DIPARTIMENTO DI PSICOLOGIA
DEI PROCESSI DI SVILUPPO
E SOCIALIZZAZIONE

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Sapienza University of Rome
Ph.D. programme in Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Educational Research

Curriculum in Developmental Psychology
XXXIV cycle

Achievement goals, social goals and future expectations: the role of the family in shaping students' educational paths

Ph.D. candidate: Alessandra Cecalupo
Supervisor: Professor Stefano Livi
Co-Supervisor: Professor Fiorenzo Laghi

Table of contents

General introduction 5

Chapter 1

Theoretical background 13

1.1 The Italian education system: an overview 13

1.2 National and international records: what do they tell us about students' school adaptation? 15

1.2.1 National records 15

1.2.2 International records 17

1.3 Motivation in education: theories and conceptualisations 19

1.4 The whys and the aims of learning: an overview of the Achievement Goal theory (AGT) 24

1.5 Beyond the self-referentiality of motivation 34

1.5.1 Research on social goals 37

1.6 The influence of significant others: environments, overlapping spheres, values, expectations and goals 44

1.6.1 Parents and the family on individual and social goals 48

1.7 Conclusions 52

Chapter 2

Study 1 – Parental goals and expectations of further education: the mediating role of high school students' achievement goals and social goals 53

2.1 Introduction 53

2.2 Model and hypotheses 54

2.3 Methods 56

2.3.1 Participants 57

2.3.2 Measures 57

2.4 Results 61

2.5 Discussion 66

Chapter 3

Study 2 – Parental influences, students' motivation and future expectations during the Covid-19 pandemic 71

3.1 Introduction 71

3.2 Model and hypotheses 72

3.3 Methods 74

3.3.1 Participants 75

3.3.2 Measures 75

3.4 Results 77

3.5 Discussion 83

Chapter 4

Study 3 – College students: do parents and families still matter? 85

4.1 Introduction 85

4.2 Model and hypotheses 86

4.3 Methods 88

4.3.1 Participants 89

4.3.2 Measures 89

4.4 Results 93

4.5 Discussion 98

Chapter 5

General discussion and conclusions 102

References 111

Annex A 145

Annex B 148

General introduction

The experience students make of school and scholastic life is continuously moulded by a multitude of intra-psychological, inter-psychological, and contextual factors, that can either enhance or hinder students' well-being, the quality of their life, and their life satisfaction both inside and outside of school.

For instance, scholars have found that the factors contributing to students' quality of school life and school life satisfaction fall in a wide range of interrelated influences, such as their demographic background, academic motivation, expectations regarding the purposes of schooling, and classroom climate (e.g., Mok & Flynn, 2002; Zullig et al., 2010), as well as the quality of the relationships with parents, teachers and classmates and perceived support from them (e.g., King et al., 2006; Zullig et al., 2010). On the other hand, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been particularly interested in analysing students' well-being, which has been conceptualised, in OECD's official records, as a multidimensional construct that comprises psychological, social, cognitive, and physical factors (OECD, 2013, 2017). In this conceptualisation, the main variables contributing to students' well-being are performance at school, schoolwork-related anxiety, motivation to achieve, expectations of further education, and the quality of relationships students have with significant others, both at school and outside of school.

In light of the above, given the important role that relationships with significant others, motivation to achievement, and expectations about the future have been often found to play in influencing students' adaptation, the present doctoral dissertation has specifically focused on these three main domains.

Motivation to achieve, parental influences and future expectations. OECD reports (e.g., OECD, 2013, 2017) define achievement motivation as "one of the most important ingredients of achievement, both in school and in life" (OECD, 2017, p. 94). In the field of psychological studies, motivation has been defined as a psychological construct involved in orienting and defining courses of action (Elliot et al., 2017), and as a multidimensional process involved in initiating and sustaining goal-directed behaviours and activities (Schunk et al., 2014). Its importance in shaping human attitudes and behaviours has prompted many scholars to analyse this construct, and conceptualise many theories that, to this day, still help us better understand people's courses of action in many areas of their lives (e.g., Ames, 1992; Bandura, 1982; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles, 1983; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1985; Weiner, 1985). Many of these theories have been particularly useful in giving important insight into how motivational processes might impact students' lives and adaptation in educational settings. While some of these theories focus on the role of needs in shaping students' motivation and posit that motivational orientations depend on the satisfaction of certain basic needs (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000), other major theories generally focus – albeit in different ways – on the cognitive aspects underlying motivational processes, such as values, beliefs, and perceptions regarding

learning, competences, and abilities (see Martin & Dowson, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014). Aside from the core aspects that characterise each motivational theory, one feature that can be found in all of them is the importance given to interpersonal relationships with significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, peers) and contextual requests in shaping motivational orientations and goals. After all, as Maehr (2008) pointed out, motivation to achievement is "largely socio-psychological in nature" (Maehr, 2008, p. 918).

The studies presented in this dissertation draw upon the Achievement Goal theory (AGT, Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1975; Elliot, 1999; Nicholls, 1976), which was developed with the purpose of understanding the aims that bring students to engage in achievement tasks and face academic challenges (Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Elliot et al., 2011). Over the years, the theory has undergone numerous revisions (see Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot et al., 2011) and, to these days, the 2x2 model of achievement goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001) is one of the most supported in this theoretical framework. The 2x2 model posits that achievement goals are defined by two main attributes, which are competence (focus on mastering a task vs. focus on normative standards) and valence (approaching a positive outcome vs. avoiding an undesirable outcome), and that four main types of goals emerge from the combination of the two attributes: mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. Each of these goals holds a specific place in students' constellation of motivational strivings, and they all have specific antecedents and specific consequences (see Bardach et al., 2020; Elliot & McGregor,

2001; Urdan & Kaplan, 2020). Each of these aspects will be further discussed in the first chapter.

Since the first theorisations about the AGT, scholars have mostly focused on individualistically-based goals (i.e., task/mastery goals and ego/performance goals), giving less attention to the goals that emerge from students' relationships with significant others. These goals, generally referred to as social goals (Urdan & Maehr, 1995), have been defined in numerous ways (e.g., Allen, 1986; Horst et al., 2007; Lochman et al., 1993). However, the definition that best fits how motivational goals are conceptualised in the AGT is Urdan and Maehr's (1995) one, which defines social goals as the "perceived social purposes of trying to achieve academically" (Urdan & Maehr, 1995, p. 232; see also Kaplan & Maehr, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Between the late 1990s and the early 2000s, research on social goals has given rise to interesting models (e.g., Maehr & McInerney, 2004; Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004) that helped better define the potential, different components of the construct and understand their consequences. Moreover, aside from analysing these goals' specific influences (e.g., King & McInerney, 2012; King et al., 2012, 2013; Martin & Dowson, 2009; McInerney et al., 2003), some studies also highlighted the importance of studying the reciprocal interactions between social goals and individual goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003). These models and studies, although limited if compared to studies about individual achievement goals, significantly contributed to the study of students' motivation, in all of its forms. However, as further explained in the next chapter, many aspects regarding the

construct of social goals, in particular, still need to be further analysed. One of the aims of the present dissertation is to do so.

Aside from motivational orientations, another focus of this dissertation is the role that parental influences hold for students' academic adaptation. Many psychological theories have widely shown that during children's development, and even during adolescence, late adolescence, and early adulthood, the role of parents is fundamental (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Epstein, 1987, 2018; Rosa & Tudge, 2013). In particular, in the field of educational psychology, parental values, expectations, and goals have been shown to influence students' educational life in many important ways (Barni et al., 2011; Chen & Lan, 1998; Friedel et al., 2007; Gniewosz & Noack, 2012; Gonida et al., 2007; Mantovani, 2013), so much so that their role for their children has been defined as one of "expectancy socialisers" (Frome & Eccles, 1998) and "interpreters of reality" (Jodl et al., 2001). The studies presented in this dissertation focused on understanding how perceived parental goals might influence students' own achievement goals and, ultimately, their future expectations. This aspect of parental influences has been chosen because not many studies have analysed the relationship between parental goals and students' goals – especially social goals. Despite the lack of conspicuous research on this specific aspect, however, the existing studies (e.g., Friedel et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; Urdan et al., 2007) have been particularly useful in providing the foundation for the studies presented in this dissertation.

The final main aim of the studies presented in this work is to analyse how parental influences and students' motivational goals ultimately impact students'

future expectations, both in upper secondary education and tertiary education. Future expectations are another fundamental aspect of students' adaptation to their educational paths (OECD, 2017). They influence students' present and future perceptions, endeavours, and attainments, in a continuous relationship with their self-concept and self-esteem, their achievements, and the level of education they effectively reach (e.g., Agger et al., 2018; Beal and Crockett, 2010; Khattab, 2015; Mantovani, 2013; Mantovani et al., 2018; Perna, 2000). They can be so central in students' belief systems that they often become self-fulfilling prophecies (OECD, 2013, 2017). Future expectations are shaped by numerous personal, interpersonal, and structural factors. In particular, students' significant relationships with family members, peers, and teachers can all play an important role in influencing their expectations (e.g., Agger et al., 2018; DeWitt et al., 2013; OECD, 2017), which renders it necessary to analyse this construct through a social-relational perspective.

The present dissertation: general aims and layout. Drawing from the aforementioned theories, models, and bodies of research, the present doctoral dissertation was born with the aim to contribute to our understanding of how parental influences, students' achievement goals (both in their individual and social forms), and students' future expectations might be related with one another. In particular, the following general aims were considered:

1. Analysing the existing literature about social goals and identifying the main types of socially-driven goals students might develop in relation to their parents and families;

2. Understanding how perceived parental goals relate to different types of individual and social goals;
3. Understanding how students' individual and social goals might mediate the relationship between perceived parental goals and students' future expectations.

With these aims in mind, the dissertation was structured as follows:

Chapter 1. A brief overview of the Italian school system and the data about Italian students' school adaptation and educational paths, retrieved from national and international records, will be presented. The main motivational theories in education will then be discussed, with a specific focus on the Achievement Goal theory (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Urdan & Kaplan, 2020), which is the theoretical framework underpinning the studies presented in this dissertation. Studies about achievement goals and social goals will be presented, and their findings analysed in depth. The role of parents and the family in shaping students' motivation and consequent outcomes will also be discussed.

Chapter 2. The first study of this research will be presented in the second chapter. In this study, the role of achievement goals and social goals in mediating the relationship between perceived parental goals and high school students' expectations of further education was tested. Results, implications, and limitations will be discussed.

Chapter 3. The second study will be presented in the third chapter. This study was aimed at testing whether the same effects found in Study 1 would emerge for

students attending the first year of upper-secondary school during the first months of the Coronavirus outbreak in Italy, when a lockdown was imposed and students attended school online. Results, implications, and limitations will be discussed.

Chapter 4. The third study will be presented in the fourth chapter. The role of achievement goals and social goals in mediating the relationship between parental goals and college students' future expectations (i.e., expectations to achieve job-related goals) was tested. Results, implications, and limitations will be discussed.

Chapter 5. A general discussion about the findings, alongside general conclusions regarding their theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and future directions, will be presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 1

Theoretical background

1.1 The Italian education system: an overview

The Italian education system is a public State system, where State schools are directly financed by the State. The State is in charge of organising the educational system with the joint action of regions, local authorities and single schools, all of which hold specific competencies and responsibilities.

Despite the education system being mostly a public State system, private and public organisations can institute non-State Schools, which can be either *scuole paritarie*, which are equal to State schools, or *scuole non paritarie*, which cannot issue qualifications. Therefore, students who attend these types of private schools must take an examination at the end of each cycle.

The education system is composed of different levels and cycles, open to all Italian students, and to foreign students as well. ECEC (early childhood education and care), which is not compulsory, is offered to children aged from 0 to 3 years (*servizi educativi per l'infanzia*) and, at pre-primary schools, to children aged from 3 to 6 years. Education becomes compulsory for 6-year-old children and stays compulsory until pupils turn 16 years old. Compulsory education comprises primary

education (*scuola primaria*), lower secondary education (*scuola secondaria di I grado*), and the first two years of the second cycle of education.

Children can start attending primary education at 6 years of age, and it lasts 5 years. At the end of this first cycle of education, students can access lower secondary education, which lasts 3 years, without a final examination. Instead, at the end of lower secondary education, students have to pass the final state examination in order to access the second cycle of education. The first two years of this educational cycle are compulsory, and students can choose to pursue either the upper secondary school education (*scuola secondaria di II grado*) or the regional vocational training system (IFP). Within the upper secondary school education, students can choose to attend either *licei*, technical or vocational programmes. Each course generally lasts 5 years, at the end of which students who pass the final examination gain access to higher education.

Higher education is offered by numerous types of institutes, such as universities, higher education for art, music and dance (AFAM) institutions or higher technical institutes. Each type of institution has its own criteria for admission, its own structure and offers specific programmes. Universities, for instance, can be both public and private and offer degree programmes for numerous disciplines. Through universities, students can obtain an Undergraduate or first-level degree (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree), a Graduate or second-level degree (Equivalent to a Master's degree) and a Postgraduate degree (PhD), which is the highest level of tertiary education. Numerous universities also offer post-graduate, specialisation degree programmes for specific professional pathways.

1.2 National and international records: what do they tell us about students' school adaptation?

1.2.1 National records

The Ministry of Education, University and Research (*Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca* – MIUR) analyses students' paths at each cycle of education, and reports useful information regarding numerous aspects of students' adaptation in school (e.g., track choices, performances, dropout rates). For the purposes of this dissertation, indices regarding upper secondary education and higher education will be discussed.

At the level of upper secondary education, in recent years the distribution of track choices has been fairly stable: each year, half of the students who pass their lower secondary education examination choose to attend *licei*, while the lowest percentage of students chooses to attend vocational schools, a percentage that increases in the southern regions of Italy (MIUR, 2020a). One of the factors that especially influence students' choices is the grade they obtain after the final state examination at the end of lower secondary education. Female students usually obtain higher grades than male students, and Italian students obtain higher grades than students with a migratory background, especially first-generation students (MIUR, 2020a, 2020b).

The number of students who fail to pass each year during upper secondary education is different in each school track: it is, in fact, higher in vocational institutes

than it is in technical schools and *licei*. Students with an immigrant background tend to fail more than native students (MIUR, 2019, 2021).

Dropout rates are higher during the first two years of the secondary cycle of education, which is when compulsory education ends (MIUR, 2019, 2021). The first year is, usually, the most selective, and it causes the highest percentage of dropouts. This happens in each school track. However, dropout rates are higher in vocational and technical schools compared to *licei*; moreover, they are higher in southern regions of Italy. Students with a migratory background (especially first-generation students) show higher percentages of dropout rates, and the same goes for male students compared to female students (MIUR, 2019, 2020b, 2021).

Concerning higher education, in the last years there has been an increase in the number of students who decide to enrol in university courses, after a period of slight decrease. This number, however, varies in different parts of Italy: universities in Northern Italy have, in fact, seen a greater increase in their number of students compared to universities in Southern Italy. In general, however, the majority of enrolled students usually obtain their high school diploma in *licei*, and the type of school they attended (e.g., classical lyceum, scientific lyceum, vocational school) strongly influences the type of university they choose. In the last years, the number of female students has generally exceeded the number of male students. Students with a migratory background still constitute a very small percentage of university students, although this very percentage has been slightly increasing over the years.

With regard to students' educational paths during tertiary education, private universities usually have a larger percentage of students who obtain their degree.

Moreover, with regard to university courses that offer a first-level degree (*Laurea Triennale*) and a second-level degree (*Laurea Magistrale*), the percentage of students who obtain their *Laurea Magistrale* is lower than the percentage of students who obtain their *Laurea Triennale*, meaning that a smaller number of students usually completes the cycle of post-secondary education. These data as well generally vary depending on the area of Italy considered[1].

1.2.2 International records

International records as well give us insightful information about students' paths in the Italian school system. Information retrieved from the OECD records enables us to know where Italy stands, compared to the other OECD countries, in relation to some main indicators of students' well-being, which is conceptualised as a multidimensional construct emerging from the interactions among psychological, social, cognitive, and physical factors (OECD 2017, 2019b). In particular, in PISA, some of the main indicators of students' well-being are performance at school, schoolwork-related anxiety, motivation to achieve, expectations of further education and sense of belonging at school. Familial and parental influences, as well as the use students make of their time outside of school, are also investigated. Moreover, all of these factors are analysed in their relation to students' overall life satisfaction.

---

[1] All the data discussed can be retrieved from:
1. https://anagrafe.miur.it/php5/home.php;
2. http://dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=INDUNIV;
3. http://ustat.miur.it/.

Trends in students' mean performances in reading, mathematics and science were assessed for countries that participated in PISA in multiple years (OECD, 2019a). Over the last years, Italian students showed improvements in their performance in mathematics, while their performances in reading and science showed stable trends, without improving nor declining.

On average, Italian students reported medium-to-high levels of school-related anxiety (OECD, 2017). They also reported high levels of motivation to achieve, and male students, in particular, reported a greater sense of ambition and competitiveness than female students (OECD, 2017). With regard to future expectations, the highest percentage of students reported they expected to complete university, but said percentage placed below average across OECD countries (OECD, 2017).

Concerning the main aspects of students' social life, the vast majority of Italian parents reported that they are fairly involved in their children's lives, both at school and at home, in almost all of the aspects analysed in the PISA questionnaire; similarly, Italian students reported that their parents tend to show high levels of interest in their school activities (OECD, 2017, 2019b). Regarding students' sense of belonging at school, Italy showed, on average, similar trends to most of the other countries, with girls, disadvantaged students and students with an immigrant background reporting lower levels of sense of belonging (OECD 2017, 2019).

Regarding students' overall satisfaction with their lives, based on the results of PISA 2015 and 2018 (OECD, 2017, 2019b), Italy placed below the average level of life satisfaction reported by students in all of the OECD countries. This surely has to do with the way, in each country, life satisfaction relates with the aforementioned

indices of well-being. As the reports specify, however, large variations in students' self-reported levels of life satisfaction can be noted within each country (OECD 2017, 2019), regardless of the existent differences between cultures and countries. More specific factors operating at the individual level, or at the level of immediate social environments and structural aspects, might have a role in generating differences among how satisfied students within each country are.

This is also true for all of the aforementioned indicators. These reports surely give us insightful information about numerous important factors that influence students' lives in school; however, each of the variables considered is way more multifaceted and operates in ways that are complex and specific. As further explained below, this is particularly true when considering students' motivation, its different components and how each of these aspects interacts with familial influences and other school-related outcomes.

1.3 Motivation in education: theories and conceptualisations

Motivation is a psychological construct involved in orienting and defining courses of action (Elliot et al., 2017). It is, in particular, a multidimensional process that helps initiate and sustain goal-directed activities (Schunk et al., 2014). Given its importance in defining individuals' drive to set goals and maintain behaviours aimed at attaining those goals, over the years numerous researchers in the field of psychology have proposed theories to explain how motivational processes might work.

Many theories have focused on the role of needs and attributions in shaping motivational strivings and consequent behavioural patterns. Some of the most influential theories that helped deepen our knowledge about human motivation are McClelland's theory (1985), which states that individuals behave following their needs of either affiliation, achievement, or power; Murray's (1938) theory, which states that personalities develop around different levels of motives, or needs, categorised in primary needs (mostly biological in nature) and secondary needs (e.g., need for independence, need for achievement); and Maslow's theory, (Maslow, 1943, 1970a, 1970b) which particularly contributed to the field of Humanistic Psychology, and states that human motivation, and individuals' self-realisation are tightly linked to their needs, conceived as universal, and organised in hierarchical levels (basic needs, psychological needs, and self-fulfilment needs).

Regarding motivation in education, the OECD (2013, 2018) has defined it as one of the fundamental factors that influence achievement, wellbeing, and adaptation. Furthermore, academic motivation has been the focus of numerous psychological theories (see Cook & Artino Jr, 2016; Schunk et al., 2014). Five contemporary theories have been particularly important in shading light on specific motivational processes in educational settings:

1. *Social-cognitive theory* (Bandura, 1982, 2001, 2005). Social-cognitive theory strongly opposes the idea that learning happens merely through the reinforcement of behaviours. Instead, it posits that it mainly stems from individuals' interactions with their environments and vicarious experiences, in a continuous interplay between the person, their behaviour, and

environmental factors (triadic reciprocal determinism; Bandura, 1978, 2003). Therefore, in this conceptualisation, learning is seen as an active process, and motivation to learn is seen as tightly linked to beliefs about self-efficacy, emotional and cognitive factors, learning environments, and relations with significant others.

2. *Attribution theory* (Weiner, 1985, 1994, 2010). Attribution theory posits that individuals strive to search for cause-effect relationships to explain outcomes and events. To this aim, they resort to processes of attribution and interpret events based on the dimensions of locus (internal vs. external), stability (fixed vs. changeable), and controllability (within vs. out of one's control). The ways these dimensions combine create specific kinds of attributions that impact cognitive, affective and behavioural responses. In educational settings, they impact students' motivational processes and consequent outcomes (Graham, 1991; Graham & Taylor, 2016). Students' attributional styles can be shaped by significant others' own ways of interpreting and explaining success and failure, as well as their feedbacks and reinforcements (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Weiner, 1985). Significant others' inferences and attributions about the cause of specific academic events are also relevant in shaping students' cognitions, emotions, and behaviours towards said events (Hareli & Weiner, 2002; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

3. *Expectancy-value theory* (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995, 2020; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Recent formulations of the expectancy-value theory, drawing upon Atkinson's (1957, 1964) pivotal

work, posit that students' motivation to choose and perform tasks is determined by their expectancies for success and the value succeeding holds for them (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Expectancies and values are influenced by numerous factors, such as students' achievement-related beliefs and task-specific beliefs, past performances and affective memories, significant others' beliefs, values and behaviours, cultural and socio-contextual features (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). This theory as well sees the role of significant others – and, particularly, significant relationships – as a fundamental, if not decisive, factor in the development of students' expectancies of success and task values (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020).

4. *Achievement Goal theory* (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988). Achievement Goal theory focuses on students' perceptions about the reasons why they engage in academic tasks (Pintrich, 2000a; Urdan & Maehr, 1995). It posits that motivation can be oriented at gaining competence (task/mastery goals) and/or at demonstrating ability (ability/performance goals) and that both these orientations can be expressed through approach and avoidance attitudes (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Barker et al., 2002). The resulting four main types of goals (mastery-approach goals; mastery-avoidance goals; performance-approach goals; performance-avoidance goals) hold unique influences on educational outcomes and are fostered by specific socio-contextual factors (Bardach et al., 2020; Urdan & Kaplan, 2020). Parents and teachers' own goal orientations, as well as the motivational orientations shared in the classroom, are all posited to have an impact on students' goals, along with the

quality of the relationships students have with each of these groups of significant others (e.g., Bardach et al., 2020; Friedel et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2007).

5. *Self-determination theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000). Similarly to some of the classical theories of motivation, Self-determination theory underlines the importance of needs in shaping students' academic motivation. In particular, it posits that motivational orientations are largely based on the satisfaction of three basic needs, which are the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness. It states that motivation moves along a continuum, and it can range from fully external (controlled and non-internalised) to fully internal (autonomous). Autonomous motivation is associated with numerous adaptive outcomes (e.g., Ratelle et al., 2007; Taylor, 2014; Vansteenkiste et al., 2009), and it is fostered by the satisfaction of the innate needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In particular, Self-determination theory especially stresses the importance of significant others, and their efforts to satisfy the needs aforementioned, in fostering adaptive forms of motivation (e.g., Alivernini & Lucidi, 2011; Ciani et al., 2010; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Laguardia & Ryan, 2002; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005; Soenens et al., 2007).

Each of these theories has brought its own, relevant contribution to our knowledge about motivation to learn, but areas of conceptual overlap among them can be found. Almost all of these theories explain academic motivation mainly in terms of cognitive processes and all of them focus on students' values and

attributions regarding learning, their perceptions, and beliefs about competence and academic abilities (Schunk et al., 2014). Furthermore, each theory has pointed out the fundamental role of contexts and social aspects in influencing individual motivation, showing how this construct comprises not only intra-psychological factors but also socio-contextual elements (Maehr, 2008; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Schunk et al., 2014).

1.4 The whys and the aims of learning: an overview of the Achievement Goal theory (AGT)

The Achievement Goal theory focuses on understanding the differences among individuals' motivational attitudes, and how said attitudes develop and change (or stay the same) over time and contexts. In particular, its main purpose is to understand the aims that guide students' choices to engage in academic tasks and face academic endeavours (Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Elliot et al., 2011). It conceives achievement goals, or orientations, as cognitive representations of specific desired end-states and criteria related to effort, ability, and success, that influence how individuals approach achievement tasks and respond to them (Ames, 1992; Pintrich, 2000b; Urdan & Kaplan, 2020).

Initially, the first theorists of the AGT drew from theories regarding causal attribution and achievement motives (e.g., McClelland, 1985; Weiner et al., 1972; Weiner, 1985) while trying, at the same time, to overcome their limitations (see Murayama et al., 2012). Dweck's model, Nicholl's model and Ames and Archer's

model were particularly significant in the development of the theory. Dweck's conceptualisation of achievement goals (Diener & Dweck, 1978, 1980; Dweck, 1975, 1986) emerged from her will to identify the antecedents of students' response patterns after failing a task. After noticing that some students exhibited positive responses to task failure, while other students exhibited a pattern of helpless responses, such as decrementing their persistence or showing negative affect, she posited that these responses were fostered by two different types of goals students might have held towards school tasks: learning goals or performance goals. In this conceptualisation, students who hold learning goals view tasks as opportunities to learn and gain competence and failure as a means to gain feedback on their progress, which enables them to respond to failure positively. On the contrary, students who hold performance goals view tasks as opportunities to demonstrate their ability, and failure as a sign they are not able enough, which brings them to show a helpless response pattern to failure. Nicholls's research (Nicholls, 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984) focused on the way students conceptualise ability. He posited that, when children start to distinguish between ability and effort, they start to infer that one can be deemed as able when he/she expends equal or less effort than others and performs the same as them, or outperforms them. He also posited that students might pursue competence either in an undifferentiated way (focusing on effort and learning simultaneously) or in a differentiated way (focusing on outperforming others with minimum effort), and defined these two types of pursuits as, respectively, a state of task involvement and ego involvement. Drawing upon the similarities between Dweck's model and Nicholls's model, Ames and Archer (1988; Ames, 1992) unified these very models into a single theoretical framework that conceptualised the

existence of two main types of achievement goals: *mastery* and *performance* goals. In this conceptualisation, mastery goals refer to valuing learning *per se* and acquiring task proficiency and new competencies. Performance goals, on the other hand, refer to wanting to demonstrate ability and outperform others. Empirical studies based on this conceptualisation showed that mastery goals resulted in a variety of adaptive outcomes, while performance goals often resulted in less clear-cut outcomes, holding both maladaptive and more positive consequences on educational outcomes (e.g., Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988; Harackiewicz & Elliot, 1993; Kaplan & Midgley, 1997; Urdan, 1997). In general, however, mastery goals and performance goals were thought to be opposite and contrasting (Ames, 1992; Ames & Archer, 1988), and individuals were thought to hold mastery goals or performance goals depending on contextual and situational demands (Ames & Archer, 1988).

In the late 90s, numerous researchers (e.g., Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Covington, 2001; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Skaalvik, 1997) introduced the trichotomous variant of the achievement goal framework. In particular, they proposed incorporating approach and avoidance components within performance goals. Hence, the new theoretical framework comprised three types of goals: mastery goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. These researchers believed that considering goals solely in their approach form contrasted with classic achievement motivation theories, which posited that achievement behaviours could be oriented towards either attainment of success or avoidance of failure (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Moreover, they believed that the dichotomous view was less

exhaustive in assessing the impact of mastery and performance goals on scholastic outcomes, especially because it considered mastery goals as the only goals that could guarantee positive outcomes. Contrariwise, studies based on the trichotomous framework showed that both mastery and performance-approach goals might facilitate task engagement and encourage intrinsic motivation. Contrariwise, performance-avoidance goals, which focus on avoiding potential failure, enable the occurrence of processes that weaken and diminish intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994, 1996). These studies also helped deepen the knowledge about performance-approach goals, highlighting how they seem to be more complex than mastery goals and performance-avoidance goals. Performance-approach goals could be considered a channel through which approach tendencies, as well as fear of failure, flow (Elliot & Church, 1997). Whether the former or the latter is activated depends on the type of achievement situation (e.g., a challenging situation with little chance of failure versus a situation that presents a little chance of success) an individual happens to be in (Darnon et al., 2007; Dompnier et al., 2013; Harackiewicz et al., 1998; Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Midgley et al., 2001).

Shortly after the introduction of the trichotomous framework, the 2x2 framework of achievement goals was theorised (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Elliot and McGregor's (2001) work was particularly relevant in pinpointing the two fundamental dimensions underlying achievement goals, which are how competence is defined and the valence attributed to each definition of competence. Competence is defined based on absolute and intrapersonal standards, which refer to mastering a task and fully developing one's knowledge or skill, and normative standards, which

refer to outperforming others. Valence, on the other hand, refers to the "approach vs. avoidance" dimension and implies that competence "is either construed in terms of a positive, desirable possibility (i.e., success) or a negative, undesirable possibility (i.e., failure)" (Elliot & McGregor, 2001, p. 502). If the trichotomous framework had applied the approach-avoidance distinction only to performance goals, numerous researchers tried to identify an avoidance orientation in mastery goals as well and understand how mastery-approach goals and mastery-avoidance goals could differ (e.g., Baranik et al., 2010; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Madjar et al., 2011; Pintrich, 2000a, 2000b; Senko & Freund, 2015; Van Yperen et al., 2009). It was shown that some students might actively try to avoid the failure of task mastering and task understanding, and face academic tasks differently from students who primarily hold mastery-approach goals (Pintrich, 2000a). The studies based on the 2x2 framework showed that, while mastery-approach goals are consistently related to positive outcomes (e.g., positive affective experiences, experiences of deep learning, effort, persistence, high performances), mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goals usually result in negative outcomes, such as surface learning, negative self-perceptions and poor performances (e.g., Baranik et al., 2010; Elliot et al., 1999; Neff et al., 2005; Van Yperen et al., 2009). Numerous studies also showed that performance-approach goals can be related to both positive and negative outcomes (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1994, 1996; Harackiewicz et al., 2002; Midgley et al., 2001; Senko, 2016; Senko & Dawson, 2017; see also Scherrer et al., 2020) showing, once again, how these goals are complex and multifaceted.

The trichotomous model and the 2x2 model of achievement goals also helped better define the achievement goal construct (Elliot et al., 2011). In particular, Elliot and colleagues' body of research contested the lack of precision of the dichotomous model in defining achievement goals, and the revisions of the theory allowed defining achievement goals as the competence-based aims that guide behaviours (e.g., Elliot, 1999, 2005; Elliot et al., 2011; Elliot & Thrash, 2001; see also Urdan & Kaplan, 2020). This more precise definition allowed for greater clarity in identifying and defining the core feature of the goal construct; in turn, it allowed for greater clarity in empirical research, too (Elliot & Fryer, 2008). It also resulted in the development of alternative theoretical achievement goal models, such as the 3x2 model of achievement goals, which especially focuses on the three main components of competence, which are task-based goals, self-based goals, and other-based goals (Elliot et al., 2011). The different conceptualisations of goals in each framework are summarised in *Table 1* below.

Table 1

Theoretical models in the AGT.

Model		*Type of goal*	*Aim of the goal*
Dichotomous models	Dweck, 1975, 1986	Learning	Learning and gaining competence
		Performance	Demonstrating ability
	Nicholls, 1976, 2984	Task-involvement	Pursuing competence through learning
		Ego-involvement	Pursuing competence by outperforming others
	Ames & Archer, 1988	Mastery	Acquiring competence and task proficiency
		Performance	Demonstrating ability and outperforming others
Trichotomous model (Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997)		Mastery	Acquiring competence and task proficiency
		Performance-approach	Demonstrating ability and outperforming others
		Performance-avoidance	Avoiding potential failure, avoiding doing worse than others

2x2 model (Elliot & McGregor, 2001)	Mastery-approach	Acquiring competence and task proficiency
	Mastery-avoidance	Avoiding the failure of task competency and proficiency
	Performance-approach	Demonstrating ability and outperforming others
	Performance-avoidance	Avoiding potential failure, avoiding doing worse than others
3x2 model (Elliot et al., 2011)	Task-approach	Doing well in a task
	Task-avoidance	Avoiding doing poorly in a task
	Self-approach	Doing better than how one has done in the past/normally does in a task
	Self-avoidance	Avoiding doing worse than how one has done in the past/normally does in a task
	Other-approach	Doing better than classmates
	Other-avoidance	Avoiding doing worse than classmates

Achievement goals have been mostly studied in primary and secondary education. However, over the years, many researchers have become concerned with analysing motivational orientations in tertiary education as well. Generally speaking, achievement goals have been found to influence university students similarly to how they influence students at lower levels of education, with mastery-approach goals

being the most adaptive goals with regard to different types of outcomes, and performance goals (performance-approach goals in particular) revealing more complex patterns of influences (e.g., Archer, 1994; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2003; Cano & Berbén, 2009; Chen, 2015; Harackiewicz et al., 1998; Harackiewicz et al., 2008). Furthermore, some variables have been found to mediate or moderate the influence of achievement goals on academic outcomes. For instance, Darnon et al. (2007) found that uncertainty about performance might moderate the effect of performance-approach goals on the performance itself, and uncertainty might render performance-approach goals similar to performance-avoidance goals in their effects. In another study, Darnon et al. (2009) found that the influence of performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals on students' performances in oral exams was mediated by the perceived complexity of the class, and that performance-approach goals helped perceive the class as less difficult compared to performance-avoidance goals.

Interestingly, other studies have taken into account the social aspects, and the potentially related outcomes, linked to achievement goals, focusing on their social value, and on how attributing certain social values to achievement goals actually results in different academic outcomes. Darnon et al.'s (2009) study particularly stressed the ambivalence of achievement goal promotion at university, where teachers' institutional discourse explicitly encourages students to develop mastery goals, but not performance goals, while structural aspects of tertiary education (e.g., the selection process) implicitly encourage students to hold performance-approach goals too. Students were found to be perfectly aware of these aspects, for they

perceived mastery goals as both socially desirable (accepted and positively judged by others) and socially useful (beneficial to succeed and being judged competent), but perceived performance-approach goals as high in social utility, but low in social desirability, and performance-avoidance goals as high in social desirability, and low in social utility. Dompnier et al. (2009) further elaborated on these findings, and found that the relationship between mastery goals and performance is positively mediated by the perceived social utility of these goals, while it is negatively mediated by their perceived social desirability, and Dompnier et al. (2015) also found that this is particularly true for low achievers, who greatly benefit from perceiving the development of mastery goals as socially useful. Moreover, Dompnier and colleagues (2013) found that perceived social utility of performance-approach goals also enhances university students' performances, while their perceived social desirability negatively influences the impact of performance-approach goals on performance. Pulfrey and Butera (2013), in an analysis of how cheating behaviours in university might be related to certain political values, search for approval and performance-approach goals, found that valuing power and achievement, which are neoliberal values of self-enhancement, predicted the motivation to gain social approval. This kind of motivation, in turn, favoured the adoption of performance-approach goals, which resulted in the condoning of cheating.

All of the aforementioned aspects further stress the importance of considering how contexts, and their intrinsic, structural aspects, are fundamental in shaping both the development of achievement goals and their relationships with educational

outcomes. Tertiary education, with its specific characteristics and requests, lends itself well to analysing these interacting influences.

1.5 Beyond the self-referentiality of motivation: socialising achievement goals

The AGT has mostly exclusively focused on individualistically-based goals but, as Eccles et al. (1998) pointed out, categorising achievement goals as task/mastery and ego/performance alone "oversimplifies the complexity of motivation" (Eccles et al. 1998, p. 1032). Students might in fact approach academic endeavours motivated by other kinds of aims as well. Since the 1990s, numerous researchers (e.g., Blumenfeld, 1992, Urdan & Maehr, 1995; Wentzel, 2000) started to point out that students pursue multiple types of goals, both personal and social, and that the importance of considering the multiplicity of said goals is emphasised by the nature of institutionalised education itself, which requires students to pay attention to many different necessities and requests (Wentzel, 2000). However, in the AGT, which is "individualistic in its conceptions" (Blumenfeld, 1992, p. 276), social goals have been traditionally overshadowed by mastery and performance goals, and the existing literature about them still lacks in different aspects.

The studies conducted on this area of inquiry defined social goals in numerous different ways, resulting in a lack of clarity in the development of the construct. Some authors have conceived social goals as individuals' aims in social interactions and situations (e.g., Lochman et al., 1993; Renshaw & Asher, 1983) or

as students' desire to socialise in academic situations (e.g., Allen, 1986). Other authors defined social goals as those goals aimed at attaining social competence (e.g., Horst et al., 2007; Ryan & Shim, 2006) and, from a content perspective, as those goals that are pursued in relation to contextual rules and conventions (Wentzel, 2000). In particular, Wentzel defined both personal and social goals as cognitive representations of what students are trying to achieve and posited that the study of goals should focus on the content of said goals (Wentzel, 2000).

On the other hand, Urdan and Maehr's (1995) definition of social goals is, perhaps, the one that best fits how the AGT conceives goals (King & Watkins, 2012). In fact, Urdan and Maehr defined social goals as the "perceived social purposes of trying to achieve academically" (Urdan & Maehr, 1995, p. 232; see also Kaplan & Maehr, 2007). In this sense, Markus and Kitayama (1991) had already pinpointed a nuance of this definition, stating that socially-oriented goals' main aim is to align the self with significant others' expectations and purposes. However, with Urdan and Maehr's (1995) work, social goals, their potential dimensions, antecedents and consequences, were more specifically defined, and the studies based on it helped better understand these aspects even more. In particular, Urdan and Maehr (1995) defined four main factors, aside from students' age, gender and ethnicity, that can influence the development of certain social goals and their impact on cognitive, emotional and behavioural outcomes:

1. *Type of goal*. Similarly to individual goals (mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, performance-avoidance goals), each type of social goal might have a different

influence on academic and non-academic outcomes. Certain social goals might be more adaptive than others and exert positive influences on different aspects of students' adaptation.

2. *Values of social targets*. If significant others' values and goals generally play a fundamental role in shaping students' motivation, this is particularly true when it comes to the development of social goals. Parents, teachers, and peers' values and goals related to certain academic outcomes can all potentially influence how students orient themselves towards those very outcomes and form their goals related to them.

3. *Meaning*. The development of certain social goals might also depend on the different meanings that achievement and the self in achievement contexts assume in different situations, cultures or developmental stages. Cultures and socio-contextual factors in particular play an important role in framing said meaning (see below).

4. *Goal coordination*. Because social goals are one of the dimensions in the system of achievement goals, the consequences of pursuing certain types of social goals might also depend on their interactions with other types of goals (e.g., task or ability goals) and their convergence, or non-convergence. Dowson and McInerney (2003) particularly underlined the importance of this aspect, and stated that "students' motivation should be conceptualised as a process of managing multiple goals, which may interact in conflicting,

converging, or compensating ways" (Dowson & McInerney, 2003, p. 108).

Some of these aspects can be found in the studies that tried to assess social goals. Many studies have especially focused on the different outcomes related to the different types of goals, and on the different meanings that social goals have based on cultural differences. The attention given to social goals has been particularly useful in deepening our knowledge of motivation in different cultures: numerous studies (e.g., King et al., 2012, 2013; King et al., 2017) have in fact shown the fundamental role that social goals play in shaping students motivation in collectivistic countries, where significant others are particularly important in students' lives, and the self and all the aspects related to the self are socially constructed.

1.5.1 Research on social goals: conceptualisations, findings and limitations

In the early 2000s, research on social goals has drawn upon two main, tightly linked theoretical frameworks, which are the Personal Investment theory (Maehr & McInerney, 2004; King et al., 2017) and Dowson and McInerney's (2001, 2003, 2004) five-factor model of social goals. Both of these theoretical perspectives drew upon Urdan and Maehr's (1995) pivotal work and identified specific dimensions of social goals then analysed in other sets of studies. The types of social goals analysed in each theory are summarised in *Table 2* (see below).

The Personal Investment (PI) theory (Maehr & McInerney, 2004) posits that students' academic experience depends on three main factors: sense of self, facilitating conditions, and achievement goals. For what concerns achievement goals, the theory posits that students' school motivation is especially influenced by mastery and performance goals (which are defined as they are defined in the Achievement Goal theory), extrinsic goals, which focus on the attainment of either material reward or praise for engaging in school work, and social goals. Social goals are declined, in the PI theory, into affiliation goals and concern goals, and both of these goals are referred to classmates or peers. The validity of this multidimensional model was supported, and the social goals considered in the model were shown to have positive influences on diverse types of outcomes (e.g., self-concept, self-reliance, affects), even after controlling for the impact of mastery and performance goals (King et al., 2010; King et al., 2012; King & Ganotice, 2013; King & McInerney, 2012).

Concerning Dowson, McInerney and their colleagues' body of research (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004; King & McInerney, 2012; King et al., 2012, 2013; Martin & Dowson, 2009), it provided insightful findings on numerous features of social goals and their impact on academic outcomes. Dowson and McInerney's (2003, 2004) five-factor model has been particularly useful in this sense. Dowson and McInerney identified, through an "inductive, systematic and contextual approach" (Dowson & McInerney, 2003, p. 92), five main types of social goals:

1. *Social affiliation* goals, which aim, through achievement, at building or maintaining relationships with peers, or enhancing a sense of belonging to a group of peers or friends;

2. *Social approval* goals, which aim at gaining teachers or parents' approval through achievement;

3. *Social concern* goals, which aim at helping peers/friends with their school work and assisting them in their personal development;

4. *Social responsibility* goals, which aim at meeting social role obligations and interpersonal or moral commitments through achievement;

5. *Social status* goals, which aim at attaining wealth or social position in later life.

Dowson and McInerney's (2003) study identified cognitive, affective and behavioural components for each goal, drawn both from observations and interviews with the students, and was pivotal to the development of the Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S, Dowson & McInerney, 2004). Compared to other scales used to measure social goals, such as the General Achievement Goal Orientation Scale (GAGOS, e.g., King et al, 2013; McInerney et al., 2003) or the Inventory of School Motivation (ISM, e.g., King et al, 2010; McInerney et al., 2001; Watkins et al., 2002), the GOALS-S broadened the range of social goals a single instrument could measure alongside academic goals and learning strategies.

Table 2

Types of social goals in the Personal Investment theory (Maehr & McInerney, 2004) and in the Five-factor model of social goals (Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004).

Theory	*Type of social goal*	*Aim of the goal*	*Social target*
Personal Investment theory (Maehr & McInerney, 2004)	Social Affiliation goals	Belonging to a group when doing schoolwork	Peers/friends
	Social Concern goals	Helping other students with schoolwork	Peers/friends
Five-factor model of social goals (Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004)	Social Affiliation goals	Building/maintaining relationships with peers; enhancing a sense of belonging to a group through achievement	Peers/friends
	Social Approval goals	Gaining teachers or parents' approval through achievement	Teachers and parents
	Social Concern goals	Helping peers/friends with school work; assisting peers/friends in their personal development	Peers/friends
	Social Responsibility goals	Meeting social role/interpersonal obligations and moral commitments through achievement	Peers/friends, teachers, parents
	Social Status goals	Attaining wealth or social position in school/in later life	-

The studies based on these models showed, as a whole, that different types of social goals actually do hold specific influences on school-related outcomes. For instance, endorsing social concern goals was shown to lead to various adaptive outcomes (Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003; King et al., 2010, 2012), and these findings highlighted that students who are prone to help others benefit from the help they give. With regard to social responsibility goals, they were found to be similar to the construct of family obligations (Fuligni et al., 1999; Fuligni, 2001; see also Phinney et al., 2000; Pomerantz et al., 2005; Feliciano & Lanuza, 2016; Van Geel & Vedder, 2011). Social responsibility goals were in fact found to positively support educational outcomes (King et al., 2012); however, it was also shown that when perceived obligations and interpersonal commitments become too pressuring, they could result in less adaptive outcomes (Fuligni et al., 1999; Dowson & McInerney, 2003). Social status goals as well seem to result in both positive and negative outcomes. In fact, in Asian educational settings, they were found to positively influence engagement in school, while they were shown to result in maladaptive educational outcomes in Western countries (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; King et al., 2012; Watkins et al., 2002).

Aside from studying these goals' specific influences, some studies highlighted the importance of analysing the reciprocal interactions between social goals and individual goals. Dowson and McInerney's (2003) qualitative study found that goals in the motivational system can either be in conflict with one another, converge with one another, or compensate for one another. For instance, students

might like studying (mastery goals) but could refrain from putting in the effort if their classmates make fun of them for it (social affiliation goals). On the contrary, other students might put to use their interest in school subjects (mastery goals) to help classmates better understand schoolwork (social concern goals). Other students might want to put the work in even when their classmates do not care for schoolwork (social affiliation goals) to get good grades (performance goals). These findings confirmed Urdan and Maehr's (1995) idea that students' motivation is a process that calls students to manage multiple goals and coordinate their conflicting, converging, or compensating interactions.

All in all, the studies regarding social goals, although limited if compared to studies about individual achievement goals, significantly contributed to the study of students' motivational aims. Dowson and McInerney's (2003, 2004) five-factor model of social goals was particularly useful in this sense. It overcame the limitations of previous models (e.g., Maehr & McInerney, 2004; McInerney et al., 2003; Watkins et al., 2002) by considering a larger number of social goals. In doing so, however, it especially focused on social goals held towards peers and friends: in the model, only social approval goals specifically refer to teachers (4 items) and parents (2 items), and social responsibility goals, while regarding perceived interpersonal or moral obligations, specifically refer to teachers and parents only in 1 item. Hence, if one wants or needs to analyse students' social goals related to a certain group of significant others, especially towards parents or teachers, the scale could be limited. In fact, the studies that specifically focused on the role of parents

and/or teachers had to adapt some items of the scale to their studies' aims (e.g., Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012) and did not use the scale as a whole.

Furthermore, broader categories of social goals (e.g., social approval goals, social responsibility goals, etc.) could be further declined in as many subtypes as the number of potential significant others, and could operate differently depending on the social target they are referred to. This surely is an issue intrinsic to the social goals construct: while mastery and performance goals are easily defined and refer to specific orientations of the self towards task and ability, social goals are far more multifaceted.

Therefore, even though the existing scales have been important in identifying certain categories of social goals and their outcomes, they might not allow focusing on how specific groups of significant others (e.g., parents) foster specific goals related to them. Furthermore, studies about social goals have generally been conducted in Eastern, collectivistic countries (e.g., King et al., 2013; King et al., 2012; King et al., 2017) and, despite having contributed greatly to our understanding of how social goals operate as motivational forces, they leave numerous unanswered questions about how social goals might work for students in different, non-collectivistic countries.

1.6 The influence of significant others: environments, overlapping spheres, values, expectations and goals

The role of significant others in influencing children, adolescents and young adults' development has been widely documented by many influential theories. Bronfenbrenner's (1973, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2001) pivotal Bioecological theory posits that children and adolescents' development must be analysed within the framework of the continuous relationships between individuals and the environment they are embedded in. Continuously revised and expanded by Bronfenbrenner himself, the theory originally conceptualised the environment as an arrangement of four systems, interconnected and enclosed within one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977): the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. The microsystem is the most proximal system the individual is embedded in, where he/she directly interacts with other individuals. The mesosystem is composed of two or more microsystems in interaction with one another. The exosystem incorporates formal and informal social structures that exert their influence on the individual, and are indirectly influenced by the individual, even if he/she does not participate actively in them. Finally, the macrosystem is the society, with its established cultural aspects, in which the individual is developing. Bronfenbrenner (1988) later introduced one more system, the chronosystem, which refers to all the changes that occur over both the ontogenetic time and historical time and influence an individual's development. Moreover, in subsequent reformulations of the theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2001), the concept of proximal processes, defined as the driving forces of human development, was formally

introduced. Proximal processes refer to the reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving human being and the persons, objects, and symbols in his/her immediate environment, and their attributes vary based on the characteristics of both the individual and the environment. In this sense, the interactions among family members, in particular, are fundamental proximal processes. This is why Bronfenbrenner was "intensely interested in the family as an institution" (Rosa & Tudge, 2013, p. 243; see also Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Tudge, 2013).

Similarly, Epstein's theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence (Epstein, 1987, 1992, 1996, 2018), drawing from Bronfenbrenner's body of work, highlights the importance of the interactions of different environments, or spheres, in influencing the development of children and adolescents. In particular, it focuses on the interactions among the family, the school, and the community as a whole. The theory posits that the interactions among these three institutions are subjected to time and to the characteristics and practices of each institution, in a dynamic process that may have positive or negative outcomes. Specifically, exchanges of information, respectful interactions, and common goals between the family and the school benefit children's learning and development greatly (Epstein, 1996, 2018).

Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological theory and Epstein's theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence showed that families and parents are particularly important in individuals' development. In the field of educational psychology, familial and parental influences have also been studied through numerous constructs, such as parental values, expectations, and goals (e.g., Chen & Lan, 1998; Gniewosz & Noack, 2012; Mantovani, 2013), parental support of needs (e.g., Alivernini & Lucidi,

2011; Chirkov, 2009; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Froiland, 2011; Joussemet et al., 2008), parental involvement and engagement (e.g., Barger et al., 2019; Gniewosz & Noack, 2012; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Kim & Hill, 2015; Mantovani & Gasperoni, 2018). In particular, the transmission of parental values has been shown to be fundamental in shaping, over time, children and adolescents' attitudes towards numerous aspects of their lives (e.g., Gniewosz & Noack, 2012). The intergenerational transmission of values has in fact been defined as the hallmark of the socialisation process (Barni et al., 2011). Seginer (1983) had already pointed out the importance of parental values regarding children's education, and their tight link with other important constructs (e.g., expectations). In Seginer's (1983) theorisation, values are one of the components of the parental knowledge that influences parents' attitudes and expectations and, consequently, their children's attitudes and expectations too. Parents' have, in fact, the role of "expectancy socialisers" (Frome & Eccles, 1998), and foster the formation of their children's expectancies and aspirations about present ability and future possibilities. These expectations, in turn, influence how kids and adolescents behave in achievement-related situations, as well as the choices they make according to said expectations (e.g., Seginer, 1983; Catsambis, 2001; Friedel et al., 2007; Kahraman & Sungur, 2012; Gonida et al., 2007). Eccles and colleagues' body of work has shown the link between the relational contexts (and the requests they hold in form of values and expectations) students grow up in and their own values, expectations and related educational outcomes (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002; see also Pomerantz et al., 2005).

Parental influences, however, do not always directly affect their children's attitudes and related outcomes. For instance, Jodl and colleagues (2001) analysed the formation of future occupational aspirations in adolescent students and found that parents have a role, during adolescence, of interpreters of reality, and that parental attitudes, behaviours, and practices impact their adolescent children's own aspirations. However, they found that parental influences are mediated by an active elaboration adolescents make of what their parents transmit to them (see also Barni et al., 2011). Similarly to what Seginer (1983) and Paulson (1994) had already pointed out, Jodl and colleagues (2001) stressed the importance of students' perceptions of what their families and, in particular, parents transmit to them (see also Gniewosz & Noack, 2012; Smith, 1982).

As a whole, these theories and studies showed that during children's development, and even during adolescence and late adolescence, the role of parents' values, expectations and goals for their children is fundamental. Interestingly, some studies have shown that parents and the family continue to hold relevance even in later stages of the educational system. Students' well-being and adjustment to university, in fact, has been shown to be linked to numerous family-related variables, such as parenting styles, early and current relationships with parents (e.g., Harper et al., 2012; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000; Wiseman et al., 2006), or parental autonomy support (e.g., Ratelle et al., 2013). Moreover, regarding academic outcomes specifically, parents have been found to hold strong influences on various outcomes, such as students' academic development and performance, or their decisions to

remain in the university they decided to attend (e.g., Bank et al.'s, 1990; Girelli et al., 2018; Harper et al., 2012).

1.6.1 Parents and the family on individual and social goals

Despite the lack of conspicuous research about familial and parental influences on the development of achievement goals, some studies have attempted to track the nature of these influences down.

Concerning the relationship between students' achievement goals and their parents' own goals, some studies have found that when parents emphasise the importance of certain types of goals, they foster the development of specular goals in their children (e.g., Friedel et al., 2007; Kahraman & Sungur, 2012; Gonida et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; Gutman, 2006; Zubković & Kolić-Vehovec, 2014). These studies generally found that students who perceive that their parents give importance to learning *per se* and, therefore, value intrinsic motivation, develop mastery goals. On the contrary, students who perceive that their parents value competition, demonstration of ability and value, consequently, performance goals, are likely to develop performance-approach or performance-avoidance goals. Moreover, more specific patterns of influences exerted by significant others emerged in each study. For instance, both Friedel et al., (2007) and Zubković & Kolić-Vehovec (2014) found that perceived parental performance goals predicted students' performance-approach goals, while teachers' performance goals did not. Zubković & Kolić-Vehovec (2014) also found that perceived parents' goals were linked with students'

goals more strongly than perceived goals in the classroom. Similarly, in Gonida et al. (2009) study, students' performance-approach goals were found to be predicted by parents' performance goals, and not by the perceived goal structure in the school.

Similarly, some studies about socially-oriented goals have shown how important family dynamics are in fostering the development of certain social goals. For instance, Dowson and McInerney (2003) found, through observations and interviews with middle-school students, that some of the five types of social goals that were identified in their corpus of studies (Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004) were conditioned by the dynamics of parent-child relationships. Interestingly, the students who perceived excessive pressure from both their parents' expectations and their own social goals, reported lower performances. This evidence adds up to the findings regarding family obligations and social responsibility goals (see *paragraph 1.5.1* above), as well as to what Urdan and colleagues (2007) found with respect to the influence that certain familial patterns have on students' motivation. Urdan et al.'s (2007) study, in fact, highlighted the existence of specific patterns of familial and parental influences underlying the formation of social goals. Through interviews with twelfth-grade students, a broad range of familial influences on motivation emerged. The analysis of emergent themes then revealed five prototypical patterns, partially similar to some of the goals that had emerged in Urdan and Maehr's (1995) examination and Dowson and McInerney's (2003, 2004) categorisation:

1. *Family pleasing* pattern, which corresponds to students' desire to make their parents proud and/or repay them for the sacrifices they

made to ensure educational opportunities for their offspring. Students in this category described their parents as supportive parents who did not place too much pressure on them to succeed or do well academically;

2. *Family obligation* pattern, which shares the main characteristics of the family pleasing pattern, but is connoted by the presence, in the students who fell in this category, of a sense of debt towards their parents. The students in this category, in fact, felt like they owed something to their parents, and often mentioned feeling pressured to succeed. A few students in this category felt the pressure coming from their parents in a less negative way and described their feelings of obligation more positively and gratefully;

3. *Family support* pattern, which corresponds to families in which parents have high expectations of academic achievement, but are also highly supportive and encouraging. Students in this category showed high self-sufficiency and declared that they wanted to do well in school for themselves and not for their parents;

4. *Aversive family influence pattern*, which refers to two different kinds of negative familial influences: familial negative expectations and negative role models in the family. In fact, some of the students who fell in this category mentioned that their family members did not expect them to succeed in school, while other students talked about

the presence, in their families, of negative role models (e.g., family members who had dropped out, or had not done well in school).

5. *Lack of influence pattern*, which corresponds to a scarce involvement of the family in a students' school life. Students in this category affirmed that their families did not have any influence on their academic beliefs and school motivation.

Regarding the antecedents and the consequences of said patterns, the study highlighted that the family patterns and the social goals they fostered differed based on factors like cultural differences among families, corroborating the idea that goals, and social goals in particular, are greatly influenced by cultural aspects (see *paragraph 1.5*). The study also highlighted that different patterns resulted in differences in achievement. In particular, during the interviews, low achievers were less likely than high or middle achievers to mention a desire to please their family members, or make them proud, and were more likely to mention negative role models in their families. They also talked about cultural norms in terms of negative stereotypes.

Again, the studies concerning motivational goals as well have shown the relevance that familial and parental influences hold for students, often underlying how the salience of these influences might exert significant effects regardless of current learning environments students are embedded in, rendering families and parents fundamental factors in every stage of education.

1.7 Conclusions

The literature review presented in this section aimed at offering an overview of what we know about motivation in education, with a particular focus on the Achievement Goal theory (AGT) and the areas of inquiry that, in this specific theoretical framework, still present gaps to be filled. The research questions mainly revolved around the social aspects of motivation and achievement goals, and families and parental figures were the social targets considered throughout the literature review and the conceptualisation of the studies.

The studies will be presented in the next chapters. They were all designed with the purpose of analysing the relationships between perceived parental goals, students' achievement goals and social goals towards their parents, and students' future expectations. As already mentioned in the *General introduction*, future expectations were chosen as the criterion variable because of the importance that this dimension holds in students' educational paths, and because of the necessity to analyse it through a social-relational perspective (Agger et al., 2018; DeWitt et al., 2013; OECD, 2013, 2017). Mediation analyses were conducted for each study, drawing from the assumption that students' own goals might mediate the influence of parental goals on students' future expectations. This mediation model was examined for both high-school students (Study 1 and Study 2) and university students (Study 3). Implications and limitations will be discussed for each study, and a general discussion will be presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 2

Study 1 – Parental goals and expectations of further education: the mediating role of high school students' achievement goals and social goals

2.1 Introduction

The present study was aimed at analysing the relationship between perceived parental goals and students' expectations of further education, and how this relationship might be mediated by students' achievement goals and social goals. This focus has been chosen because, traditionally, the AGT has mainly focused on individualistically-based goals, resulting "individualistic in its conceptions" (Blumenfeld, 1992, p. 276). However, students do actually approach academic endeavours motivated by numerous kinds of aims and pursue multiple types of goals, both personal and social (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007; Maehr & McInerney, 2004; Urdan & Maehr, 1995; see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5*). Moreover, the role that parental influences play on the development of students' individualistically-based goals and social goals have been explored in a small number of studies (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003; Friedel et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5.1*). These aspects all call for further exploration.

The students who participated in the study were attending the first two years of upper-secondary school. This level of education was chosen because of its critical importance in students' educational paths (see *Chapter 1*, *paragraph 1.2*).

In the model, with regard to students' achievement goals, mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals were taken into account. Moreover, as better explained in *paragraph 2.3.2*, two types of social goals were considered: welfare-related goals, which are conceptually similar to social affiliation goals and social concern goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003, 2004; Maehr & McInerney, 2004) and emotional-relational goals, which are conceptually similar to social approval goals and social responsibility goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003, 2004).

2.2 Model and hypotheses

Drawing from the literature presented in *Chapter 1*, it was hypothesised that each type of achievement and social goal considered would mediate the relationship between parental goals and students' expectations of further education.

In particular, it was hypothesised that perceived parents' mastery goals would have a positive effect on mastery-approach goals (H1) and mastery-avoidance goals (H2), and no effect on performance-approach goals (H3) and performance-avoidance goals (H4). It was hypothesised that perceived parents' performance goals would have a positive effect on performance-approach goals (H5) and performance-avoidance goals (H6), and a negative effect on mastery-approach goals (H7). No

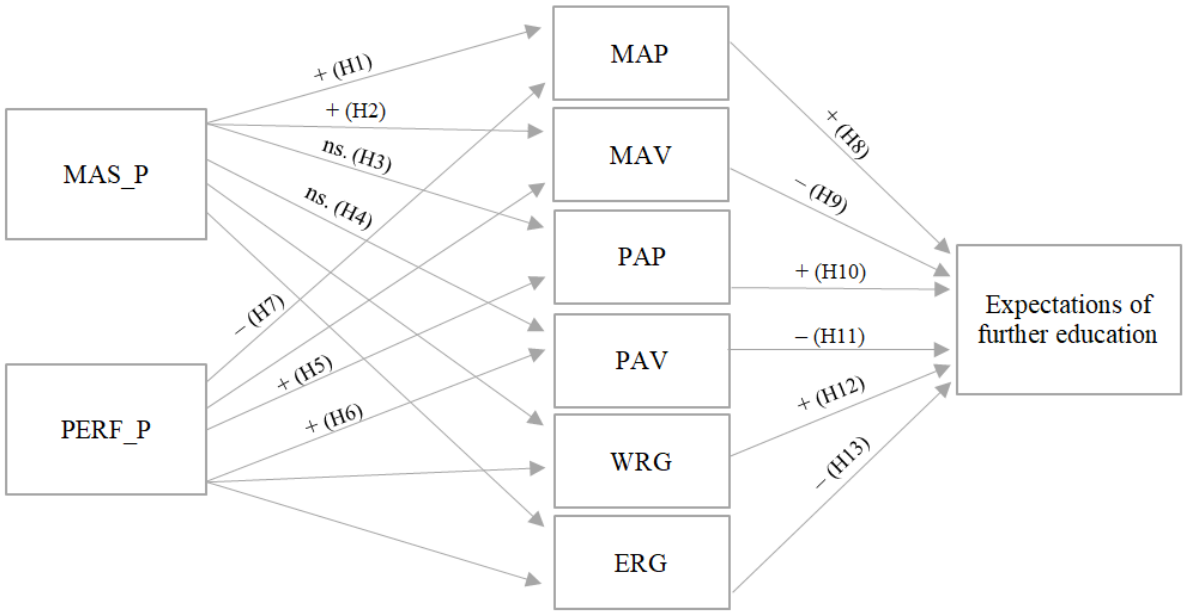
hypotheses were made regarding the relationship between parents' performance goals and mastery-avoidance goals, and no hypotheses were made on the effects of parental goals on students' social goals either because there is no existing literature on these specific relationships.

Concerning the relationships between students' goals and their expectations of further education, it was hypothesised that mastery-approach goals would have a positive effect on future expectations (H8) and mastery-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on them (H9). It was also hypothesised that performance-approach goals would have a positive effect on future expectations (H10) and that performance-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on them (H11). Finally, it was hypothesised that welfare-related goals would have a positive effect on students' expectations (H12) and that emotional-relational goals would have a negative effect on them (H13).

The hypothesised effects are shown in the figure below.

Figure 1

Research design and hypothesised effects.



Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

2.3 Methods

The two *licei* that agreed to participate in the study were provided with the following: an access request, in which the characteristics of the study were described and the use of the data only for research purposes was ensured; a presentation of the study; the questionnaire; the informed consent parents had to sign in order for their children to participate in the study. Students could not fill in the questionnaire

without their parents' consent, and participation was completely voluntary and anonymous. Students filled in the questionnaire in their respective classrooms and were given one hour to complete it. The questionnaire was administered in the month of November 2019.

2.3.1 Participants

A total of 650 students (M_{age} = 14.25; *SD* = .96) participated in the study. The students attended two scientific lyceums in Rome and belonged to 31 different classrooms. Concerning gender, 263 students (40.46%) identified as "woman", 380 students (58.46%) identified as "man", 3 students (0.46%) identified as "non-binary", while 4 students (0.62%) did not specify their gender. Almost all students were born in Italy (87.84%). 12 students (1.85%) were first-generation students (i.e., students born in a foreign country), and 67 students (10.31%) were second-generation students (i.e., students with at least one foreign parent).

2.3.2 Measures

Achievement goals. The 12-item scale used to assess achievement goals was derived from Elliot and McGregor's (2001; see also Darnon & Butera, 2005; Wang et al., 2007). The two major dimensions of achievement motivation that the scale examines are mastery goals and performance goals and, for each dimension, both approach and avoidance aspects can be noticed. Thus, the scale allows observing

individuals' orientations towards four types of goals: mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals. In Cecalupo et al.'s (2021) study, the factorial structure of the scale was confirmed.

Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale. Internal consistency for each of the four dimensions was tested, and each of them showed good levels of reliability: $a_{\text{mastery-approach}} = .77$; $a_{\text{mastery-avoidance}} = .76$; $a_{\text{performance-approach}} = .91$; = $a_{\text{performance-avoidance}} = .80$.

Social goals. The scale used to notice social goals was specifically created for the present investigation. The 10 items were created drawing from the empirical studies discussed in *Chapter 1, paragraph 5.1* (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003, 2004; Urdan et al., 2007) with the aim to notice students' view of scholastic success as a means to assist their family in the future (i.e., provide care for family members and provide them with economic support), to comply with parents' expectations, and repay perceived obligations towards parents. Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement.

Because the scale was specifically created for this study, its factorial structure was examined. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2(45) = 3223.32$; $p < .001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) was .83, above the minimum standard for conducting factor analysis (Child, 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974; Lloret et al., 2017). The values in the diagonal of the

anti-image correlation matrix were all above .79, and the communalities between items were all above .47. All of these indices suggested that the data were appropriate for conducting an exploratory factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974). Principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation were used. Two factors, which explained 57.62% of the variance, were extracted. All items had primary loadings above .67, while no item had cross-loadings above .30. The two extracted factors showed a correlation of .23. They were labelled "welfare-related goals" (all items refer to seeing scholastic success as a means to provide one's parents and family with care and economic support in the future) and "emotional-relational goals" (all items refer to seeing scholastic success as a means to comply with parental expectations and repay perceived obligations towards parents). Internal consistency for both dimensions was tested, and each of them showed high levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{welfare-related goals}} = .89$; $\alpha_{\text{emotional-relational goals}} = .85$.

Parental goals. Perceived parental goals were noticed through an 11-item scale retrieved from Midgley et al.'s Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS, 2000). The scale is composed of 6 items that refer to perceived parental mastery goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to do challenging class work, even if I make mistakes"), and 5 items that refer to perceived parental performance goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to show others that I am good at class work"). Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement.

The factorial structure of the scale was examined. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2(55) = 2056.09$; $p < .001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .84, above the minimum standard for conducting factor analysis (Child, 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974; Lloret et al., 2017). The values in the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above .78, and the communalities between items were all above .28. All of these indices suggested that the data were appropriate for conducting an exploratory factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974). Principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation were used. Two factors, which explained 44.34% of the variance, were extracted. All items had primary loadings above .40. The two extracted factors showed a correlation of .22. The labels "parental mastery goals" and "parental performance goals" suited the extracted factors and were retained. Both dimensions showed good levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{parental mastery goals}} = .76$; $\alpha_{\text{parental performance goals}} = .83$.

Future expectations. Students' expectations for further education were noticed through one item: "What level of education do you think you will realistically attain?". Students had to answer through a five-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to the lower level of education attainable (i.e., the end of compulsory education) and 5 corresponded to the highest level of education attainable (i.e., postgraduate degrees). The intermediate numbers corresponded, respectively, to high school diploma, Bachelor's degree, and Master's degree.

2.4 Results

Correlations. Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics are reported in *Table 3* below.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Parents' goals											
1. Mas_P	4.06	.61	–								
2. Perf_P	2.93	.92	.21**	–							
Achievement goals											
3. MAP	3.96	.79	.44**	-.05	–						
4. MAV	3.34	.91	.21**	.08*	.36**	–					
5. PAP	2.36	1.05	.14**	.47**	.13**	.17**	–				
6. PAV	2.79	1.09	.11**	.44**	.06	.27**	.66**	–			
Social goals											
7. WRG	3.60	.89	.25**	.14**	.24**	.06	.15**	.12**	–		
8. ERG	3.24	.98	.19**	.31**	.14**	.18**	.24**	.33**	.20**	–	
Future expectations											
9. Expectations of further education	3.66	.91	.22**	-.10*	.25**	-.06	.07	-.02	.17**	-.07	–

Note: ** $p \leq .001$ / $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals.

From the descriptive analyses, it can be observed that perceived parents' mastery goals were positively related to each type of individual and social goal, and to students' future expectations as well (r = .22; p < .001). Perceived parents' performance goals were more strongly related to performance-approach goals (r = .47; p < .001), performance-avoidance goals (r = .44; p < .001) and emotional-relational goals (r = .31; p < .001), and they were negatively correlated with students' future expectations (r = -.10; p = .01). Students' expectations were also positively correlated with mastery-approach goals (r = .25; p < .001) and welfare-related goals (r = .17; p < .001). Concerning the relationships between achievement goals and social goals, welfare-related goals were more strongly related to mastery-approach goals (r = .24; p < .001), while emotional-relational goals were more strongly related to both performance-approach goals (r = .24; p < .001) and performance-avoidance goals (r = .33; p < .001).

Mediation. To test whether achievement goals and social goals mediated the relationship between perceived parental goals and students' expectations of further education, a mediation analysis was conducted with PROCESS (Hayes, 2017). Specifically, Model 4 was used. First, parents' performance goals were introduced as the predictor (X1) while parents' mastery goals were introduced as the covariate (X2), and a second analysis was run with parents' mastery goals as the predictor and parents' performance goals as the covariate. Mastery-approach goals (M1), mastery-avoidance goals (M2), performance-approach goals (M3), performance-avoidance

goals (M4), welfare-related goals (M5), and emotional-relational goals (M6) were introduced as the mediators. Students' expectations of further education were introduced as the criterion (Y). All the variables were standardised before running the analysis.

First, the predictors' effects on the mediators were analysed. Mastery-approach goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery goals (B = .47; SE = .04; 95% CI [.40, .54]; p < .001), and negatively impacted by parents' performance goals (B = -.16; SE = .04; 95% CI [-.23, -.08]; p < .001), while mastery-avoidance goals were only impacted by parents' mastery goals (B = .20; SE = .04; 95% CI [.13, .28]; p < .001), and the effect was positive. These results confirmed H1, H2 and H7. Performance-approach goals were impacted only by parents' performance goals (B = .46; SE = .04; 95% CI [.39, .53]; p < .001) and the same went for performance-avoidance goals (B = .44; SE = .04; 95% CI [.37, .51]; p < .001), confirming H3, H4, H5 and H6. For what concerns social goals, welfare-related goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery goals (B = .24; SE = .04; 95% CI [.16, .31]; p < .001) and parents' performance goals too (B = .09; SE = .04; 95% CI [.01, .16]; p = .03). Emotional-relational goals as well were positively impacted by both parents' mastery goals (B = .13; SE = .04; 95% CI [.06, .21]; p = .001) and performance goals (B = .28; SE = .04; 95% CI [.21, .36]; p < .001).

The effects of the mediators and the effects of the predictors on the criterion were then assessed. Students' expectations of further education were positively impacted by students' mastery-approach goals (B = .18; SE = .05; 95% CI [.09, .27]; p < .001), performance-approach goals (B = .14; SE = .05; 95% CI [.04, .24]; p < .01)

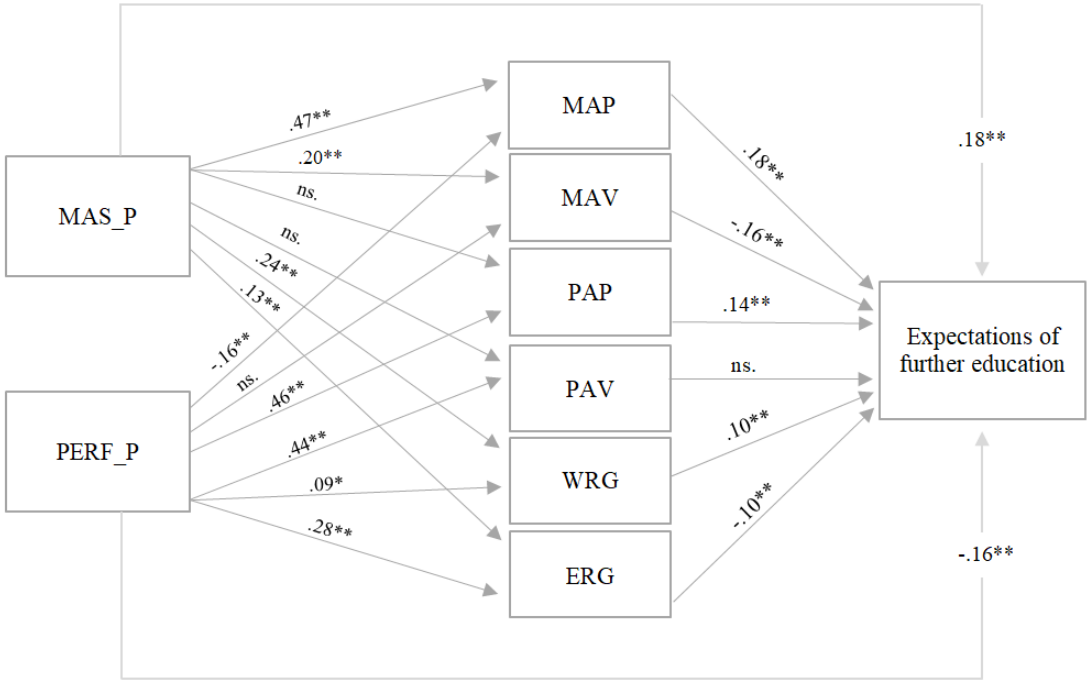
and welfare-related goals (*B* = .10; *SE* = .04; 95% CI [.03, .18]; *p* = .01). These results confirmed H8, H10, H12. Contrariwise, they were negatively impacted by mastery-avoidance goals (*B* = -.16; *SE* = .04; 95% CI [-.24, -.07]; *p* < .001) and emotional-relational goals (*B* = -.10; *SE* = .04; 95% CI [-.18, -.02]; *p* = .01). H9 and H13 were, therefore, confirmed. The impact of performance-avoidance goals on the criterion was not significant, so H11 was not confirmed.

Interestingly, despite the mediating effect of students' achievement and social goals, both parents' mastery goals (*B* = .18; *SE* = .04; 95% CI [.10, .27]; *p* < .001) and performance goals (*B* = -.16; *SE* = .05; 95% CI [-.25, -.07]; *p* = .001) had a direct impact on students' expectations.

The overall model was significant and explained 15% of the variance ($F_{(8, 624)}$ = 13.22; R^2 = .15; *p* < .001).

Figure 2

Effects of parents' mastery and performance goals on students' future expectations through students' achievement and social goals.



Note: ** p ≤ .001 / p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

The indirect effects were assessed. They were firstly assessed considering parents' performance goals as the main predictor. All the indirect effects, aside from the effect of the predictor on the criterion through mastery-avoidance goals and performance-avoidance goals, were significant: mastery-approach goals (*B* = -.03; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.05, -.01]); performance-approach goals (*B* = .07; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [.02, .11]); welfare-related goals (*B* = .01; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [.00, .02]); emotional-relational goals (*B* = -.03; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.05, -.01]).

Then, parents' mastery goals were considered as the main predictor and indirect effects were assessed. The indirect effects through mastery-approach goals (*B* = .09; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [.04, .13]), mastery-avoidance goals (*B* = -.03; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.06, -.01]), welfare-related goals (*B* = .02; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [.01, .05]) and emotional-relational goals (*B* = -.01; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.03, -.00]) were significant.

2.5 Discussion

This study's main aim was to analyse how achievement goals and social goals mediated the relationship between perceived parental goals and students' expectations of further education for students attending the first two years of high school. In particular, the study was aimed at understanding the specific influences parental goals had on students' own goals and the effect that students' goals had on future expectations.

As predicted, parents' mastery goals positively impacted students' mastery-approach goals, which, in turn, positively influenced students' expectations of further education. Moreover, parents' performance goals had a negative effect on students' mastery-approach goals, and this evidence highlighted that parental goals that are particularly focused on demonstrating ability and being competitive can be potentially detrimental. Parents' mastery goals also positively impacted students' mastery-avoidance goals, which, however, had a negative influence on future expectations. This outcome confirmed that mastery-approach goals and mastery-avoidance goals are intrinsically different from one another, and mastery-avoidance

goals can result in negative outcomes (e.g., Baranik et al., 2010; Van Yperen et al., 2009). Performance-approach goals were positively influenced by parents' performance goals and, in turn, they positively influenced students' future expectations. This finding was in line with the idea that performance-approach goals are not necessarily maladaptive and can result in positive outcomes (see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.4*). Performance-avoidance goals were positively impacted by parents' performance goals, but had no influence on future expectations. This dimension of achievement goals might, perhaps, impact other kinds of scholastic outcomes for students attending the first two years of upper-secondary school.

With regard to social goals, welfare-related goals were positively impacted by both parental mastery goals and performance goals, although the influence of the latter was much smaller. Perhaps, when students perceive that their parents intrinsically value learning and studying, they are more prone to perceive schooling as a means to actually be of help to significant others in the future. Emotional-relational goals as well were impacted by parental mastery and performance goals, but were more strongly affected by parents' performance goals. This finding could imply that those students who perceive that their parents place particular emphasis on demonstrating ability and competing in scholastic settings, might be especially concerned about conforming with parental expectations or making them proud.

Interestingly, welfare-related goals positively impacted students' expectations of further education, while emotional-relational goals had a negative impact on the criterion. These findings could imply that the pressure students feel to comply with parents' expectations, values, or goals might actually hinder their academic-related

outcomes, while focusing on the possibility education gives to assist one's family and become responsible for significant others might result in adaptive outcomes (see Dowson & McInerney, 2001, 2003; King et al., 2010, 2012).

Another finding that has to be considered is that, despite students' goals mediating the relationship between parental influences and students' future expectations, parents' mastery goals and performance goals continued to exert a direct influence on students' expectations. This finding suggests that, for students that age, parents still have a key role in influencing numerous aspects of their life in school.

On a general note, it can be concluded that, as hypothesised and expected, each motivational dimension qualitatively differs from the other, and is linked to certain antecedents and outcomes in specific ways (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001, 2003; Harackiewicz et al. 2002; Urdan & Maehr, 1995). The findings particularly stressed that, aside from the role that achievement goals such as mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals play in influencing students' academic outcomes, social goals' contribution must be considered too. This finding, alongside the evidence that parental influences do play a part in students' school experiences, stresses the importance of considering the social-psychological nature of motivational strivings and related outcomes.

The present study has some limitations that have to be considered. Firstly, with regard to methods, data, and analyses, the data were collected at a single point in time and are therefore cross-sectional, making it impossible to make definitive

assumptions about causality. Despite using cross-sectional designs can be useful in several areas of inquiry (Spector, 2019), numerous studies highlighted the importance of recurring to longitudinal data when testing mediation (e.g., Jose, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2011).

Furthermore, despite the findings contributing to our understanding of how parental goals, students' individual and social goals, and students' future expectations might be related to one another, the overall model did not explain a large portion of the variance of the criterion. This means that other variables might play an important role in influencing students' expectations of further education at this level of schooling. Future research on the issue must take this into account.

Moreover, the fact that parents' goals were reported by students might be another limitation. Even though adolescents' estimations and self-reports of diverse types of data are actually fairly reliable (Crockett et al., 1987), and despite the importance of noticing students' own perceptions of certain dimensions, in future research it might be useful to retrieve this information from parents as well.

Other limitations lie in the features of the sample. Participant students all attended *licei*, so there is no diversity in the sample with respect to the types of schools students attended. Since the types of upper-secondary schools in Italy differ widely (see *Chapter 1*, *paragraph 1.1*), analysing the proposed model for students attending other types of schools would provide a more complete look into the variables studied and their relationships.

In addition, most of the participating students were Italian, and only a small percentage of the sample was composed of students with an immigrant background. Considering the difficulties that immigrant students (and especially first-generation students) face at higher levels of education (see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2*), analysing the relations between parental goals and students' achievement goals and social goals might be useful in understanding which of these aspects might serve as a protective factor, or hinder immigrant students' present and future academic outcomes.

Chapter 3

Study 2 – Parental influences, students' motivation and future expectations during the Covid-19 pandemic

3.1 Introduction

In December 2019 a novel form of coronavirus, labelled SARSCoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) was identified, after the Chinese city of Wuhan was interested, in November 2019, by a rising number of people affected by an unknown type of pneumonia. On January 2020, the severity of the newfound coronavirus brought the World Health Organisation (WHO) to classify its outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern (World Health Organisation, 2020a, 2020b). Less than two months later, on the 11th of March, due to its rapid escalation, the outbreak was declared to be a pandemic (World Health Organisation, 2020c).

After the coronavirus outbreak in China, Italy was the first country to be severely affected by the spreading of the virus. The gravity of the situation led Italy's Prime Minister to impose a national quarantine, making Italy officially enter the first phase of its lockdown (Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers 09/03/2020, 11/03/2020). This phase lasted until the 4th of May, when the country

entered the second phase, characterised by new rules and their decreased restrictiveness (Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers 26/04/2020).

Scholastic activities were particularly affected by the pandemic and the lockdown. In fact, even during the second phase of the lockdown, institutes remained closed and classes remained online until the end of the school year. This resulted in a lot of changes in students' day to day life, and in important challenges to their socio-psychological and academic adaptation (e.g., Commodari & La Rosa, 2020; Esposito et al., 2021; Meda et al., 2021; Spinelli et al., 2020). The aim of this study was therefore to test the model presented in Study 1 during the lockdown and test whether the relationships between perceived parental goals, students' own individual and social goals, and students expectations were any different.

3.2 Model and hypotheses

Hypotheses concerning the relationships between parental perceived goals, students' goals and students expectations of further educations were made not only drawing from the literature presented in *Chapter 1*, but also from the results discussed in Study 1.

Regarding the relations between perceived parental goals and students' goals, it was hypothesised that perceived parents' mastery goals would have a positive effect on mastery-approach goals (H1) and mastery-avoidance goals (H2), and no effect on performance-approach goals (H3) and performance-avoidance goals (H4). It was also hypothesised that parents' mastery goals would have a positive effect on

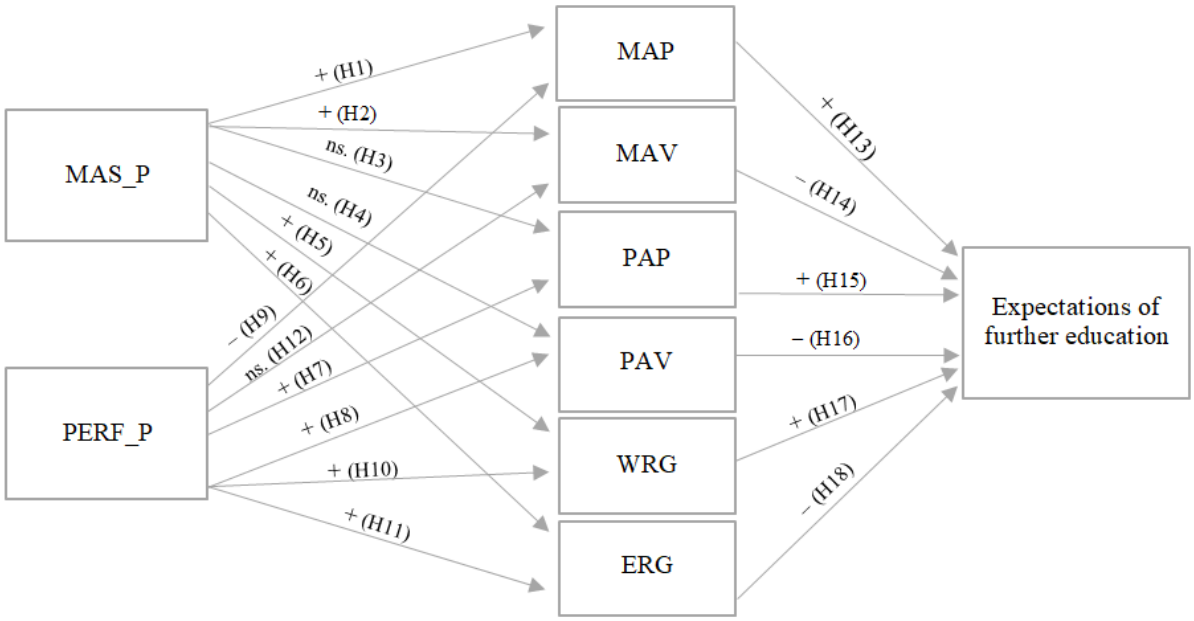
both welfare-related goals (H5) and emotional-relational goals (H6). Concerning parents' performance goals, it was hypothesised that they would have a positive effect on performance-approach goals (H7) and performance-avoidance goals (H8) and a negative effect on mastery-approach goals (H9). It was also hypothesised that they would have a positive impact on welfare-related goals (H10), a positive effect on emotional-relational goals (H11), and no effect on mastery-avoidance goals (H12).

Concerning the effects of students' goals and their expectations of further education, it was hypothesised that mastery-approach goals would have a positive effect on them (H13), and mastery-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on them (H14). It was also hypothesised that performance-approach goals would have a positive effect on the criterion (H15) and performance-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on it (H16). Finally, it was hypothesised that welfare-related goals would have a positive effect on future expectations (H17) and that emotional-relational goals would have a negative effect on them (H18).

The hypothesised effects are shown in the figure below.

Figure 3

Research design and hypothesised effects.



Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

3.3 Methods

The two lyceums who participated in Study 1 participated in this study as well. Because the institutes already knew the purposes of the research and the structure of the questionnaire, they were solely provided with the informed consent parents had to sign in order for their children to participate in the study.

The questionnaire was administered online through the software Qualtrics. Students could not fill in the questionnaire without their parents' consent and their own consent, therefore participation was completely voluntary. Students' anonymity was ensured, and no personal information was asked, aside from age and gender.

3.3.1 Participants

294 students (M_{age} = 12.85; *SD* = .76) attending the first year of upper-secondary education participated in the study. The students attended two scientific lyceums in Rome and belonged to 12 different classrooms. Concerning gender, 111 students (37.75%) identified as "woman", 182 students (61.91%) identified as "man", 1 student (0.34%) identified as "non-binary". 90.14% of students were born in Italy. 6 students (2.04%) were first-generation students (i.e., students born in a foreign country), and 23 students (7.82%) were second-generation students (i.e., students with at least one foreign parent).

3.3.2 Measures

Achievement goals. Achievement goals were assessed through the adaptation of Elliot and McGregor's scale (2001) already used for Study 1. The 12-item scale notices students' mastery-approach goals (e.g., "I want to learn as much as possible at school"), mastery-avoidance goals (e.g., "Sometimes I worry that I may not learn all that I possibly could in this class"), performance-approach goals (e.g., "It is important to me to do well compared to other students in this class") and

performance-avoidance goals (e.g., “My goal in this class is to avoid doing worse than my classmates”). Students could show their degree of agreement with each item through a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement. Internal consistency of each dimension was tested, and they all showed good to high levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{mastery-approach}} = .74$; $\alpha_{\text{mastery-avoidance}} = .78$; $\alpha_{\text{performance-approach}} = .90$; = $\alpha_{\text{performance-avoidance}} = .79$.

Social goals. The 10-item scale used to notice social goals noticed students’ aim to succeed at school to assist their family in the future (e.g., “Doing well in school will give me the opportunity to take care of my family in the future”, “Doing well in school will give me the opportunity to help my parents financially in the future”) and their goal to succeed academically to comply with parental expectations, render them proud and repay perceived obligations towards them (e.g., “I want to do well in school because I feel like I owe it to my parents”, “I want to do well in school because this is what my parents expect from me”). These two dimensions, as discussed in the previous chapter, were denominated welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals. Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement. Internal consistency for both dimensions was tested, and each of them showed high levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{welfare-related goals}} = .90$; $\alpha_{\text{emotional-relational goals}} = .85$.

Parental goals. Perceived parents' goals were noticed through the 11-item scale presented in Study 1 (Midgley et al., 2000). 6 items notice parents' mastery goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to do challenging class work, even if I make mistakes"), and the remaining 5 items notice parents' performance goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to show others that I am good at class work"). Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement. Internal consistency was tested, and both dimensions showed good levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{parental mastery goals}}$ = .70; $\alpha_{\text{parental performance goals}}$ = .74.

Future expectations. Students' expectations for further education were noticed through the item "What level of education do you think you will realistically attain?". Students had to answer through a five-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to the lower level of education attainable (i.e., the end of compulsory education) and 5 corresponded to the highest level of education attainable (i.e., postgraduate degrees). The intermediate numbers corresponded, respectively, to high school diploma, Bachelor's degree, and Master's degree.

3.4 Results

Correlations. Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics are reported in the table below.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
Parents' goals											
1. Mas_P	4.27	.52	–								
2. Perf_P	3.23	.81	.14*	–							
Achievement goals											
3. MAP	4.25	.65	.35**	-.04	–						
4. MAV	3.56	.90	.23**	.18**	.30**	–					
5. PAP	2.53	1.06	.11	.37**	.08	.15**	–				
6. PAV	3.01	1.08	.00	.33**	.01	.22**	.48**	–			
Social goals											
7. WRG	3.53	.88	.23**	.15**	.23**	.22**	.08	.09	–		
8. ERG	3.31	.96	.20**	.43**	.06	.26**	.37**	.42**	.29**	–	
Future expectations											
9. Expectations of further education	3.70	1.01	.17**	-.23**	.22**	-.17**	.11	-.08	.03	-.09	–

Note: ** p ≤ .001 / p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals.

Parents' mastery goals were positively correlated with mastery-approach goals (r = .35; p < .001), mastery-avoidance goals (r = .23; p < .001) and welfare-related goals (r = .23; p < .001). Parents' performance goals were, instead, positively

correlated with performance-approach goals (r = .37; p < .001), performance-avoidance goals (r = .33; p < .001) and, especially, emotional-relational goals (r = .43; p < .001). Interestingly, they were positively related to mastery-avoidance goals as well (r = .18; p = .002). Regarding the relationships among students' individual and social goals, welfare-related goals were positively correlated with mastery-approach goals (r = .23; p < .001) and mastery-avoidance goals (r = .22; p < .001), while emotional-relational goals were positively correlated with mastery-avoidance goals (r = .26; p < .001), performance-approach goals (r = .37; p < .001) and especially performance-avoidance goals (r = .42; p < .001). Students' future expectations were positively correlated with mastery-approach goals (r = .17; p < .001) and parents' mastery goals (r = .22; p = .004), and negatively correlated with mastery-avoidance goals (r = -.17; p = .004) and parents' performance goals (r = -.23; p < .001).

Mediation. The mediation analysis was conducted with PROCESS (Hayes, 2017). Specifically, Model 4 was used. First, parents' performance goals were introduced as the predictor (X1) while parents' mastery goals were introduced as the covariate (X2), and a second analysis was run with parents' mastery goals as the predictor and parents' performance goals as the covariate. Mastery-approach goals (M1), mastery-avoidance goals (M2), performance-approach goals (M3), performance-avoidance goals (M4), welfare-related goals (M5), and emotional-relational goals (M6) were introduced as the mediators. Students' expectations of

further education were introduced as the criterion (Y). All the variables were standardised before running the analysis.

The predictors' effects on the mediators were analysed. Similarly to results discussed in Study 1, mastery-approach goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery goals (B = .39; SE = .06; 95% CI [.28, .50]; p < .001), but were not affected by parents' performance goals. Therefore, H1 was confirmed, but H9 was not. Mastery-avoidance goals were instead positively influenced by both parents' mastery goals (B = .20; SE = .06; 95% CI [.08, .31]; p = .001) and parents' performance goals (B = .16; SE = .06; 95% CI [.04, .27]; p = .008), confirming H2 and not confirming H12. Parents' performance goals also positively impacted performance-approach goals (B = .36; SE = .06; 95% CI [.26, .48]; p < .001) and performance-avoidance goals (B = .33; SE = .06; 95% CI [.22, .45]; p < .001), while parents' mastery goals had no effects on these goals. Therefore, H3, H4, H7, H8 were all confirmed. Welfare-related goals were positively influenced by both parents' mastery goals (B = .20; SE = .06; 95% CI [.09, .31]; p = .001) and performance goals (B = .22; SE = .06; 95% CI [.11, .33]; p < .001), and the same went for emotional-relational goals, which were however more strongly impacted by parents' performance goals (B = .41; SE = .05; 95% CI [.31, .52]; p < .001). H5, H6, H10 and H11 were all confirmed.

The effects of the mediators on the criterion were then assessed. Students' expectations of further education were positively impacted by mastery-approach goals (B = .19; SE = .06; 95% CI [.07, .31]; p = .002) and performance-approach goals (B = .22; SE = .06; 95% CI [.09, .34]; p = .001), while mastery-avoidance goals negatively influenced them (B = -.26; SE = .06; 95% CI [-.37, -.14]; p < .001).

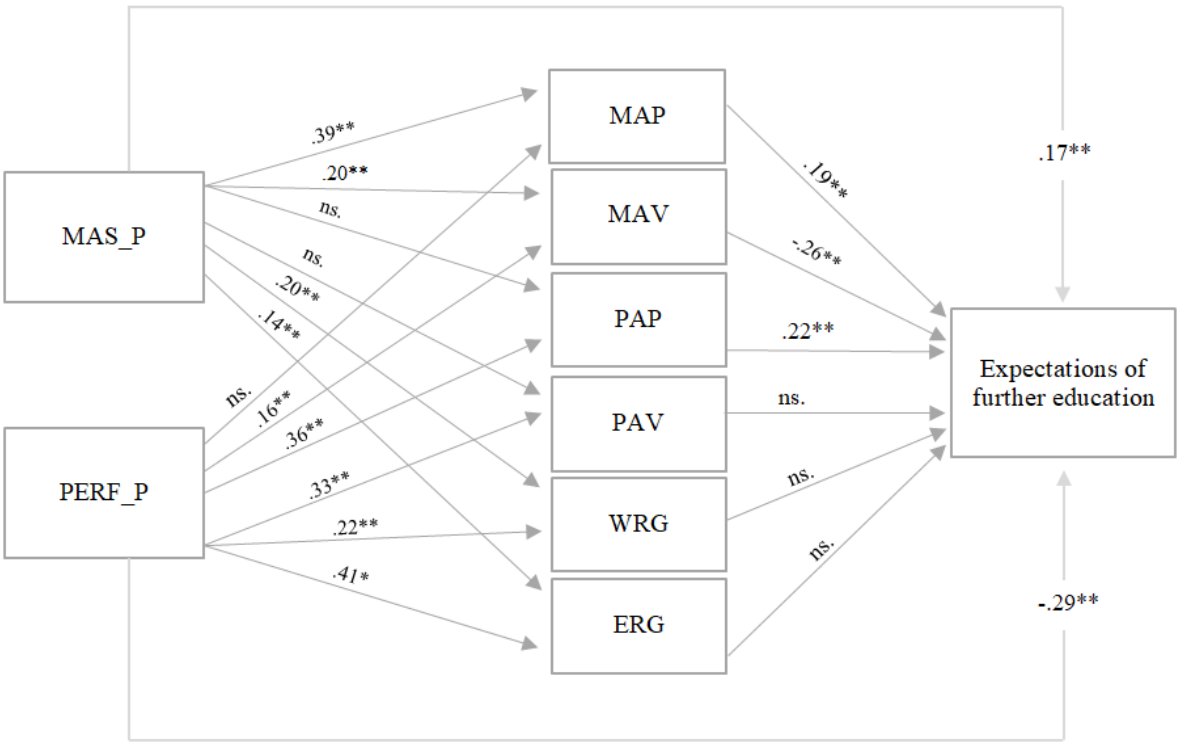
Performance-avoidance goals, welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals all had no effects on the criterion. Therefore, of the remaining hypotheses only H13, H14 and H15 were confirmed.

Parents' mastery and performance goals both had direct effects on students' expectations, and while the effect of parents' mastery goals was positive (B = .17; SE = .06; 95% CI [.05, .29]; p = .001), the effect of parents' performance goals was negative (B = -.29; SE = .06; 95% CI [-.41, -.17]; p < .001).

The overall model was significant and explained 22% of the variance ($F_{(8, 277)}$ = 9.50; R^2 = .22; p < .001).

Figure 4

Effects of parents' mastery and performance goals on students' future expectations through students' achievement and social goals.



Note: ** p ≤ .001 / p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

Indirect effects were assessed firstly considering parents' performance goals as the main predictor. The two significant indirect effects were the effect of parents' performance goals on students' expectations through mastery-avoidance goals (*B* = -.04; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [-.07, -.01]) and performance-approach goals (*B* = .08; *SE* = .03; 95% CI [.03, .14]). Secondly, parents' mastery goals were considered as the main predictor and indirect effects were assessed. The only significant indirect effect was through mastery-approach goals (*B* = .08; *SE* = .03; 95% CI [.03, .13]).

3.5 Discussion

This study aimed at testing the relationships between parental goals, students' goals and students' future expectations during the lockdown imposed by the Italian government during the first months of the pandemic.

As predicted, mastery-approach goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery goals, and performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals were positively impacted by parents' performance goals. In line with the literature discussed in *Chapter 1* (e.g., Friedel et al., 2007; Kahraman & Sungur, 2012; Gonida et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; Gutman, 2006; Zubković & Kolić-Vehovec, 2014) and with the findings discussed in Study 1, perceiving that parents value certain aspects of motivation results in the development, in their children, of similar motivational orientations. Interestingly, mastery-avoidance goals were positively impacted by both parents' mastery goals and performance goals. Because studies regarding mastery-avoidance goals and, especially, their antecedents, are fewer than studies regarding the other types of achievement goals, this finding might need further examination.

Welfare-related goals and emotional relational goals were affected by both parental goals, but emotional-relational goals showed a stronger relationship with parents' performance goals, just like it emerged in Study 1. Although the relations between parental stances on motivation and social goals surely need further examination, this finding seems to confirm that wanting to make parents proud, to

comply with parents' expectations while perceiving a strong sense of obligation towards parents might more easily stem from perceiving that parents value competition and demonstration of ability. With regard to social goals' effect on students expectations, neither welfare-related goals nor emotional-relational goals had an effect on students' future expectations. This finding might suggest that in the particular moment of time the data were retrieved, students' individual goals were more salient than their social goals in impacting expectations of further education.

Parental goals had a direct impact on students' expectations of further education in this study as well, confirming the importance that perceived parental stances about school motivation have on impacting high school students' own future expectations. Moreover, given that during the lockdown students were in continuous contact with their families and parents, this might also have rendered their influence more salient.

This study has some limitations that must be considered. Firstly, the size of the sample was relatively small, and it should have been ideal to test the effects discussed on a larger sample. Moreover, participants all attended *licei*, and the vast majority of them were Italian, rendering the sample scarcely diversified.

Most of all, the data were retrieved during a particular socio-historical period when scholastic life (and life in general) underwent fast, unforeseen changes, rendering the findings non-generalisable. Although the study might give an interesting outlook on the antecedents and consequences of students' motivational orientations during the first months of the Coronavirus outbreak, this must be considered when examining the findings discussed above.

Chapter 4

Study 3 – College students: do parents and families still matter?

4.1 Introduction

Research conducted on achievement motivation at the level of tertiary education has found that achievement goals affect college students similarly to how they affect students at lower educational levels (e.g., Archer, 1994; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2003; Cano & Berbén, 2009; Chen, 2015; Harackiewicz et al., 1998; Harackiewicz et al., 2008; see *paragraph 1.4*). Some studies also explored the different social values that achievement goals (mastery-approach and performance-approach goals in particular) can hold for college students and how attributing a particular value to said goals might result in outcomes that are more or less adaptive (e.g., Darnon et al., 2009; Dompnier et al.. 2009; Dompnier et al., 2015; see *paragraph 1.4*).

Instead, the impact of social goals for college students has never been assessed, and the role of parental goals has not been specifically analysed either. These aspects are worth examining, especially because of the importance that parents and the family continue to hold for young adults, even at higher levels of education.

The present study was intended to understand whether or not university students' future expectations are influenced by parental stances on achievement goals, and whether or not this influence could be mediated by students' own achievement goals and social goals. The future expectations considered were job-related expectations. With regard to students' achievement goals, mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals, and performance-avoidance goals were all taken into account. Regarding social goals, welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals were considered in this study as well.

4.2 Model and hypotheses

Drawing from the literature presented in *Chapter 1* and considering the findings discussed in Study 1, it was hypothesised that achievement goals and social goals would mediate the influence of parental goals on future expectations (i.e., job-related expectations) for college students as well.

A hypothesis for each effect was made. It was hypothesised that perceived parents' mastery goals would have a positive effect on mastery-approach goals (H1) and mastery-avoidance goals (H2), and no effect on performance-approach goals (H3) and performance-avoidance goals (H4). Based on the effects found in Study 1, it was also hypothesised that parents' mastery goals would have a positive effect on both welfare-related goals (H5) and emotional-relational goals (H6). Concerning parents' performance goals, it was hypothesised that they would have a positive effect on performance-approach goals (H7) and performance-avoidance goals (H8)

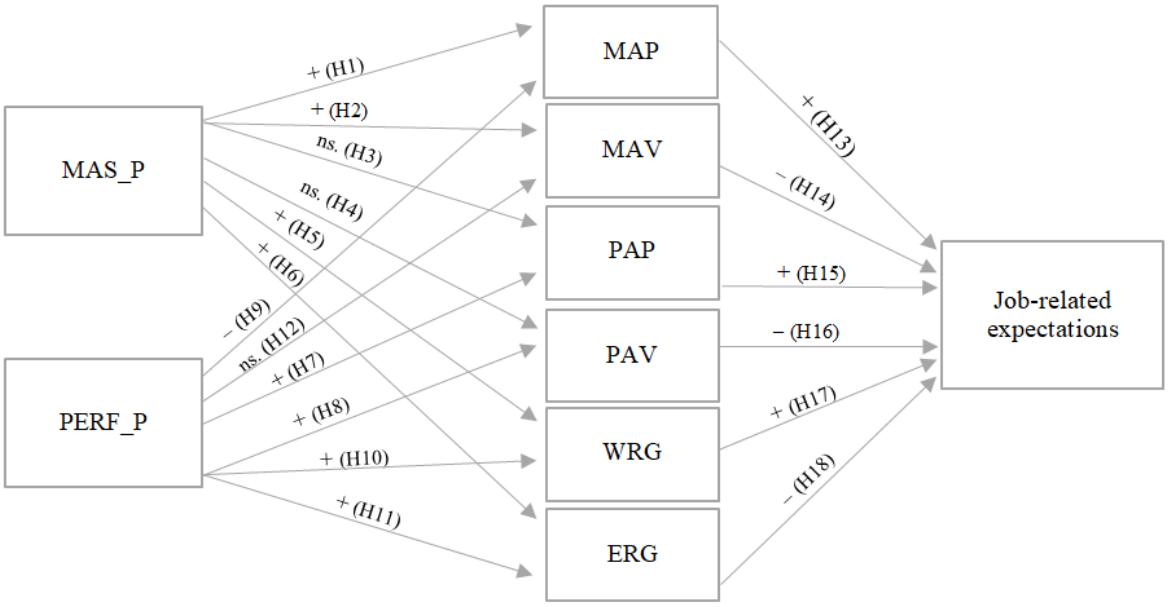
and a negative effect on mastery-approach goals (H9). Based on the effects found in Study 1, it was also hypothesised that they would have a positive impact on welfare-related goals (H10), a positive effect on emotional-relational goals (H11), and no effect on mastery-avoidance goals (H12).

Concerning the effects of students' goals and their job-related expectations, it was hypothesised that mastery-approach goals would have a positive effect on said expectations (H13), and mastery-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on them (H14). It was also hypothesised that performance-approach goals would have a positive effect on future expectations (H15) and performance-avoidance goals would have a negative effect on them (H16). Finally, it was hypothesised that welfare-related goals would have a positive effect on the criterion (H17) and that emotional-relational goals would have a negative effect on it (H18).

The hypothesised effects are shown in the figure below.

Figure 5

Research design and hypothesised effects.



Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

4.3 Methods

The data were retrieved through a questionnaire administered online through the software Qualtrics, and participants were recruited through Prolifics. In order to fill in the questionnaire, participants had to be fluent in Italian and had to be attending a university in Italy. No other restrictions were applied. Participation was completely voluntary and anonymous, and students were remunerated for participating in the study.

4.3.1 Participants

A total of 400 students from numerous types of university courses answered the questionnaire. The mean age was 23.74 years (*SD* = 3.30). The larger percentages of students were composed of 22-year-olds (16.25%) and 24-year-olds (13.50%). 206 participants were women (51.50%), 185 participants were men (46.25%), and 9 participants (2.25%) identified as non-binary. Regarding the year of study, 64 students (16%) were attending the first year of studies, 93 students (23.25%) the second year, 112 students (28%) the third year, 56 students (14%) the fourth year, and 75 students (18.75%) the fifth and final year. Moreover, 299 students (74.75%) stated that they still lived with their parents, and 360 students (90%) stated that they were still economically dependent on parents. Almost all participants were born in Italy (92.50%). In fact, only 2 students (0.50%) were first-generation students, and 28 students (7%) were second-generation students.

4.3.2 Measures

Achievement goals. Achievement goals were observed through an adaptation of Elliot and McGregor's scale (2001). Because the original items refer to high school students, they were adapted to notice college students' motivational orientations (e.g., "I want to learn as much as possible at university"; "Sometimes, I am afraid I may not understand the lessons as thoroughly as I would like"; "It is important for me to do better than the other students in the courses I am attending"; "My goals is to avoid doing worse than my peers in the courses I am attending").

Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement.

The factorial structure of the scale was examined. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2(66) = 2502.64$; $p < .001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) was .78, above the minimum standard for conducting factor analysis (Child, 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974; Lloret et al., 2017). The values in the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above .71, and the communalities between items were all above .44. All of these indices suggested that the data were appropriate for conducting an exploratory factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974). Principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation were used. Four factors, which explained 64.94% of the variance, were extracted. All items had primary loadings above .58, while no item had cross-loadings above .30. The labels "mastery-approach", "mastery-avoidance", "performance-approach", and "performance-avoidance" suited the extracted factors and were retained. Internal consistency for each scale was tested, and each dimension showed good levels of reliability: $a_{\text{mastery-approach}} = .82$; $a_{\text{mastery-avoidance}} = .78$; $a_{\text{performance-approach}} = .92$; = $a_{\text{performance-avoidance}} = .78$.

Social goals. Social goals were noticed through 10 items, adapted from the scale created for high school students (see *Chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.2*). The items notice college students' desire to succeed at university as a means to support their family in the future (e.g., "Doing well in college will give me the opportunity to take care of my family in the future"; "Doing well in college will give me the opportunity

to help my parents financially in the future"), and as a means to comply with parental expectations and repay perceived obligations towards parents (e.g., "I want to do well in college because that is what my parents expect from me"; "I want to do well in college because I feel a strong sense of responsibility towards my parents"). Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement.

The factorial structure of the scale was examined. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2(45) = 2810.19$; $p < .001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1974) was .83, well above the minimum standard for conducting factor analysis (Child, 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974; Lloret et al., 2017). The values in the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above .77, and the communalities between items were all above .43. All of these indices suggested that the data were appropriate for conducting an exploratory factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974). Principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation were used. Two factors, which explained 65.94% of the variance, were extracted. All items had primary loadings above .60, and no item had cross-loadings above .30. The two extracted factors showed a correlation of .20. They were labelled "welfare-related goals" (all items refer to seeing academic success as a means to provide one's parents and family with care and economic support in the future) and "emotional-relational goals" (all items refer to seeing academic success as a means to comply with parental expectations and repay perceived obligations towards parents). Internal consistency for both scales was

tested, and each of them showed high levels of reliability: $\alpha_{\text{welfare-related goals}} = .92$; $\alpha_{\text{emotional-relational goals}} = .88$.

Parental goals. Perceived parental goals were noticed through an 11-item scale retrieved from Midgley et al.'s (2000) Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS). The items, originally created for elementary, middle and high school students, were adapted for college students. The scale is therefore composed of 6 items referred to perceived parental mastery goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to do challenging academic activities, even if I make mistakes"), and 5 items referred to perceived parental performance goals (e.g., "My parents would like me to show others that I am good at coursework"). Students had to show their degree of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 equalled total disagreement and 5 equalled total agreement.

The factorial structure of the scale was examined. Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2(55) = 1743.85$; $p < .001$), and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .83, above the minimum standard for conducting factor analysis (Child, 2006; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974; Lloret et al., 2017). The values in the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix were all above .77, and the communalities between items were all above .25. All of these indices suggested that the data were appropriate for conducting an exploratory factor analysis (Bartlett, 1954; Hair et al., 2010; Kaiser, 1974). Principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation were used. Two factors, which explained 49.87% of the variance, were extracted. All items had primary loadings above .44. Only one item ("My parents want me to do

my best in my studies") had a primary loading of .45 on the first factor and a loading of .37 on the second factor. Following the structure of the original scale, the item was considered as part of the first factor. The two extracted factors showed a correlation of .17. The labels "parental mastery goals" and "parental performance goals" suited the extracted factors and were retained. Both dimensions showed good levels of reliability: $a_{\text{parental mastery goals}} = .82$; $a_{\text{parental performance goals}} = .82$.

Future expectations. Regarding future expectations for college students, job-related expectations were considered. One item asked students to indicate, using a 10-point Likert scale, to which degree they expected to achieve their job-related goals in the future ("To what extent do you think you will be able to achieve your job-related goals?").

4.4 Results

Correlations. Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics are reported in the table below.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations.

	M	***SD***	**1.**	**2.**	**3.**	**4.**	**5.**	**6.**	**7.**	**8.**	**9.**
Parents' goals											
1. Mas_P	3.81	.77	–								
2. Perf_P	3.12	.92	.17**	–							
Achievement goals											
3. MAP	4.41	.64	.24**	.07	–						
4. MAV	3.92	.87	.09	.23**	.33**	–					
5. PAP	2.48	1.07	.11*	.23**	.22**	.09	–				
6. PAV	2.44	1.03	-.01	.28**	.02	.19**	.53**	–			
Social goals											
7. WRG	3.64	.87	.22**	.07	.23**	.15**	.11*	.11*	–		
8. ERG	3.30	.92	.20**	.24**	.00	.26**	.10	.27**	-.04	–	
Future expectations											
9. Job-related goals	6.10	2.11	.12*	-.20**	.17**	-.22**	.14**	-.04	.27**	-.13**	–

Note: ** $p \leq .001$ / $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals.

From the descriptive analyses, it can be observed that parents' mastery goals were more strongly correlated with students' mastery-approach goals (r = .24; p < .001) and welfare-related goals (r = .22; p < .001), while parents' performance goals were especially related to performance-approach goals (r = .23; p < .001),

performance-avoidance goals (r = .28; p < .001), emotional-relational goals (r = .24; p < .001) and, interestingly, mastery-avoidance goals (r = .23; p < .001). Concerning the relationships between achievement goals and social goals, welfare-related goals were more strongly related to mastery-approach goals (r = .23; p < .001), while emotional-relational goals were more strongly related to performance-avoidance goals (r = .27; p < .001). Finally, aside from performance-avoidance goals, job-related expectations were correlated with all of the other variables.

Mediation. A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether achievement goals and social goals mediated the influence of perceived parental goals on students' expectations of further education. The analysis was conducted with PROCESS (Hayes, 2017). Specifically, Model 4 was used. First, parents' performance goals were introduced as the predictor (X1) while parents' mastery goals were introduced as the covariate (X2), and a second analysis was run with parents' mastery goals as the predictor and parents' performance goals as the covariate. Mastery-approach goals (M1), mastery-avoidance goals (M2), performance-approach goals (M3), performance-avoidance goals (M4), welfare-related goals (M5), and emotional-relational goals (M6) were introduced as the mediators. Students' job-related expectations were introduced as the criterion (Y). All the variables were standardised before running the analysis.

The effects of the predictors on the mediators were analysed. Mastery-approach goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery goals (B = .24; SE = .05; 95% CI [.14, .33]; p < .001), and they were not impacted by parents'

performance goals. These results confirmed H1, but did not confirm H9. Contrary to what was expected, mastery-avoidance goals were not influenced by parents' mastery goals, but were positively influenced by parents' performance goals (B = .22; SE = .05; 95% CI [.12, .31]; p < .001). Therefore, H2 and H12 were not confirmed. Performance-approach goals were only impacted by parents' performance goals (B = .22; SE = .05; 95% CI [.12, .32]; p < .001), and the same went for performance-avoidance goals (B = .29; SE = .05; 95% CI [.20, .39]; p < .001). These findings confirmed H3, H4, H7 and H8. Welfare-related goals were impacted only by parents' mastery goals (B = .21; SE = .05; 95% CI [.11, .31]; p < .001), while emotional-relational goals were positively impacted by parents' mastery-goals (B = .16; SE = .05; 95% CI [.07, .26]; p = .001) and parents' performance goals (B = .22; SE = .05; 95% CI [.12, .31]; p < .001) as well. Therefore, H5, H6 and H11 were confirmed, while H10 was not confirmed.

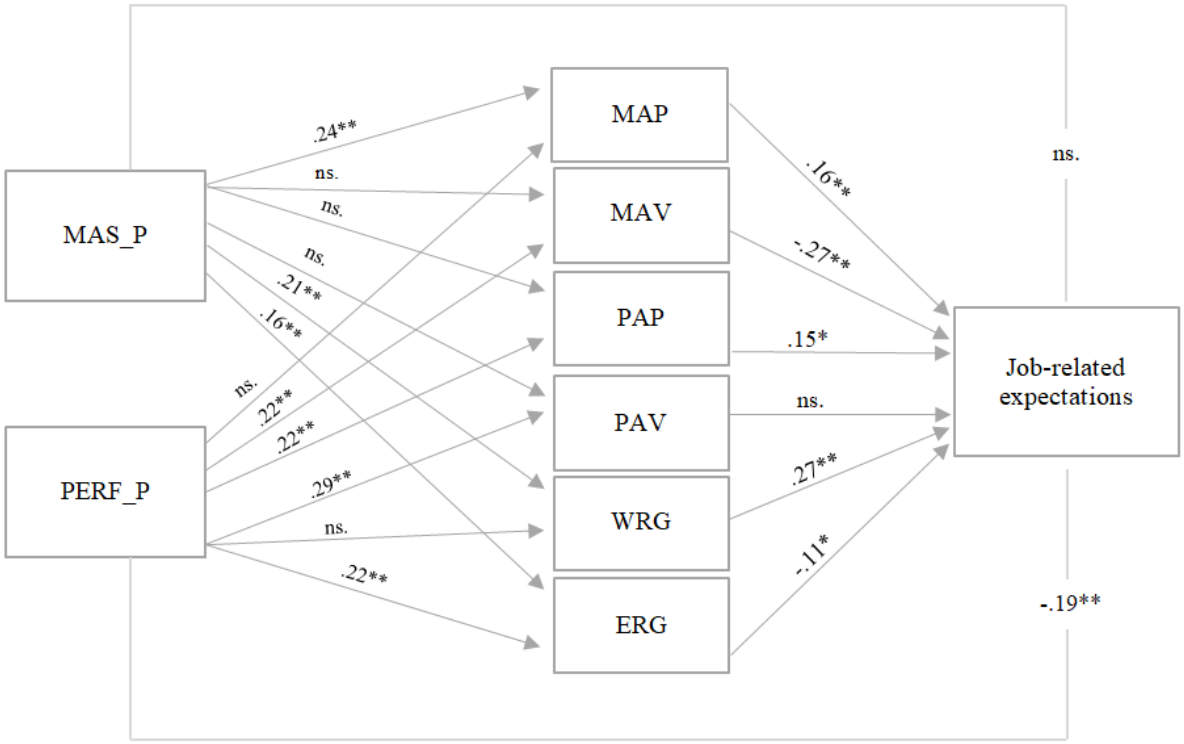
The effects of the mediators on the criterion were then assessed. Students' job-related expectations were positively impacted by mastery-approach goals (B = .16; SE = .05; 95% CI [.06, .26]; p = .001), performance-approach goals (B = .15; SE = .05; 95% CI [.05, .26]; p = .005) and welfare-related goals (B = .27; SE = .05; 95% CI [.18, .36]; p < .001). On the contrary, job-related expectations were negatively impacted by mastery-avoidance goals (B = -.27; SE = .05; 95% CI [-.36, -.17]; p < .001) and emotional-relational goals (B = -.11; SE = .05; 95% CI [-.21, -.02]; p = .02). Performance-avoidance goals did not have an effect on job-related expectations. Aside from H16, all the remaining hypotheses were confirmed.

Concerning the impact of the predictors on the criterion, parents' mastery goals did not have a direct effect on job-related expectations. Instead, parents' performance goals had a direct effect on them, and their impact was negative (B = -.19; SE = .05; 95% CI [-.29, -.10]; $p < .001$)

The overall model was significant and explained 24% of the variance ($F_{(8, 391)}$ = 15.71; R^2 = .24; $p < .001$).

Figure 6

Effects of parents' mastery and performance goals on students' job-related expectations through students' achievement and social goals.



Note: ** p ≤ .001 / p ≤ .01; * p ≤ .05.

Legend: MAS_P = perceived parents' mastery goals; PERF_P = perceived parents' performance goals; MAP = mastery-approach goals; MAV = mastery-avoidance goals; PAP = performance-approach goals; PAV = performance-avoidance goals; WRG = welfare-related goals; ERG = emotional-relational goals; ns. = non-significant.

The indirect effects were assessed. They were firstly assessed considering parents' performance goals as the main predictor and parents' mastery goals as the covariate. The effects of parents' performance goals on students' job-related expectations through students' performance-approach goals (*B* = .03; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [.01, .07]), mastery-avoidance goals (*B* = -.06; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [-.10, -.03]) and emotional-relational goals (*B* = -.02; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.05, -.00]) were significant.

Parents' mastery goals were then considered as the main predictor and indirect effects were assessed. The indirect effects of this predictor through mastery-approach goals (*B* = .04; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [.01, .07]), welfare-related goals (*B* = .06; *SE* = .02; 95% CI [.02, .10]) and emotional-relational goals (*B* = -.02; *SE* = .01; 95% CI [-.04, -.001]) were significant.

4.5 Discussion

This study aimed at understanding the role of parental influences on college students' achievement goals, social goals and, ultimately, future expectations. In particular, it was intended to understand how students' achievement and social goals

could mediate the relationship between perceived parental goals and job-related expectations (i.e., to which degree students expected to achieve their job-related goals in the future).

Some of the effects hypothesised emerged. Students' mastery-approach goals were positively influenced by parents' mastery goals, while students' performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals were positively influenced by parents' performance goals. Interestingly, mastery-avoidance goals did not show a significant relationship with parents' mastery goals and were, instead, positively impacted by parents' performance goals. This finding surely needs further examination, especially considering that mastery-avoidance goals have not been studied as much as the other types of achievement goals have.

Aside from performance-avoidance goals, which did not have any effect on students' future expectations, the other types of achievement goals impacted the criterion as hypothesised. Mastery-approach goals and performance-approach goals both had a positive effect on job-related expectations, which might imply that college students do perceive learning *per se* and demonstration of ability/competition as a valuable means to reaching their goals after college. On the contrary, mastery-avoidance goals negatively impacted job-related expectations, which confirmed once again that focusing on avoiding failing task competency can result in maladaptive outcomes.

Regarding social goals, welfare-related goals were impacted solely by parents' mastery goals. A similar finding had emerged in Study 1 and, as already discussed, it could imply that when students perceive that their parents conceive

studying and learning as valuable *per se*, it could positively influence their perceptions of school's utility to be of help to significant others in the future. Welfare-related goals, in turn, positively impacted students' job-related expectations, confirming that pursuing this type of socially-oriented goal might be adaptive. Emotional-relational goals were instead impacted by both parental goals, but were more strongly influenced by parents' performance goals. Like it emerged in Study 1, they had a negative effect on students' future expectations. Therefore, even for students at higher levels of education, wanting to conform to parental expectations and perceiving an excessive sense of duty, or obligation, towards them can result in negative consequences. This finding is particularly relevant because of the specific aspect of future expectations considered (i.e., expectations to achieve one's job-related goals in the future).

Finally, the importance of parental influences at this educational level was also confirmed by the finding that parents' performance goals continued to have a direct effect on students' expectations despite the mediation of students' own achievement and social goals. Said effect was negative, which highlighted, once again, how detrimental the value parents give to demonstrating ability and competing in academic settings might be even for young adults.

This study, although important for the implications discussed above, has some limitations that must be addressed. First, in this study as well, the data were collected at a single point in time, which precludes drawing definitive conclusions about causal relationships between variables. It would be desirable to recur to

longitudinal data, especially when testing mediation (Jose, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2011).

Also, because the measures used to notice perceived parental goals, students' own achievement goals and social goals were adapted and/or created *ad hoc* for the present study, future research might want to confirm these measures' structure and validity.

Another limitation lies in not having considered certain aspects that could moderate the effects at issue. For instance, still living with parents or still being economically dependent on parents could influence the degree to which parents influence college students' goals and future expectations. Students' age, their family's socio-economic background and their own socio-economic status might have an influence on the effects at issue as well, especially with regard to the antecedents and consequences of welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals. Because of the need to further explore the role of social goals for college students' academic adaptation and related factors, future research might take these aspects into account.

Chapter 5

General discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this doctoral dissertation was to contribute to the discourse on motivation in education. In particular, drawing from the Achievement Goal theory (AGT), its purpose was to integrate the existing knowledge about the antecedents and consequences of motivational orientations by considering their social-relational nature. Particular attention was given to the role of perceived parental goals and social goals.

Three empirical studies were conducted. The first study aimed ad analysing the relationship between perceived parental goals (i.e., parents' mastery goals and parents' performance goals) and high-school students' expectations of further education (i.e., the level of education students expected to attain). In particular, it aimed at examining how this relationship could be mediated by students' achievement goals (i.e., mastery-approach goals, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals) and social goals (i.e., welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals). The second study aimed at testing whether the same effects found in Study 1 would emerge for students attending the first year of upper-secondary school during the first months of the Coronavirus outbreak in Italy, when a lockdown was imposed and students attended

school online. Finally, Study 3 aimed at analysing the relationships among parental perceived goals, students' individual and social goals, and students' expectations (i.e., the extent to which students expected to reach their job-related goals in the future) for university students.

The studies presented contributed to the existing literature about school motivation, and the AGT in particular, in different ways. First, the findings regarding the relationship between perceived parental goals and students' own goals gave an insight on how the transmission of motivational values from parents to their children might work. The findings confirmed that perceiving that parents value certain goals more than others fosters the development of specular goals (e.g., parents mastery goals fostering students' mastery-approach goals and parents' performance goals fostering students' performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals; see Friedel et al., 2007; Kahraman & Sungur, 2012; Gonida et al., 2007; Gonida et al., 2009; Gutman, 2006; Zubković & Kolić-Vehovec, 2014). More importantly, from the findings, it emerged that parents' performance goals might also negatively influence their children's mastery-approach goals (see Study 1). This means that perceiving that parents give importance to competition and demonstration of ability might render their children less prone to developing an intrinsic interest in learning and scholastic activities. Since this effect did not emerge in all of the studies, it would be interesting to test the relationship between parents' performance goals and students' mastery goals further. Moreover, mastery-avoidance goals showed mixed relationships with parental goals. While in Study 1 they emerged to be positively related to parents' mastery goals, in Study 2 they were positively influenced by

parents' mastery goals and performance goals too, and in Study 3 they were positively influenced only by parents' performance goals. These findings call for further research on the antecedents of mastery-avoidance goals, both for high-schoolers and university students, especially considering that these goals have been (and still are) "the least researched and least understood of the four goals in the 2x2 model" (Elliot & Murayama, 2008. p. 625) and, just like performance-approach goals, they might be particularly complex. Finally, both social goals considered in the studies showed compound influences from parental goals. Welfare-related goals were impacted by both types of parental goals in Study 1 and Study 2, with a stronger influence from parents' mastery goals, and were solely impacted by parents' mastery goals in Study 3. Emotional-relational goals were also influenced by both types of parental goals, but they were more strongly affected by parents' performance goals in all of the studies. Hence, perceiving learning and school performances as a means of taking care of one's family in the future might be more strongly associated with perceiving that parents value learning *per se*. Instead, wanting to do well in school to make parents proud, comply with perceived obligations towards them, and comply with their expectations might be more easily fostered by the perception that parents want their children to demonstrate their ability and compete in school. Interestingly, welfare-related goals were also more strongly correlated with students' mastery-approach goals in all of the studies, while emotional-relational goals were more strongly correlated with performance-approach goals and/or performance-avoidance goals. These findings, despite needing further examination, give significant insight into how these types of social goals might relate with individual goals in the system of motivational strivings. As already anticipated

by Urdan and Maehr (1995) and Dowson and McInerney (2003), this might be an aspect of significant relevance.

The findings also contributed to our understanding of how students' motivational orientations (both individual and social) might impact their future expectations, which are one of the most relevant factors of students' lives in school and out of school (Agger et al., 2018; Beal and Crockett, 2010; Khattab, 2015; Mantovani, 2013; Mantovani et al., 2018; OECD, 2013, 2017). Regarding students' achievement goals, all the studies confirmed the adaptive nature of mastery-approach goals and the maladaptive influence of mastery-avoidance goals. Performance-approach goals were also confirmed to positively impact future expectations, both for high-school students and university students. Performance-avoidance goals, on the other hand, were not found to have any effect on students' expectations. These findings, as a whole, confirmed that these four goals are related in different ways to different domains of outcomes, and might transversely contribute to the discourse regarding the domain-specificity of achievement goals' influences (e.g., Bong, 2001; Green et al., 2007; Magson et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018). With respect to social goals, the findings that emerged in Study 1 and Study 2 suggested that welfare-related goals might result adaptive for both high-school students and college students' future expectations, while emotional-relational goals might instead result in maladaptive outcomes. As previously explained, welfare-related goals were conceptualised based on the dimensions of social affiliation goals and social concern goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003, 2004; Maehr & McInerney, 2004), and welfare-related goals were conceptualised based on the dimensions of social

approval goals and social responsibility goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2003, 2004), and the findings discussed in Study 1 and Study 3 are consistent with the idea that the latter might be, in certain circumstances and relatively to certain outcomes, maladaptive (see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5.1*). These findings, as further discussed below, will surely need further research. Finally, the findings have also highlighted the importance that perceived parental goals hold for both for high-schoolers and college students, not only in influencing students' own goals, but also in directly influencing their future expectations. This finding is surely important with respect to college students and provided evidence for the role that parents and the family continue to hold for young adults and students in later stages of the educational system.

These findings have important theoretical implications, but are also relevant on a practical level. Schools might want to sensitise parents to the relevance that their values, goals, attitudes and practices can hold for their children's school-related beliefs and goals and to how these aspects can, in turn, affect other important scholastic outcomes. In particular, as also mentioned below, since parents and the family are only one of the social institutions that continuously influence children and adolescents in their adaptation in school and out of school, students would greatly benefit from fruitful, positive interactions and exchanges between the family system and the different actors in the school system (see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.6*). These exchanges might result in practices that could help students become aware of their goals and the impact that these goals have on their educational outcomes, and help them develop adaptive types of goals to work with to build their present and future in

school and after school completion (see Hoyert & O'Dell, 2006; Hulleman & Barron, 2015; Lazowski & Hulleman, 2016; Morisano et al., 2010; Muis et al., 2013).

The major limitations of the studies were already discussed in each of the previous chapters. Some general limitations can be, however, pinpointed. With regard, in particular, to social goals and their effects on school-related outcomes, the findings contributed to the literature about socially-driven goals by focusing, specifically, on two types of goals students might pursue for the sake of their families and parents. Choosing parents specifically as the social target at issue was relevant because the models (and the scales) through which social goals have been previously studied especially focused on goals held towards peers and friends (see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5.1*). However, the findings surely are not exhaustive. As already discussed in *Chapter 1*, the construct of social goals might be even more complex than the construct of achievement goals, since broader categories of social goals can be declined in as many subtypes as the number of potential significant others, and could operate differently depending on the social target they are referred to. With regard to social goals towards parents and families, there might be numerous other goals aside from welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals that might greatly influence students' expectations or other school-related outcomes. Furthermore, with reference to the factors Urdan and Maehr's (1995) identified as fundamental in the study of social goals (i.e., differences among types of social goals; values of social targets; meanings given to goals on the basis of cultural and socio-contextual factors; goal coordination; see *Chapter 1, paragraph 1.5*) the aspect of meaning can only be partially inferred from the findings discussed in the previous

chapters, and the aspect regarding the coordination between social goals and achievement goals could not be noted with the methodology used. These aspects surely need to be further explored.

Furthermore, with regard to the influence of significant others on motivation and future expectations, the studies presented in this dissertation have focused solely on the role of parents. The role of classmates, peers, and teachers is, however, equally important (e.g., Burgess et al., 2018; Friedel et al., 2007; King & Mendoza, 2020; Spera & Wentzel, 2003; Wentzel et al., 2017) and it would be desirable to assess these influences jointly, to examine their relative weight on academic outcomes and how they converge/conflict with, or compensate for, one another. Furthermore, perceived parental goals were the only aspect of parental determinants considered. Other fundamental aspects of familial influences, such as the family composition, background, socioeconomic status and social capital, or parents' educational level and employment status, often play an important role in contributing to facilitating or hindering students' adaptation in school, their motivation, and other educational outcomes (e.g., Buchmann et al., 2021; Banerjee, 2016; Borgna & Struffolino, 2017; OECD, 2017, 2018).

Differences in students' demographics might as well be equally important in determining whether certain types of parental influences, individual or social goals are more valued than others, and these aspects were not taken into account in the studies. Study 1 and Study 2 especially presented this issue, given that the samples were poorly diversified in terms of the participant students' cultural backgrounds and the schools they were attending. In fact, as already mentioned in *Chapter 1*

(*paragraphs 1.1* and *1.1.1*) Italian schools differ remarkably on the basis of many factors, such as the geographic area the school is located in (e.g., Northern, Central, or Southern Italy; cities, peripheries or small towns), or the type of educational programme the school offers, which greatly differentiates *licei* from technical and vocational schools.

Finally, as already mentioned, all the data retrieved for each of the studies were cross-sectional, meaning that no actual inferences about causal relationships among the variables at issue can be made. It is desirable, if not necessary, to test mediation with longitudinal data (Jose, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2011). Moreover, in each study, mediation was tested using PROCESS (Hayes, 2017), which is based on regression analyses, while it might be desirable to recur to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) when testing mediation. SEM, might provide "a more appropriate inference framework for mediation analyses and for other types of causal analyses" (Gunzler et al., 2013), and result more advantageous than standard regression models (Gunzler et al., 2013; Pek & Hoyle, 2016).

Conclusions. The studies presented in the present dissertation tried to contribute to the Achievement Goal theory (AGT) by examining the influences of perceived parental goals on high-school students and college students' future expectations (i.e., the educational level students expected to attain in the future; the degree to which students expected to achieve their job-related goals in the future) through students' own achievement goals (i.e., mastery-approach goals; mastery-

avoidance goals; performance-approach goals; performance-avoidance goals) and social goals (welfare-related goals and emotional-relational goals).

Taken as a whole, the findings discussed above supported the idea that motivation is "largely socio-psychological in nature" (Maehr, 2008, p. 918), and that the system of motivational goals goes beyond the "self-referentiality" of individualistically-based goals. Despite the limitations discussed above, the findings offered insights that could serve as a basis for future research on the social aspects of school motivation and, eventually, for fruitful exchanges between schools and families, from which good practices may emerge.

References

Agger, C., Meece, J., & Byun, S. Y. (2018). The influences of family and place on rural adolescents' educational aspirations and post-secondary enrollment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *47*(12), 2554-2568.

Alivernini, F., & Lucidi, F. (2011). Relationship between social context, self-efficacy, motivation, academic achievement, and intention to drop out of high school: A longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 104*(4), 241-252.

Allen, J. D. (1986). Classroom management: Students' perspectives, goals, and strategies. *American Educational Research Journal*, *23*(3), 437-459.

Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *84*(3), 261-271.

Ames, C., & Archer, J. (1988). Achievement goals in the classroom: Students' learning strategies and motivation processes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(3), 260-267.

Anderman, L. H., & Anderman, E. M. (1999). Social predictors of changes in students' achievement goal orientations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 24*(1), 21-37.

Archer, J. (1994). Achievement goals as a measure of motivation in university students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *19*(4), 430-446.

Atkinson, J. W. (1957). Motivational determinants of risk-taking behavior. *Psychological Review*, *64*(6), 359-372.

Atkinson, J. W. (1964). *An Introduction to Motivation*. Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.

Bandura, A. (1978). The self system in reciprocal determinism. *American Psychologist*, *33*(4), 344–358.

Bandura, A. (1982) Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency, *American Psychologist*, 37, 122–147.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 1-26.

Bandura, A. (2003). Observational learning. In J. H. Byrne (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Learning and Memory*, 2nd ed. (pp. 482-484). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Bandura, A. (2005). The Evolution of Social Cognitive Theory. In K. G. Smith, & M. A. Hitt (Eds.), *Great Minds in Management* (pp. 9-35). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Banerjee, P. A. (2016). A systematic review of factors linked to poor academic performance of disadvantaged students in science and maths in schools. *Cogent Education*, *3*(1), 1178441.

Bank, B. J., Slavings, R. L., & Biddle, B. J. (1990). Effects of peer, faculty, and parental influences on students' persistence. *Sociology of Education*, *63*(3), 208-225.

Baranik, L. E., Stanley, L. J., Bynum, B. H., & Lance, C. E. (2010). Examining the construct validity of mastery-avoidance achievement goals: A meta-analysis. *Human Performance*, *23*(3), 265-282.

Bardach, L., Oczlon, S., Pietschnig, J., & Lüftenegger, M. (2020). Has achievement goal theory been right? A meta-analysis of the relation between goal structures and personal achievement goals. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *112*(6), 1197-1220.

Barger, M. M., Kim, E. M., Kuncel, N. R., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2019). The relation between parents' involvement in children's schooling and children's adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *145*(9), 855-890.

Barker, K. L., McInerney, D. M., & Institute, M. D. (2002). Performance approach, performance avoidance and depth of information processing: A fresh look at relations between students' academic motivation and cognition. *Educational Psychology*, *22*(5), 571-589.

Barni, D., Ranieri, S., Scabini, E., & Rosnati, R. (2011). Value transmission in the family: Do adolescents accept the values their parents want to transmit?. *Journal of Moral Education*, *40*(1), 105-121.

Barron, K. E., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2001). Achievement goals and optimal motivation: Testing multiple goal models. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*(5), 706–722.

Barron, K. E., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2003). Revisiting the benefits of performance-approach goals in the college classroom: Exploring the role of goals in advanced college courses. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *39*(4-5), 357-374.

Bartlett, M. S. (1954). A further note on the multiplying factors for various X2 approximations in factor analysis. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, *16*(2), 296-298.

Beal, S. J., & Crockett, L. J. (2010). Adolescents' occupational and educational aspirations and expectations: Links to high school activities and adult educational attainment. *Developmental Psychology*, *46*(1), 258-265.

Blumenfeld, P. C. (1992). Classroom learning and motivation: Clarifying and expanding goal theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *84*(3), 272-281.

Bong, M. (2001). Between-and within-domain relations of academic motivation among middle and high school students: self-efficacy, task value, and achievement goals. *Journal of educational psychology*, *93*(1), 23-34.

Borgna, C., & Struffolino, E. (2017). Pushed or pulled? Girls and boys facing early school leaving risk in Italy. *Social Science Research*, *61*, 298-313.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1973). Social ecology of human development. In F. Richardson (Ed.), *Brain and intelligence: The ecology of child development* (pp. 113–129). Hyattsville, MD: National Education Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental research, public policy, and the ecology of childhood. *Child Development*, *45*(1), 1–5.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1975). Reality and research in the ecology of human development. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, *119*(6), 439–469.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). The ecology of human development in retrospect and prospect. In H. McGurk (Ed.), *Ecological factors in human development* (pp. 275–286). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: North Holland.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, *22*(6), 723-742.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1988). Interacting systems in human development. Research paradigms: Present and future. In N. Bolger, A. Caspi, G. Downey, & M. Moorehouse (Eds.), *Persons in contexts: Developmental processes* (pp. 25–49). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (2nd ed., Vol. 3, pp. 1643–1647). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press and Elsevier Science.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: a future perspective. In P. Moen, G. H. Elder, & K. Luscher (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (pp. 599–618). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2000). Ecological systems theory. In A. Kazdin (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Psychology*, (Vol. 3, pp. 129–133). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2001). The bioecological theory of human development. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioural sciences* (pp. 6963–6970). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Buchmann, M., Kriesi, I., Bayard, S., Sander, F., & Bundel, S. (2021). Upward Mobility of Students from Lower-educated Families in Stratified Educational Systems: The Role of Social Capital and Work Habits. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 50,* 391-407.

Burgess, L. G., Riddell, P. M., Fancourt, A., & Murayama, K. (2018). The influence of social contagion within education: A motivational perspective. *Mind Brain and Education,12*(4), 164–174.

Cano, F., & Berbén, A. B. G. (2009). University students' achievement goals and approaches to learning in mathematics. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *79*(1), 131-153.

Catsambis, S. (2001). Expanding knowledge of parental involvement in children's secondary education: Connections with high school seniors' academic success. *Social Psychology of Education*, *5*(2), 149-177.

Cecalupo, A., Marini, M., Scarci, F., & Livi, S. (2021). Individual strivings in social comparison processes: Achievement motivation goals in the Big-fish-little-pond Effect. *Frontiers in Psychology (submitted for publication and formally accepted)*.

Chen, C. (2015). Incremental validity of achievement goals in predicting subjective well-being among university students. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, *14*(1), 38-62.

Chen, H., & Lan, W. (1998). Adolescents' perceptions of their parents' academic expectations: comparison of American, Chinese-American and Chinese high school students. *Adolescence*, *33*(130), 385-385.

Cheung, C. S. S., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2012). Why does parents' involvement enhance children's achievement? The role of parent-oriented motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*(3), 820-832.

Child, D. (2006). *The essentials of factor analysis* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Chirkov, V. I. (2009). A cross-cultural analysis of autonomy in education: A self-determination theory perspective. *Theory and Research in Education*, *7*(2), 253-262.

Ciani, K. D., Sheldon, K. M., Hilpert, J. C., & Easter, M. A. (2011). Antecedents and trajectories of achievement goals: A self-determination theory perspective. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *81*(2), 223-243.

Commodari, E., & La Rosa, V. L. (2020). Adolescents in quarantine during COVID-19 pandemic in Italy: perceived health risk, beliefs, psychological experiences and expectations for the future. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 559951.

Cook, D. A., & Artino Jr, A. R. (2016). Motivation to learn: an overview of contemporary theories. *Medical Education*, *50*(10), 997-1014.

Crockett, L. J., Schulenberg, J. E., & Petersen, A. C. (1987). Congruence between objective and self-report data in a sample of young adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *2*(4), 383-392.

Darnon, B., & Butera, F. (2005). Buts d'accomplissement, stratégies d'étude, et motivation intrinsèque: présentation d'un domaine de recherche et validation française de l'échelle d'Elliot et McGregor (2001). *L'année Psychologique*, *105*(1), 105-131.

Darnon, C., Butera, F., Mugny, G., Quiamzade, A., & Hulleman, C. S. (2009). "Too complex for me!" Why do performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals predict exam performance?. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *24*(4), 423-434.

Darnon, C., Dompnier, B., Delmas, F., Pulfrey, C., & Butera, F. (2009). Achievement goal promotion at university: social desirability and social utility of mastery

and performance goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96*(1), 119-134.

Darnon, C., Harackiewicz, J. M., Butera, F., Mugny, G., & Quiamzade, A. (2007). Performance-approach and performance-avoidance goals: When uncertainty makes a difference. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(6), 813-827.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and" why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227-268.

DeWitt, J., Osborne, J., Archer, L., Dillon, J., Willis, B., & Wong, B. (2013). Young children's aspirations in science: The unequivocal, the uncertain and the unthinkable. *International Journal of Science Education*, *35*(6), 1037-1063.

Diener, C. I., & Dweck, C. S. (1978). An analysis of learned helplessness: Continuous changes in performance, strategy, and achievement cognitions following failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 36*(5), 451-462.

Diener, C. I., & Dweck, C. S. (1980). An analysis of learned helplessness: II. The processing of success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(5), 940-952.

Dompnier, B., Darnon, C., & Butera, F. (2009). Faking the desire to learn: A clarification of the link between mastery goals and academic achievement. *Psychological Science*, *20*(8), 939-943.

Dompnier, B., Darnon, C., & Butera, F. (2013). When performance-approach goals predict academic achievement and when they do not: A social value approach. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *52*(3), 587-596.

Dompnier, B., Darnon, C., Meier, E., Brandner, C., Smeding, A., & Butera, F. (2015). Improving low achievers' academic performance at university by changing the social value of mastery goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*(4), 720-749.

Dowson, M., & McInerney, D. M. (2001). Psychological parameters of students' social and work avoidance goals: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *93*(1), 35-42.

Dowson, M., & McInerney, D. M. (2003). What do students say about their motivational goals?: Towards a more complex and dynamic perspective on student motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *28*(1), 91-113.

Dowson, M., & McInerney, D. M. (2004). The development and validation of the Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S). *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *64*(2), 290-310.

Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, March 9, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/03/09/20A01558/sg.

Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, March 11, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/03/11/20A01605/sg.

Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers, April 26, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2020/04/27/20A02352/sg.

Dweck, C. S. (1975). The role of expectations and attributions in the alleviation of learned helplessness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *31*(4), 674-685.

Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, *41*(10), 1010-1018.

Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, *41*(10), 1040-1048.

Eccles, J. (1983). Expectancies, values and academic behaviors. In J. T. Spence (Ed.), *Achievement and achievement motives: Psychological and Sociological Approaches* (pp. 75-146). San Francisco: Free man.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (1995). In the mind of the actor: The structure of adolescents' achievement task values and expectancy-related beliefs. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *21*(3), 215-225.

Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2020). From expectancy-value theory to situated expectancy-value theory: A developmental, social cognitive, and sociocultural perspective on motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *61*(4), 101859.

Eccles, J. S., Wigfield, A., & Schiefele, U. (1998). Motivation to succeed. In W. Damon & N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 1017–1095). New York, NY: Wiley.

Elliot, A. J. (1999). Approach and avoidance motivation and achievement goals. *Educational Psychologist*, *34*(3), 169-189.

Elliot, A. J. (2005). A conceptual history of the achievement goal construct. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp. 52-72). New York: The Guilford Press.

Elliot, A. J., & Church, M. A. (1997). A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*(1), 218-232.

Elliot, A. J., & Covington, M. V. (2001). Approach and avoidance motivation. *Educational Psychology Review, 13(2)*, 73-92.

Elliot, A. J., Dweck, C. S., & Yeager, D. S. (2017). *Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Elliot, A. J., & Fryer, J. W. (2008). The goal concept in psychology. In J. Shah & W. Gardner (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivational Science* (pp. 235–250). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Elliot, A. J., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (1996). Approach and avoidance achievement goals and intrinsic motivation: A mediational analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(3), 461-475.

Elliot, A. J., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (1994). Goal setting, achievement orientation, and intrinsic motivation: A mediational analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*(5), 968-980.

Elliot, A. J., & McGregor, H. A. (2001). A 2× 2 achievement goal framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *80*(3), 501-519.

Elliot, A. J., Murayama, K., & Pekrun, R. (2011). A 3× 2 achievement goal model. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *103*(3), 632-648.

Elliot, A. J., & Thrash, T. M. (2001). Achievement goals and the hierarchical model of achievement motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, *13*(2), 139-156.

Epstein, J. L. (1987). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufman and F. Loel (Eds.), *Social Intervention: Potential and Constraints* (pp. 121-136). New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter.

Epstein, J. L. (1992). School and family partnerships. In M. Alkin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* (pp. 1139-1151). New York, NY: MacMillan.

Epstein, J. L. (1996). Perspectives and Previews on Research and Policy for School, Family, and Community Partnerships. In A. Booth and J. Dunn (Eds.), *Family-*

School Links: How do they affect educational outcomes? (pp. 209-246). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships. Preparing educators and improving schools.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Esposito, S., Giannitto, N., Squarcia, A., Neglia, C., Argentiero, A., Minichetti, P., ... & Principi, N. (2021). Development of psychological problems among adolescents during school closures because of the COVID-19 lockdown phase in Italy: A cross-sectional survey. *Frontiers in Pediatrics, 8*, 628072.

Feliciano, C., & Lanuza, Y. R. (2016). The immigrant advantage in adolescent educational expectations. *International Migration Review, 50*(3), 758-792.

Friedel, J. M., Cortina, K. S., Turner, J. C., & Midgley, C. (2007). Achievement goals, efficacy beliefs and coping strategies in mathematics: The roles of perceived parent and teacher goal emphases. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *32*(3), 434-458.

Froiland, J. M. (2011). Parental autonomy support and student learning goals: A preliminary examination of an intrinsic motivation intervention. *Child &Youth Care Forum, 40*(2), 135-149.

Frome, P. M., & Eccles, J. S. (1998). Parents' influence on children's achievement-related perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*(2), 435-452.

Fuligni, A. J. (2001). Family obligation and the academic motivation of adolescents from Asian, Latin American, and European backgrounds. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2001*(94), 61-76.

Fuligni, A. J., Tseng, V., & Lam, M. (1999). Attitudes toward family obligations among American adolescents with Asian, Latin American, and European backgrounds. *Child Development*, *70*(4), 1030-1044.

Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*(1), 148-162.

Girelli, L., Alivernini, F., Salvatore, S., Cozzolino, M., Sibilio, M., & Lucidi, F. (2018). Affrontare i primi esami: motivazione, supporto all'autonomia e percezione di controllo predicono il rendimento degli studenti universitari del primo anno. *Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies (ECPS Journal), 18*, 165-185.

Gniewosz, B., & Noack, P. (2012). What you see is what you get: The role of early adolescents' perceptions in the intergenerational transmission of academic values. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *37*(1), 70-79.

Gonida, E. N., Kiosseoglou, G., & Voulala, K. (2007). Perceptions of parent goals and their contribution to student achievement goal orientation and engagement in the classroom: Grade-level differences across adolescence. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, *22*(1), 23-39.

Gonida, E. N., Voulala, K., & Kiosseoglou, G. (2009). Students' achievement goal orientations and their behavioral and emotional engagement: Co-examining the role of perceived school goal structures and parent goals during adolescence. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *19*(1), 53-60.

Goodall, J., & Montgomery, C. (2014). Parental involvement to parental engagement: A continuum. *Educational Review*, *66*(4), 399-410.

Graham, S. (1991). A review of attribution theory in achievement contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, *3*(1), 5-39.

Graham, S., & Taylor, A. Z. (2016). Attribution theory and motivation in school. In K. R. Wentzel & D. B. Miele (Eds.), *Handbook of Motivation at School* (pp. 11-33). New York, NY: Routledge.

Green, J., Martin, A. J., & Marsh, H. W. (2007). Motivation and engagement in English, mathematics and science high school subjects: Towards an understanding of multidimensional domain specificity. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *17*(3), 269-279.

Gunzler, D., Chen, T., Wu, P., & Zhang, H. (2013). Introduction to mediation analysis with structural equation modeling. *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry*, *25*(6), 390-394.

Gutman, L. M. (2006). How student and parent goal orientations and classroom goal structures influence the math achievement of African Americans during the high school transition. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *31*(1), 44-63.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Harackiewicz, J. M., Barron, K. E., & Elliot, A. J. (1998). Rethinking achievement goals: When are they adaptive for college students and why? *Educational Psychologist, 33*(1), 1-21.

Harackiewicz, J. M., Barron, K. E., Pintrich, P. R., Elliot, A. J., & Thrash, T. M. (2002). Revision of achievement goal theory: Necessary and illuminating. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94(3)*, 638-645.

Harackiewicz, J. M., Durik, A. M., Barron, K. E., Linnenbrink-Garcia, L., & Tauer, J. M. (2008). The role of achievement goals in the development of interest: reciprocal relations between achievement goals, interest, and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*(1), 105-122.

Harackiewicz, J. M., & Elliot, A. J. (1993). Achievement goals and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*(5), 904-915.

Hareli, S., & Weiner, B. (2002). Social emotions and personality inferences: A scaffold for a new direction in the study of achievement motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 37*(3), 183-193.

Harper, C. E., Sax, L. J., & Wolf, D. S. S. (2012). The role of parents in college students' sociopolitical awareness, academic, and social development. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 49*(2), 137-156.

Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education?. *Review of Educational Research*, *67*(1), 3-42.

Horst, S. J., Finney, S. J., & Barron, K. E. (2007). Moving beyond academic achievement goal measures: A study of social achievement goals. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *32*(4), 667-698.

Hoyert, M. S., & O'Dell, C. D. (2006). A Brief Intervention to Aid Struggling Students: A Case of Too Much Motivation?. *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *6*(1), 1-13.

Hulleman, C. S., & Barron, K. E. (2015). Motivation interventions in education: Bridging theory, research, and practice. In *Handbook of educational psychology* (pp. 174-185). New York, NY: Routledge.

King, A. L. D., Huebner, S., Suldo, S. M., & Valois, R. F. (2006). An ecological view of school satisfaction in adolescence: Linkages between social support and behavior problems. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *1*(3), 279-295.

Jose, P. E. (2016). The merits of using longitudinal mediation. *Educational Psychologist*, *51*(3-4), 331-341.

Joussemet, M., Landry, R., & Koestner, R. (2008). A self-determination theory perspective on parenting. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, *49*(3), 194-200.

Kahraman, N., & Sungur, S. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of middle school students' achievement goals in science. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 22*(1), 45-60.

Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika, 39*(1), 31-36.

Kaplan, A., & Maehr, M. L. (2007). The contributions and prospects of goal orientation theory. *Educational Psychology Review, 19*(2), 141-184.

Kaplan, A., & Midgley, C. (1997). The effect of achievement goals: Does level of perceived academic competence make a difference?. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 22*(4), 415-435.

Khattab, N. (2015). Students' aspirations, expectations and school achievement: What really matters?. *British Educational Research Journal, 41*(5), 731-748.

King, B. R., & Ganotice, F. A. (2013). Student motivation as hierarchical and multidimensional: Cross-cultural validation of personal investment theory in the Philippines. *Universitas Psychologica, 12*(3), 685-698.

King, R. B., Ganotice, F. A., & Watkins, D. A. (2012). Cross-cultural validation of the Inventory of School Motivation (ISM) in the Asian setting: Hong Kong and the Philippines. *Child Indicators Research, 5*(1), 135-153.

King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Nasser, R. (2017). Different goals for different folks: A cross-cultural study of achievement goals across nine cultures. *Social Psychology of Education, 20*(3), 619-642.

King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Watkins, D. A. (2010). Can social goals enrich our understanding of students' motivational goals?. *Journal of Psychology in Chinese Societies*, *11*(2), 1-16.

King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Watkins, D. A. (2012). Studying for the sake of others: The role of social goals on academic engagement. *Educational Psychology*, *32*(6), 749-776.

King, R. B., McInerney, D. M., & Watkins, D. A. (2013). Examining the role of social goals in school: A study in two collectivist cultures. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 28*(4), 1505-1523.

King, R. B., & Mendoza, N. B. (2020). Achievement goal contagion: Mastery and performance goals spread among classmates. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*(3), 795-814.

King, R. B., & Watkins, D. A. (2012). "Socializing" achievement goal theory: The need for social goals. *Psychological Studies, 57*(1), 112-116.

Kim, S. w., & Hill, N. E. (2015). Including fathers in the picture: A meta-analysis of parental involvement and students' academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 107*(4), 919–934.

La Guardia, J., & Ryan, R. (2002). What adolescents need: A self-determination theory perspective on development within families, school, and society. In F. Pajares & T. Urdan (Eds.), *Academic motivation of adolescents: Vol. 2* (pp. 193-219). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Lazowski, R. A., & Hulleman, C. S. (2016). Motivation interventions in education: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(2), 602-640.

Lloret, S., Ferreres, A., Hernandez, A., Tomas, I. (2017). The exploratory factor analysis of items: Guided analysis based on empirical data and software. *Anales de Psicologia, 33*(2), 417-432.

Lochman, J. E., Wayland, K. K., & White, K. J. (1993). Social goals: Relationship to adolescent adjustment and to social problem solving. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 21*(2), 135–151.

Madjar, N., Kaplan, A., & Weinstock, M. (2011). Clarifying mastery-avoidance goals in high school: Distinguishing between intrapersonal and task-based standards of competence. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *36*(4), 268-279.

Magson, N. R., Bodkin-Andrews, G. H., Craven, R. G., Nelson, G. F., & Yeung, A. S. (2013). Questioning new directions in understanding student motivation: An investigation into the domain specificity of motivational goals. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *30*(2), 171-190.

Maehr, M. L. (2008). Culture and achievement motivation. *International Journal of Psychology*, *43*(5), 917-918.

Maehr, M., & McInerney, D. M. (2004). Motivation as personal investment. In D. M. McInerney & S. Van Etten (Eds.), Sociocultural influences on motivation and learning, Vol. 4 (Big Theories Revisited) (pp. 61-90). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Mantovani, D. (2013). Aspirazioni e aspettative lavorative: giovani studenti italiani e stranieri a confronto. *Quaderni di Sociologia, 61*, 50-75.

Mantovani, D., & Gasperoni, G. (2018). Native and immigrant parents' involvement in school-related activities in France and Italy. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, *10*(3), 110-139.

Mantovani, D., Gasperoni, G., & Albertini, M. (2018). Higher education beliefs and intentions among immigrant-origin students in Italy. *Ethnicities*, *18*(4), 603-626.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*(2), 224-253.

Martin, A. J., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, *79*(1), 327-365.

Martin, A. J., Marsh, H. W., McInerney, D. M., Green, J., & Dowson, M. (2007). Getting along with teachers and parents: The yields of good relationships for students' achievement motivation and self-esteem. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools, 17*(2), 109-125.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370-396.

Maslow, A. H. (1970a). *Motivation and personality*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Maslow, A. H. (1970b). *Religions, values, and peak experiences.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Maxwell, S. E., Cole, D. A., & Mitchell, M. A. (2011). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation: Partial and complete mediation under an autoregressive model. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 46*(5), 816-841.

McClelland, D. C. (1985). How motives, skills, and values determine what people do. *American Psychologist*, *40*(7), 812-825.

McInerney, D. M., Marsh, H. W., & Yeung, A. S. (2003). Toward a hierarchical goal theory model of school motivation. *Journal of Applied Measurement*, *4*(4), 335-357.

McInerney, D. M., Yeung, A. S., & McInerney, V. (2001). Cross-cultural validation of the Inventory of School Motivation (ISM): Motivation orientations of Navajo and Anglo students. *Journal of Applied Measurement, 2*(2), 135–153.

Meda, N., Pardini, S., Slongo, I., Bodini, L., Zordan, M. A., Rigobello, P., ... & Novara, C. (2021). Students' mental health problems before, during, and after COVID-19 lockdown in Italy. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, *134*, 69-77.

Middleton, M. J., & Midgley, C. (1997). Avoiding the demonstration of lack of ability: An underexplored aspect of goal theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89*(4), 710-718.

Midgley, C., Kaplan, A., & Middleton, M. (2001). Performance-approach goals: Good for what, for whom, under what circumstances, and at what cost? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *93*(1), 77-86.

Midgley, C., Maehr, M. L., Hruda, L. Z., Anderman, E., Anderman, L., Freeman, K. E., & Urdan, T. (2000). *Manual for the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

MIUR (2019). La dispersione scolastica. AA.SS. 2017/2018 - 2018/2019. AA.SS. 2018/2019 - 2019/2020. Ministero dell'Istruzione – Ufficio Gestione Patrimonio Informativo e Statistica. Retrieved from https://miur.gov.it/pubblicazioni/-/asset_publisher/6Ya1FS4E4QJw/content/la-dispersione-scolastica-aa-ss-2017-2018-2018-2019-aa-ss-2018-2019-2019-2020.

MIUR (2020a). Esiti dell'esame di Stato e degli scrutini nella scuola secondaria di I grado. Ministero dell'Istruzione – Ufficio Gestione Patrimonio Informativo e Statistica. Retrieved from https://www.miur.gov.it/-/esiti-dell-esame-di-stato-e-degli-scrutini-nella-scuola-secondaria-di-i-grado.

MIUR (2020b). Gli alunni con cittadinanza non italiana. A.S. 2018/2019. Ministero dell'Istruzione – Ufficio Gestione Patrimonio Informativo e Statistica. Retrieved from https://www.miur.gov.it/-/scuola-online-i-dati-sugli-alunni-con-cittadinanza-non-italiana-per-l-anno-scolastico-2018-2019.

MIUR (2021). Focus "Esiti degli scrutini del secondo ciclo di istruzione". Ministero dell'Istruzione – Ufficio Gestione Patrimonio Informativo e Statistica. Retrieved from https://www.miur.gov.it/documents/20182/0/Esiti+degli+scrutini+del+secondo+ciclo+di+istruzione.pdf/cf7c3f02-ce24-447e-9999-

02e1af4fdbb9?version=1.1&t=1497006260201#:~:text=Tra%20gli%20studenti%20con%20voto%20dieci%20il%2068%2C8%25%20ha,16).

Mok, M. M. C., & Flynn, M. (2002). Determinants of students' quality of school life: A path model. *Learning Environments Research*, *5*(3), 275-300.

Morisano, D., Hirsh, J. B., Peterson, J. B., Pihl, R. O., & Shore, B. M. (2010). Setting, elaborating, and reflecting on personal goals improves academic performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *95*(2), 255-264.

Muis, K. R., Ranellucci, J., Franco, G. M., & Crippen, K. J. (2013). The interactive effects of personal achievement goals and performance feedback in an undergraduate science class. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *81*(4), 556-578.

Murayama, K., Elliot, A. J., & Friedman, R. (2012). Achievement goals. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (pp. 191–207). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Murray, H. A. (1938). *Explorations in Personality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Neff, K. D., Hsieh, Y. P., & Dejitterat, K. (2005). Self-compassion, achievement goals, and coping with academic failure. *Self and Identity*, *4*(3), 263-287.

Nicholls, J. G. (1976). Effort is virtuous, but it's better to have ability: Evaluative responses to perceptions of effort and ability. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *10*(3), 306-315.

Nicholls, J. G. (1978). The development of the concepts of effort and ability, perception of academic attainment, and the understanding that difficult tasks require more ability. *Child Development, 49*(3), 800-814.

Nicholls, J. G. (1980). The development of the concept of difficulty. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development, 26*(3), 271-281.

Nicholls, J. G. (1984). Achievement motivation: conceptions of ability, subjective experience, task choice, and performance. *Psychological Review, 91*(3), 328-346.

OECD (2013). *PISA 2012 Results: Ready to Learn: Students' Engagement, Drive and Self-Beliefs (Volume III)*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264201170-en (last accessed date: January 2022).

OECD (2017). *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students' Well-Being*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273856-en (last accessed date: January 2022).

OECD (2018). *The resilience of students with an immigrant background: Factors that shape well-being*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264292093-en (last accessed date: January 2022).

OECD (2019a). *PISA 2018 Results (Volume I): What Students Know and Can Do*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1787/5f07c754-en (last accessed date: January 2022).

OECD (2019b). *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*. OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en (last accessed date: January 2022).

Pek, J., & Hoyle, R. H. (2016). On the (in) validity of tests of simple mediation: Threats and solutions. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *10*(3), 150-163.

Perna, L. W. (2000). Differences in the decision to attend college among African Americans, Hispanics, and Whites. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *71*(2), 117-141.

Phinney, J. S., Ong, A., & Madden, T. (2000). Cultural values and intergenerational value discrepancies in immigrant and non-immigrant families. *Child Development*, *71*(2), 528-539.

Pintrich, P. R. (2000a). *The role of goal orientation in self-regulated learning.* In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of Self-regulation* (p. 451–502). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Pintrich, P. R. (2000b). An achievement goal theory perspective on issues in motivation terminology, theory, and research. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*(1), 92-104.

Pomerantz, E. M., Grolnick, W. S., & Price, C. E. (2005). The Role of Parents in How Children Approach Achievement: A Dynamic Process Perspective. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 229–278). New York, NY: Guilford.

Pulfrey, C., & Butera, F. (2013). Why neoliberal values of self-enhancement lead to cheating in higher education: A motivational account. *Psychological Science*, *24*(11), 2153-2162.

Ratelle, C. F., Guay, F., Vallerand, R. J., Larose, S., & Senécal, C. (2007). Autonomous, controlled, and amotivated types of academic motivation: A person-oriented analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(4), 734-746.

Ratelle, C. F., Simard, K., & Guay, F. (2013). University students' subjective well-being: The role of autonomy support from parents, friends, and the romantic partner. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *14*(3), 893-910.

Renshaw, P. D., & Asher, S. R. (1983). Children's goals and strategies for social interaction. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *29*(3), 353–374.

Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development: Its evolution from ecology to bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 5*(4), 243-258.

Ryan, A. M., & Shim, S. S. (2006). Social achievement goals: The nature and consequences of different orientations toward social competence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *32*(9), 1246-1263.

Scherrer, V., Preckel, F., Schmidt, I., & Elliot, A. J. (2020). Development of achievement goals and their relation to academic interest and achievement in adolescence: A review of the literature and two longitudinal studies. *Developmental Psychology*, *56*(4), 795-814.

Schunk, D. H., Meece, J.L., & Pintrich, P.R (2014). *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research, and Applications, 4th Edition.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Seginer, R. (1983). Parents' educational expectations and children's academic achievements: A literature review. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, (29)*1 1-23.

Senko, C. (2016). Achievement goal theory: A story of early promises, eventual discords, and future possibilities. In K. Wentzel & D. Miele (Eds.), Handbook of Motivation at School, Vol. 2. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Senko, C., & Dawson, B. (2017). Performance-approach goal effects depend on how they are defined: Meta-analytic evidence from multiple educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *109*(4), 574-598.

Senko, C., & Freund, A. M. (2015). Are mastery-avoidance achievement goals always detrimental? An adult development perspective. *Motivation and Emotion*, *39*(4), 477-488.

Skaalvik, E. M. (1997). Self-enhancing and self-defeating ego orientation: Relations with task and avoidance orientation, achievement, self-perceptions, and anxiety. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89*(1), 71-81.

Smith, T. E. (1982). The case for parental transmission of educational goals: The importance of accurate offspring perceptions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *44*(3), 661-674.

Soenens, B., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2005). Antecedents and outcomes of self-determination in 3 life domains: The role of parents' and teachers' autonomy support. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 34*(6), 589-604.

Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., Luyckx, K., Goossens, L., Beyers, W., & Ryan, R. M. (2007). Conceptualizing parental autonomy support: Adolescent perceptions of promotion of independence versus promotion of volitional functioning. *Developmental Psychology*, *43*(3), 633-646.

Spector, P. E. (2019). Do not cross me: Optimizing the use of cross-sectional designs. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 34*(2), 125-137.

Spera, C., & Wentzel, K. R. (2003). Congruence between students' and teachers' goals: Implications for social and academic motivation. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *39*(4-5), 395-413.

Spinelli, M., Lionetti, F., Pastore, M., & Fasolo, M. (2020). Parents' stress and children's psychological problems in families facing the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 1713.

Taylor, G., Jungert, T., Mageau, G. A., Schattke, K., Dedic, H., Rosenfield, S., & Koestner, R. (2014). A self-determination theory approach to predicting school achievement over time: The unique role of intrinsic motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 39*(4), 342-358.

Tudge, J. R. H. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner. In H. Montgomery (Ed.), *Oxford bibliographies on line: Childhood studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Urdan, T. C. (1997). Achievement goal theory: Past results, future directions. In M. L. Maehr & A. L. Pincus (Eds.), Advances in motivation and achievement (Vol. 10, pp. 99–141). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Urdan, T., & Kaplan, A. (2020). The origins, evolution, and future directions of achievement goal theory. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*(2020), 101862.

Urdan, T. C., & Maehr, M. L. (1995). Beyond a two-goal theory of motivation and achievement: A case for social goals. *Review of Educational Research, 65*(3), 213-243.

Van Geel, M., & Vedder, P. (2011). The role of family obligations and school adjustment in explaining the immigrant paradox. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 40*(2), 187-196.

Van Yperen, N. W., Elliot, A. J., & Anseel, F. (2009). The influence of mastery-avoidance goals on performance improvement. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 39*(6), 932-943.

Vansteenkiste, M., Sierens, E., Soenens, B., Luyckx, K., & Lens, W. (2009). Motivational profiles from a self-determination perspective: the quality of motivation matters. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(3), 671-688.

Wang, C. J., Biddle, S. J., & Elliot, A. J. (2007). The 2× 2 achievement goal framework in a physical education context. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 8*(2), 147-168.

Wang, C. K. J., Tan, L., & Dairianathan, E. I. (2018). Achievement goals, implicit theories, and intrinsic motivation: A test of domain specificity across music, visual art, and sports. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *66*(3), 320-337.

Watkins, D. A., McInerney, D. M., & Lee, C. (2002). Assessing the school motivation of Hong Kong students. *Psychologia, 45*(3), 145–154.

Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review, 92*(4), 548-573.

Weiner, B. (1994). Integrating social and personal theories of achievement striving. *Review of Educational Research*, *64*(4), 557-573.

Weiner, B. (2010). Attribution theory. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGaw (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 558–563). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Weiner, B., Heckhausen, H., & Meyer, W. U. (1972). Causal ascriptions and achievement behavior: A conceptual analysis of effort and reanalysis of locus of control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 21*(2), 239–248.

Wentzel, K. R. (2000). What is it that I'm trying to achieve? Classroom goals from a content perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 105-115.

Wentzel, K. R., Muenks, K., McNeish, D., & Russell, S. (2017). Peer and teacher supports in relation to motivation and effort: A multi-level study. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,49*, 32–45.

Wigfield, A. (1994). Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation: A developmental perspective. *Educational Psychology Review, 6*(1), 49-78.

Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2000). Expectancy–value theory of achievement motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 68-81.

Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2002). The development of competence beliefs, expectancies for success, and achievement values from childhood through adolescence. In A. Wigfield & J. S. Eccles (Eds.), *The development of achievement motivation* (pp. 91–120). New York, NY: Academic.

Wintre, M. G., & Yaffe, M. (2000). First-year students' adjustment to university life as a function of relationships with parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 15*(1), 9-37.

Wiseman, H., Mayseless, O., & Sharabany, R. (2006). Why are they lonely? Perceived quality of early relationships with parents, attachment, personality predispositions and loneliness in first-year university students. *Personality and Individual Differences, 40*(2), 237-248.

World Health Organisation (2020a). *WHO Director-General's statement on IHR Emergency Committee on Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-statement-on-ihr-emergency-committee-on-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov).

World Health Organisation (2020b). *Statement on the second meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news/item/30-01-2020-statement-on-the-second-meeting-

of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov).

World Health Organisation (2020c). *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020.

Zubković, B. R., & Kolić-Vehovec, S. (2014). Perceptions of contextual achievement goals: Contribution to high-school students' achievement goal orientation, strategy use and academic achievement. *Studia Psychologica, 56*(2), 137-153.

Zullig, K. J., Huebner, E. S., & Patton, J. M. (2011). Relationships among school climate domains and school satisfaction. *Psychology in the Schools, 48*(2), 133-145.

Annex A

Study 1 and Study 2 scales.

1. Perceived parental goals

Di seguito troverai delle affermazioni riguardanti il modo in cui alcuni studenti percepiscono le attitudini dei propri genitori verso la scuola. Indica quanto sei d'accordo con ciascuna affermazione utilizzando la seguente scala di risposta:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Totalmente in disaccordo	Abbastanza in disaccordo	Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	Abbastanza in accordo	Totalmente in accordo

1.	I miei genitori vogliono che io trascorra del tempo a ragionare su quello che studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	I miei genitori vogliono che dia il meglio di me nello studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	I miei genitori vorrebbero che io mi cimentassi in attività scolastiche impegnative, anche quando so che potrei commettere degli errori.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	I miei genitori vogliono che io capisca ciò che faccio in classe, senza limitarmi semplicemente a memorizzare ciò che studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	I miei genitori vogliono che capisca che ciò che studio a scuola è connesso a ciò che accade al di fuori della scuola.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	I miei genitori vogliono che io capisca ciò che studio, non che svolga semplicemente i miei compiti scolastici.	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	Ai miei genitori non piace quando commetto degli errori nelle attività scolastiche.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	Ai miei genitori piacerebbe che, a scuola, io dimostrassi di essere migliore dei miei compagni di classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	I miei genitori vorrebbero che dimostrassi agli altri di essere bravo nelle attività scolastiche.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	I miei genitori pensano che dare le risposte giuste a scuola sia molto importante.	**1 2 3 4 5**
11.	I miei genitori sarebbero contenti se dimostrassi che per me le attività scolastiche sono semplici.	**1 2 3 4 5**

2. Achievement goals

Nel caso delle prossime affermazioni ti preghiamo di indicare il tuo grado di accordo attraverso la scala di risposta qui riportata, in cui 1 indica il massimo disaccordo, il 5 il massimo accordo e i numeri intermedi un accordo intermedio.

1 Totalmente in disaccordo	**2** Abbastanza in disaccordo	**3** Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	**4** Abbastanza in accordo	**5** Totalmente in accordo

1.	È importante per me essere più bravo dei miei compagni di classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	Per me è importante andare meglio dei miei compagni di classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	Il mio obiettivo a scuola è di prendere voti migliori rispetto alla maggior parte dei miei compagni di classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	Qualche volta sono preoccupato che non riuscirò ad imparare tutto ciò che mi viene insegnato a scuola.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	Certe volte ho paura di non riuscire a capire bene gli argomenti delle lezioni come vorrei.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	Sono sinceramente dispiaciuto quando penso che potrei non riuscire ad imparare tutto quello che c'è da imparare a scuola.	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	A scuola voglio imparare il più possibile.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	È importante che io capisca il contenuto delle lezioni il meglio possibile.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	Desidero poter padroneggiare perfettamente le materie che ci spiegano a scuola.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	L'importante è evitare di andare peggio a scuola rispetto agli altri compagni di classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
11.	Il mio obiettivo è di evitare di ritrovarmi tra i peggiori studenti della classe.	**1 2 3 4 5**
12.	La mia paura di avere voti peggiori dei miei compagni di classe mi spinge ad impegnarmi.	**1 2 3 4 5**

3. Social goals

Le seguenti affermazioni fanno riferimento ad alcuni tipi di motivazione che possono spingere gli studenti ad impegnarsi per andare bene a scuola. Indica, utilizzando la scala di risposta proposta, il tuo grado di accordo con ciascuna affermazione.

1 Totalmente in disaccordo	**2** Abbastanza in disaccordo	**3** Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	**4** Abbastanza in accordo	**5** Totalmente in accordo

1.	Andare bene a scuola mi darà la possibilità di migliorare lo status socio-economico della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	Andare bene a scuola mi darà la possibilità di migliorare le condizioni di vita della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	Andare bene a scuola mi darà l'opportunità di aiutare economicamente i miei genitori in futuro.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	Andare bene a scuola mi darà la possibilità di assistere al meglio la mia famiglia in futuro.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	Andare bene a scuola mi darà la possibilità di prendermi cura della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	Voglio andare bene a scuola perché mi sento in debito nei confronti dei miei genitori.	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	Voglio andare bene a scuola perché percepisco un forte senso di responsabilità nei confronti dei miei genitori.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	Voglio andare bene a scuola perché è ciò che i miei genitori si aspettano da me.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	Voglio andare bene a scuola perché i miei genitori pensano che sia la cosa giusta da fare.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	Voglio andare bene a scuola per rendere orgogliosi i miei genitori.	**1 2 3 4 5**

Annex B

Study 3 scales.

1. Perceived parental goals

Ti chiediamo ora di rispondere ad alcune domande riguardanti le attitudini dei tuoi genitori riguardo alcuni aspetti della tua vita universitaria. Ti ricordiamo che contano le tue personali percezioni/opinioni.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Totalmente in disaccordo	Abbastanza in disaccordo	Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	Abbastanza in accordo	Totalmente in accordo

1.	I miei genitori vogliono che io trascorra del tempo a ragionare su quello che studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	I miei genitori vogliono che dia il meglio di me nello studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	I miei genitori vorrebbero che io mi cimentassi in attività universitarie impegnative, anche quando so che potrei commettere degli errori.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	I miei genitori vogliono che io capisca ciò che faccio nei corsi universitari, senza limitarmi semplicemente a memorizzare ciò che studio.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	I miei genitori vogliono che capisca che ciò che studio all'università è connesso a ciò che accade al di fuori di essa.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	I miei genitori vogliono che io capisca ciò che studio, non che svolga semplicemente i miei compiti universitari (ad esempio: studiare per un esame, partecipare a lavori di gruppo, scrivere tesine, ecc.)	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	Ai miei genitori non piace quando commetto degli errori nelle attività universitarie.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	Ai miei genitori piacerebbe che, all'università, io dimostrassi di essere migliore dei colleghi nei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	I miei genitori vorrebbero che dimostrassi agli altri di essere bravo nelle attività universitarie.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	I miei genitori pensano che dimostrare le mie conoscenze/abilità nelle attività universitarie sia molto importante.	**1 2 3 4 5**
11.	I miei genitori sarebbero contenti se dimostrassi che per me le attività universitarie sono semplici.	**1 2 3 4 5**

2. Achievement goals

Le seguenti affermazioni fanno riferimento ad alcuni tipi di motivazione ed obiettivi che possono spingere gli studenti ad impegnarsi all'università. Ti preghiamo di indicare, per ciascuna affermazione, il tuo grado di accordo/disaccordo.

1 Totalmente in disaccordo	**2** Abbastanza in disaccordo	**3** Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	**4** Abbastanza in accordo	**5** Totalmente in accordo

1.	Per me è importante essere più bravo dei colleghi dei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	Per me è importante andare meglio dei colleghi dei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	Il mio obiettivo all'università è di prendere voti migliori rispetto alla maggior parte dei colleghi dei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	Qualche volta sono preoccupato che non riuscirò ad imparare tutto ciò che mi viene insegnato all'università.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	Certe volte ho paura di non riuscire a capire bene gli argomenti delle lezioni come vorrei.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	Sono sinceramente dispiaciuto quando penso che potrei non riuscire ad imparare tutto quello che c'è da imparare all'università.	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	All'università voglio imparare il più possibile.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	È importante che io capisca il contenuto delle lezioni il meglio possibile.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	Desidero poter padroneggiare perfettamente i contenuti che ci spiegano a scuola.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	L'importante è evitare di andare peggio a scuola rispetto ai colleghi dei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
11.	Il mio obiettivo è di evitare di ritrovarmi tra i peggiori studenti nei corsi che seguo.	**1 2 3 4 5**
12.	La mia paura di avere voti peggiori colleghi dei corsi che seguo mi spinge ad impegnarmi.	**1 2 3 4 5**

3. Social goals

Le seguenti affermazioni fanno riferimento ad alcuni tipi di motivazione che possono spingere gli studenti ad impegnarsi all'università. Ti preghiamo di indicare il tuo grado di accordo/disaccordo con ciascuna affermazione.

1 Totalmente in disaccordo	**2** Abbastanza in disaccordo	**3** Né in accordo, né in disaccordo	**4** Abbastanza in accordo	**5** Totalmente in accordo

1.	Andare bene all'università mi darà la possibilità di migliorare lo status socio-economico della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2.	Andare bene all'università mi darà la possibilità di migliorare le condizioni di vita della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3.	Andare bene all'università mi darà l'opportunità di aiutare economicamente i miei genitori in futuro.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4.	Andare bene all'università mi darà la possibilità di assistere al meglio la mia famiglia in futuro.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5.	Andare bene all'università mi darà la possibilità di prendermi cura della mia famiglia in futuro.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6.	Voglio andare bene all'università perché mi sento in debito nei confronti dei miei genitori.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7.	Voglio andare bene all'università perché percepisco un forte senso di responsabilità nei confronti dei miei genitori.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8.	Voglio andare bene all'università perché è ciò che i miei genitori si aspettano da me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9.	Voglio andare bene all'università perché i miei genitori pensano che sia la cosa giusta da fare.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10.	Voglio andare bene all'università per rendere orgogliosi i miei genitori.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**