

# Extracurricular activities, Positive Parenting and Personal Positive Youth Development. Differential relations amongst age and academic pathways

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Positive parenting and Extracurricular Activities are contextual assets for enhancing Personal Positive Youth Development. However, these assets have not been studied simultaneously or in students of different ages. This paper analyzed these associations, by testing a mediator model in students with different academic trajectories.

**Method.** The sample was composed by 1.402 adolescents, aged between 12 and 20 years ( $Mean=14.40$ ;  $SD=1.910$ ; males=49%). Students completed various questionnaires regarding the personal constructs of Optimism, Hope, General Self-efficacy and Sense of Coherence, as well as questionnaires that address perceptions of Parental Style and Extracurricular Activities. A random sampling was carried out by schools in Aragon (Spain) that offered the degrees carried out by adolescents.

**Results.** Structural equation modeling showed that Positive Parenting was associated with the accomplishment of Extracurricular Activities and personality constructs. Further, participation in activities was associated with the same pattern of personality traits (Expectancies, Self, and Sense of Coherence). These results were found mainly in younger students (12-15 years old), while in older students (16-20 years old) this effect was found only for those with a profile of less successful academic pathways.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** Relationships with family are the essential asset for adolescents, especially to promote Personal Positive Youth Development, but also for the engagement in Extracurricular Activities. Implications for developmental psychologists, practitioners and educators are discussed, especially underscoring the importance of offering extracurricular opportunities.

**Keywords:** Adolescents; Extracurricular Activities; Positive Parenting; Personal Positive Youth Development; Structural equation modeling.

## Resumen

**Introducción.** La Parentalidad Positiva y las Actividades Extraescolares son activos contextuales para mejorar el desarrollo personal positivo de adolescentes. Sin embargo, estos activos no se han estudiado simultáneamente o en estudiantes de diferentes edades. Este artículo analizó estas asociaciones, probando un modelo de mediación en estudiantes con diferentes trayectorias académicas.

**Método.** La muestra estuvo compuesta por 1.402 adolescentes, con edades comprendidas entre 12 y 20 años (*Media*=14.40; *DT*=1.910; hombres=49%). Los estudiantes completaron varios cuestionarios sobre los constructos de personalidad de Optimismo, Esperanza, Autoeficacia General y Sentido de Coherencia, así como cuestionarios que abordan las percepciones del Estilo Parental y las Actividades Extraescolares. Se llevó a cabo un muestreo aleatorio por colegios de Aragón (España) que ofertaran las titulaciones cursadas por adolescentes.

**Resultados.** El modelo de ecuaciones estructurales mostró que la Parentalidad Positiva se asoció con la realización de Actividades Extraescolares y los constructos de personalidad. Además, la participación en actividades se asoció con el mismo patrón de rasgos de personalidad (Expectativas, Self, y Sentido de coherencia). Estos resultados se encontraron principalmente en estudiantes más jóvenes (12-15 años), mientras que en estudiantes mayores (16-20 años) este efecto se encontró solo en aquellos con un perfil de trayectorias académicas de menor éxito.

**Discusión y Conclusión:** El tipo de relaciones parentales constituyen el principal activo para los adolescentes, especialmente para promover su desarrollo personal positivo, pero también para la participación en actividades extraescolares. Se debaten las implicaciones para los psicólogos del desarrollo, profesionales y educadores, especialmente subrayando la importancia de ofrecer oportunidades extracurriculares.

**Palabras clave:** Adolescentes; Actividades Extracurriculares; Parentalidad Positiva; Desarrollo Personal Positivo Adolescente; Modelos de Ecuaciones Estructurales.

## Introduction

Research has been showing growing interest in the effects of the use of free time by adolescents, as well as how this contributes to adolescent adjustment. One way that many young people spend their free time is by participating in extracurricular activities (EA) (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010). In general, EA are a positive developmental asset for young people (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Durlak, Mahoney, Bohnert & Parente, 2010; Eisman, Stoddard, Bauermeister, Cladwell & Zimmerman, 2016), and have been related to positive development in adolescents (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

In general, physical and sport activities promote social and academic skills in young people, as well as prevention from risk behaviors. However, non-sport activities promote students' adjustment better (Darling, 2005). In fact, collective sports do not contribute to the promotion of academic, social and preventive competences at the same high level as other types of activities (Wilson, Gottfredson, Cross, Rorie, & Conell, 2010), like those that are cultural and artistic in nature. Literature has suggested that cultural and artistic activities constitute an adequate context to develop discipline and artistic talents, but very few studies have compared different cultural and artistic activities (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008) with other types, such as sport EA. Hansen, Skorupski & Arrington (2010) emphasize how EA that involve action (e.g. sports) do not enable a pattern of development as rich as other types of activities.

Durlak et al. (2010) presented an integrative model about the mechanisms through which EA could be a developmental asset for youth. Similarly, Anderson, Funk, Elliott & Smith (2003) highlighted the importance of family support to start engaging with EA, but they also criticized EA could be an element of dissatisfaction. In this study, in line with Durlak et al. (2010), findings about the interrelations between contextual elements of EA, the relationship between Positive Parenting and several variables of EA were explored. A model of structural equations (SEM) tested to what extent EA can mediate Positive Parenting on increasing Personal Positive Youth Development (PPYD), as well as adding an additional value to Positive Parenting.

Moreover, as Durlak et al. (2010) stated that there are scarce research works that have related these two contextual assets with personality traits that are related to persistence in goals and youth development. Although both have been associated with motivation (Sharp,

Caldwell, Graham, & Ridenour, 2006), prosocial behavior (Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005), individual decision making skills (Crean, 2012) or self-acceptance (Eisman et al., 2016), there are not studies that have related them to the individual characteristics or personality competences that evaluate PPYD.

These personality characteristics are evaluated by personality constructs, which provide theoretical guidance for research among adolescents (Orejudo, Puyuelo, Fernández-Turrado & Ramos, 2012). Most of these constructs emerge from the field of positive psychology (Orejudo, Aparicio & Cano, 2013; Snyder et al., 2005) and may contain some elements to explain behavior. Theoretically, they are based in models of self-regulation that establish the importance of goals for the explanation of behavior. These constructs also attribute special importance to the mechanisms used to explain persistence when facing difficulties (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Snyder et al., 2005) and represent an improvement in the perspective of youth development (Lopez, Rose, Robinson, Marques & Pais-Ribeiro, 2009).

For instance, optimism, hope and self-efficacy have been related (Hughes, Galbraith & White, 2011). Orejudo et al. (2013) proposed in their model four personality constructs to evaluate positive youth development: Dispositional Optimism (Carver and Scheier, 2002), Hope (Snyder, Rand & Sigmon, 2005), General Self-efficacy (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982) and Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky, 1996). They found that these personality variables were related to a second order factor, with high interrelation.

### *Current research*

Durlak et al. (2010), researching the relevance of EA for youth development, pointed out some of the gaps in this field: research on different results linked to participation in these activities, the interaction between different factors included in the model, and the lack of evidence regarding the results. These limitations are intended to be overcome by the research objectives of this study. The research in this study has been conducted in a context with much less evidence: Spaniard teenagers.

Thus, there is a lack of evidence of the importance of participation in EA and positive parenting for the personality characteristics of adolescents. When considering the constructs that evaluate these personality variables, we start from the theoretical framework proposed by

Orejudo et al. (2013): Optimism, Hope, Self-efficacy and Sense of coherence. Although these constructs' adaptive capability in adolescents has been proven, we propose to use them as indicators of PPYD.

In addition, in this study, we propose to analyze the achievements of participation in EA and Positive Parenting through this set of personality constructs. Even if previous studies have related personal competencies with enhanced participation in EA or in family functioning aspects (Parra & Oliva, 2015; Steinberg & Silk, 2002), not both factors have been analyzed together. Very few studies have investigated the relationships between positive parenting and EA (Eisman et al., 2016; Huebner & Mancini, 2003; Jiang & Peguero, 2017), even less in Spain (e.g., García-Moya, Moreno, Jiménez-Iglesias, Rivera, & Lidström, 2012). Indeed, other investigations in Spain have found that EA are related in a unitary way (e.g. Hermoso, 2009) or the relationship of positive parenting styles with PPYD constructs (e.g. Sense of coherence; García-Moya et al., 2012).

Accordingly, there is a lack of studies that jointly analyze the importance of various contextual factors for PPYD, so that we have focused our research on this gap. Besides, although some studies actually relate EA to academic trajectories (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Langenkamp, 2011), none of these works have included parental or familiar characteristics and their relation to EA while considering academic trajectories. Finally, and taking into account the need to learn about the interrelation between these factors and some characteristics of adolescents (Durlak et al., 2010), this study is complemented by comparing the relationships between Positive Parenting, EA and PPYD, based on the age and the academic trajectory of the participants, since most of these research works do not provide comparisons between academic trajectories with more or less academic success.

Further, it must be pointed out that evaluating the relationships between participation in EA, Positive Parenting and PPYD is an important novelty in this field. It responds to a research demand raised by Durlak et al. (2010) and complements other studies and reviews which have addressed other dimensions of development (Hansen et al., 2010) linked to constructs such as behavior planning, perseverance or coping with stressors. These constructs add to other hypotheses about the mediating variables between participation and adaptation of adolescents (Crean, 2012).

### *Objectives and Hypotheses*

In line with what has been argued, the general objective is aimed at evaluating the importance of positive parenting and extracurricular activities for the improvement of Adolescent Positive Personal Development. Specifically, we have as objectives (1) determine the relationship of different dimensions of extracurricular activities, as a multidimensional construct; (2) test the relationship between the constructs of Optimism, Hope, Self-efficacy and Sense of Coherence proposed by Orejudo et al. (2013); (3) understand how positive parenting is related to Personal Positive Youth Development through extracurricular activities; and (4) analyze if these relationships change through age and academic trajectories.

Consequently, the starting hypotheses are as follows: (1) we hope that some of the dimensions of EA are related, forming a multidimensional construct; and (2) the constructs with which we evaluate Personal Positive Youth Development are closely related to each other. Furthermore, (3) we argue that positive parenting is directly related to the improvement of Personal Positive Youth Development, and indirectly through participation in EA; and (4) we hope to find some differences in EA participation, as well as in this pattern of relationships between the groups analyzed by age and academic background.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

The participants in this research were adolescent students. Specifically, young people were selected from three different age groups separated by the difference of one academic course. Precisely, all the young people were selected from 7<sup>th</sup> grade (age 12-13) of middle school in the American educational system and 9<sup>th</sup> grade (age (14-15) of high school in the American educational system (both from Compulsory Secondary Education in the Spanish educational system; ESO). The oldest group selected was post-compulsory education: 11<sup>th</sup> grade of high school in the American educational system or 1 *Bachillerato* in the Spanish National system, and Vocational Training schools (age 16-17). Data was also collected from young people who were in specific vocational training programs prior to finishing this compulsory stage (age 14-15). These professional qualification programs that are accessed by young people over 15 years old who have not succeeded in Compulsory Secondary Education

The sample consisted of 1.402 adolescents (49.0% males and 51.0% females). Table 1 shows the descriptive data according to course, sex and age. The sex distribution did not differ in the analyzed courses ( $\chi^2=4.092$ ,  $g1=3$ ,  $p=.252$ ) despite the percentage of females being slightly higher in post-compulsory education (females=55,1%) and lower in PCPI (initial vocational training programs) (females=40,7%). Ages fell within a range of 12 and 20 years old ( $M=14.40$ ,  $SD=1.91$ ), and were evidently related to the academic course. Among the older students, the most striking fact was the greater heterogeneity of the low academic profile group, in which there were students aged from 15 to 20 years. In order to obtain the sample, from among all the educational schools of Zaragoza and its province with the aforementioned programs, a sample was made by clusters among public, semi-private, rural and urban schools. As a result, eight schools were selected and contacted. Only one semi-private center declined the invitation to participate. The final sample corresponded to 50.8% of urban public schools, 39.0% of rural ones and 10.2% of urban semi-private ones.

Table 1. *Description of the participants*

Level	N	%	Sex		Age	
			Males	Females	Mean	S.D.
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	492	35.1	50.0%	50.0%	12.39	.66
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	412	29.4	49.2%	50.8%	14.30	.73
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	312	22.3	44.6%	55.4%	16.55	.84
Low academic profile	186	13.3	53.7%	46.3%	16.23	1.40
Total	1.402	100.0	49.0%	51.0%	14.40	1.910

### *Instruments*

Extracurricular activities questionnaire. (Hermoso, 2009). It contains descriptive data about performing activities organized after school hours. The variables of EA firstly included the occupation of students' free time, and accounted for the accomplishment of organized activities, unorganized activities, or not performing any activity. Among those adolescents who participated in organized activities, a series of dummy variables were collected, which covered the number of courses underway, type of activity (physical-sport and/or cultural-artistic), perception of this activity's utility/utilities, and the activity's future performance, on



an ordinal Likert-type scale from 1 to 4 (“nothing” to “totally”), and the possibility of choosing those activities they intended to perform on a Likert scale from 1 to 3 (“no” – “sometimes” – “yes”). There were also variables of a specific physical-sport activity type, depending on whether it was an individual or collective sport, or of a cultural and/or artistic kind, e.g; languages, computer science, music, arts/crafts, theatre, dancing, and others. The questionnaire the requirements of external validity, internal validity (inter-rater) and validity of content.

Scale for the Evaluation of the Educational Style of Parents of Adolescents. (Oliva, Parra, Sánchez-Queija & López, 2007). It evaluates several dimensions of the parental educational style based on the perception of their adolescent children from the age of 12. It contains the sub-dimensions of warmth (8 items that score between 8 and 48), autonomy promotion (8 items, 8-48), humor (6 items, 8-48), self-disclosure (6 items, 6-36), behavioral control (8 items, 6-36) and psychological control (8 items, 8-48). The scale is composed of 41 items, which are scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 (ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). The indices of reliability of the subscales are firstly indicated by the original authors (Oliva et al., 2007) and secondly in our work ( $\alpha=.92$ ;  $\alpha=.91$ ), these being: Warmth ( $\alpha=.92$ ;  $\alpha=.91$ ), Autonomy promotion ( $\alpha=.88$ ;  $\alpha=.88$ ), Humor ( $\alpha=.88$ ;  $\alpha=.89$ ), Self-disclosure ( $\alpha=.85$ ,  $\alpha=.87$ ), Behavioral Control ( $\alpha=.82$ ;  $\alpha=.83$ ) and Psychological Control ( $\alpha=.86$ ;  $\alpha=.85$ ). The different dimensions are positive, except for behavioral control, with optimal scores at a medium level - and psychological control, characteristic of a negative parental style, especially when accompanied by low scores for warmth, self-disclosure or autonomy promotion. The remaining dimensions are positive aspects of parental control, with a focus on adolescents’ better psychological and behavioral adjustment.

Youth Life Orientation Test. (*YLOT*, Ey et al., 2005). It is a measure adapted from the LOT-R (Scheier, Carver and Bridges, 1994) to evaluate dispositional optimism in children and adolescents aged between 7 and 18 years. It consists of two subscales, Optimism and Pessimism, which can be measured together or separately. It contains 14 items: six optimistic items, six pessimistic ones (scores between 6 and 30 for each subscale, ranged from 1. “I never think so” to 5. “I always think so”) and two distracting items. In our version, which has been adapted to Spanish samples by Royo (2016), affirmations were valued on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with internal consistencies of the two scales of .62 and .78. In our study, the reliability

index was  $\alpha=.84$  for the whole scale,  $\alpha=.71$  for the Optimism subscale and  $\alpha=.71$  for Pessimism subscale.

Children's hope scale. (Snyder et al., 1997). Its aim is to inform about the ability to generate pathways towards objectives and to persevere towards them. It contains two subscales, with three items within each one: agency (motivational component to achieve the goals) and pathways (finding different ways to achieve these goals). Each scale has scores between 3-15). It is suitable for ages from 8 to 19 years old, and is composed of six items on a 5-point Likert scale (ranged from 1."I never think so" to 5."I always think so"). It has an internal consistency of .86. In this study, the adapted Spanish version of Royo (2016) was used, whose confirmatory factor model generated a better fit for the two-factor model than for the one-factor model, and the two valid scales obtained internal consistencies between  $\alpha=.574$  (agency subscale) and  $\alpha=.642$  (pathways subscale). In our sample, the agency subscale had an  $\alpha=.532$  and the pathways subscale had an  $\alpha=.614$ .

General Self-Efficacy Scale. (Baessler & Schwarzer, 1996, adapted by Sanjuán, Pérez & Bermudez, 2000). It evaluates the stable feeling of personal competence to effectively handle a variety of stressful situations. It has been used interchangeably with age. It consists of 10 items with 4-point Likert scales (ranged from 1."I never think so" to 4."I always think so") to generate a total score in a single self-efficacy factor at a general level, and scores between 10 and 40. The Spanish version had high internal consistency scores ( $\alpha=.87$ ), and in our study an  $\alpha=.83$  was obtained.

Sense of Coherence Scale. (*SOC-13*, Antonovsky, 1987). The SOC-13 is an adaptation of the Orientation Life Questionnaire (OLQ), which evaluates the SOC construct as a global orientation. The Spanish adaptation used in this study (Fernández Martínez, 2006) reduces the original OLQ 29-item version to 13 items, and uses a 7-point Likert scale (from 1."It has never happened to me" until 7."It always happens to me"). It evaluates the three subscales of this construct: Comprehensibility (5 items, scores between 5 and 35), Manageability (4 items, scores 4-28) and Meaningfulness (4 items, scores 4-28). SOC scales have been used at all ages from 10-years old and onward. The questionnaire shows a good reliability index (*Cronbach's*  $\alpha=.82$ ). Our study obtained an alpha index of .77, and .58 for Comprehensibility, .52 for Manageability, and .50 for Meaningfulness.

### *Procedure*

This study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of the British Educational Research Association by their Second edition of the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011). Subjects received no compensation for participating in the study. Compliance with the standards contained of Helsinki on human experimentation was guaranteed throughout the duration of the study.

Based on the theoretical framework of positive youth development, we selected the age range covered by this adolescent stage (12-18). Consequently, we selected the schools that offered some or all of the studies carried out in this stage. As for that, the inclusion criteria of the sample focused on schools in the province of Zaragoza (Spain) that offered some of the academic stages proposed for adolescents (12-18 years old).

Participants were recruited at schools. Among all secondary schools in the province of Zaragoza (Spain), they were randomly selected 10 schools, with a proportional representation of public/private and of urban/rural schools: 7 public schools (4 urban, 3 rural) and 3 private urban schools. Among them, 7 schools accepted to participate: 6 public schools (4 urban, 2 rural) and 1 private urban school, and requested to participate by sending a letter to the schools' principals.

The objectives and characteristics of the study were explained to the principals and counselors of the schools, who agreed to participate. Afterwards, they transferred the study objectives and questionnaires to the tutors from the different groups. Prior to completion, families were informed through a letter about the purpose of the study and procedure, obtaining parental permission in this way, and participants' anonymity was ensured. In the same letter, the volunteers were informed of the participation and the possibility of excluding from the activity those children whose families did not agree with their participation, given that the data was collected during class time. Therefore, schools were selected by using an opt-in procedure and families were selected by using an opt-out procedure. Questionnaires took 25 minutes to complete in the presence of an external team staff. After completing the study, each school received an individualized report with the overall results.

### *Data Analysis*

Missing values were removed. Out of a total sample of 1504 participants, those who had unanswered whole scales were systematically excluded. Thus, there were finally 1402, deleting 6.9%. If unanswered items were missing, they were replaced by the mean.

The basic analysis of this work was based on structural equation modeling for the different analyzed groups. The AMOS program (Arbuckle, 2009) is an appropriate option to perform confirmatory factor analysis of first and second order factors to establish regression models amongst the observed and latent variables, and to make comparisons between different groups (Byrne, 2010). Thus, the first mentioned measurement models were established in which, on the one hand, the hypothesis was tested to combine the four Positive Parenting scales in a single latent variable and, on the other hand, the indicators of the selected EA. Afterwards, the same procedure was carried out with the analyzed personality subscales (Optimism, Self-efficacy, Hope and Sense of Coherence) by taking the proposal of Orejudo et al. (2013) as an initial model. These authors proposed a three-factor model with the subscales of each construct to join the Self-efficacy and Hope subscales.

Once these two measurement models were configured in the total sample, the relationship between the two models was estimated in a regression model, in which Positive Parenting styles acted as antecedent variables. Their fit was evaluated with the usual indices: the chi-square index (DCIM in AMOS) and the Norman chi-square index ( $\chi^2 / DF$ ), IFC, NFI or RMSEA (Byrne, 2010). Finally, whether the weight of this regression could differ in distinct groups was tested. In accordance with this purpose, several SEM models were created and compared with the restrictions related to these values. When dealing with nested models, the comparisons of the models was made by calculating  $\Delta\chi^2$  and the AIC index (Byrne, 2010).

The compared groups were, on the one hand, age groups (12-13, 14-15, 16-17 and more than 17 years) and groups according to academic trajectory (1<sup>st</sup> *ESO*, 3<sup>rd</sup> *ESO*, 1<sup>st</sup> *Bachillerato* and lower academic trajectory, which was a group formed by Diversification and Vocational Training). These groups differ from one another in terms of their educational level and the academic trajectories linked to them. Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades of *ESO* correspond to grades 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of USA educational system. After *ESO*, students can start 1<sup>st</sup> *Bachillerato* (11<sup>th</sup> of USA educational system). *Bachillerato* lasts 2 grades, before leaving to study at University. Finally, our last group was made up of students with less successful academic trajec-

tories; e.g., either they had not succeeded in Compulsory Secondary Education and had started a Vocational Training, or are currently doing Vocational Training, and had a background of academic failure, but had some curricular adaptations to encourage them to complete this cycle.

## Results

Table 2 shows the results of the means and standard deviations of the variables analyzed in this research, as well as the correlations between them. The values show medium-high scores for the scales of Positive Parenting, Optimism, Self-efficacy and Hope, slightly lower ones for Sense of Coherence, and the lowest scores went to Pessimism. In the correlations table, the Positive Parenting styles correlate positively with each other, with scores that came close to .60. In turn, all the Parenting Styles dimensions correlate with the personality characteristics, but obtained more moderate values, with scores of around .30. It should be noted that all the correlations are positive, except for the Pessimism scale.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics and correlations among variables.*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Warmth	1307	39.73	7.833	1										
2. Autonomy promotion	1302	37.25	8.076	.695**	1									
3. Humor	1322	28.27	6.195	.730**	.662**	1								
4. Self-disclosure	1359	20.37	6.665	.563**	.550**	.556**	1							
5. Optimism	1365	22.98	3.822	.383**	.366**	.391**	.321**	1						
6. Pessimism	1359	13.44	4.575	-.365**	-.327**	-.343**	-.248**	-.540**	1					
7. Agency	1382	11.07	2.139	.327**	.327**	.331**	.302**	.469**	-.349**	1				
8. Pathways	1382	11.69	2.087	.305**	.342**	.310**	.264**	.514**	-.336**	.502**	1			
9. Self-efficacy	1356	30.24	4.707	.286**	.345**	.288**	.224**	.480**	-.386**	.514**	.640**	1		
10. Comprehensibility	1357	20.77	4.856	.278**	.232**	.253**	.207**	.315**	-.417**	.288**	.277**	.324**	1	
11. Manageability	1358	17.24	4.350	.325**	.264**	.295**	.235**	.350**	-.478**	.318**	.267**	.279**	.653**	1
12. Meaningfulness	1371	18.96	3.994	.417**	.365**	.380**	.339**	.425**	-.512**	.390**	.365**	.341**	.438**	.457**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at 0.01 (bilateral).

\* . Correlation is significant at 0.05 (bilateral).

Regarding EA, 61.7% of the participants stated that they had participated in out-of-school organized activities, and 23.8% indicated that they did not participated in EA. On average, the group had been participating in EA on previous academic years a mean of 3.68 years (S.D.=4.093). Among the sports activities, 52.2% played team sports, while 30.5% played individual sports. Among cultural or arts, language learning was the most frequent (23.1%), followed by music (18.3%), computer science (11.2%), reading books (10.9%) or

other media (6.9%), dancing (10.4%), crafts (9.2%) or theatre (4.5%). Of all the students, 16.9% stated that they performed other activities not included in the questionnaire.

When analysing the relationships between groups, some differences relating to the academic course were found, with students from the low academic profile group reporting a lower frequency for all the organized activities (only 39.2%). Of the whole sample, 59.4% were able to choose the activities that they performed, while 32.7% answered they could choose only a few times, and the low academic profile group responded differently to this pattern ( $\chi^2=24.212$ ,  $gl=6$ ,  $p<.001$ ; *V de Cramer*=.093) since only 27.4% indicated that they could not choose the activities they wanted. Overall, for the perception of utility terms, those who participated in these activities realized that they were useful to them (*Mean*=2.08, 0-3 scale), and no differences between courses were observed ( $F_{(3,861)}=2.134$ ,  $p=.094$ ;  $\eta^2=.007$ ). For gender, we found some minimal differences, such as sport activities being more frequent for males, and a more marked tendency to not participate in organized activities for females, who claimed this was due to lack of time and having fewer options for these activities than males.

Regarding the model to measure Positive Parenting styles, the first model that grouped the six parental styles made estimations in which negative styles of behavioral control and psychological control had regression weights below .30, which were responsible for lack of model fit ( $\chi^2=276.049$ ,  $d.f.=9$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\chi^2/df=30.672$ , *CFI*=.914, *RMSEA*=.146). Therefore, we propose a new model without these two scales by fitting the data in the new model in a better manner ( $\chi^2=6.822$ ,  $d.f.=2$ ,  $p=.033$ ,  $\chi^2/df=3.411$ , *CFI*=.998, *RMSEA*=.041). Figure 1 shows the regression weights of this model (and of the rest), and a graphical representation of the model with the measures and the mediation model.

With respect to the variables that define the personality component of PPYD, the solution with a three-order of the first- and second-order models presented the best fit ( $\chi^2=65.019$ ,  $d.f.=13$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\chi^2/df=5.048$ , *CFI*=.987, *RMSEA*=.054). The three first-order factors, called Self (which included three variables: General Self-efficacy construct, Agency subscale of Hope and Pathways subscale of Hope), General Expectancies (which included two variables: Optimism and Pessimism subscales of YLOT scale) and Sense of Coherence (which included three variables, that is, the three subscales of OLQ scale), grouped the variables according to the above framework. However, the modification indices suggested an improved model fit by

adding new regression weights with Meaningfulness contributing the factor of Self, Pessimism to Sense of Coherence, and the correlated estimation errors between Meaningfulness and Pessimism (Figure 1).

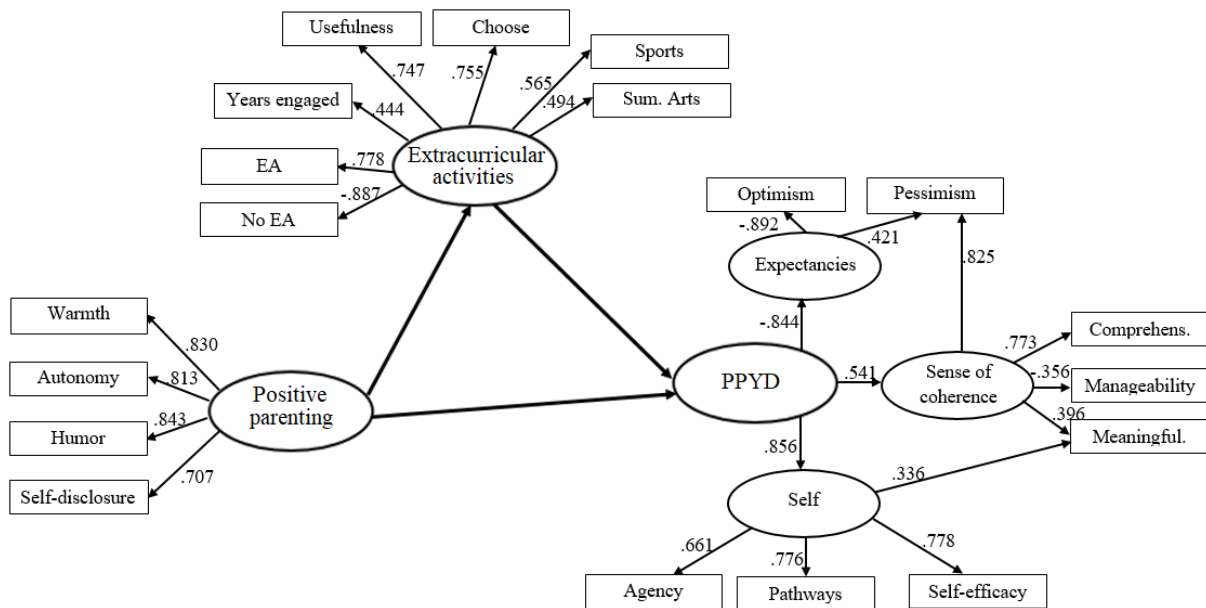


Figure 1. Mediation model

Finally, the dimensions of out-of-school activities fit a single-factor model ( $\chi^2=38.955$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\chi^2/df=3.246$ ,  $CFI=.993$ ,  $RMSEA=.040$ ), where the different analyzed dimensions, organized activities, team sports, number of years playing them, utility, choice and addition of cultural or artistic activities, saturated positively and not participating in organized activities saturated negatively (Figure 1). Participation in individual sport activities and individual cultural or artistic activities was suppressed separately because regression scores approached .30 and the model displayed a worse fit ( $\chi^2=635.031$ ,  $d.f.=88$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $\chi^2/df=7.216$ ,  $CFI=.883$ ,  $RMSEA=.067$ ). For age comparisons (Table 3), the model with the best fit (age\_3) incorporated the constraints of the age\_2 measure model, and additional restrictions on the relationships among Positive Parenting, EA and PPYD. This resulted in differences in the older and younger groups for the relationships between Positive Parenting and PPYD, and between Positive Parenting and EA, and also predicted that the weight between EA and PPYD differed in all four groups. This fit of this model was not worse than age\_2, which only

incorporated the measurement model and the differences for all the regression weights ( $\Delta\chi^2=16,055$ ,  $d.f.=12$ ,  $p=.189$ ), and was also more parsimonious. The model assumed that the equality in all the regression weights (age\_4) was statistically worse ( $\Delta\chi^2=27.158$ ,  $d.f.=3$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

Figure 2 shows the results of this model, where it can be assumed that in the groups of the 12-13 ( $\beta=.594$ ) and 14-15-year-olds ( $\beta=.633$ ) a stronger relation between the positive parenting and PPYD was found than in the older students, aged 16-17 years ( $\beta=.502$ ) and over the age of 18 ( $\beta=.495$ ). Similarly, Parental Styles more accurately predicted the extracurricular scores for younger students (13-14 years,  $\beta=.259$ ), and this association diminished in those aged 14-15 ( $\beta=.136$ ) and disappeared in the 16-17-year-olds ( $\beta=0$ ). Interestingly in the group over 17 it was significant again, and was similar to that of the 14-15-year-old group ( $\beta=.129$ ). Regarding the role of EA and PPYD, a similar pattern was found, with the highest ratio found for younger students (12-13 years,  $\beta=.274$ ), and the lowest for 14-15 ( $\beta=.104$ ) and aged over 18 ( $\beta=.123$ ). However, it was null for those aged 16-17 years ( $\beta=.000$ ). To summarize, the model accounted for 51.1% of PPYD variance in the 12-13-year-old group, 42.9% in the 14-15 group, 25.2% in the 16-17 group, and 27.5% in older than 17 group.

Table 3. *Model comparisons*

AGE	Moel	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	CFI	PCFI	RMSEA	AIC
Age_1	Unconstrained	136	1.118.915	624	0.000	1.793	0.956	0.872	0.024	1.390.915
Age_2	Measurement weights	106	1.163.875	654	0.000	1.780	0.954	0.913	0.024	1.375.875
Age_3	Meas. W + Equal	94	1.179.930	666	0.000	1.772	0.954	0.929	0.024	1.367.930
Age_4	Structural weights	91	1.207.088	669	0.000	1.804	0.952	0.931	0.024	1.389.088
COURSE	Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	CFI	PCFI	RMSEA	AIC
Year_1	Unconstrained	144	1.103.305	616	0.000	1.791	0.957	0.862	0.024	1.391.305
Year_2	Measurement weights	114	1.146.376	646	0.000	1.775	0.956	0.903	0.024	1.374.376
Year_3	Meas. W + Equal	101	1.166.749	659	0.000	1.770	0.955	0.920	0.023	1.368.749
Year_4	Structural weights	99	1.185.296	661	0.000	1.793	0.954	0.922	0.024	1.383.296

Finally, the analysis of academic courses and academic trajectories complemented the result related to age since the two *Bachillerato* and low academic profile group were of similar ages. As in the previous case, we present a model that offers an optimal fit, and which imposes some equality restrictions to the relationships among the indicated variables (Table 3). Specifically, the constraints of the measure model (course\_2) and the equality of the regression weights of the second-order factor of PPYD indicated that the path from Positive Parent-



ing towards PPYD was equal in all the groups, except for 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and that participating in EA equaled zero in all the groups, except for the youngest one: 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The ratio between EA and PPYD equaled zero in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and obtained the same value in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and in the low academic profile group.

This model, as shown in Table 3, presented a good fit, was more parsimonious, and was no worse than the model of course\_2, which assumed only equality in the measurement model ( $\Delta\chi^2=20.373$ ,  $d.f.=13$ ,  $p=.086$ ), but was better than the model of course\_4, which assumed equality for all the regression weights ( $\Delta\chi^2=18.547$ ,  $d.f.=2$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Accordingly, and as observed in Figure 2, the relationships between Positive Parenting and PPYD differed and were equal in all the groups, except for 11<sup>th</sup> grade ( $\beta=.446$ ), where the relationship was weaker. For the other relationships, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade group was the only group in which Positive Parenting predicted EA ( $\beta=.267$ ), while its value was similar for the students of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade ( $\beta=.208$ ) and low academic profile groups ( $\beta=.198$ ). However, it lowered for 9<sup>th</sup> grade ( $\beta=.129$ ) and was 0 for 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Thus the percentage of explained variance of PPYD was higher for 7<sup>th</sup> grade ( $R^2=.499$ ) than for 11<sup>th</sup> grade ( $R^2=.204$ ), and an intermediate percentage was obtained for 9<sup>th</sup> grade ( $R^2=.389$ ) and low academic profile group ( $R^2=.403$ ).

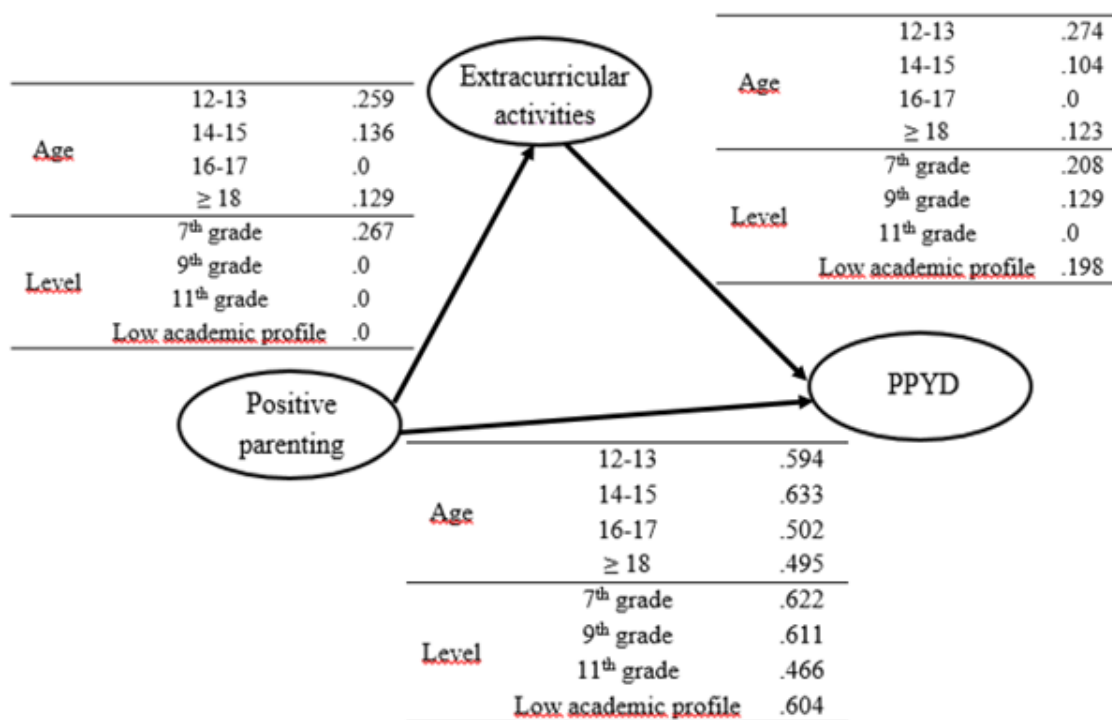


Figure 2. Results of the model by age and level groups

## Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this work was to analyze the relationship between the most relevant contextual assets in adolescents (Positive Parenting and EA) and PPYD, understood and analyzed through different personality constructs. The results support the hypothesis that PPYD is clearly associated, basically, with the relationships that adolescents establish with their parents, and this has been explained by important links with constructs that, theoretically, promote this development. PPYD is also related with out-of-school activities engagement, which promote motivation and meaningful relationships with peers and adults in non-formal contexts (Parra & Oliva, 2015).

We have firstly hypothesizing about the relationship between the different dimensions of EA. According to the first objective, a multidimensional vision of the EA has been proposed by taking into account the evaluated variables, such as participation in different types of EA, intensity (related to the years of activity), the choice possibilities and perceived usefulness. This multidimensional vision gathers some of the aspects of these activities considered as more relevant to promote the acquisition of skills. Unlike other studies that have focused on the breadth dimensions, type of activity (specificity) or duration (intensity) (Akiva, 2013, Crean, 2012, Hansen et al., 2010), in our study none of these indicators of the model have been excluded. In fact, the greatest values of the regression weights have been obtained by usefulness and the possibility to choose favorite activities.

The data related to utility and choice could be an alternative to understand why other aspects –e.g. intensity or duration- do not have as much discriminative capacity (Hansen & Larson, 2007; Roth, Malone & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). In relation with the types of activities, the only indicator of the model that has been excluded was the individual sports activities, but not team sports. This is another dimension that could explain the differences found in activities of this type (Hansen et al., 2010). However, these relationships are not the same in all adolescents, as some differences appear depending on age and academic trajectories. In the younger groups, the association between both dimensions is higher, but it diminishes as adolescents grow and earn autonomy. This effect would not be in students who do not achieve the expected success in the education system, do not present academic trajectories that do not fulfill the educational system's expectations, and thus initiate Vocational Training early.

With regard to the second objective, the relationship found between the constructs that evaluate the PPYD presents few differences from that found in the sample by Orejudo et al. (2013). Like its results, the best model suggests a second-order factor that groups all these constructs, forming a pattern of personality traits, with a series of constructs with a marked adaptive, goal setting, and coping component (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Snyder et al., 2005). However, in our case the factor analysis suggests including a variable (Self) that groups the Self-efficacy construct, the Agency dimension, and the Pathways dimension, both of the Hope construct. The model has also shown a better fit incorporating new regression weights of Meaningfulness of Sense of Coherence contributing to the Self factor, and Pessimism to the Sense of Coherence factor.

In the third objective we hypothesized that positive relationships between parents and their teenage children were related to PPYD through EA. As mentioned earlier, the participation of younger students in EA is associated with Positive Parenting, and has an effect on PPYD through this. However, the effect of this mediation does not limit the strong effect that Positive Parenting continues to have on PPYD. This effect is maintained for the intermediate age groups beyond EA, and does not decrease, with the older groups or academic success, where it is still present. This highlights the importance of positive family relationships throughout adolescence (Oliva et al., 2015; Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

Finally, the fourth objective was oriented to analyze if there were differences in these relationships and, specifically, in EA participation across age and academic trajectories. Roth et al. (2010) stated that the achievements of participation in EA are greater in younger children, so our data could go in the same direction. Some explanations for this result can be provided. Firstly, it has already been shown that adolescents with less parental support may be more involved in organized activities over time to develop other meaningful and/or supportive relationships (Eisman et al., 2016; Lerner, 2005; Parra & Oliva, 2015) to overcome these shortcomings. Secondly, this result also suggests that good bonds with parents are more important for younger students to engage in organized activities. And also this fact becomes less relevant with age as students gain more autonomy when making decisions about planning their leisure time, following the developmental hypothesis stated by Eisman et al. (2016).

This developmental hypothesis is based on the importance of involvement in organized activities in different developmental stages. Thus more adolescents tend to participate in distinct activities (Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2009) and their ability to control time management increases (Fredricks & Eccles, 2010) as they select activities more precisely and shorten their number (Denault & Poulin, 2009). The present work also found reduced participation in EA as age increases, particularly for those students with worse academic trajectories.

Thirdly, as adolescents' development advances throughout the adolescent stage, they increase the amount of time they spend outside home and school by nurturing other meaningful relationships for them, and they are more likely to perceive support from adults, and not from teachers or family, in tasks like organized out-of-school activities (Crosby, Santelli, & DiClemente, 2009, Eisman et al., 2016). However, we should not overlap this finding because the adolescents aged 18 years or older once again showed significant levels in the relationship between Positive Parenting and EA.

Nevertheless, participation in organized activities was not related to PPYD in either the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students or the group of 16-17 years old. One possible explanation for this finding is that students in mid-late adolescence need to spend more time outside school hours to study subjects given the higher demand than in previous courses, while the relevance of such organized activities is still high for the students with a less successful profile and aged 18 years or more. However, this relevance does not reach the level indicated by younger students, for whom a stronger relation between EA and PPYD was found. For this reason, all the efforts made to promote participation in activities at the beginning of adolescence can contribute to improve academic trajectories (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2008).

Positive Parenting Style is related to PPYD in the different age and course groups, which are crucial throughout adolescence, as evidenced by previous works (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Oliva, Jiménez & Parra, 2009; Oliva, Parra & Reina, 2015). Our results suggest that, for PPYD, these perceptions of parental styles are more relevant than organized EA. One explanation for this finding is that Positive Parenting would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes in personal competences, and would thus provide opportunities for participation in activities that promote PPYD, as former findings indicate (Eisman et al., 2016; Jiang & Peguero, 2017; Morrissey & Werner-Wilson, 2005). Therefore, although there are no simi-

lar previous theoretical approaches between family bonds and adolescent participation, the conceptualization of participation as a multidimensional construct is likely to influence this result.

In this sense, we cannot lose sight of the downward evolutionary trend in the weight of the importance of parental relationships for PPYD. What is truly interesting is that, in late adolescence, this only happens in academic trajectories of success. This could be explained because family continues to play an important role in the development of these personality competences. This same difference between academic profiles is also observed in the relationship between EA and the PPYD, emphasizing that EA are another factor to be promoted (Parra & Oliva, 2015).

Attending to the limitations of our work, we allude to its cross-sectional design. This design can incorporate differential effects into different groups -taking into account a smaller percentage of samples coming from semi-private schools-, even though these participants have been educated by an educational system that has not undergone changes lately. Longitudinal studies can be a good complement to investigate this phenomenon. Besides, beginning the study at the age of 12 restricts the established conclusions to this age so, based on the results of this research, it seems pertinent to start the study at an earlier age. Other limitations of the study address some moderate reliability indexes of instruments (Agency of CHS, and OLQ), the vast number of variables investigated (which limits the richness of the design) and the use of self-report measures only.

That is why further research, taking into account the perceptions of parents, would complement the perceptions that young people have of parental styles. Overall, the results of this study suggested a relationship between relevant contextual assets and PPYD in adolescents. Taking this data into account, future research should focus on the analysis in detail of the relation of EA and others variables that could have influence on the personal positive youth development. These other variables have barely been considered in our country and have shown their relevance in Anglo-Saxon contexts, for example, the neighborhood (Crean, 2012).

Finally, our results have some implications for educational psychologists, supporting the proposals about the effects of EA for the improvement of youth development (Bundick,

2011; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Relationships with family are the essential asset, especially to promote PPYD, but also for others of these relationships' mediating assets, for example, the engagement in EA. Our findings reveal that this importance of positive parenting styles for EA is losing weight over the years, along the adolescent stages, to the extent that the person is increasing their autonomy. Thus, we should consider this progressive improvement of the capacity to manage the own leisure time, and focus on more specific interests and EA along adolescence. And, following our results, we also must take into account the decrease in the importance of positive parenting for PPYD throughout adolescence. As they get older, other contextual variables emerge that improve their PPYD. Although somehow, family can compensate for those shortcomings in the academic trajectory or in other life difficulties (Oliva et al., 2009).

This implications underscore the importance of offering the possibility of choosing a wide range of EA, especially at the beginning of adolescence, since it enables this improvement of their PPYD, and they can try and discover their interests in a non-formal context – a context that is meaningful to them. This is more important, especially for those young people with less successful academic profiles, as a compensatory asset of these deficiencies in the curricular context. In any case, since parental relationships are the main asset of youth development, it is especially important that the focus be placed on raising information about the best parental styles, taking into account this relevance for a better youth development.

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