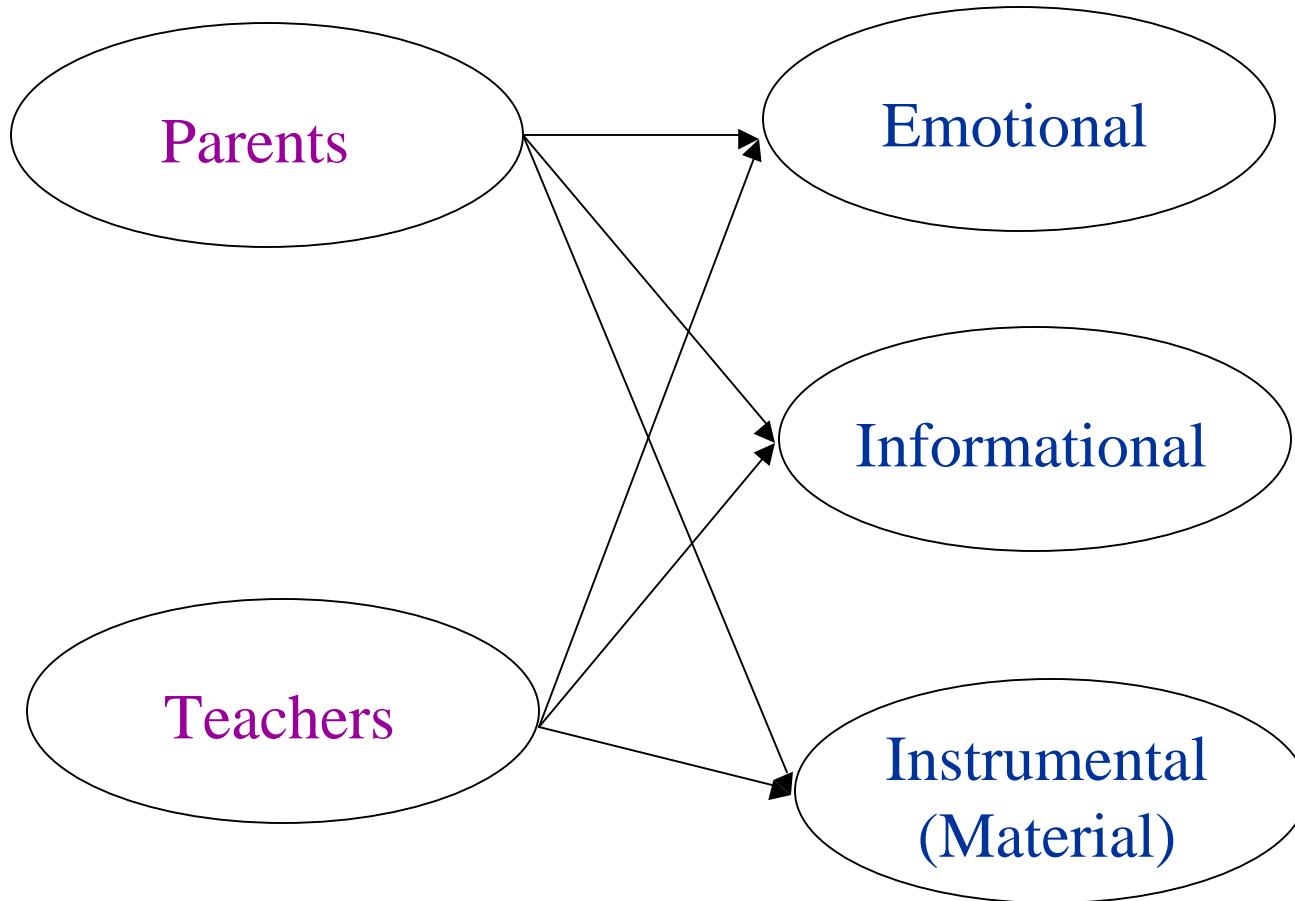


**What do I want to be when I grow up?": Role of parent and teacher support in enhancing students' academic efficacy and educational expectations**

## Sources of Support

## Types of Support



## Hypotheses

1. Emotional support from parents is more important than informational support in enabling students to feel more academically efficacious in school.
2. Informational support is more important than emotional support in enabling students to feel more knowledgeable about their future.
3. Both informational and emotional supports are important in decreasing students' skepticism about the value of getting an education for their future and enhancing students' educational expectations.
4. Students who receive informational support from both parents and teachers will feel less skeptical about the value of getting an education for their future and have higher educational expectations than students who receive informational support from only one of the sources.
5. Students who receive informational support from either parents or teachers will feel less skeptical about the value of getting an education for their future and have higher educational expectations than students who do not receive such support from either source.

## **Participants**

Participants were 453 students from three school districts involved in a longitudinal study of school transitions. The participants included in this study were those students who had data at eighth grade in middle school, as well as ninth grade in high school. The sample used in the analyses was 40% European American and 60% African American. Students from other ethnic groups were excluded because they constituted a very small percentage of the total sample (7%). There were approximately equal proportions of males (52%) and females (48%) in the sample. The communities from which participants were drawn were primarily low to middle class, with 38% of the students in the sample receiving free or reduced-fee lunch.

# Measures

## Clustering Variables

- Parents capability to help with problems in school (Emotional support).
- Parents as sources of information about the future (Informational support).
- Teachers as sources of information about the future (Informational support).

## Outcome variables

- Academic efficacy (math).
- Skeptical beliefs about education.
- Knowledge about preparing for the future.
- Future educational expectations

## The Four Clusters

- **Cluster 1:** A group that perceived a low level of emotional support from parents and low levels of informational support from both parents and teachers (13%).
- **Cluster 2:** A group that perceived a higher than average level of emotional support and lower than average levels of informational support from parents and high level of informational support from teachers (28%).
- **Cluster 3:** A group that perceived a slightly below average level of emotional support and low informational support from parents and high levels of informational support from teachers (26%).
- **Cluster 4:** A group that perceived a higher than average level of emotional support from parents and high levels of informational support from parents and teachers (32%).

## **Analysis**

We conducted ANCOVAs using these clusters as between subject factors along with ethnicity and gender.

For academic efficacy and skeptical beliefs about education we covaried out eighth grade levels from each ninth grade outcome, so that we were looking at the change in the outcome over the transition into high school.

For students' knowledge about preparing for the future and their educational expectations, we covaried out eighth grade GPA.

All ANCOVA analyses included follow-up pairwise comparisons of the cluster means.

## Results

- Change in efficacy from eighth to ninth grade was significantly greater for students who reported that both parents and teachers were good sources of information (cluster 4:  $\underline{M} = 4.59$ ) than for students in the other three groups (all  $ps < .05$ ).
- Students who reported high levels of information from both parents and teachers (cluster 4:  $\underline{M} = 4.36$ ) reported significantly more knowledge about what they needed to do in order to succeed than did any of the other three clusters (all  $ps < .001$ ). Students who perceived low levels of informational support from parents and teachers (cluster 1:  $\underline{M} = 3.13$ ), reported significantly less knowledge than students in the other three groups (all  $ps < .001$ ).
- Students who perceived low emotional support from parents (cluster 1:  $\underline{M} = 2.58$ ) displayed the sharpest increase in skepticism about the value of school across the transition to high school. Furthermore, this increase in skepticism differed significantly from that of each remaining cluster grouping (all  $ps < .01$ ).
- Students who reporting receiving low levels of parental emotional and informational support (Cluster 1:  $\underline{M} = 3.77$ ) had significantly lower educational expectations than did students in the remaining three groups.



## Discussion

Our findings indicate that students who reported receiving low parental emotional support and lower than average information from both parents and teachers (Cluster 1), fared the least well on the outcomes we examined. Conversely, when students reported average or above average levels of parents and/or teachers as good sources of information, outcomes improved. While students who received who reported above average levels of all three types of support (cluster 4) showed the most adaptive pattern of outcomes on the factors we examined, students who reported some type of teacher informational support fared better than students without teacher informational support. Not surprisingly, the group with all three types of support reported the most academic efficacy, knowledge about the future, and highest educational expectations. In addition, they were the least skeptical regarding the value of education for their future.