAT Flexibility, Approval "Boys" Toys, Approval "Girls" Toys, and Disapproval other Gender

Boys and Girls Combined

$F(9,95) = 8.74***$
Child Age: $\beta = .20, t = 2.36^*$
Approval "Girls" Toys: $\beta = -.35, t = -2.98^{**}$
Approval "Boys" Toys: $\beta = .33, t = 3.24^{**}$

Boys
 $F(8,35) = 7.51***$
Child Age: $\beta = -.60, t = -5.12^{***}$
Approval "Boys" Toys: $\beta = .30, t = 2.37^*$

Girls
 $F(8,52) = 14.60***$
Child Age: $\beta = .81, t = 8.94^{***}$
Approval "Boys" Toys: $\beta = .38, t = 4.08^{***}$
Disapprove Other: $\beta = -.17, t = 2.09^*$

Conclusion

Parents' attitudes, and occasionally interests, were related to their children's gender stereotyped characteristics. Parents who approved of other gender interests in their children had children with less stereotyped characteristics. Future work will use other measures of child characteristics.