

Children's Temperamental Activity Level and Their Daily Activities, in Five Cultures

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INTRODUCTION

Developmental Niche Framework (Super & Harkness, 1986)

- Physical and social settings
- Customs and Practices
- Parental Ethnotheories

These culturally-influenced subsystems interact with the child (e.g., temperament) to produce development.

Temperament

- The individual biological dispositions that underly behavior from a young age.
- Parents' perception of the difficulty of temperament varies by culture (Super et al., 2008).
- Children select environments (e.g. daily activities) that match their temperament (Buss & Plomin, 1984).

Daily Activities

- Children's daily activities serve as some of the most important settings that facilitate development.
- Time children spend in basic everyday activities varies by culture (Harkness et al., 2011).
- No research has yet assessed whether the relations between temperament and daily activities vary by culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are there associations between time spent in daily activities and temperamental activity level?
- Do these associations vary by country?

SAMPLE

3 to 7-year-old children
From five countries.

Country	Sample Size
Italy	29
Netherlands	51
Spain	33
Sweden	34
United States	24
Total	171

METHODS

Measures

- Behavioral Style Questionnaire (BSQ; McDevitt & Carey, 1978)
 - Activity Level standardized across all five countries. Higher scores represent more activity.
- Daily Diaries

Analyses

- Analysis of Covariance was carried out to asses potential Country by Activity Level interactions in Peer Time, Academic Time, and Play Time.
- Linear Regression models were carried out for each country to follow-up on statistically significant Country by Activity Level interactions.

RESULTS

Table 1:
Analysis of Covariance F-statistics for Country, Activity Level, and Country X Activity Level

Effect	Peer Time	Academic Time	Play Time
Country	.46	9.57***	12.24***
Activity Level	.04	9.94**	8.10**
Country X Activity Level	.67	1.43	2.53*

Table 2:
Regression Slopes for Activity Level Predicting Peer, Academic, and Play Time, by Country

Daily Activity	Italy	Netherlands	Spain	Sweden	United States
Peer	.29	-.47	-.74	.16	.41
Academic	-4.55	-.05	-8.80	-2.45	-16.84
Play	.92	-1.89	8.64	2.31	29.22**

Figure 1:
Activity Level by Country Predicting Peer Time

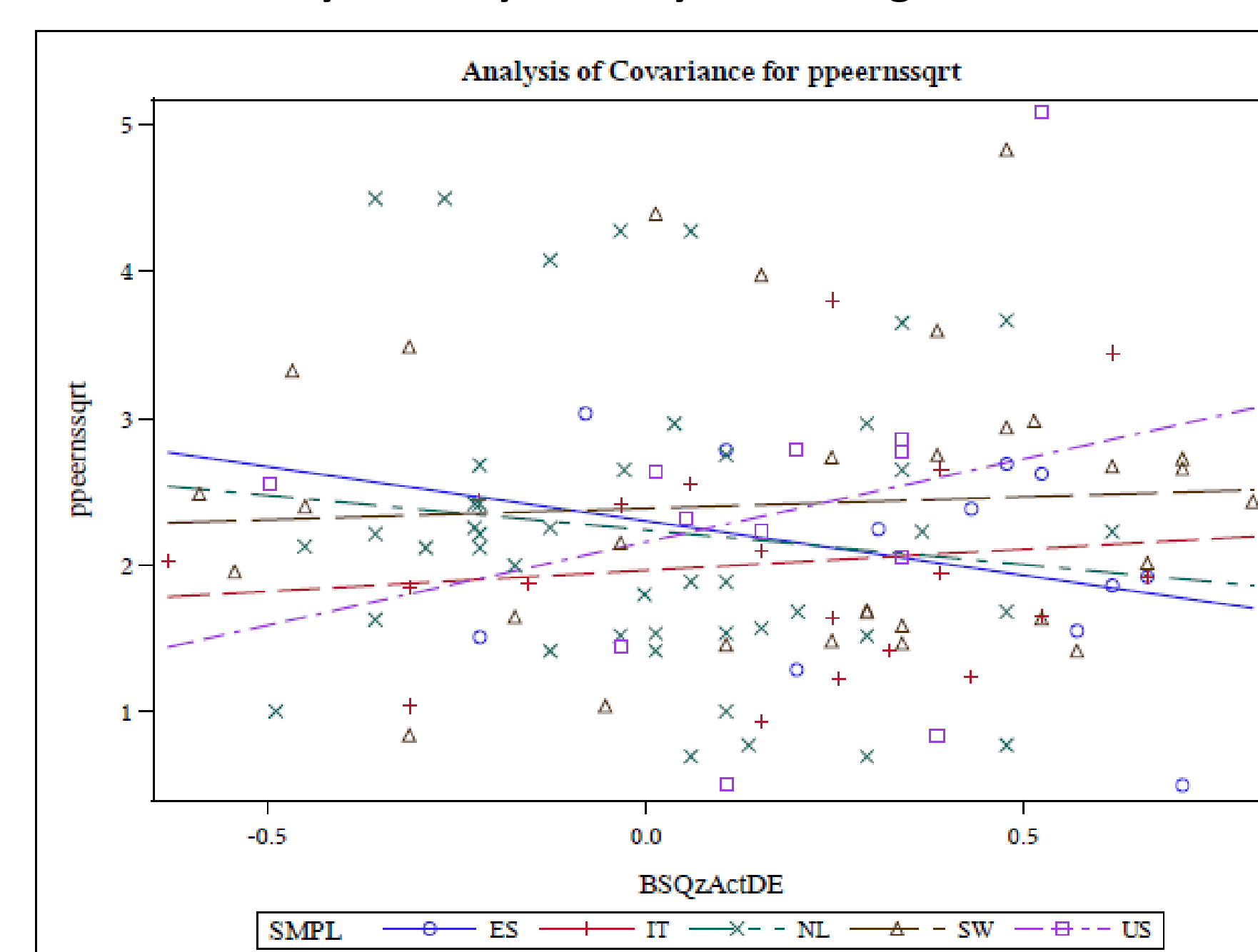


Figure 2:
Activity Level by Country Predicting Academic Time

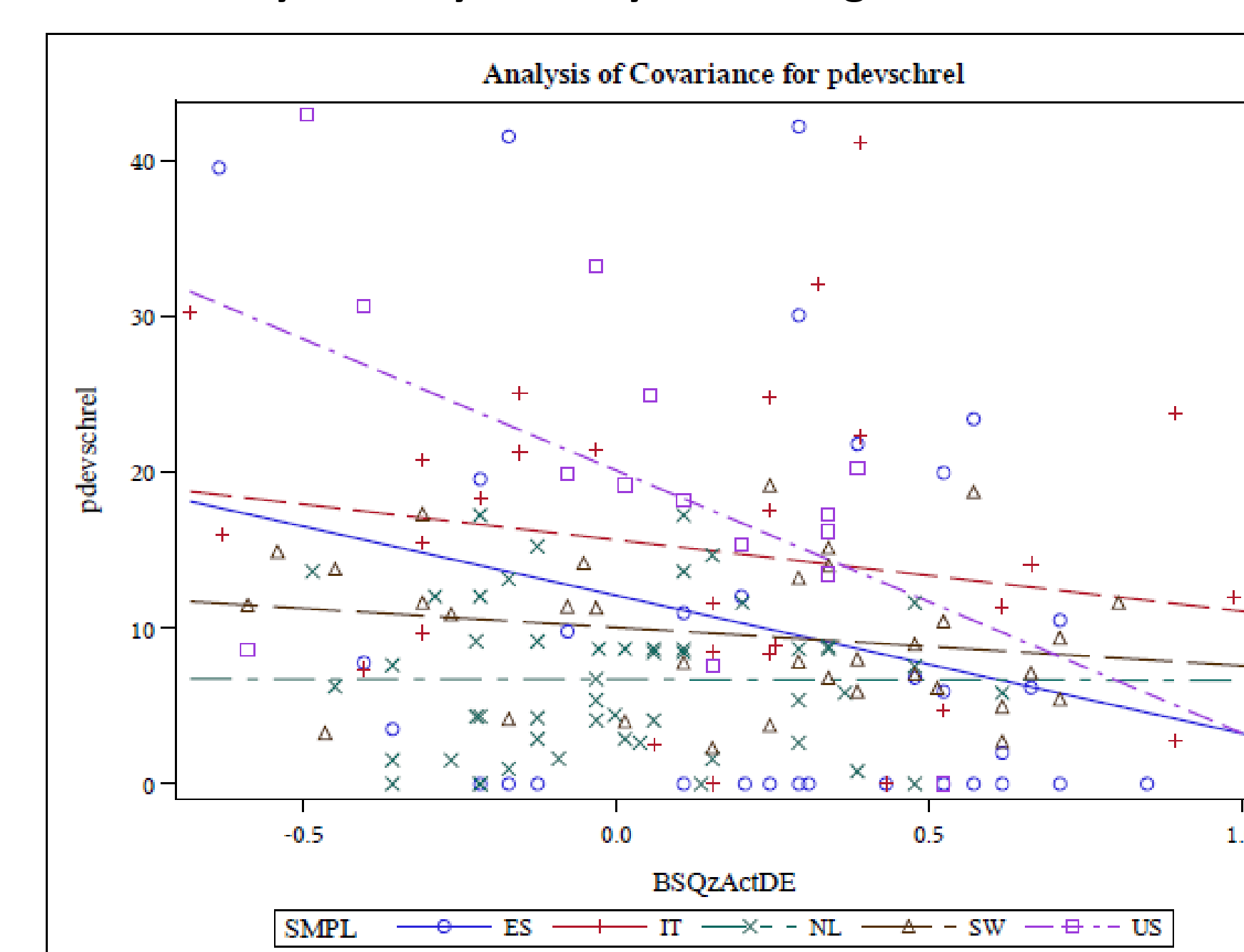


Figure 3:
Activity Level by Country Predicting Play Time

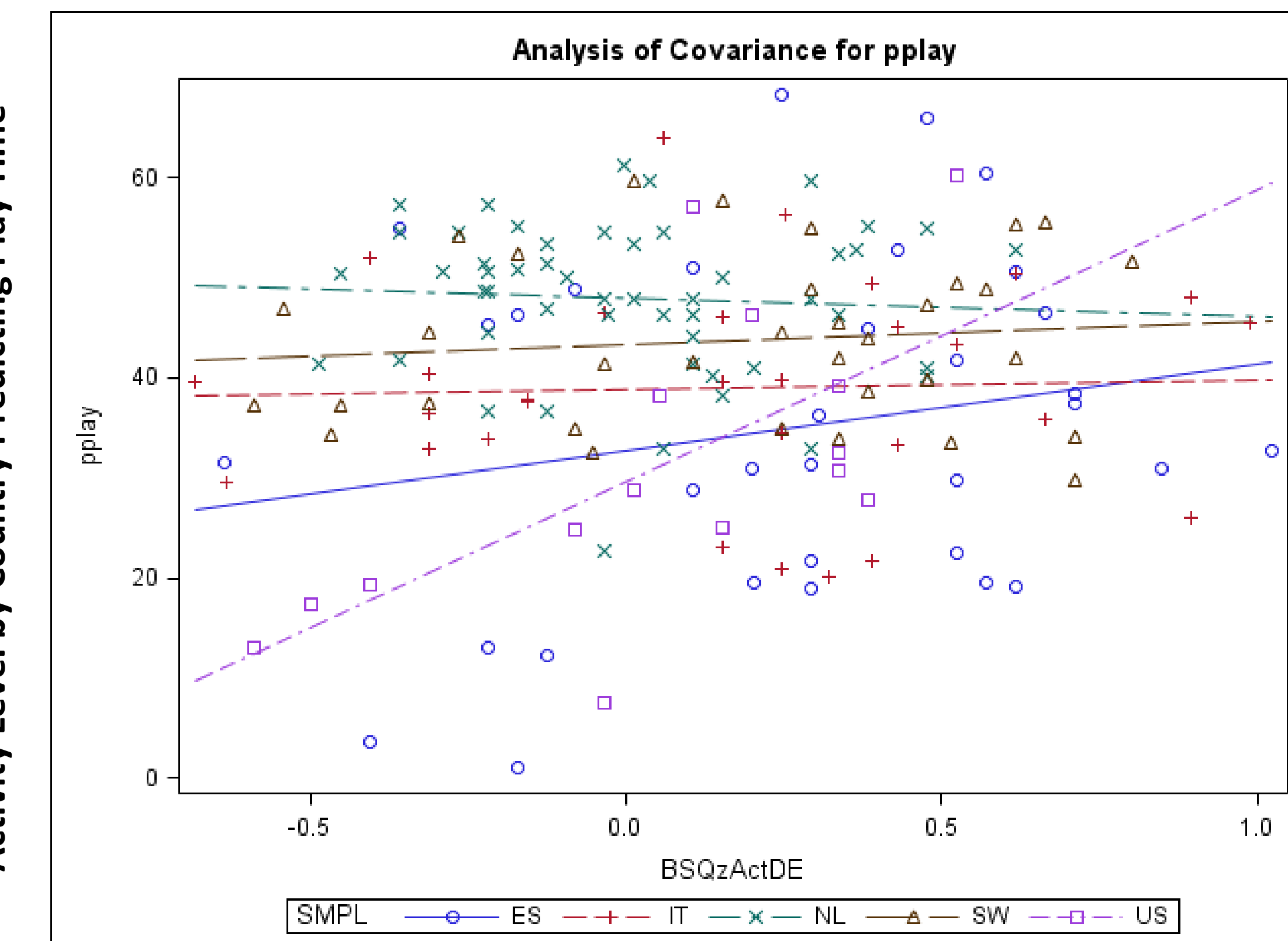
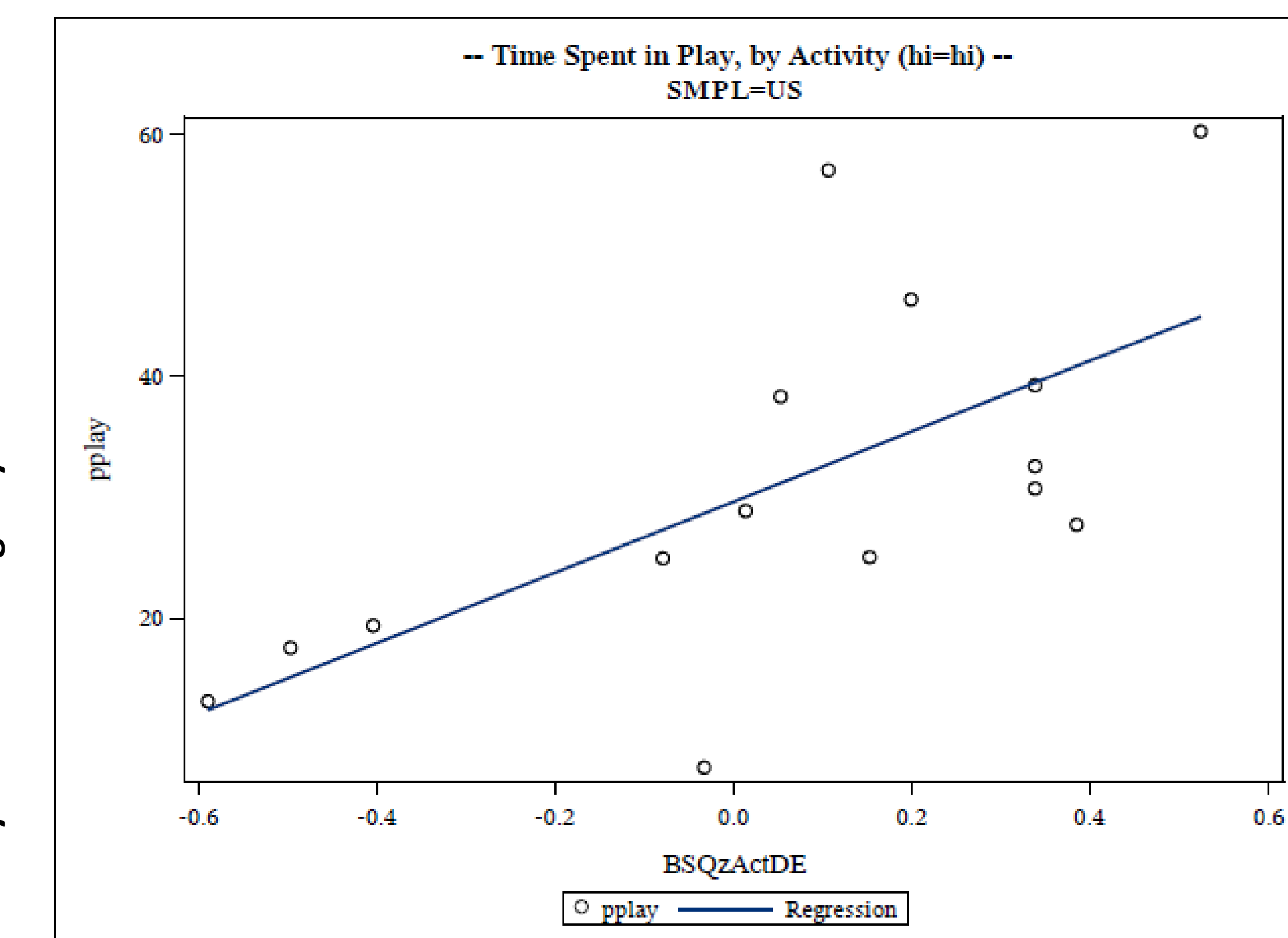


Figure 4:
Activity Level Predicting Play Time in the United States



DISCUSSION

- Cultural variation in time spent in academics and in play, but not in time spent with peers.
- Higher Activity Level was associated with less time spent with peers and more time in play. The effect of Activity Level on play was substantial only for US children.
- Children's activity can play a strong role in early childhood education, where academics and play are important activities.

