

INTRODUCTION

- Reading anxiety is a significant issue affecting elementary school students, negatively impacting problem-solving, self-regulation, and efficient information processing (Grills-Taquechel et al., 2007; Ialongo et al., 1994).
- Additionally, elementary students with higher anxiety levels in reading and math performance also tend to have higher generalized anxiety levels. (Wicklund, 2023).
- Studies have found that effective elementary school counseling programs can help reduce anxiety symptoms and improve reading fluency in first-grade students (Leggiadro, 2021).
- Researchers also found a significant increase in language arts achievement and productive school behaviors for both 3rd and 5th grade students who received counseling interventions (Mullis & Otwell, 1997).

Present Study

- We conducted a linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between school counseling services (therapy) and reading anxiety in elementary school students (K-6).

Hypothesis

- We hypothesized that participation in school counseling services would be negatively correlated with reading anxiety.

METHOD

Participants

- The participant's data was collected from the National Project on Achievement in Twins (NatPAT)
- Sample size varied depending on the number of complete observations for each research question.

Analytic Plan

- To answer the principal research question, we conducted a linear regression model (n = 830) predicting each child's reading anxiety score as a function of the binary variable of school therapy (0 = did not receive therapy, 1 = received therapy).

Measures

- School counseling participation was parent-reported as a dichotomous variable
 - "Did your child regularly receive any of the following supports or services at school during the 2021-2022 school year?"
- Child reading anxiety was measured using a child-reported Likert scale assessing nervousness towards reading/situations that involve reading (1 = No, it doesn't make me nervous; 4 = Yes, it makes me nervous)

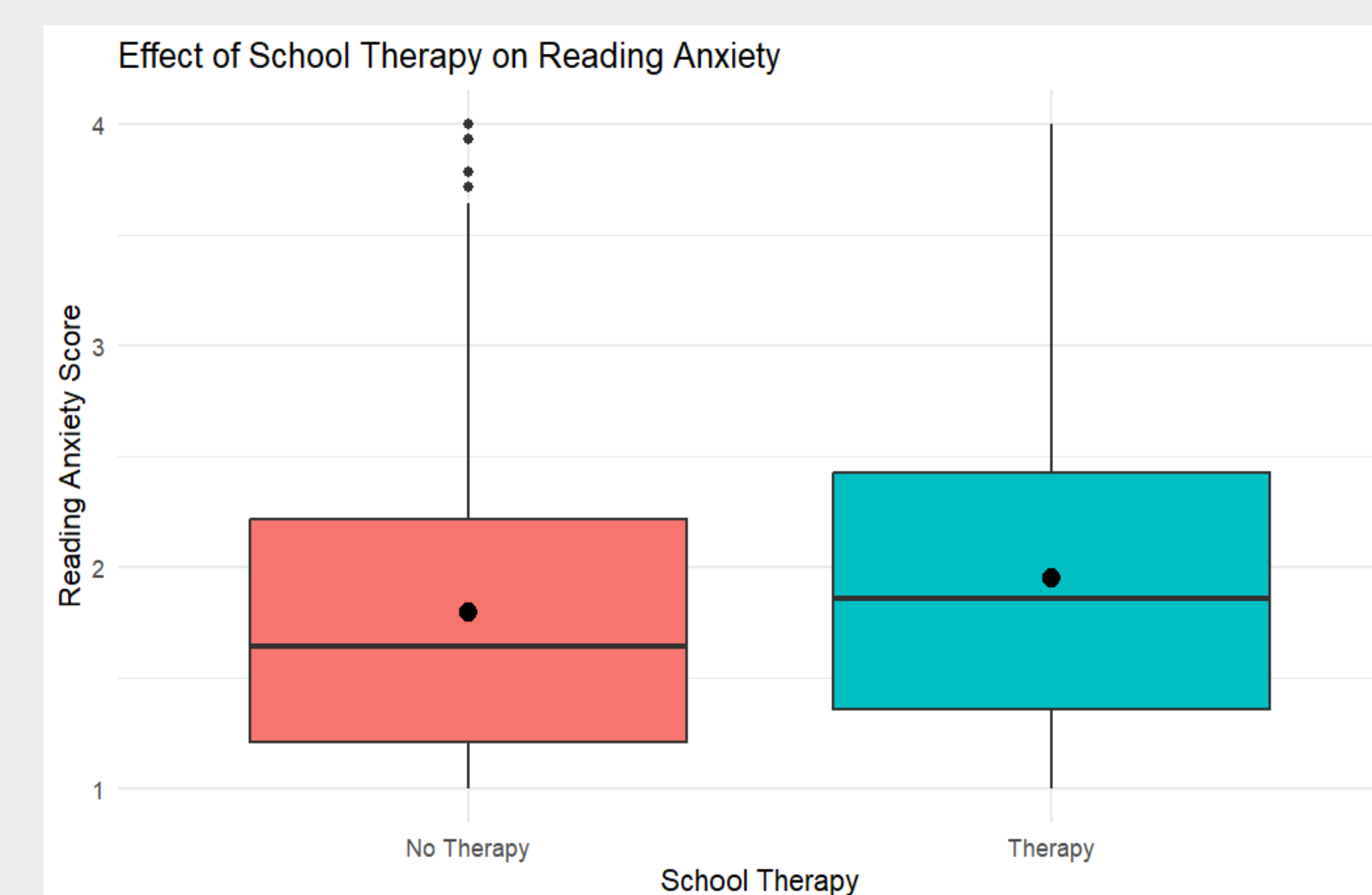
RESULTS

- This model approached significance ($p = 0.06$), but we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Additionally, given the large sample size and low R^2 value, it is unlikely that it is indicative of a true or meaningful effect.
- Contrary to our hypothesis, there was a small positive (though non-significant) relationship between school counseling and reading anxiety ($\beta = .15$)

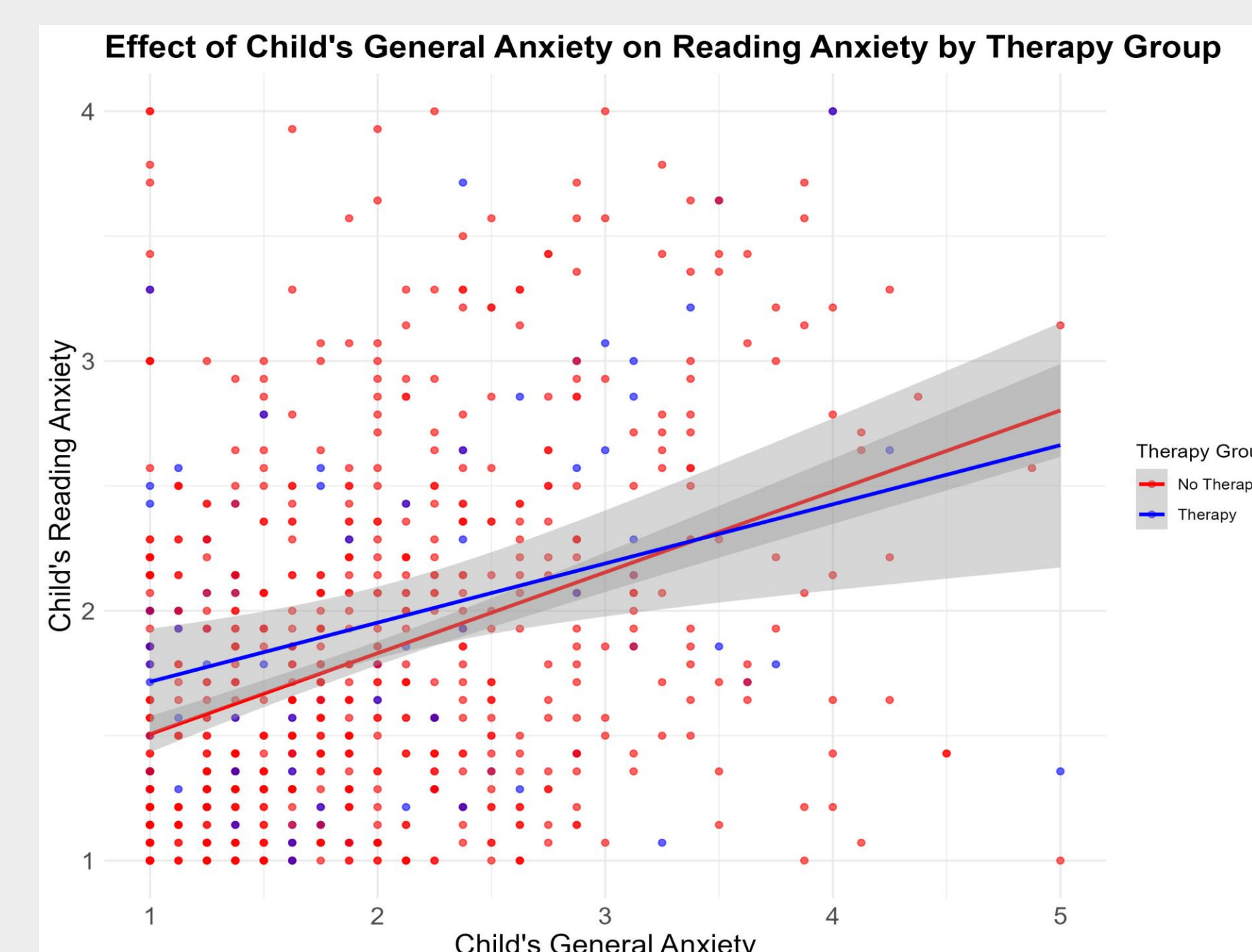
Reading Anxiety ~ School Therapy			
Predictors	Estimates	CI	p
(Intercept)	1.800 ***	1.749 – 1.850	<0.001
School Therapy	0.153	-0.007 – 0.313	0.061
Observations	830		
R ² / R ² adjusted	0.004 / 0.003		

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Therapy participation was not a significant predictor of reading anxiety ($p = .06$).

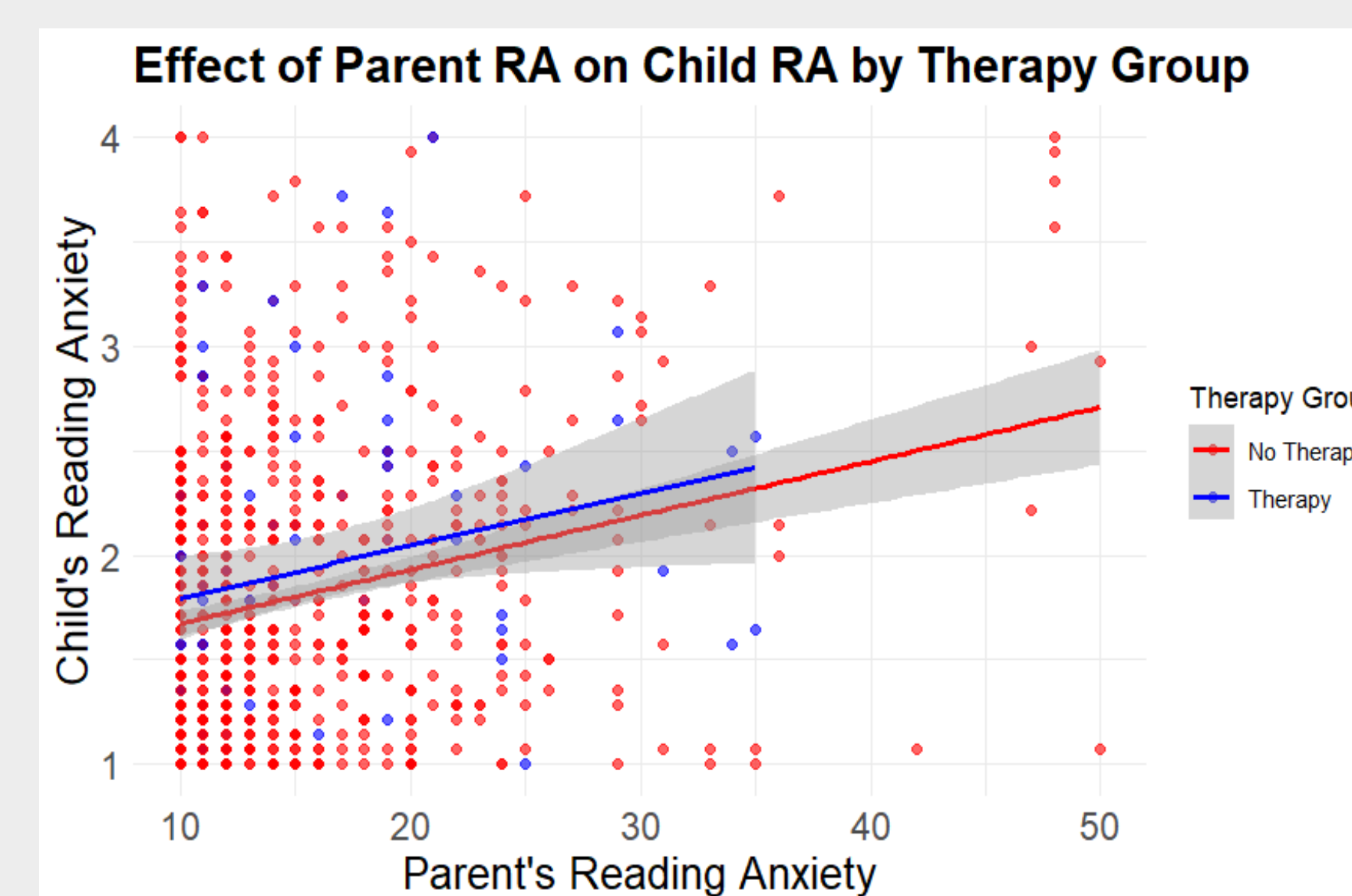


Boxplot visualizing differences in child reading anxiety scores between students who received therapy and those who did not. No significant group differences were observed.

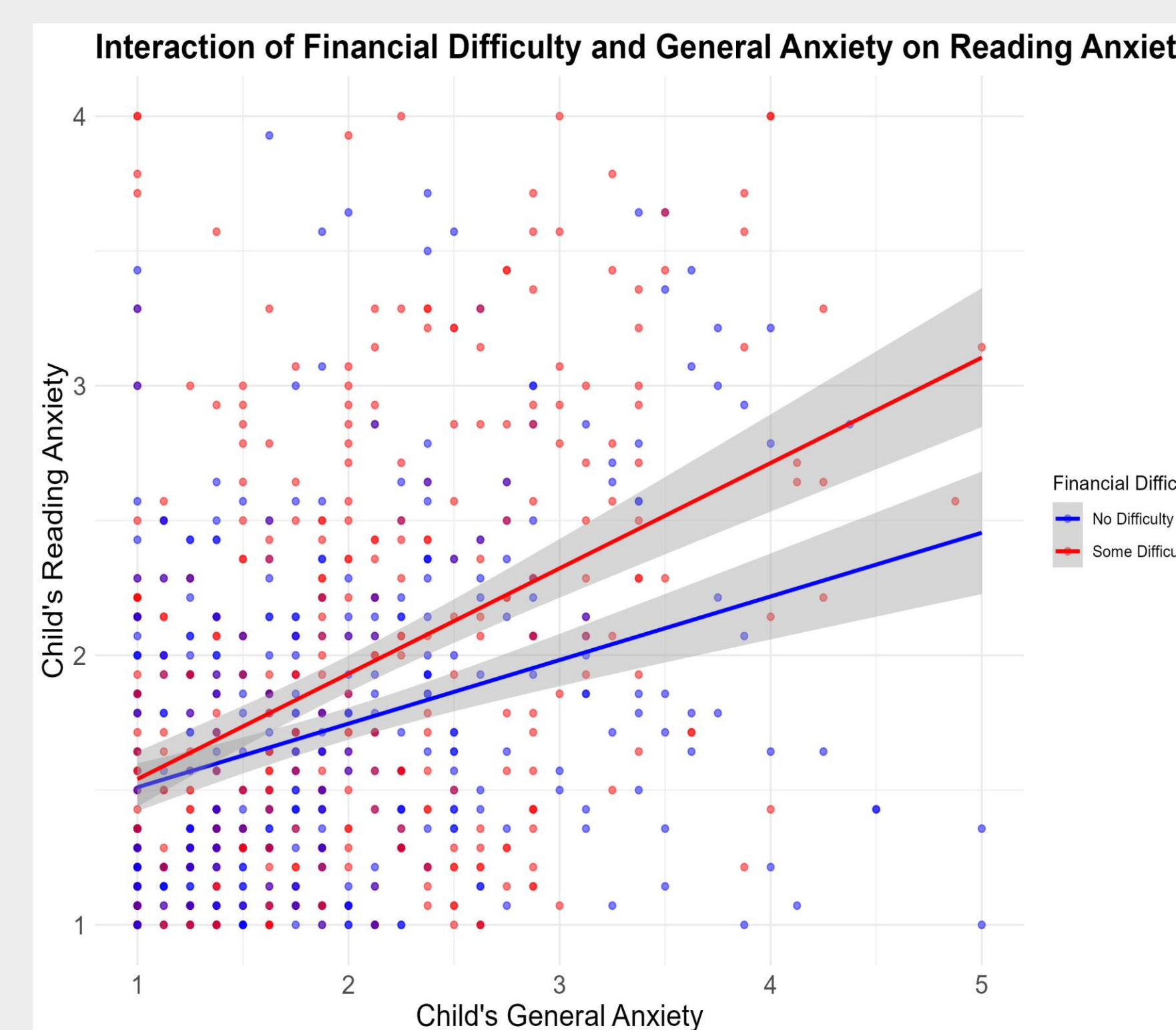


Child general anxiety is positively associated with child reading anxiety, with no moderating effect of therapy group.

- In addition to the primary analysis, we explored potential moderators and mediators of the relationship between school counseling and reading anxiety. Specifically, we examined:
 - The effect of parent reading anxiety on child reading anxiety, separated by therapy group.
 - The interaction between financial difficulty and general anxiety on child reading anxiety.
- Preliminary findings suggest that parental reading anxiety is positively associated with child reading anxiety regardless of therapy status. Moreover, financial difficulty exacerbates the relationship between general anxiety and reading anxiety.



Parental reading anxiety positively predicts child reading anxiety across both therapy and no-therapy groups, indicating a significant parental influence on child outcomes



Financial difficulty strengthens the association between child's general anxiety and reading anxiety, suggesting that socioeconomic stress may amplify anxiety-related reading challenges

DISCUSSION

- Our aim to find a significant relationship between school counseling services and reading anxiety in elementary students was not supported by the data.
- However, exploratory analyses suggested that parental reading anxiety was positively associated with child reading anxiety, regardless of therapy group.
- Additionally, children's general anxiety correlated with increased reading anxiety, and this effect was more severe for families with some financial difficulty.
- These results align with previous literature (e.g., Grills-Taquechel et al., 2007; Wichman, 2023) suggesting that home and environmental factors significantly impact children's reading anxiety.
- Limitations include the lack of detailed information regarding the content and duration of therapy received.
- Future research could further explore how parental anxiety and financial hardship influence child reading anxiety and examine potential interventions that integrate both school-based and family-focused supports.

CITATIONS/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Special thanks to Dr. Sean McCarron, Dr. Sara Hart and NatPAT Project Coordinator: Vir Hirani
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