

Stress and Educational Expectations: A Study of Future Orientation

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Research Question:

Does the type of secondary school influence students' perceived levels of bad stress in relation to future orientation?

Background

- *Bad stress can lead to mental and physical health problems*
- *Time Orientation has been linked to health outcomes*
- *Future orientation is a U.S. norm*
- *Future orientation is an indicator of motivation, delay of gratification, avoidance of problem behaviors in adolescents*

Methods

- 9 interview participants
 - 5 former public high school students
 - 2 former charter school students
 - 1 current local public high school student
 - 1 current local charter school student
- 1500 students randomly selected and surveyed through online Qualtrics platform, 107 responses
- Interview data was coded in Microsoft Excel
- Survey data was analyzed in IBM SPSS
 - Likert – scale type time perspective questions
 - Questions related to parents, schools, and peers
 - Questions related to future-oriented resources
 - Text entry open-ended questions

Theories

- Social Strain Theory
- Fear Appeal Theory
- Social Learning Theory

Qualitative Results

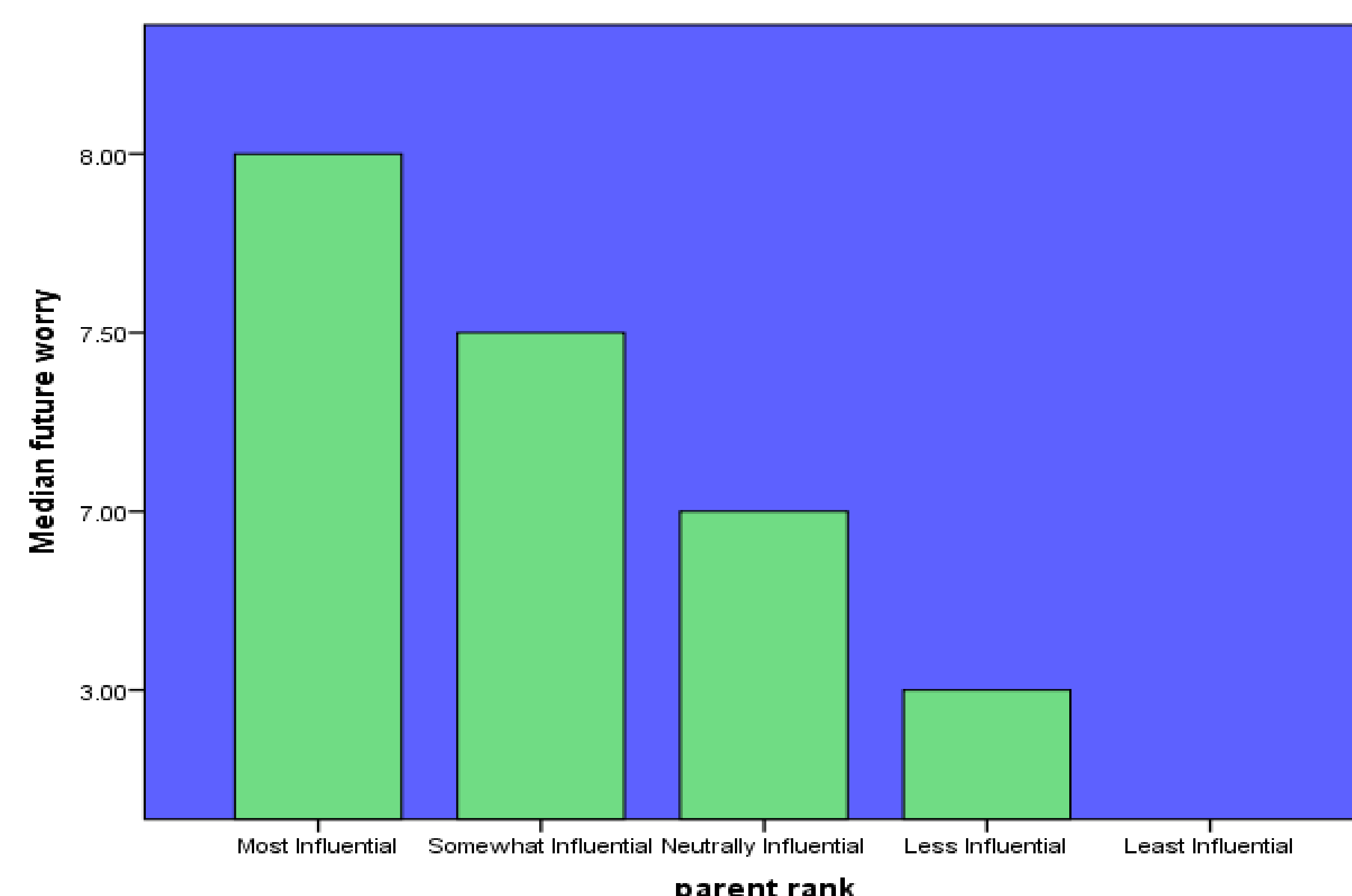
“I felt my parents expected my top-notch grades to continue and so I pushed myself more in my academics than in any other aspect of my life. Technically, my parents never pushed me in high school, but they didn’t need to because they planted that “perfectionism” seed when I was a kid. I’m afraid it still hasn’t left me.”

“Teachers are constantly on your tail because we are the future of the United States, and they don’t want us to fail. As for parent’s they tell me ‘to do anything that makes me happy and successful’. My parents didn’t make all of the right decisions when it came to their future, so seeing me succeed would make them more than happy”

“Both my parents went to Northwestern University. My mother became a lawyer and my father a business consultant and between them, there are 4+ degrees. When I realized I didn’t have the academics to get into Northwestern, I was disappointed in myself.”

“Our school’s academic requirements exceed those of the regular high school as we are expected to take four years of math, science, English, and one (or more) of the 30 foreign languages we are offered. Although one of the pillars of [my charter school] is field experience, I don’t think they tried hard enough to get us (or encourage us to find) out of school internships.”

Quantitative Results



Discussion

There was not a significant difference between types of school, parental occupations, school influence ranking, and future time orientation worry.

Correlations

| | | Type of Secondary School Attended | If AP classes were offered | Student's rank of parental influence on college attendance |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Type of Secondary School Attended | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .235** | .062 |
| If AP classes were offered | Pearson Correlation | .235** | 1 | -.042 |
| Student's rank of parental influence on college attendance | Pearson Correlation | .062 | -.042 | 1 |
| future worry | Pearson Correlation | .051 | -.005 | -.186* |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Conclusion

- Future orientation is a U.S. norm, and effects student's stress levels in individual ways
- Schools can help or harm stress by giving coping mechanisms, this can influence a student's stress level
- Qualitatively, parents influenced a student's stress in relation to future goals
- The school type does not directly influence a student's perceived stress level regarding future goals

References

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