

17th EARA Online Conference, 2-5 September, 2020



The links between family economic and cultural capital and adolescent identity processing styles

Erentaitė, R.¹ & Vosylis, R.^{1,2}

¹Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities (Kaunas University of Technology)

²Institute of Psychology (Mykolas Romeris University)



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)

Background and goal



- Studies reveal a number of **adverse effects of family economic hardships on child and adolescent developmental outcomes.**

(Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Heberle & Carter, 2015; Masarik & Conger, 2017)

- Relatively little is known about the **internal psychological processes, such as formation of personal identity,** in relation to family economic situation.

(Dickerson, Milojevich, & Quas, 2019; Heberle & Carter, 2015)



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Background and goal



- Recent findings reveal that **aspects of self-regulation and cognition** can be shaped by experiences related to poverty and low socio-economic status.

(Frankenhuis & Nettle, 2020; Sheehy-Skeffington, 2019; Warren & Barnett, 2020)

- Personal identity is a **socio-cognitive structure involved in self-regulatory** processes.

(Adams & Marshal, 1996; Berzonsky, 1989, 2004 2007)

- **Thus, our goal was to explore whether the way adolescents approach identity-related issues may also be related to their family economic situation.**



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Theoretical models



Explaining the links between family economic context and individual development (Conger & Donnellan, 2007):

Family investment model

Better-off families have better access to financial, social, human, and cultural capital, so they can make multifaceted investments in the development of their children, while disadvantaged families must focus on meeting the immediate family needs.

Family economic stress model

Economic hardships exacerbate family stresses and have an adverse effect on parents' emotions, behaviors, and relationships, which in turn negatively influence their parenting strategies and impede their children's developmental outcomes .

Respectively, **two mediational models** were constructed to test the links between family economic context and adolescent identity.

GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Variables and instruments



Predictor: *Family material conditions* (based on Hobza et al., 2017)

- Number of cars, computers at home, personal bedroom, trips abroad, free meals

Outcome: *Identity processing styles* (Berzonsky, 2015)

- Information-oriented, normative, diffuse-avoidant

Mediators: Investment model

Family cultural capital (Tramonte & Willms, 2010):

- ***Cultural assets*** (number of books, musical instruments, art pieces at home)
- ***Cultural discussions*** (frequency of discussions on art, culture, social and political issues at home)
- ***Cultural activities*** (frequency of attending exhibitions, concerts, theater, museums)

Mediators: Stress model

Family economic pressures & Family conflict (both adapted from Wadsworth & Compas, 2002)

Parenting styles (Boerchi & Tagliabue, 2018):

- Support, interference, lack of engagement

GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Study participants



- **1268** adolescents (51,7% females)
- Age 14 - 16 (M = 14.87 SD = 0.39)
- Diverse family and socio-economic background:
 - 67% live with two parents; 22% parental divorce, 4% parental loss, 4% migration
 - 12.9% receive social support (free nutrition at school) (on a national level – 13.7%)
- Homogenous ethnically (> 98% Lithuanian)



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)

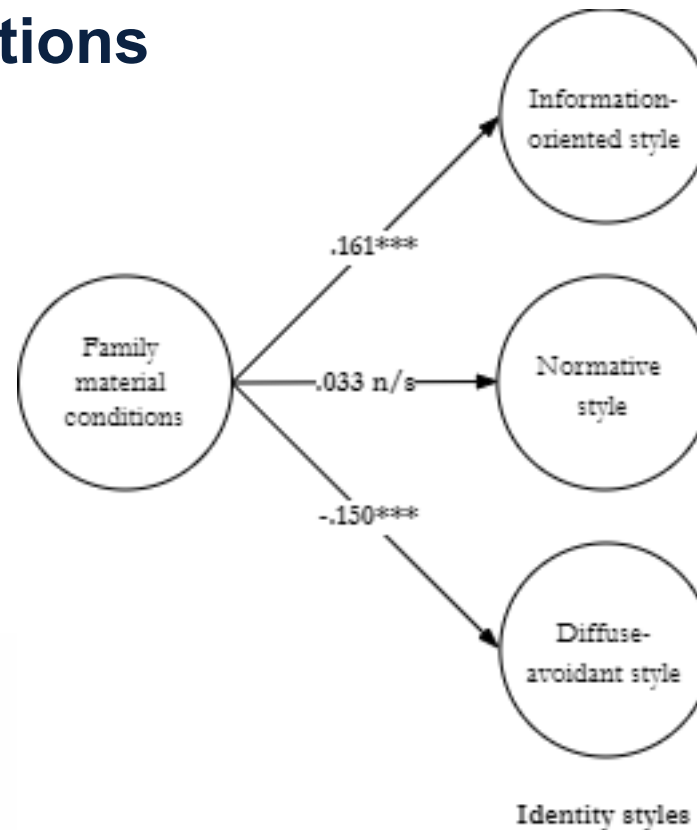


Results: Overall associations



Family material conditions are related:

- Positively with information-oriented identity style
- Negatively with diffuse-avoidant identity style



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)

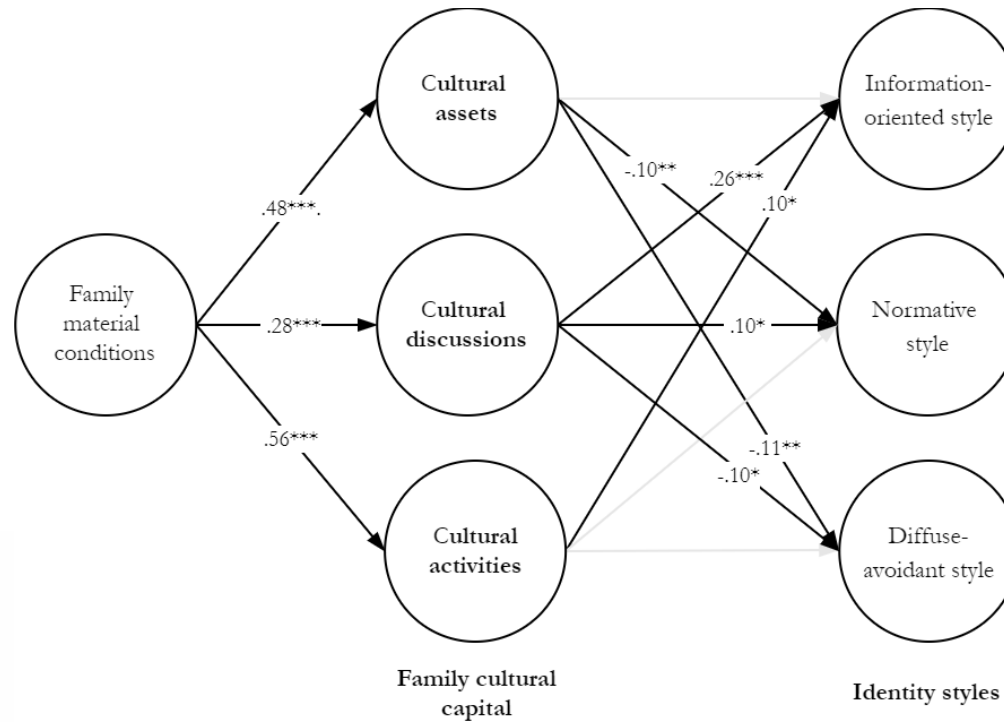


Mediated links 1: Family investment model



Family material conditions are *indirectly* linked:

- Positively with information-oriented style *through* cultural activities
- Negatively with diffuse-avoidant style *through* limited cultural assets



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)

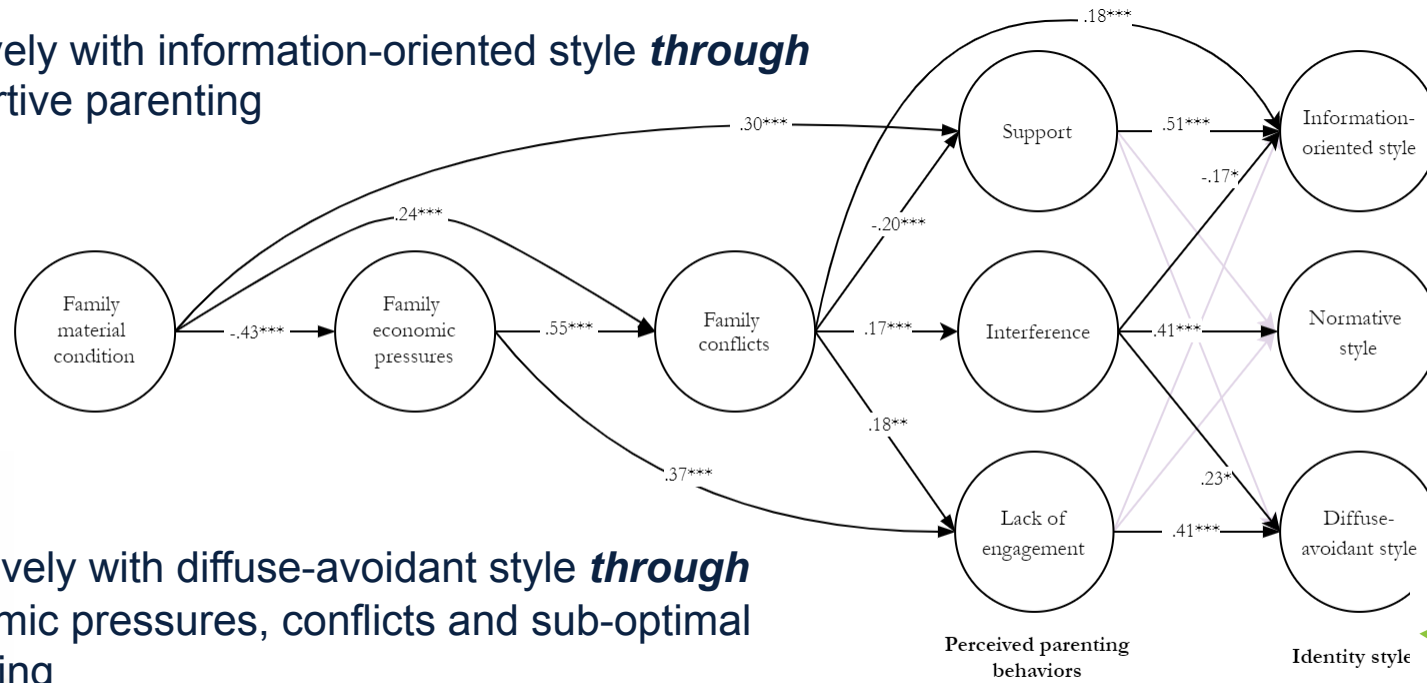


Mediated links 2: Family stress model



Family material conditions are *indirectly* linked:

- Positively with information-oriented style *through* supportive parenting



- Negatively with diffuse-avoidant style *through* economic pressures, conflicts and sub-optimal parenting

GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Conclusions and Limitations



Our findings reveal the **relevance** of family economic situation for adolescent identity formation and provides insights into **potential mechanisms** involved.

- Better material conditions at home are linked to more reliance on deliberate, rational processing of identity-related issues (through higher cultural (co)engagement and better relationships in the family).
- Worse material situation in the family is related to avoidance or situational processing of identity-related information (through higher economic pressures, limited cultural assets, and poorer relationships in the family).

Our cross-sectional findings should be complemented with longitudinal approaches.

GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



Acknowledgements



This presentation is based on data collected under the research project “The development of adolescent personal goals in the context of social inequality (PaNel)”. The project is funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (grant agreement S-MIP-19-26).



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)



17th EARA Online Conference, 2-5 September, 2020



Thank you!

Contact us: rasa.erentaite@ktu.lt

Visit the study web: <https://tikslulaboratorija.ktu.edu>



GOALS' LAB STUDY (2019-2021)