

Gendered Messaging and GPA

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Overview

Despite historic stereotypes that men tend to outperform women academically, currently women have been outperforming men academically, even in STEMs areas (Buchmann & Diprete, 2006; Halpern et al., 2007, Rahafar et al., 2016). Here, we consider whether the current reality has changed the historic stereotype threat of gender in academics:

- *Do parental figures' promotion of traditional gender roles correlate with academic performance in current undergraduates Such that **higher** traditional gendered messages from parental figures will be associated with **higher** GPA in women?*

Methods

Participants: Undergraduates (34F, 13M) completed an online survey

Measures:

- We asked participants about the messages they received from parental figures regarding gender using the Modified Child Gender Socialization Scale (**MCGSS**, Blakemore, Owen, & Hill, 2008). The scale was divided into two subscales assessing gendered messages on A) toys and activities and b) education and gender-appropriate behavior. **Higher** scores reflect **more** traditional messages.
- We measured participants gender values and expectations within participants using Attitudes toward Women Scale for Adolescents (**AWSA**; Galambos et al. 1985). **Higher** scores indicated **less** traditional values.

Meeting Link: <https://meet.google.com/bxh-arjy-tvg>

Results

- Results did not support our hypothesis: there was no significant relationship between traditional gender role messages from parents (MCGSS) and GPA in women, overall, or on either subscale.
- However, an exploratory analysis found a negative correlation between parental messages on gender typed toys and GPA in men, results were significant, $r(13) = -.58, p < .05$.
- No correlations with AWSA were found.

Women: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

| Variable | M | SD | Correlation to GPA |
|---------------------|-------|------|--------------------|
| GPA | 3.370 | .419 | -- |
| Education/Behavior | 2.513 | .541 | -.169 |
| Toy/Activities | 3.559 | .532 | .021 |
| Overall Traditional | 3.070 | .551 | -.172 |

Men: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

| Variable | M | SD | Correlation to GPA |
|---------------------|-------|------|--------------------|
| GPA | 3.253 | .419 | -- |
| Education/Behavior | 3.810 | .346 | .251 |
| Toy/Activities | 3.699 | .488 | -.580* |
| Overall Traditional | 3.502 | .440 | .296 |

* $p < .05$

Discussion

- There was no supporting evidence of a relationship between traditional gender role messages from parental figures and GPA in women. This lack of relationship suggests the possibility that gendered messages women receive and gender expectations that women hold may not be associated with their academic performance. This could suggest that differences in gender roles beliefs are not related to their academic performance.
- There was not a significant relationship found between personally held gender values, measured by AWSA, and gendered messages from parental figures. This does not correspond with evidence suggesting that there is a degree of transmission from parental figures to children (Epstein & Ward, 2011).
- A significant finding from exploratory analysis was a moderate negative correlation between parental messages for gender-typed toys and GPA for men. Future studies could assess if there is a relationship between parental messages on what toys and activities are acceptable for boys and GPA in males. The investigation could also compare differences in the relationship between different types of toys and GPA.

References

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