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**Shaping The Future: The Mediating Effect of Self-Esteem and the  
Moderating Effect of Migration Background on the Associations Between  
Teacher and Family Support and Adolescents' Future Orientations**

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### **Abstract**

Literature in the field of adolescent future orientations highlights the importance of forming positive conceptualisations about the future as they can act as a buffer for adolescent risk behaviour and may also fuel goal setting and development. The formation of future orientations can be influenced by multiple interacting factors. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the association between family / teacher support and adolescent future orientations. Additionally, this study investigated whether self-esteem explained these associations and whether having a migration background influenced the strength of these associations. Unlike previous studies, future orientations were measured not only by future expectations, but also future emotions. Using data from the Dutch Youth Got Talent survey, linear regression analyses were conducted to investigate these relationships. Results showed that family support was significantly associated with higher future orientations, as was teacher support, although the link for the latter was not as strong as for the former. Self-esteem only partially explained these relationships. Contrary to our expectations, results from moderation analysis showed that having a migration background did not significantly alter the strength of the associations between social support and future orientations. Practical implications are discussed in the final stages of the report.

**Key words:** *Adolescent, future orientations, family support, teacher support, self-esteem, migration background.*

## **Introduction**

When adolescents look to the future, what they envisage can be crucial for understanding their behaviour, wellbeing, and future psychosocial outcomes (Sipsma, et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that adolescents who anticipate a negative future are more likely to display risk behaviour such as delinquency, substance use, and engaging in risky sexual behaviour (Sipsma, et al., 2012). Conversely, studies have suggested that improving future expectations and pursuing positive goals may provide a protective influence on unhealthy behaviours in adolescence and in the future (Massey et al., 2008; Nurmi, 1991; Dubow et al., 2001). Future orientations are particularly relevant during times of developmental transitions, for example the path from adolescence to adulthood, as they guide an individual's preparation for the future (Seginer, 2008). To prepare for the future, goals are set, and the pursuit of these goals influences behaviour (Nurmi et al, 1994). Therefore, studying future expectations is particularly important during adolescence as they predict current and future behavioural, and developmental, outcomes (Nurmi et al, 1994). This research examines contributing factors that shape future orientations in more detail, namely family support, teacher support, self-esteem and migration background.

### **Future Orientations and Social Support**

Future orientations have been defined using several different terms, some relate to possible selves that one would like to become or is afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986), others refer to one's perception of the likelihood of events to occur in the future (Oettingen & Mayer, 2002). Corte and colleagues (2020) suggest that future orientations are a product of a variety of factors, namely individual characteristics, past experiences, opportunities of the social context and support from adults. Located in the Microsystem, where interactions between individuals and their proximal environment shape development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), this research examines the associations between family / teacher support and adolescent future orientations.

The Developmental Systems Theory (Ford & Lerner, 1992) suggests that adolescent development is a co-constructed process between an individual and their interactions with important others that take place in the proximal context. Supportive interactions with significant others can be perceived as a form of validation and represent acceptance, approval, encouragement and a source of self-knowledge (Harter, 1990). These interactions and feelings of validation may be gradually internalised by adolescents (Sica, et al., 2016), bolstering their

current self-concept, which Nurmi (1991) outlined can be transferred to a more positive outlook of the future. Therefore, since interactions with family and teachers operate in an adolescent's proximal environment, they may play an influential role in the formation of future orientations. Indeed, previous research has found that achieving future orientations is associated with tangible support from both parents and teachers (Zhu, et al, 2014). In particular, studies suggest that the perception of family support can positively influence a child's future orientations (Trommsdorff, 1983). Moreover, Lanz & Rosnati (2002) suggest that greater family support can lead to an improved sense of optimism, a characteristic that is intrinsically linked to a more positive outlook on life and the future. These interactions and perceived support may translate to the belief that future expectations are likely to be achieved, as adolescents possess an optimistic attitude toward attaining their future goals (Massey, et al, 2008).

Most research observing the associations between teacher support and future orientations largely focus on academic achievement (Thijs & Fleischmann, 2014; Tucker et al, 2002). Whilst academic achievement can be perceived as instrumental for the materialisation of future hopes, this has usually been measured as a means of progressing to higher education (Seginer, 2008). However, the school environment has been recognised as a place of social, cognitive and behavioural development (Cohen et al., 2009). This influence on an adolescent's future exceeds academic achievement alone (Guess & McCane-Bowling, 2016) and may be linked to future expectations and emotions. Doll (2010) emphasised the importance of the supportive teacher-student relationship in the school setting and refer to it as warm, caring and meeting students' personal and developmental needs. This support may in turn lead to students being more open to learning and more willing to increase their skills such as goal setting, planning and problem solving (House, 1981). Research suggests that these skills are important factors in the development of future orientations (Nurmi & Pulliainen, 1991) and may have broader implications than academic success alone. It is therefore hypothesised that higher levels of support from the family and teachers will be associated with more positive future orientations. Subsequently, this research aims to fill the gap in the literature relating to this topic by investigating the association between family / teacher support and adolescent future orientations.

### **Self-esteem as a mediator in the association between family / teacher support and future orientations**

An additional aim of this study is to investigate whether the psychological concept of self-esteem explains the association between social support and future orientations. This research refers to self-esteem as an individual's evaluation of their self-worth (Prihadi & Chua, 2012). Social support may play an important role in the formation of self-esteem as support and encouragement may be internalised by adolescents (McCabe & Barnett, 2000). Also, levels of self-confidence have been recognised as an important resource in conceptualising the future (Iovu, 2018). This may be explained through Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory that identifies how self-efficacy expectations and belief in one's ability to achieve a task are important influences on current behaviour and future outcomes. Indeed, Thompson and Zuroff (2010) highlight that young individuals with a high self-confidence are more likely to have positive expectations about their future. This research seeks to further examine the relationship between self-esteem, social support, and future orientations by testing the hypothesis that self-esteem mediates the association between family / teacher support and adolescent future orientations.

### **Migration Background as a moderator in the association between family / teacher support and future orientations**

This research also aims to investigate whether having a migration background moderates the relationship between social support and future orientations. It is not uncommon for migrant families to experience issues when settling into a host country due to many issues that arise in the acculturation process of migration (Le & Stockdale, 2008). Particularly for migrant adolescents, constructing a positive ethnic identity, facing prejudice and discrimination and dealing with different expectations of the new society may cause considerable stress (Hovey & King, 1996). In addition to these stresses, migrant families face social exclusion in host countries due to a lack of opportunities and acceptance (Schierup, et al., 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesised that family and teacher support may become particularly important in the formation of migrant adolescent future orientations, as this network offers a sense of belonging and encouragement which may not be perceived from society. In line with this, Trask- Tate & Cunningham (2010) found that teachers facilitate a feeling of belonging within the school environment among migrant adolescents that may be absent in the wider societal context. Additionally, Feliciano and Lanuza (2016) found that the perception of social support resulted

in migrant adolescents having higher academic aspirations. In this study, we will investigate to what extent having a migration background moderates the relationship between family / teacher support and future orientations. We hypothesize that the strength of the relationship between social support and future orientations will increase for adolescents with a migration background.

### Current Study

As seen in Figure 1, this study aims to test the hypothesis that family and teacher support are associated with more positive future orientations for adolescents (H1). We also hypothesise that self-esteem will mediate the associations between social support and future orientations (H2). Finally, we hypothesise that having a migration background will positively moderate the associations between social support and future orientations (H3).

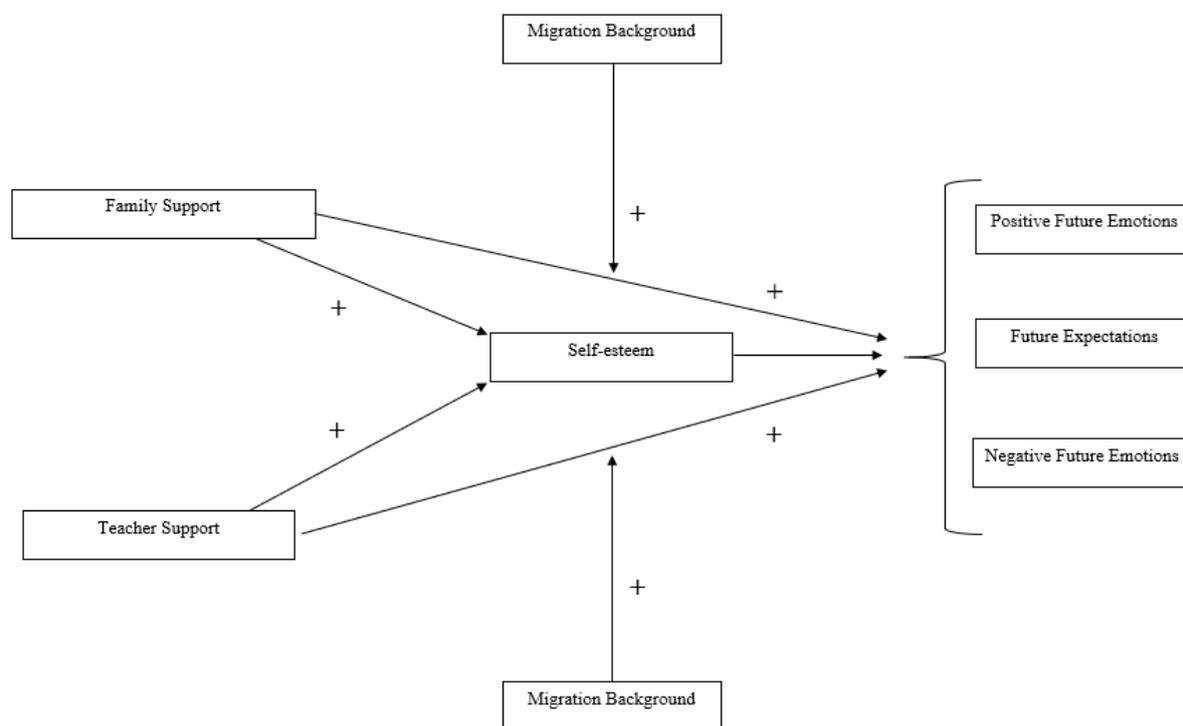


Figure 1. Research Model

## Methods

### Sample

Data collected from the first wave of The Youth Got Talent (YGT) project was used in the current study. Participants were recruited from three separate schools for tertiary vocational education in the Utrecht region of The Netherlands. After cleaning the data, a sample of 1,153

respondents remained valid for this study and consisted of 56% ( $N=645$ ) female and 44% ( $N=507$ ) male respondents. The mean age of the participants was 17.24 ( $SD=1.51$ ), and the range was from ages 16-24. Most participants were Dutch, 76.4% ( $N=881$ ), 17.6% ( $N=203$ ) had a non-western migration background and 6% ( $N=62$ ) had a western migration background. During the data collection period, trained researchers administered a self-report questionnaire in a classroom environment. Most participants completed the questionnaire digitally (96.5%), pencil and paper were used by remaining participants (3.5%). The adolescent response rate was 83%. All participants were anonymised, ensuring confidentiality. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Assessment Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Utrecht University (FETC18-070) in 2018.

## **Instruments**

### **Dependent Variables**

*Future Orientations:* Three measures were used to assess future orientations. One such measure was the Future Expectations Scale, which is compiled of eight items and has been validated in previous research (Jessor & Costa, 1990). Participants were asked to fill in a 5-point scale from (1) very little chance to (5) very large chance of eight statements becoming true in their own future; for example, ‘you have a job that pays well’, ‘you will be able to buy a house’. A mean score was taken from these items and it was interpreted that the higher the score, the higher the expectations were of the future. A Cronbach’s alpha was assessed and showed high reliability ( $\alpha = .808$ ).

Positive and negative future emotions were also assessed as indicators of future orientations, using the Positive and Negative Future Emotions Scales (Liebenburg, et al., 2015). The three items that contributed to the mean score of the Positive Future Emotions subscale asked participants to what extent they would feel the following emotions in the future from (1) not at all to (5) very much; ‘trust’, ‘enthusiasm’, and ‘that I can achieve a lot’. The Negative Future Emotions subscale contained four items that contributed to a mean score. Statements were related to how much an individual would feel; ‘cared for’, ‘an empty feeling’, ‘doubts’ and ‘feelings of loneliness’. Cronbach’s alpha showed high reliability for Positive Future Emotions subscale ( $\alpha = .816$ ) and for the Negative Future Emotions subscale ( $\alpha = .780$ ).

## **Independent Variables**

*Family Support:* The level of family support was measured by the Family Support Scale, transferred from the validated Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988). The subscale consisted of four items that contributed to a final mean score. The questions were all measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from (1) completely disagree to (7) completely agree. The items included statements such as ‘The people in my family do their best to help me’. Cronbach’s alpha showed adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .927$ ).

*Teacher Support:* To measure Teacher Support, this research used the Teacher and Classmate Support Scale (Torsheim, Wold & Samdal, 2000). The teacher support subscale was composed of the mean scores of three items. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed from (1) completely disagree to (5) completely agree with statements such as ‘I feel as though my teachers care about me’. Cronbach’s alpha showed high reliability ( $\alpha=.827$ ).

## **Mediator**

*Self-esteem:* Self-esteem was measured using the statement, ‘I have a lot of self-confidence’, on a 7- point scale ranging from (1) totally not true to (7) totally true.

## **Moderator**

*Migration Background:* Migration background was measured by participants responding to the questions; ‘in which country were you born?’, ‘which country was your mother born?’ and ‘which country was your father born?’. Following the CBS (2020) criteria, this research considered a participant to have a migration background when one or more parents were born outside of The Netherlands. This variable was dichotomised to distinguish between migration background (coded as 1) and native (coded as 0).

## **Control Variables**

*Gender, Age and Socioeconomic Status (SES):* Gender was assessed by asking ‘are you a boy (coded 1) or girl (coded 0)’. Age was assessed by respondents answering, ‘what year were you born?’. SES was measured by the validated Family Affluence Scale (Torsheim et al., 2016), a six-item scale that produced a score between 0-13. It was interpreted that the higher the score, the higher the participant’s SES.

## Data Analysis

All data analyses were conducted through IBM SPSS (27<sup>th</sup> version). Cleaning of the data allowed for any missing values, extreme scores and participants above the age of adolescence (>24) to be deleted ( $N=78$ ). A Shapiro-Wilks test showed that the data was not normally distributed ( $p<.001$ ), however normal distributions of all the variables were deemed acceptable after visual inspection of histograms. Any consistent outliers were monitored using boxplots, but there were no identifiable consistencies in outlying respondents for each variable, resulting in outliers being included in the sample.

Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the strength and significance of the correlations between the dependent variables of future orientations and all other variables in this study. Following this, multiple linear regressions were used for mediation analysis, which followed the four-step process recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). This process was repeated for three separate outcome variables, namely future expectations, positive future emotions and negative future emotions. The first step was to investigate the association between the independent variables (family and teacher support) and the dependent variables (future expectations and emotions). The second step involved running regression analysis to observe the significance of the association between the independent variable and the mediating variable of self-esteem. The third step required the mediating variable of self-esteem to be significantly associated with the dependent variables of future expectations and emotions, after controlling for the effect of the independent variables of family and teacher support. In step four, regression analysis observing the association between the independent and the dependent variable, whilst controlling for the mediator of self-esteem, was performed. This produced the final coefficient for the association between family / teacher support and the dependent variables of future orientations. If the fourth step revealed that the association between the independent variable and dependent variable was no longer significant, full mediation had occurred. If the coefficient had decreased in comparison to the results of step one, partial mediation was present and warranted further investigation using a Sobel Test (1982).

The self-esteem variable was then removed for the moderation analysis, which was conducted through a series of linear regressions. The independent variables of family and teacher support were mean centred to compute new interaction terms with the moderating variable of migration background. Firstly, control variables were entered to observe the associations with dependent variables of future orientations. Secondly, the independent

variables of family and teacher support, and the moderating variable of migration background, were added to examine the associations with future expectations and emotions. Thirdly, moderation analysis was conducted through analysing the interaction terms between the support variables and the moderating variable of migration background, and the subsequent associations with the future orientation outcome variables.

## **Results**

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive analyses were conducted to observe means and standard deviations of the main variables, excluding migration background as it was dichotomised (Table 1). Compared to scale midpoints, means of the independent variables of family and teacher support were high. Scores on self-esteem were lower but still quite high. The means of future expectations were similarly high to those of positive future emotions. The mean of negative emotions (measured on a negative scale) was noticeably lower and was similar to the midpoint of the scale.

As seen in Table 2, a correlations analysis including all study variables was conducted to explore associations between independent, dependent and control variables. No multicollinearity was detected. All independent variables showed significant correlations with dependent variables. Higher family support was associated with higher future expectations, higher positive future emotions and less negative future emotions. The same was true for teacher support, but correlations were less strong when compared to family support. Family and teacher support showed significant positive associations with self-esteem. Self-esteem showed the strongest positive association with future expectations and positive future emotions, and the strongest negative association with negative future emotions, compared to the support variables. Migration background was dichotomised and indicated that the adolescents with a migration background were significantly more likely to report higher self-esteem and positive future emotions. Those with a migration background indicated a lower family affluence score. Family affluence was positively correlated with future expectations and positive future emotions and was negatively correlated with negative future emotions. Boys were more likely to have higher future expectations and positive future emotions, whilst girls experienced more negative future emotions than boys. Due to the significant correlations with the dependent variables, all control variables were included for further analysis.

Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum Values of Study Variables (N = 1151)*

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>Variables</b>				
Family Support	5.82	1.38	1.00	7.00
Teacher Support	3.64	0.73	1.00	5.00
Self-esteem	4.73	1.48	1.00	7.00
Future Expectations	3.77	0.53	1.38	5.00
Positive Future Emotions	3.80	0.75	1.00	5.00
Negative Future Emotions	2.46	0.82	1.00	5.00

Table 2

*Correlations across all study variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Family Support										
2. Teacher Support	.17**									
3. Self-esteem	.22**	.16**								
4. Future Expectations	.33**	.21**	.40**							
5. Positive Future Emotions	.36**	.24**	.45**	.65**						
6. Negative Future Emotions	-.33**	-.18**	-.37**	-.46**	-.47**					
7. Migration Background <sup>a</sup>	.00	.02	.16**	.01	.06*	.00				
8. Age	-.11**	.07*	-.01	-.11**	-.02	.12**	.07*			
9. Gender <sup>b</sup>	-.01	.07*	.16**	.09**	.06*	-.02	-.05	.03		
10. Family Affluence	.10**	-.01	.06	.16**	.08*	-.08**	-.18**	-.13**	.06*	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Note. <sup>a</sup> reference group is 'native'. <sup>b</sup> reference group is girls

### **The association between family / teacher support and future expectations and emotions**

Linear regressions were conducted in Tables 3, 4 and 5. In Model 1, the control variables of age, gender, family affluence and migration background were added to investigate the associations with future expectations and emotions (future orientations). Age (growing older) was associated with less positive expectations and more negative emotions in the future. Being male was associated with more positive future orientations. Higher family affluence was also positively associated with more positive future orientations. Having a migration background was positively associated with positive future emotions but showed no significant link with the other outcome variables. Whilst controlling for control variables, Model 2 (Tables

3, 4 and 5) showed that family support was positively associated with future expectations ( $\beta = .28, p < .01$ ) and positive future emotions ( $\beta = .32, p < .01$ ). Family support also showed a significant negative association with negative future emotions ( $\beta = -.30, p < .01$ ). Controlling for the same variables, linear regressions also revealed that teacher support was positively associated with future expectations, as seen in Table 3 ( $\beta = .16, p < .01$ ), and positive future emotions, as seen in Table 4 ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ), and significantly negatively associated with negative future emotions, as seen in Table 5 ( $\beta = -.13, p < .01$ ).

### **Self-esteem as mediator in the association between family / teacher support and future expectations and emotions**

Following the steps recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986), analyses examining whether self-esteem mediated the relationship between family / teacher support and future orientations was performed using multiple linear regressions. Family support was positively associated with the mediator, self-esteem ( $\beta = .19, p < .01$ ). Moreover, as seen in Model 3 of Tables 3, 4 and 5, regression analyses showed higher self-esteem was significantly associated with higher future expectations ( $\beta = .33, p < .01$ ), positive future emotions ( $\beta = .25, p < .01$ ) and was negatively associated with negative future emotions ( $\beta = -.31, p < .01$ ). The positive direct association between family support and future expectations remained significant when controlling for self-esteem, but the effect size decreased ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ). Although the change in value was small, ( $\beta$  change = .04), this indicated partial mediation. A Sobel test (1982) supported that self-esteem partially mediated the association between family support and future expectations ( $p < .001$ ). Following the same four step process, results showed self-esteem also partially mediated the relationship between family support and positive future emotions (Table 4), as the association remained significant but reduced in effect size ( $\beta$  change = .07) after the inclusion of the mediator. Again, a Sobel test (1982) confirmed there was partial mediation ( $p < .001$ ). Finally, self-esteem also partially mediated the association between family support and negative future emotions (Table 5), as the direct negative effect remained significant but decreased in size ( $\beta$  change = .06). A Sobel test (1982) confirmed partial mediation ( $p < .001$ ).

The previously mentioned steps were repeated to examine if self-esteem mediated the relationship between teacher support and outcome variables of future orientations. Teacher support was positively associated with self-esteem ( $\beta = .11, p < .01$ ). Self-esteem was positively associated with future expectations ( $\beta = .33, p < .01$ ), positive future emotions ( $\beta = .25, p < .01$ ) and was negatively associated with negative future emotions ( $\beta = -.31, p < .01$ ). Next, it was

found that self-esteem partially mediated the association between teacher support and future expectations (Table 3, Model 3), as the direct effect decreased when controlling for the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta$  change =.04). A Sobel test (1982) confirmed this result ( $p < .001$ ). Self-esteem also partially mediated the relationship between teacher support and positive future emotions (Table 4, Model 3) as the direct effect was smaller after controlling for the mediator of self-esteem ( $\beta$  change =.04), which was supported by a Sobel test (1982) ( $p < .001$ ). The same partial mediation was found for negative future emotions, as can be seen in Table 5 ( $\beta$  change =.03), and a significant Sobel Test supported this result ( $p < .001$ ).

### **Does migration background moderate the effect of family / teacher support on future expectations and emotions?**

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to test the hypothesis that migration background moderated the relationship between family / teacher support and future orientations. Migration background showed a significant association with positive future emotions ( $p < .05$ ), but not with the other dependent variables. Adolescents with a migration background were significantly more likely to express positive future emotions than adolescents without such a background ( $\beta = .07, p < .05$ ). In Model 4 of Tables 3, 4 and 5, linear regressions revealed that the interaction term of family support and migration background showed no significant associations with future expectations ( $\beta = .03, p = .33$ ), positive future emotions ( $\beta = .00, p = .96$ ) or negative future emotions ( $\beta = .05, p = .11$ ). As seen in Model 4 of Table 3, 4 and 5, the interaction term of teacher support and migration background also showed no significant relation to future expectations ( $\beta = .02, p = .63$ ), positive future emotions ( $\beta = -.02, p = .63$ ) or negative future emotions ( $\beta = -.01, p = .84$ ). Due to the non-significance of the associations, the extremely small  $R$  square change values ( $< .002$ ) were not reported.

Table 3

*Regression analyses for associations between family / teacher support and future expectations, the mediating role of self-esteem and moderating role of migration background*

Variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	Sig.												
Age	-.03	.01	-.09	.00	-.03	.01	-.08	.01	-.03	.01	-.08	.00	-.03	.01	-.09	.01
Gender <sup>a</sup>	.09	.03	.09	.00	.09	.03	.08	.00	.03	.03	.03	.00	.09	.03	.08	.00
Family Affluence	.09	.02	.11	.00	.11	.02	.12	.00	.09	.03	.10	.00	.11	.02	.12	.00
Migration Background <sup>b</sup>	.05	.04	.04	.15	.05	.04	.04	.20	-.03	.03	-.02	.43	.05	.04	.04	.20
Family Support					.11	.01	.28	.00	.09	.01	.22	.00	.10	.01	.27	.00
Teacher Support					.12	.02	.16	.00	.09	.02	.12	.00	.11	.02	.15	.00
Self-esteem									.12	.01	.33	.00				
Family Support * Migration Background													.02	.02	.03	.33
Teacher Support * Migration Background													.02	.05	.02	.63

Note. Dependent Variable: Future Expectations <sup>a</sup> reference group was girls. <sup>b</sup> reference group was native adolescents

Table 4

*Regression analyses for associations between family / teacher support and positive future emotions, the mediating role of self-esteem and moderating role of migration background*

Variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	Sig.												
Age	-.01	.02	-.01	.65	.00	.01	.01	.84	.00	.01	.01	.79	.00	.01	.01	.85
Gender <sup>a</sup>	.09	.04	.06	.03	.08	.04	.05	.06	-.01	.04	-.01	.72	.08	.04	.05	.07
Family Affluence	.10	.04	.08	.01	.07	.03	.05	.06	.04	.03	.03	.20	.06	.03	.05	.06
Migration Background <sup>b</sup>	.13	.05	.07	.01	.12	.05	.07	.02	.01	.05	.00	.91	.12	.05	.07	.02
Family Support					.18	.02	.32	.00	.14	.01	.25	.00	.18	.02	.33	.00
Teacher Support					.19	.03	.18	.00	.15	.03	.14	.00	.20	.03	.19	.00
Self-esteem									.19	.01	.25	.00				
Family Support * Migration Background													.00	.03	.00	.96
Teacher Support * Migration Background													-.03	.07	-.02	.63

Note. Dependent Variable: Positive Future Emotions <sup>a</sup> reference group was girls. <sup>b</sup> reference group was native adolescents

Table 5

*Regression analyses for associations between family / teacher support and negative future emotions, the mediating role of self-esteem and moderating role of migration background*

Variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	Sig.												
Age	.06	.02	.11	.00	.05	.02	.09	.00	.05	.02	.09	.00	.05	.02	.09	.00
Gender <sup>a</sup>	-.04	.05	-.02	.44	-.02	.05	-.01	.61	.06	.04	.04	.17	-.02	.05	-.01	.65
Family Affluence	-.09	.04	-.07	.02	-.06	.04	-.04	.14	-.03	.04	-.02	.37	-.06	.04	-.04	.13
Migration Background <sup>b</sup>	-.03	.06	-.12	.63	-.02	.05	-.01	.79	.09	.05	.05	.09	.01	.05	-.01	.79
Family Support					-.18	.02	-.30	.00	-.14	.02	-.24	.00	-.20	.02	-.33	.00
Teacher Support					-.15	.03	-.13	.00	-.11	.03	-.10	.00	-.15	.04	-.13	.00
Self-esteem									-.17	.02	-.31	.00				
Family Support * Migration Background													.06	.04	.05	.11
Teacher Support * Migration Background													-.02	.08	-.01	.84

Note. Dependent Variable : Negative Future Emotions. <sup>a</sup> reference group was girls. <sup>b</sup> reference group was native adolescents

## Discussion

This study aimed to examine the association between support provided by family / teachers and adolescent future orientations, as well as the mediating role of self-esteem in this association. Additionally, this research set out to discover whether having a migration background moderated the link between social support and future orientations. Results showed a direct positive association between family support and higher future expectations, more positive future emotions and less negative emotions in the future. Similar associations were found for teacher support, although associations with the three indicators of future orientations were considerably weaker. Self-esteem explained a small part of the associations between social support and future orientations. In contrast to expectations, results showed no significant moderating role of migration background in the relationships between social support and future orientations.

Consistent with previous research (Schmidt et al 2016), results showed that higher levels of social support were associated with a more positive outlook of the future. An explanation for this may be that significant adults in the proximal environment offer support that influences an adolescent's future orientations in a multitude of ways (Corte, et al., 2020). An example of such support arises in the form of supportive interactions that provide validation, acceptance, encouragement and offer a source of self-knowledge (Sica, et al., 2016). These interactions may be internalised by adolescents (Harter, 1990) and the subsequent feelings of support and optimism may lead to a more positive view that future orientations can be achieved (Massey et al, 2008). Furthermore, these interactions provide adolescents the opportunity to talk with significant adults about the future, envisioning and preparing for possible future scenarios (Silva & Corse, 2018). Such highly personal and intense interactions may be more frequent and directly influential in the family home due to the immediacy of connection and the minimal boundaries between family members. This allows future orientations to be discussed and supported unreservedly, in comparison to the possible professional and formal boundaries associated with teacher-student relationships. This might explain our finding that family support was, comparably, more strongly associated with future orientations. Indeed, Irwin (2009) reported that adolescents' perception of emotional support from their families was the most valuable resource in believing that future aspirations were achievable. Teacher support should still be considered an important resource when adolescents conceptualise the future. However, it is possible that the future orientations and goals that are

promoted in the school setting are centred around academic success (Thijs & Fleischmann, 2014), rather than the additional emotional expectations that were examined in this study.

The results of this study showed that self-esteem partially explained the relationship between family / teacher support and future orientations. A potential reason for this finding was that social support was not strongly associated with the concept of self-esteem. Although the association was not strong, our results did reveal that higher family and teacher support was associated with higher self-esteem. These results are in line with McCabe and Barnett (2000), who propose that the perception of social support may be internalised and incorporated into the self-concept. For the second part of the mediation analysis, results showed that higher self-esteem was associated with more positive future orientations. These findings give support to previous research that suggests displaying higher levels of self-esteem in youth is strongly related to more positive expectations about the future (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2008; Thompson & Zuroff, 2010; Snyder & Lopez, 2005). A possible explanation for this is that present self-concept influences adolescents' future outcome expectations (Nurmi, 1991). More broadly, the findings of this mediation analysis highlight the interaction of multiple levels of influence when forming future orientations (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). As although the findings revealed a small association between social support and self-esteem, our results suggest they are both independently important to adolescent future orientations. Therefore, in parallel with Iovu and colleagues (2018), the implications of this research provide support for avoiding the consideration of future orientations as a product of one variable and instead recognise that they are dynamically formed by multiple influences, both on the individual and ecological level.

Moreover, our findings suggest that migration background did not moderate the relationship between family / teacher support and future orientations. It was hypothesised that social support may be a more influential factor in the promotion of positive future orientations for adolescents with a migration background due to previous research outlining the additional societal and individual challenges they may face (Dimitrova et al., 2016; Schierup, et al., 2015). However, our findings were not in line with these notions. In fact, results revealed that adolescents with a migration background were significantly more likely to perceive positive future emotions than adolescents without such a background. As such, our results can be seen in a positive light as they suggest that having a migration background does not require increased levels of social support to achieve more positive future orientations. This result may point to the resilience of migrant individuals, a theory which has been explained through the immigrant paradox (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). This theory outlines that those with a migration background

are likely to conceptualise a better future than their native counterparts despite the apparent challenges they face. This may be due to the migrant families belonging to a selective group that move country to pursue upward social mobility, an optimistic view that is shared intergenerationally (Heath et al., 2008). An alternative possible explanation for this finding is that The Netherlands, as a host country, provides equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of migration background. This equal opportunity perspective can be supported by the low unemployment rates in The Netherlands and may give confidence to all young adolescents that they can work in the future and pursue their positive future orientations (Nickell & Van Ours, 2000).

Strengths of this research include a relatively large sample in an appropriate adolescent age group in The Netherlands. Additionally, research on this topic is moderately scarce and therefore this study offers an important contribution to this field of research. The main limitation of this study was the cross-sectional research design. This methodological shortcoming prevents any comment on the causal links between social support and future orientations. In other words, it is difficult to decipher whether social support leads to higher future orientations, or whether it is higher future orientations that lead to higher levels of social support. Future research should aim to overcome this methodological issue by employing the use of longitudinal data. Also, this study used data collected from only three proximally located schools, offering the same level of educational provision. Future studies may benefit from samples with more eclectic educational backgrounds. Methodological issues arise in the measurement of self-esteem, which was represented by a single item. This could be too simplistic a measurement for a complex emotional understanding. Finally, whilst examining teacher support, this study may have overlooked important influences in the school setting, such as peer support. Future research should consider the inclusion of such variables.

## **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the limitations, this study indicated the importance of social support in the associations with adolescents' future orientations, irrespective of migration background. Family support was more strongly associated with future orientations in comparison with teacher support. Although self-esteem partially explained these relationships, it should be considered as an independently important variable in the association with adolescent future orientations. Practical interventions aiming to improve adolescent current and future behaviour may wish to promote positive future orientations by targeting ecological and individual

influences. That is, working together with families and teachers to bolster support networks and promote the growth of adolescent self-esteem, to create a more positive outlook on the future.

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### **Appendix 1: Interdisciplinarity of Research**

In line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1989), this research recognises that adolescent's development is determined by several different levels of influence. From the proximal environment to the larger societal and cultural influences; ecological systems inevitably interact, and influence adolescents' lives. Therefore, when contributing to the research field of Youth Studies, and answering the question 'to what extent does self-esteem mediate the association between family and teacher support and future expectations', it is imperative to adopt an interdisciplinary approach as this encompasses the different levels of influence. By drawing on theoretical perspectives from across the spectrum of social sciences, this research aims to approach the research question from the intrapersonal level, the interpersonal level and observe social influence on an individual. All of these perspectives are important for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the potential problems at hand relating to future expectations.

In order to better understand the different levels of influence, and in turn the interdisciplinarity of this research, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1989) will be explained further. Firstly, the individual is of particular importance. This is because natural biological influences, such as puberty and ageing, influence an individual's development and personality traits. In this research, these individual characteristics are important to recognise as they may influence self-esteem, family and teacher relationships and future expectations in general. Additionally, individual characteristics such as migrant background are of particular interest in this research.

According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1989), this research proposition can mostly be found on the Microsystem level. On this level, Bronfenbrenner describes the interactions between the individual and the immediate environment, such as parents and teachers, and how they interact to shape development. In relation to future expectations, the interpersonal interactions from the proximal environment can be seen to be very influential and will be investigated in more detail. This research focuses primarily on family and teacher support and how this may shape adolescents' future expectations through promoting feelings of confidence and self-esteem. This level of influence highlights how the microsystem interacts with the individual.

The Mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) must also be considered for this research question as this level observes how elements of the Microsystem (in this case teacher and

families) interact with each other and in turn influence the individual. Furthermore, the Exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) must also be considered as; although the adolescents will not be directly involved in this interaction, the influence may still be felt on an individual level. For example, contrasting levels of support from parents and teachers may affect the feelings of individual self-esteem.

The Macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) includes the larger attitudes and ideologies of the contextual cultures and society and considers how this influences the individual. The governmental policies and cultural attitudes of The Netherlands towards migrants may be found in the Macrosystem. This holds particular importance when investigating the moderation effect of having a migrant background on the formation's future expectations. In addition, government funding for schools that offers support in terms of student wellbeing programs may be determined on this level and may in turn influence the perspective of teacher support.

Finally, when looking at the sociohistorical context or Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), we must consider potential cohort and period effects. This may be true when thinking of the Covid-19 pandemic and how this influences self-esteem, strains, or strengthens family relationships and may also result in perceived distance from teachers. It may also be worth considering factors that influence future expectations of this cohort in terms of political context and wider societal context.