**Teacher Attachment and its Relationship with Academic Aspirations and GPA in Latinx Students**

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### Literature Reviews

**Educational Disparities**
- Academic aspirations and outcomes tend to vary based on differences in culture and ethnicity.
- For example, 44% of Latinx college students were the first in their family to attend college, compared to African American (34%), Asian (29%), White (22%) and all students (22%) (Santiago et al., 2019).

**Teacher Attachment**
- Research has shown that teachers are known to have positive impacts on students regarding academic outcomes and aspirations.
- Teacher-student relationships were found to be the most impactful for school outcomes when compared to parental support, parental education monitoring, friend support, and friends’ school behavior in Latinx students (Woolley et al., 2009).
- Latinx students who experienced teacher support reported higher school levels of school engagement and lower school trouble (cutting class, getting in fights, misbehaving in class, etc.) (Garcia-Reid et al., 2015).
- Teacher support for Latinx middle and high school students was found to be the most influential factor predicting better academic performance (Woolley et al., 2009).

**Research Goals**
- **Goal 1:** To examine the relationship between teacher attachment and GPA in Latinx students.
- **Goal 2:** To examine the relationship between teacher attachment and academic aspirations.

### Methods

**Participants and Procedures**
- 207 Latinx middle school students in a southwestern state.
- Participants completed online surveys at home or in school computer labs.
- 45.9% of participants were male, 52.7% were female.
- Mean age of the participants was 12.39 (SD 1.15).
- Out of the participants who answered the survey question of where they were born, 184 were born in the United States of America, 4 were born in Mexico, and 1 was born in another country.

**Measures**
- **Child-Teacher Attachment**
  - Child-teacher attachment was measured with a 9-item scale that assessed positive adolescent attachment to their teachers (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The responses ranged from 1 ("almost never or never") to 5 ("almost always or always"). The Cronbach’s alpha was .93.
- **GPA**
  - GPA was measured with one item ("What grades do you mostly get in school?") where response choices ranged from 1 ("Mostly A’s") to 9 ("Mostly F’s"). The responses were re-coded so that higher responses were associated with higher grades.

**Analytic Plan**
- Linear regression analysis using SPSS.

### Results

|   | Correlations, means (M), and standard deviation (SD) for variables (N = 207) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Child-Teacher Attachment | 1. | 2. | 3. |
| 2. GPA | 0.20** | - | - |
| 1. Academic Aspirations | 0.05 | 0.40** | - |
| Mean | 3.18 | 7.26 | 5.22 |
| SD | 1.03 | 1.61 | 0.97 |

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

**Goal 1.**
- Association between teacher attachment and GPA was positive and statistically significant (β = .31, p < .01, CI = .098, .531)

**Goal 2.**
- Association between teacher attachment, and academic aspirations was positive but not statistically significant. (β = .04, p = .52, CI = -.089, .177)

### Discussion

**Conclusions**
- Results suggest that teacher support is positively correlated with GPA, but not academic aspirations for Latinx students.
- Teachers may have a more direct effect on students’ grades whereas academic aspirations may be based in other factors such as family and intrinsic motivation.
- Results suggests that strengthening relationships between teachers and students may be beneficial for Latinx youths’ academic well-being.
- While offered, diversity training for teachers is currently varied district-by-district, and it is important to make it mandatory for teachers so that they can foster strong relationships with their students regardless of differences in culture.
- Along with warmth and trust, teachers should strive to create a “positive working relationship” with their students that includes a sense of collaboration (Tose, 2012).

**Limitations and Future Directions**
- Because our sample only consisted of students one southwestern state, this study might not be applicable to Latinx students outside of the southwest due to differences in culture and expectations.
- There may be other factors, such as family history of schooling, intrinsic motivation, and parental support, that contribute to academic aspirations and GPA, so more research is necessary to deduce the most efficient way to help Latinx students succeed.
- We used a survey as our method for gathering data which may lead to inaccuracy in answers, because of the limited scale responses available.
- The study did not control for gender or nativity and future work should examine the role of these demographic variables in links between teacher attachment and academic aspirations and GPA.
- Future work should also evaluate whether findings from this study generalize to other ethnic minorities youth.
- Finally, longitudinal work is important to examine long-term impacts of teacher student attachment as students move through middle and high school.

### Acknowledgements

This project was funded by The W.T. Grant Foundation (M. Delgado & R. Nair, PIs). For more information: mydelgado@email.arizona.edu.

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