

# Raising Adolescents in a Threatening World

The role of Parents' Threat Beliefs,  
Eco-Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in  
Overprotective Parenting and  
Academic Overinvolvement

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# Theoretical Background

## PARENT THREAT BELIEFS

- culture of fear (Haidt & Lukianoff, 2018; Furedi, 2008)
- threat in children's current and future environment in terms of scarcity and instability (Gurland & Grolnick, 2005)
- may make parents more or less sensitive to cues about danger for their children



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# Theoretical Background

## PARENTS' ECO-ANXIETY

→ negative emotions like worry and anxiety about climate-related risks (Ogunbode et al., 2021)

→ large majority of people see climate change as a major threat to livelihoods, health, places (Hickman et al., 2021)

→ associated with mental health



# Theoretical Background

## OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTING

- level of protection that is excessive considering the child's developmental level (Thomasgard et al., 1995)
- negative outcomes for children
- associated with parent's anxiety

## ACADEMIC OVERINVOLVEMENT

- level of parental involvement in the school context that is excessive



# Theoretical Background

## PARENTAL SELF-EFFICACY

- parents' perception on their capacity to successfully raise their children (Jones and Prinz, 2005)
- predictor of parenting behavior and child outcomes
- influenced by emotional states (Bandura, 1997)

## PARENTAL ANXIETY

- predictor of overprotective parenting



# Research goals

Parents' beliefs about the world as a **threatening** place and parents' **eco-anxiety**

- elicits overprotective parenting and academic overinvolvement?
- role of parental self-efficacy and anxiety?



# Sample

- N= 757 parents of adolescents in Belgium
- 478 mothers (63,1%) and 279 fathers (36,9%)
- Parents' age: M= 49 (5.04)
- Parent's education: 48,3% have a university degree
- Adolescents' age: M= 16.4 ( $SD = 0.78$ )
- 53,8% girls and 46.1% boys



# Instruments

## Overprotective parenting

(10 items, MOPS, Chevrier et al., 2021)

- Anxious OP subscale
- *“I often take tasks out of my child’s hands without giving him/her the chance to try them by him/herself”*
- $\alpha = .82-.82$  (M-F)

## Academic Overinvolvement

(4 items, adapted from Chevrier et al., 2021)

- *“I am overly concerned about my child’s academic performance.”*
- $\alpha = .79 -.72$  (M-F)





# Instruments

## Threat beliefs

(10 items, World Out There, Gurland & Grolnick, 2005)

- *“It makes me nervous to think about all the dangers kids are exposed to today ”*
- $\alpha = .84 - .84$  (M-F)

## Eco-anxiety

(5 items, adapted from STAI-short, Ogunbode et al., 2021)

- Negative feelings about climate change
- *“When I think about climate change, I feel worried”*
- $\alpha = .88 - .86$  (M-F)



# Instruments

## Parental self-efficacy

(4 items, Maap, Hamilton et al., 2015)

- Global PSE
- *“I have confidence in myself as a parent.”*
- $\alpha = .84 - .85$  (M-F)

## Parental anxiety

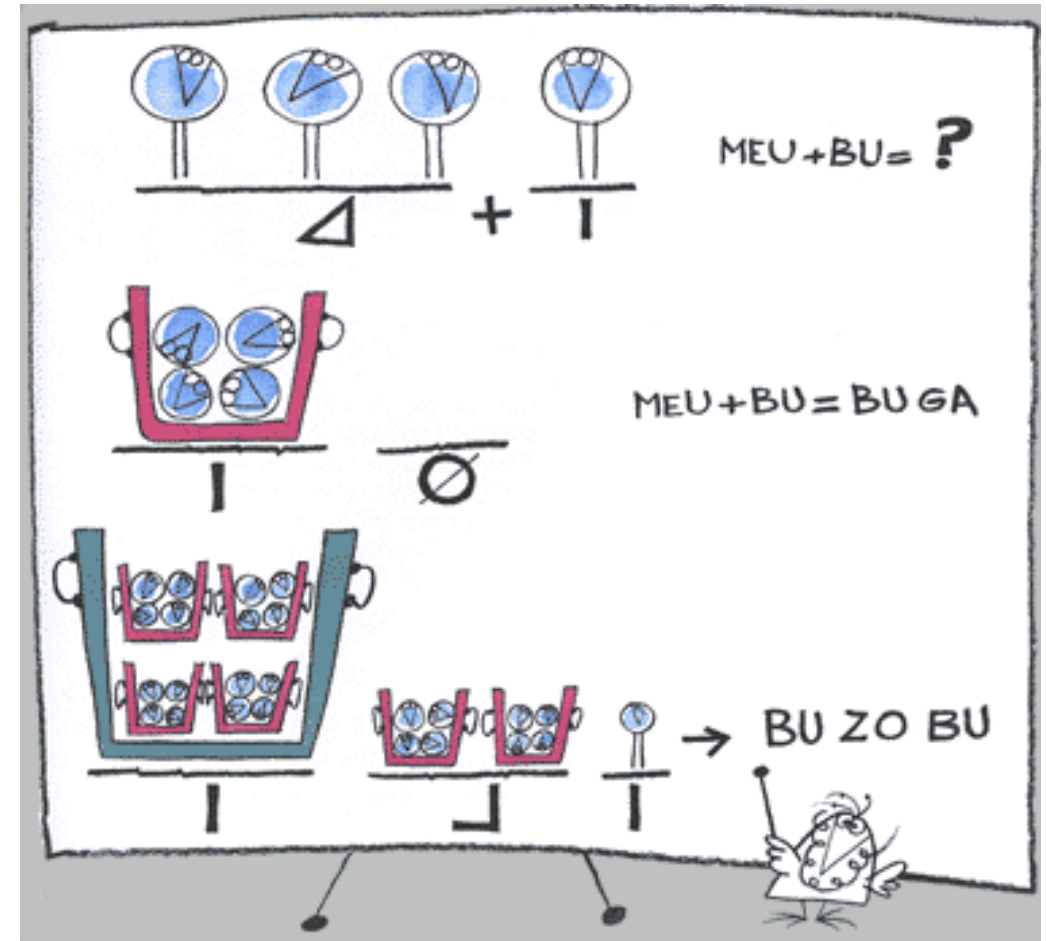
(5 items, STAI-short, Zsido et al., 2020)

- Trait anxiety
- *“I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them.”*
- $\alpha = .84 - .85$  (M-F)

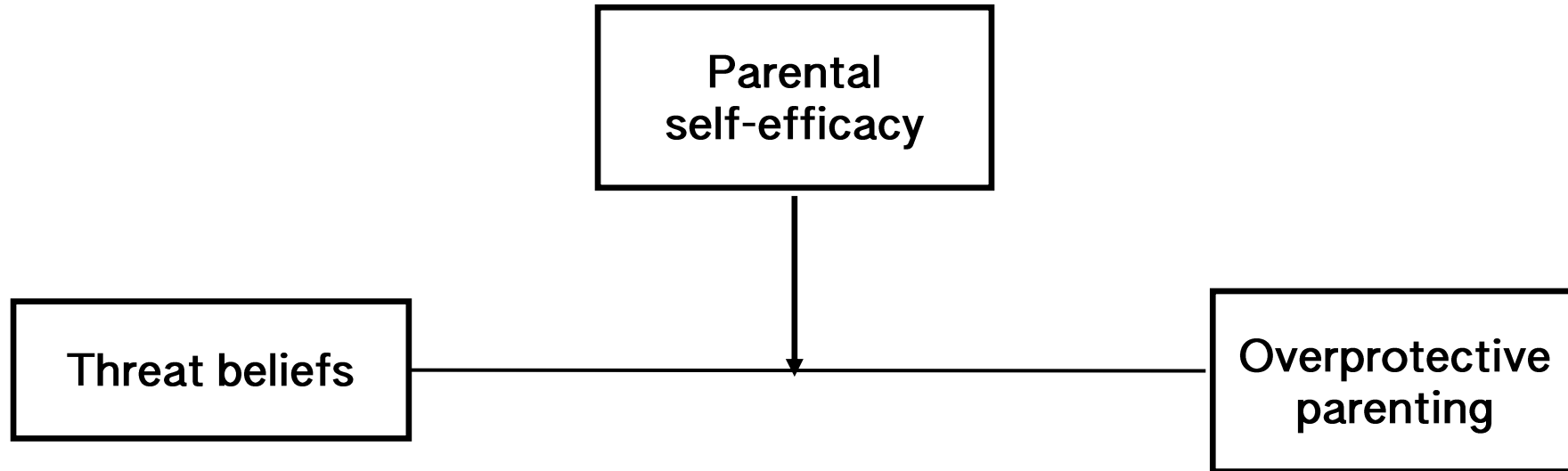
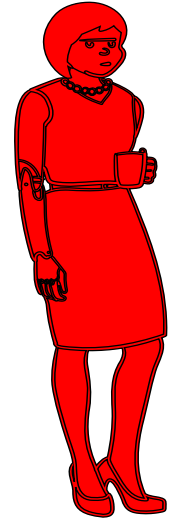


# Analysis strategy

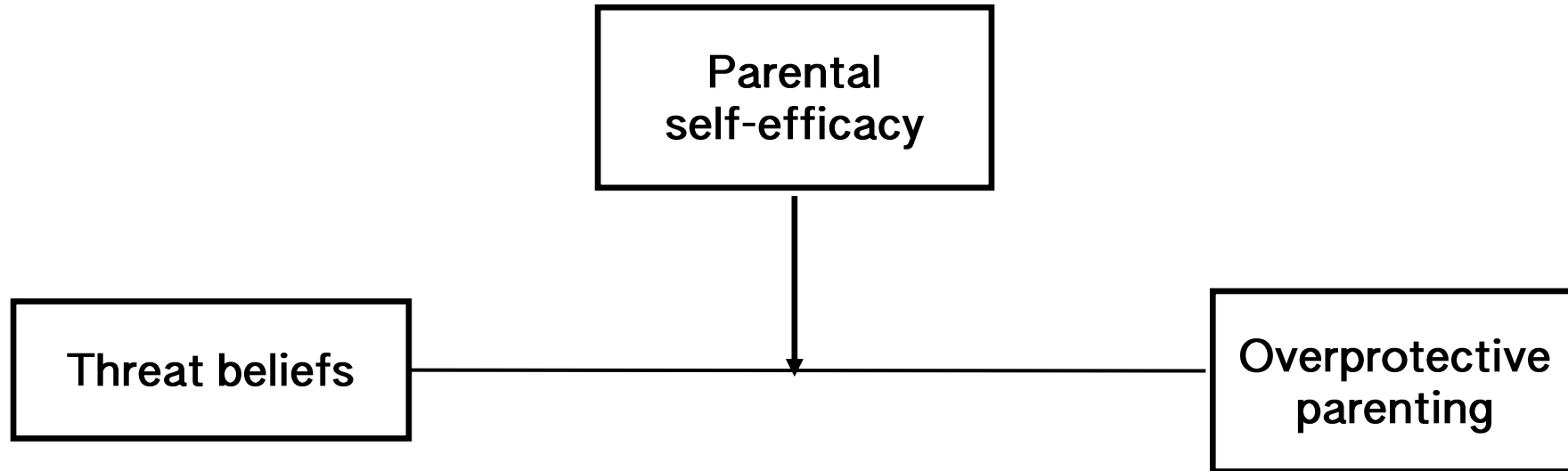
- separate models for mothers and fathers
- structural equation modelling in R
- moderation



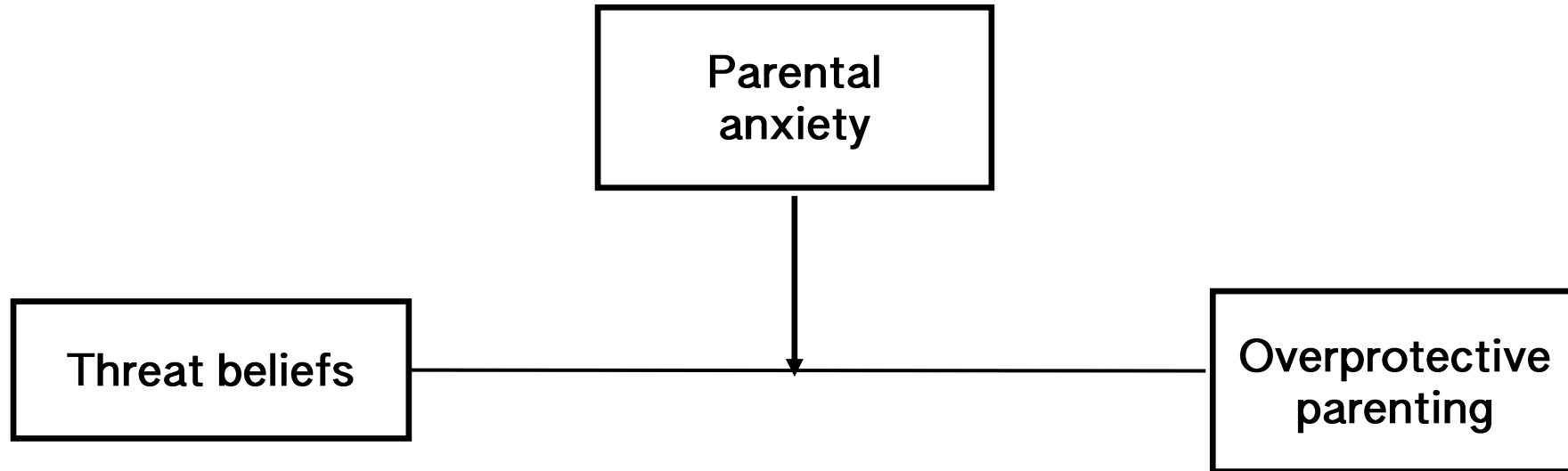
# Analysis



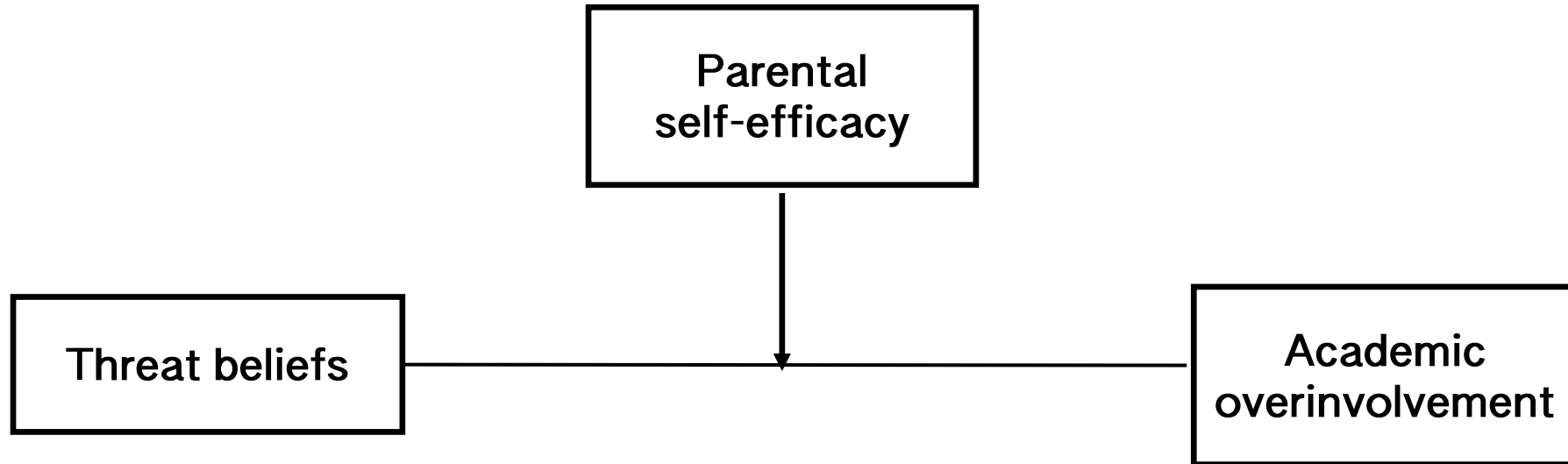
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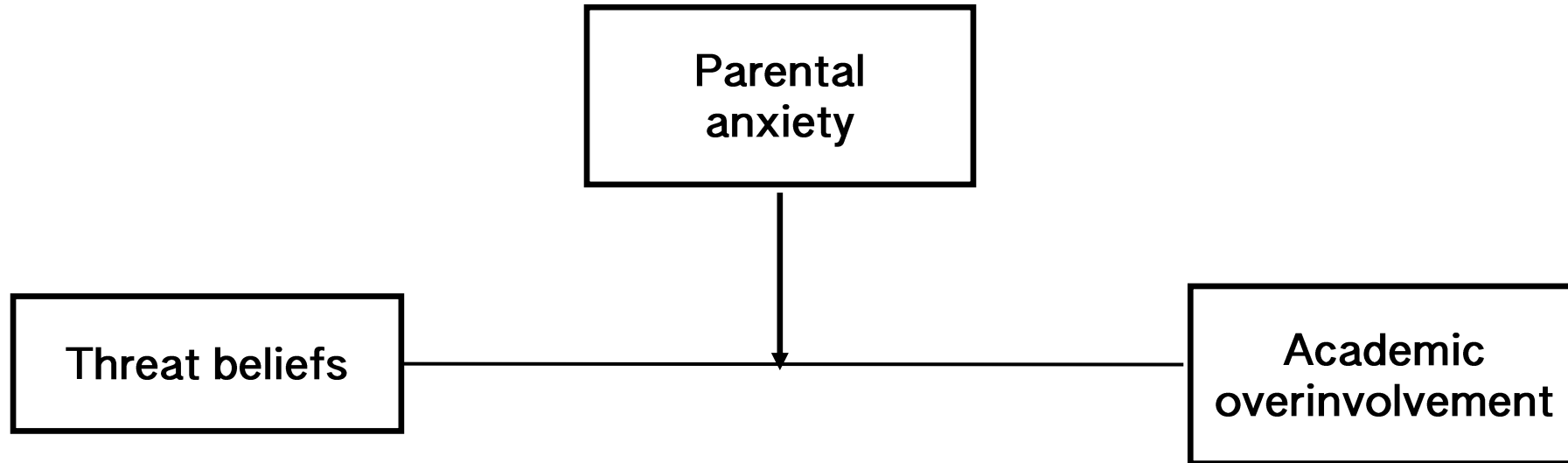
# Analysis



# Analysis



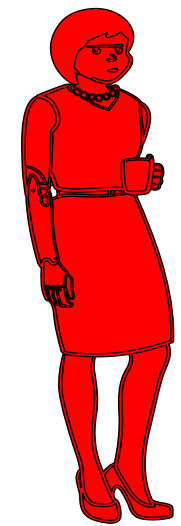
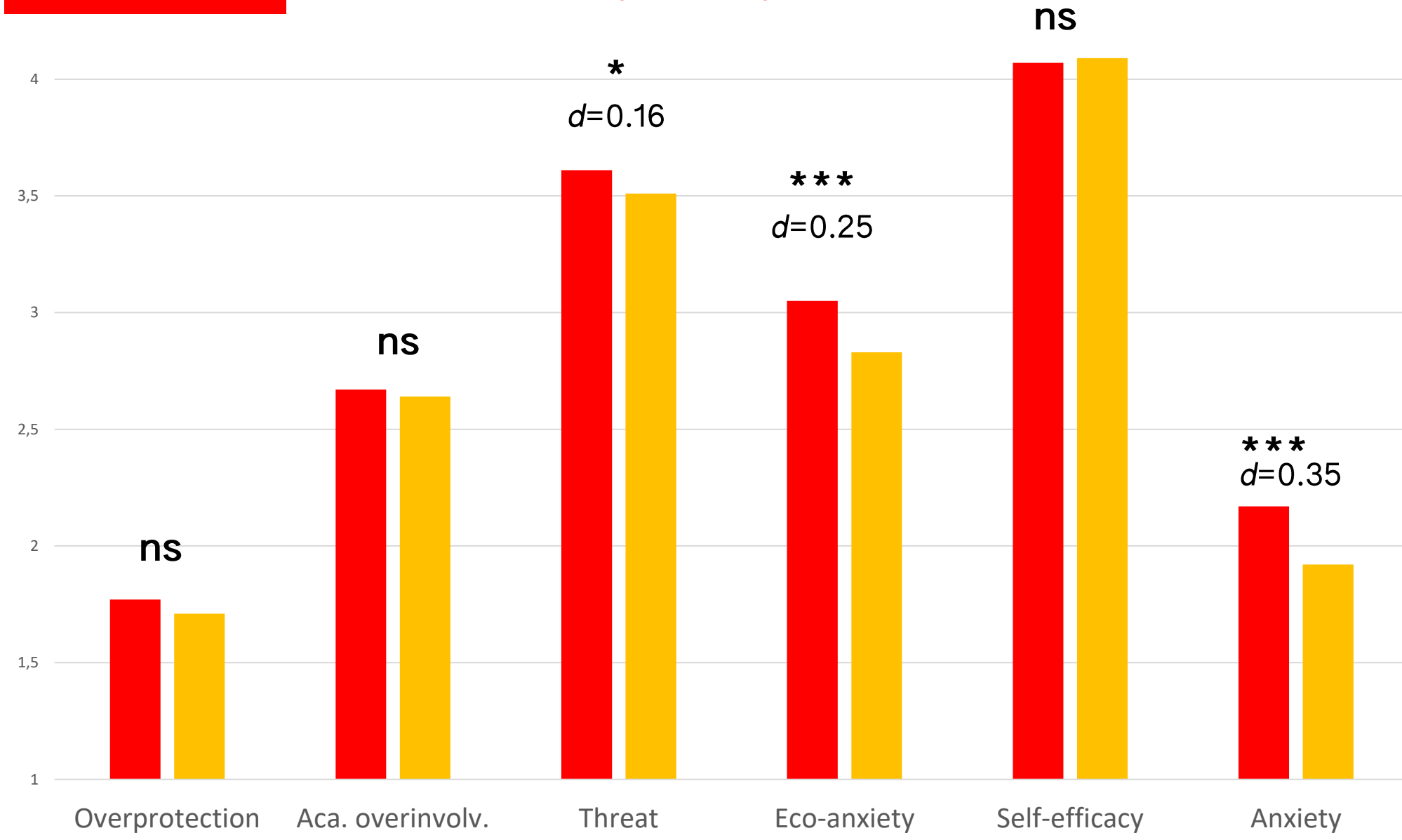
# Analysis





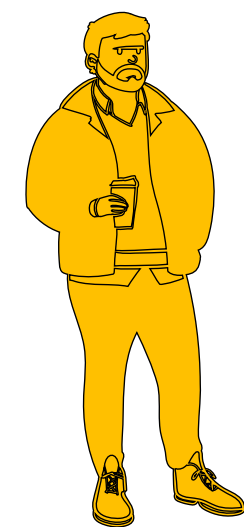
# Results

## Preliminary analyses

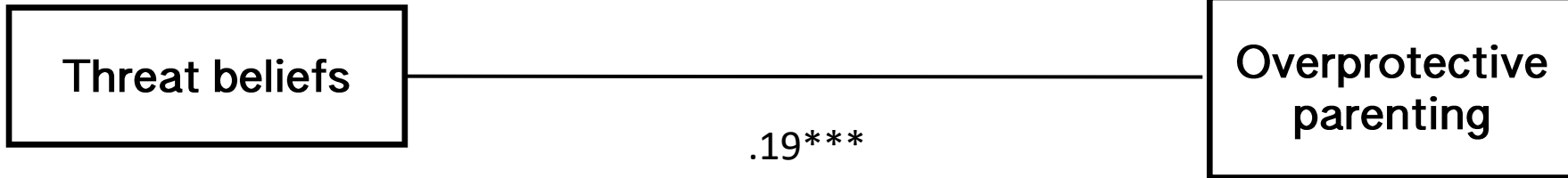
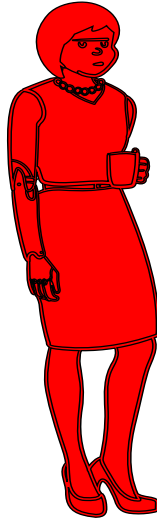


Mothers

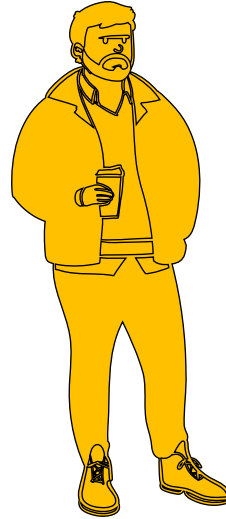
Fathers



# Results



# Results

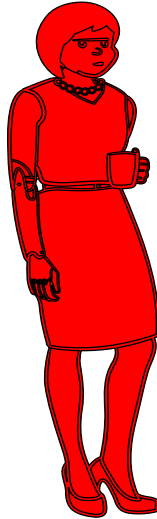


Threat beliefs

.27\*\*\*

Overprotective  
parenting

# Results

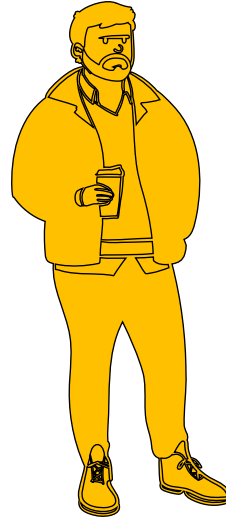


Threat beliefs

.32\*\*\*

Academic  
overinvolvement

# Results



Threat beliefs

.25\*\*\*

Academic  
overinvolvement

# Results

## Overprotective parenting

	Mother	Father		Mother	Father
Threat	.19***	.26***	Threat	.12*	.21***
Self-efficacy	-.22***	-.15*	Anxiety	.22***	.29***
Threat x Self-efficacy	-.05	.01	Threat x anxiety	.07	.09
Eco-anxiety	.02	-.01	Eco-anxiety	.02	-.005
Self-efficacy	-.23**	-.19*	Anxiety	.28***	.38***
Eco-anxiety x self-efficacy	-.01	.09	Eco-anxiety x anxiety	.01	-.01

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .000$ ; model fit indices: RMSEA=0.00; CFI=1.00

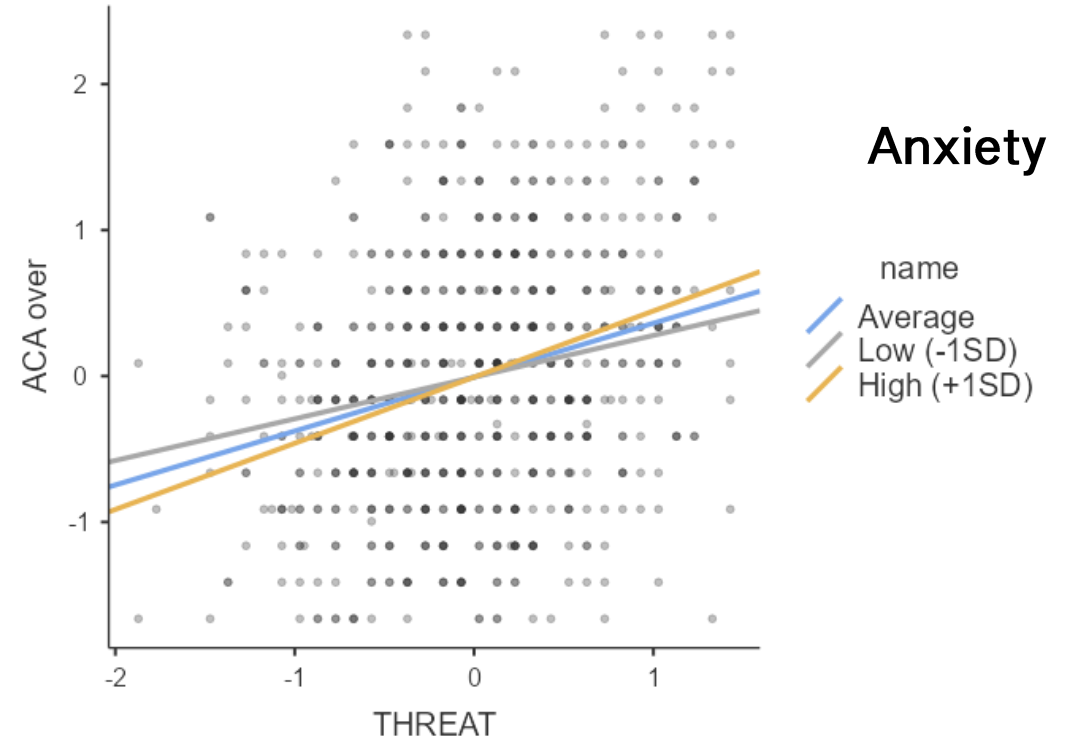
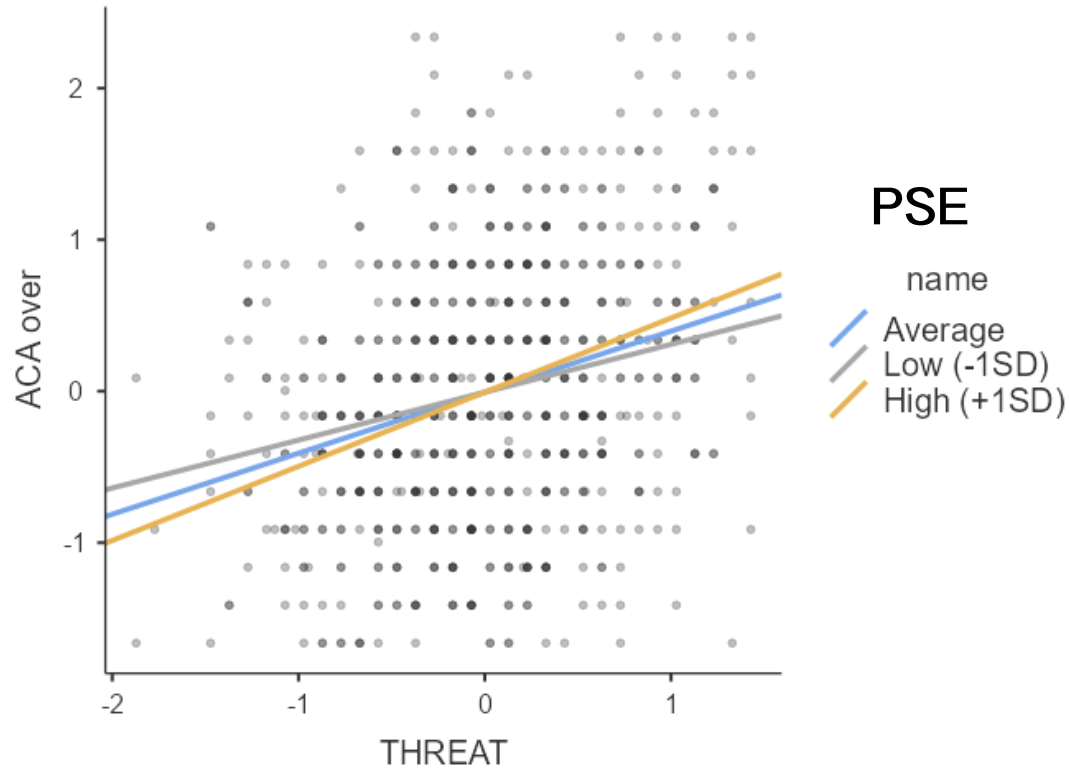
# Results

## Academic overinvolvement

	Mother	Father		Mother	Father
Threat	.32***	.25***	Threat	.29*	.22***
Self-efficacy	-.01	.01	Anxiety	.09	.10
Threat x Self-efficacy	.10*	.01	Threat x anxiety	.09†	-.01
Eco-anxiety	.09	.03	Eco-anxiety	.05	-.01
Self-efficacy	-.02	-.00	Anxiety	.20***	.17***
Eco-anxiety x self-efficacy	-.00	-.01	Eco-anxiety x anxiety	.05	.01

†  $p = .05$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .000$ ; model fit indices: RMSEA=0.00; CFI=1.00

# Results



Parental self-efficacy (and anxiety) seem to moderate the relation between threat beliefs and academic overinvolvement

-> for mothers



# Discussion

**Eco-anxiety** is not related to overprotective parenting or academic overinvolvement

-> for mothers and fathers



# Discussion

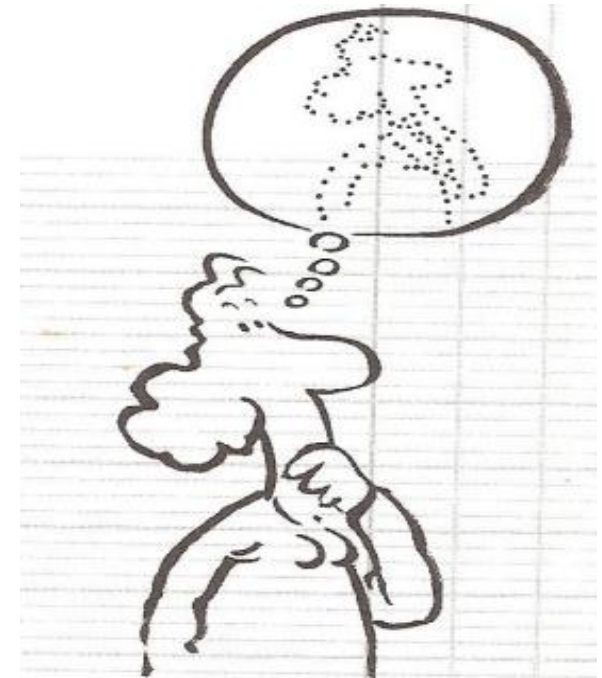
Parents' **threat beliefs** are related to anxious overprotective parenting and academic overinvolvement

-> for mothers and fathers



# Discussion

- Parental **anxiety** is related – positively - to anxious overprotection and academic overinvolvement
  - **PSE** is related – negatively – to overprotection
- > for mothers and fathers



# Discussion

Moderating role of **PSE** (and anxiety) in the relation between threat beliefs – academic overinvolvement

- for mothers
- not for fathers

Limitations: no causality - replication



# Take home

**Threat** perceived by **parents**

-> concern for  
overprotective parenting  
and academic  
overinvolvement

“

I don't care  
about my  
kids' future”

... said no one ever.

# Thank you



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# model

