



# The Association between the Perception of Parental Affection and Academic Performance in Adolescents

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## Introduction

- Student's emotional well-being has become a more studied topic in recent years due to the increasing evidence that emotions can greatly affect their academic agency (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014)
- Additionally, familial valuing of school subjects have pointed to an increase in test anxiety in young children (Prekel, 2017).
- Test anxiety: the experience of nervousness and apprehension during the examination process.
- Studies have shown that adolescents with test anxiety are more likely to have academic difficulties than those without (Hernández-Pozo & Macías-Martínez, 2008).
- Parental influence has been shown to indirectly affect adolescents' school performance (Slowiaczek, 1994).

## Research Questions

- Is there an association between adolescent perception of parental affection and their academic performance, controlling for parent's education level?
- Does the association between adolescent perception of parental affection and academic performance differ with the gender of the parent?

## Methods

### Sample

- Respondents (n=20,745) were drawn from the 1994-95 U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), a sample of adolescents in grades 7-12 in the 1994-95 school year.

### Measures

- Perception of maternal and paternal affection were assessed using the five categories of varying affection and were coded separately based on the gender of the parent. The five levels were then coded dichotomously into "affection" and "no affection".
- Academic performance was assessed using a series of four questions about letter grades. Responses were summed to a variable reflecting GPA ranging from 0 (all D's) to 12 (all A's).
- Parent education level was assessed using the reported level by the child.

## Results

### Univariate

- Adolescent GPA mean is 8.112.
- 41.62% of Fathers went to a 4-year college or beyond (43.98% for Mothers)

### Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis showed that there is not a significant association between the perception of father's affection and adolescent GPA ( $F(1,1942)=1.605, p=0.205$ )
- However, ANOVA analysis showed that there is a significant association between the perception of mother's affection and adolescent GPA ( $F(1,1942)=8.416, p=0.00376$ ); visualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Adolescent GPA and Perception of Mother's Affection

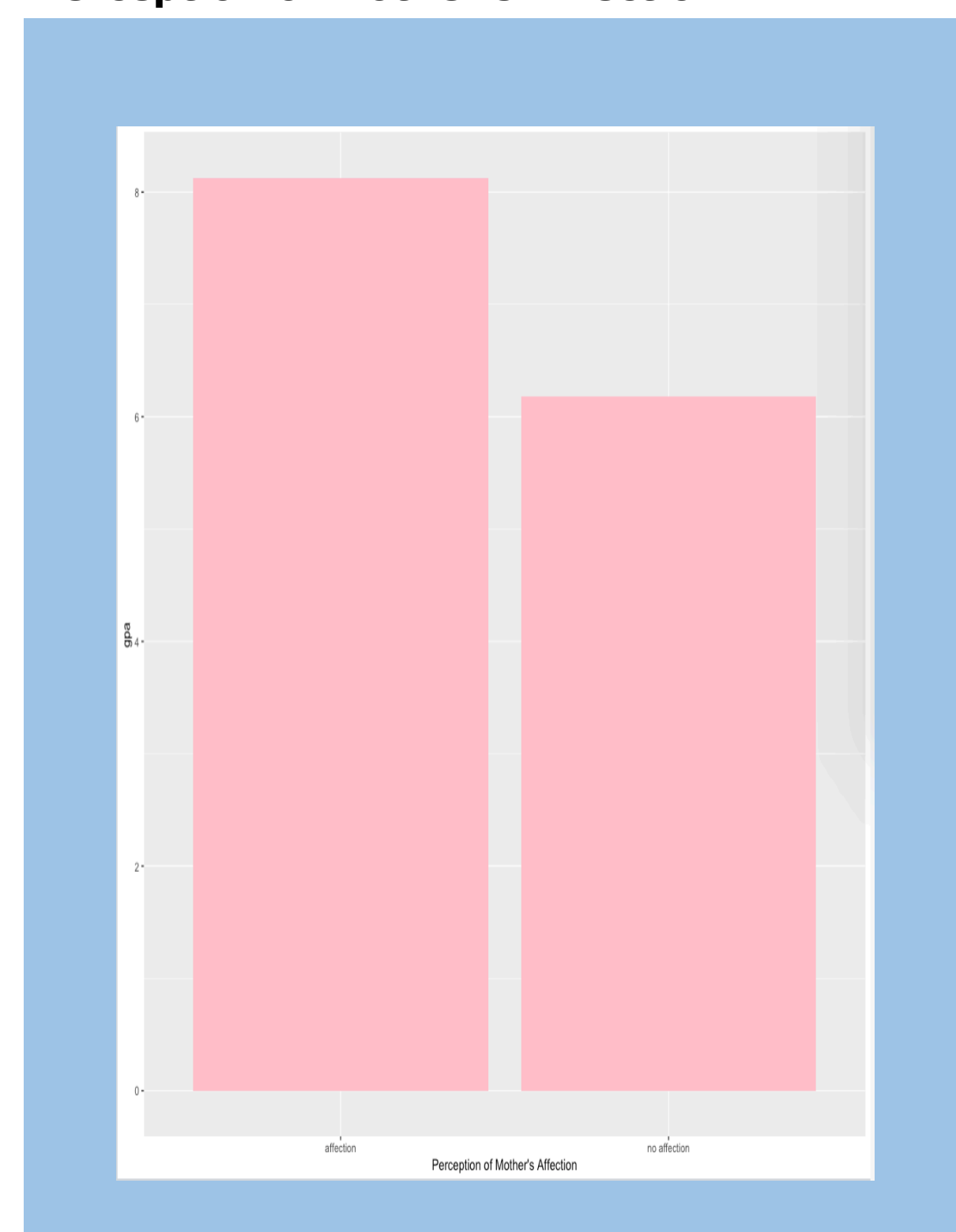


Figure 2. Adolescent GPA vs. Mother's Education Level by Affection Level



### Multivariate

- After controlling for mother's education level, no parental affection is significantly and negatively associated with adolescent GPA for parents with education levels 4-year college ( $p<0.001$ ), beyond 4-year college ( $p=0.0005$ ), and HS or less ( $p<0.001$ ) ( $B= -1.91, p<0.001$ ). (Figure 2)
- After controlling for father's education level, the multiple linear regression shows that father's affection level is not significantly associated with adolescent GPA ( $p= 0.08$ ). (Figure 3)
- The levels of father's education that are significantly related to adolescent GPA are 4-year college ( $p<0.001$ ), beyond 4-year college ( $p=0.03$ ), GED/trade school ( $p= 0.005$ ), and HS or less ( $p<0.001$ ).

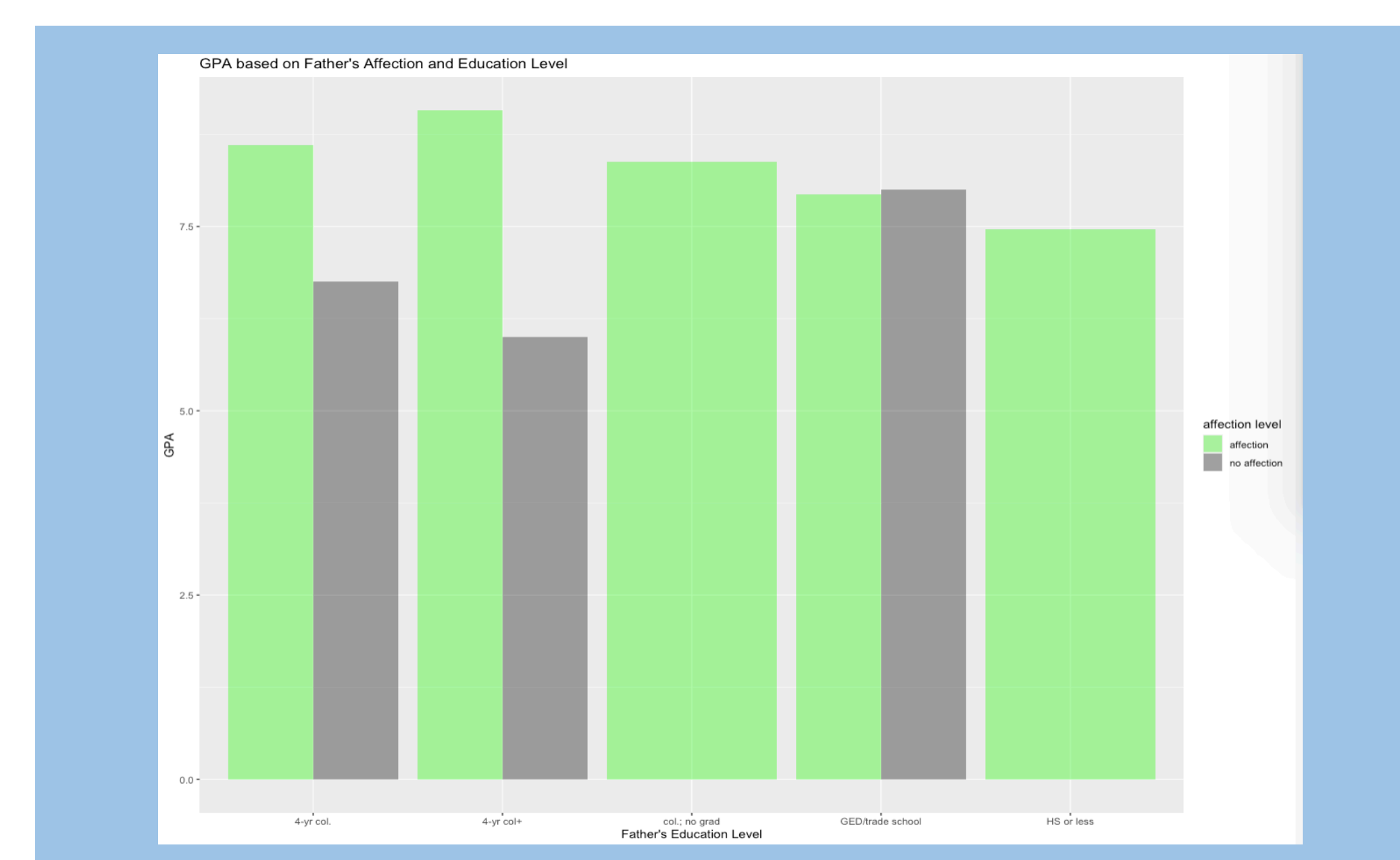


Figure 3: Adolescent GPA vs. Father's Education Level by Affection Level

## Discussion

- The gender of the parent affects the significance of the relationship between adolescent GPA and parental affection.
- This information may influence the way that parents view parenting and adolescents' academic anxiety, highlighting the importance of one's upbringing on their academic success.
- Regardless of parental education, adolescents with parental affection appear to be more likely to have a higher GPA than adolescents without parental affection.
- Family counselors, therapists, and child psychiatrists might use this information to educate parents on the effects of their relationships with their children.
- Further research is needed to determine what actions parents can take to increase their child's perception of affection.