

School Competence Among Adolescents in Low-Income Families: Does Parenting Style Matter?

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Abstract

In the present study, we investigated parenting styles and self-perceived school competence among low-income adolescents in Norway. The purpose of the study was threefold: 1) to identify differences, if any, in self-perceived school competence between low-income ethnic Norwegians and low-income ethnic minorities; 2) to determine differences, if any, in the perception of parenting styles between the groups; and 3) to determine if parenting styles predict self-perceived school competence in the two groups. The sample consisted of 253 adolescents 12-18 years of age; 130 adolescents were ethnic Norwegians, and 123 were from ethnic minorities. Self-perceived school competence was measured using the Scholastic Competence subscale of Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents. Perception of parenting style was measured with the following three scales: *support*, *monitoring* and *neglect*. An independent-samples t-test revealed that ethnic minorities reported higher levels of self-perceived school competence than did ethnic Norwegians. No significant difference between the groups in their perception of parenting styles was observed. Support and monitoring were positively correlated with school competence, whereas neglect was negatively correlated with school competence. When all three parenting styles were entered separately into standard multiple regression analyses for the two groups, a high degree of perceived neglect significantly predicted low self-perceived school competence in both groups. This finding indicates how schools and policy makers can explore the types of support that families may need to adopt better upbringing styles.

Keywords: parenting styles, self-perceived school competence, poverty, ethnic minority adolescents, Nordic countries

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In recent years, there has been an increased focus on child poverty in Norway. Children from ethnic minority backgrounds are overrepresented among the poor and are among those with the lowest socioeconomic status (SES), and low SES may affect children's school competence (McLoyd, 1998; Statistics Norway, 2016a). In Norway and other Nordic countries, rapid immigration has occurred in recent years. In 2016, the immigrant population of Norway constituted 16.3 percent of the population (Statistics Norway, 2016b). Consequently, the surge in immigration adds a new dimension to academic and political discussions related to ethnic minorities and educational opportunities in Nordic countries (Jackson, Jonsson, & Rudolphi, 2012).

In a global context, Norway is considered among the more egalitarian countries with respect to income inequalities (Elstad & Stefansen, 2014; OECD, 2011). However, despite its substantial offering of public services, 10,3 percent of Norwegian children lived below the poverty line in Norway during the period from 2013 to 2015, which corresponds to 101,300 children (Bufdir, 2017). Of the developed countries worldwide, Norway and other Nordic countries are known for protecting children in low-income families (UNICEF, 2012). Moreover, Norway is known for its extensive range of public services, such as free or subsidised health care, unemployment benefits, cash support for parents and free municipal schooling (Bhuller & Aaberge, 2010). In this context, it may be hypothesised that, compared with other countries with less developed public services, in Norway, the effect of low economic resources is modest. Alternatively, it can be particularly challenging to be poor in a rich country.

Parenting has often been invoked as an explanatory mechanism when investigating the influence of distal factors (such as poverty) on child outcomes (such as school competence) (McLoyd, 1998). Economic hardship may diminish parents' ability to provide resources, such as warm and responsive parenting and consistent parental supervision (Hanson, McLanahan, & Thomson, 1997). Parental involvement in a child's life is positively related to their school competence, and may even moderate some of the harmful effects of economic disadvantage (Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty, & Franze, 2005; Spera, 2005). Most of the existing research on family relations and parenting styles has been conducted based on the assumption that parenting is similar across cultures (van Campen & Russell, 2010). However, there may be different cultural understandings of parenting (Russell, Crockett, & Chao, 2010), and parenting styles may vary considerably between ethnic groups (Chao, 2001) and across nations (Park & Lau, 2016).

Parenting styles have been conceptualised in different ways in empirical studies (Elstad & Stefansen, 2014). Baumrind's (1973; 1991) work is the most influential approach and is known as the three typological parenting approaches. These can briefly be defined as authoritative, authoritarian and permissive approaches. An authoritative style permits children considerable freedom but with simultaneous restrictions. An authoritarian style tends to raise obedient adolescents who do not question authority. The permissive style consists of a warm and tolerant pattern of parenting towards the child's impulses, using as little punishment as possible and having few demands for behaviour (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). Maccoby and Martin (1983) later added a fourth category referred to as neglectful, which may appear similar to permissive. However, the difference is that the parents in this category score low on both warmth, response and control. They are perceived as unconcerned, indifferent and uncommitted; furthermore, they are more concerned about their own activities than about monitoring their children's activities. This type of parenting style tends to be considered gross negligence (Pedersen, 1992).

According to Turner, Chandler and Heffer (2009), adolescents growing up with an authoritative parenting style have greater levels of self-esteem and higher levels of school competence. However, a meta-analysis conducted by Pinquart (2016) observed a weaker association between the authoritative parenting style and school competence among samples with more participants from ethnic minorities compared with that among samples with more participants from ethnic majorities. An authoritative parenting style may also be compared to the love-oriented style as described by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957) consisting of warmth and emotional affection (or withdrawal of such) when responding to their children's behaviours. This style uses praise as a means of reward in addition to withdrawal of love and isolation as a punishment. The authoritative style approach must not be confused with the authoritarian parenting approach. The latter describes a parenting style in which parents have a good overview of their children's daily activities but lack the emotional aspect. Such parents can be perceived as both dismissive and cold, where values such as obedience and submission are considered an important part of their children's upbringing (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Some groups of ethnic minority parents may have parenting styles that are more authoritarian, patriarchal and gendered than what is common from the Nordic understandings of parenting (Hollekim, 2016). Studies conducted outside Nordic countries show that in particular, Asian adolescents being fostered by authoritarian parents perform well in school (Chao, 2001; Graf, Mullis, & Mullis, 2008; Shek, 2008). A recent review of school

competence from Nordic countries comparing majority and minority adolescents yielded similar results. According to the review, some minority adolescents' school competence may be just as good (if not better) than majority adolescents when having similar or even lower socioeconomic statuses than the majority (Johnsen, Ortiz-Barreda, Rekkedal, & Iversen, 2017). An authoritarian parenting style may also have a negative effect for some minority adolescents, such as lack of autonomy and unbeneficial educational outcomes (Leirvik, 2016).

García and Gracia (2009) investigated parenting styles in a Spanish context among adolescents 12-17 years old and classified the styles into three groups, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful. The parenting style that was associated with optimal development in a Spanish context was the permissive style. This style contains a warm and tolerant pattern of parenting in which parents allow their children to freely express their feelings and impulses. Furthermore, parents make as few demands and punishments as possible, and there is a lack of monitoring of their children's activities. These parents have low expectations from their children and violations on rules are often met with indulgence (Dornbusch et al., 1987). These studies support the idea that parenting styles are not universal. Parenting styles include subjective aspects and culturally specific characteristics, such as customs, shared beliefs, attitudes and value systems, which are well recognised in Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Systems Theory (1989) and studies of child development (Sen, Yavuz-Muren, & Yagmurlu, 2013). Compared with the majority group, ethnic minority groups possess a set of different understandings, norms and values concerning parenting, which may challenge Nordic ideas concerning the most suitable parenting style (Hollekim, 2016).

Among Nordic countries, several recent studies have compared the school competence of ethnic minority adolescents and majority adolescents, e.g., Borg (2013), Kilpi-Jakonen (2014), Andersen and Thomsen (2011), Fekjær and Leirvik (2011) and Jonsson and Rudolphi (2011). In these studies, ethnic minorities performed as well or better than ethnic majorities. School competence in these studies was measured by quantified measurement criteria, such as the amount of time spent on homework (Borg, 2013) and actual grades (Andersen & Thomsen, 2011; Jonsson & Rudolphi, 2011; Kilpi-Jakonen, 2014). Other studies use children's self-perception to measure school competence (Bouchey & Harter, 2005; Chamorro-Premuzic, Harlaar, Greven, & Plomin, 2010; Hughes & Ensor, 2011). Self-perceived school competence may be measured by how adolescents perceive themselves as competent compared to others. Positive self-perceptions may predict academic success (Marsh, Ellis, & Craven, 2002).

How children perceive themselves and their environment may play a key role in shaping their behaviour (Rutter, 1989). Self-perceived school competence is also associated with self-efficacy and highlights the extent to

which a student believes that he has the opportunity to manage his own tasks and goals (Bandura, 1997). Self-perceived school competence is associated with self-reported grades and academic initiative and positively related to doing well at school (Akey, 2006; Danielsen, Breivik, & Wold, 2011; Felder-Puig et al., 2012).

To our knowledge, however, few studies have compared self-perceived school competence and parenting styles among low-income groups, specifically, low-income adolescents from majority and ethnic minority families in a Nordic welfare state. The studies by Fekjær and Leirvik (2011), Kilpi-Jakonen (2012) and Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, and Solheim (2004) compared school competence between majority and minority adolescents and parental support. However, these studies did not in particular study only low-income adolescents or self-perceived school competence. The present study seeks to deepen knowledge of self-perceived school competence in low-income adolescents from Norwegian and ethnic minority families, focusing on whether perceptions of parenting styles may differentially influence self-perceived school competence. The study has three aims: 1) to identify differences, if any, in self-perceived school competence between low-income ethnic Norwegians and low-income ethnic minorities; 2) to identify differences, if any, in the perception of parenting styles between the two groups; and 3) to determine if parenting styles predict self-perceived school competence in the two groups.

Methods

Participants

The data in the present study were collected from the study Children's level of living – the impact of family incomes (Sandbæk & Pedersen, 2010), a joint project by Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) and the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association (NKS). The study has a panel design with a case sample consisting of families with income under the 60th percentile of the national median in 2000 and a comparison sample consisting of families with income levels across the income distribution spectrum (Elstad & Ugreninov, 2010). The children were aged 6 to 12 years in the first round of interviews in 2003 and aged 12 to 18 years in the final round in 2009. The current study is based on survey data from 2009. The sample consists of 261 adolescents living in families who have experienced long-term poverty (defined as having a stable low income below the 60th percentile of the national median income during a period of three years); this constitutes 25.3 percent of the original low-income sample.

Procedure

Families, including both the children and their parents, were interviewed at three points in time: in 2003, 2006 and 2009. The children were interviewed about various aspects of their daily life, such as their health, their

school and their views on the family's material situation. The parents were interviewed about demographic factors, such as their labour force affiliation, social relations and the family's finances. In addition to the interviews, both children and their parents completed a pen and paper survey. Furthermore, register data on immigrant background, education, income and use of public benefits was collected from Statistics Norway (SSB) (Sandbæk, 2013).

We defined "ethnic minorities" as all children with at least one parent classified as foreign born ($n = 123$), while "ethnic Norwegians" were defined as all children born in Norway to two ethnic Norwegian parents ($n = 138$). The ethnic Norwegians consisted of 75 girls and 63 boys (mean age 14.7, SD 2.0), while the ethnic minorities consisted of 53 girls and 69 boys (mean age 14.7, SD 1.9). As shown in Table 1, a greater percentage of ethnic minority adolescents lived with two parents compared with adolescents of the ethnic Norwegian background ($p < 0.001$). There were no significant differences between the groups regarding gender, age or parental education. For details on the sample, see the descriptive statistics of the groups shown in Table 1.

[Place Table 1 here]

In survey studies, sample bias is common (Elstad, 2010), and surveys with a longitudinal design are often affected by high dropout rates (Grødem, 2008). However, a weighting process was employed to compensate for skewness in dropout rates. The weighting included an upward adjustment for categories of respondents with a relatively low probability of participating in 2009 (e.g., "non-Western" immigrants and parents with low education) and "downgraded" the categories of respondents with a relatively high probability of participating in 2009. For further information on the data collection for the study Children's level of living – the impact of family incomes, see Wilhelmsen (2010).

Measures

The outcome variable Self-Perceived School Competence was measured with five items, e.g., "I think I am as smart as other children my age" and "I am late at finishing my homework". The items stem from the "Scholastic Competence subscale" of Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) (Harter, 1988), the Norwegian revised edition launched by Wichstrøm (1995). Responses to all items were recorded on a four-point scale from 1 = Describes me very well to 4 = Describes me very poorly. Responses were recorded such that a high score indicated a high level of school competence. Totalling the responses to the five items on Harter's SPPA gave a sum score that ranged from 5 to 20 with Cronbach's alpha = 0.74 (total sample). For this variable, the Cronbach's alphas for the groups were 0.62 (ethnic Norwegians) and 0.66 (ethnic minorities). When investigating the measures of the

construct validity of Harter's SPPA, Wichstrøm (1995) found a significant correlation between school competence and the sum of self-reported grades in Mathematics, English and Norwegian.

In the current study, parenting styles were measured by "support", "monitoring" and "neglect". Support reflects the extent to which adolescents perceived their parents as supportive and understanding (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Bakken, 1998). Support was measured by five questions, such as "My parents accept me as I am" and "My parents understand me". The questions stemmed from the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment scale (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987); the Norwegian version launched from "The Young Investigation" (Bakken, 1998). Responses were reported on a five-point scale from 1 = Perfectly true to 5 = Not true at all. Responses were reversed so that high scores indicated a high perception of support. A sum score was created by adding the responses to the five items, range 5–25; Cronbach's alpha = 0.75. The Cronbach's alphas for the groups were 0.78 (ethnic Norwegians) and 0.72 (ethnic minorities).

Monitoring reflects the extent to which parents have established rules in relation to their adolescent's behaviour and manners and the extent to which adolescents perceive that their parents pay attention to their daily activities (Alsaker, Dundas, & Olweus, 1991; Snyder & Patterson, 1987). Monitoring was measured with three questions, "My parents know most of my friends", "My parents usually know where I am" and "It is important for my parents to know where I am and what I do in my spare time". Monitoring stems from the Monitoring Scale (Alsaker et al. 1991). The responses were recorded on a five-point scale from 1 = Perfectly true to 5 = Not true at all. Responses were reversed meaning that high scores indicated a high perception of monitoring. A sum score was created by adding the responses to the three items, range 3–15; Cronbach's alpha = 0.67. The Cronbach's alphas for the groups were 0.74 (ethnic Norwegians) and 0.57 (ethnic minorities). For additional information on the support and monitoring scales, see Sandbæk (2009).

Neglect was measured with the following three items: "They have not helped me as much as I needed them to"; "My parents have not spoken with me much"; and "They have spent too little time with me". This parenting dimension gauges the extent to which adolescents perceive their parents as unhelpful, unconcerned and disinterested (Elstad & Stefansen, 2014). The responses were reported on a four-point scale from 1 = Perfectly true to 4 = Not true at all. Responses were reversed so that high scores indicated a high perception of neglect. A sum score was created by adding the responses to the three items, range 3–12; Cronbach's alpha = 0.65. Cronbach's alphas for the groups were 0.69 (ethnic Norwegians) and 0.61 (ethnic minorities). For additional information on the neglect scale,

see Elstad and Stefansen (2014). Family structure was measured with the question “Who lives with the child?”, which was included in the parent questionnaire and coded 1 = Children not living with both parents and 2 = Children living with both parents. Parental education was coded as 1 = None to secondary school and 2 = University/college.

Data Analyses

The analyses were performed with IBM SPSS, version 20. All analyses were based on statistical models that explored the relationships between the variables and the mean scores between groups. Chi-Square tests were performed to explore whether there were differences between the two low-income groups in terms of demographic variables, e.g., gender, family structure, and parental education. An independent-samples t-test was used to explore whether there were differences in self-perceived school competence and perceived parenting styles (support, monitoring and neglect) between the ethnic Norwegian and ethnic minority adolescents. The relationship between self-perceived school competence (as measured by the dependent variable) and parenting styles (as measured by the three independent variables support, monitoring and neglect) was first investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation. Standard multiple regression analyses within the groups of ethnic Norwegian adolescents and ethnic minority adolescents (separated analyses) were used to determine which parenting style was the best predictor of self-perceived school competence. Preliminary analyses were conducted in the regression analyses to ensure that there were no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity or homoscedasticity. No violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption was noted. Multicollinearity was measured with the Variance inflation factor (VIF), which assesses how much the variance of the estimated regression coefficient increases if the predictor variables are correlated. The VIF value showed that the variables were only moderately correlated. Support received a VIF value of 1.32; monitoring received a VIF value of 1.24; and neglect received a VIF value of 1.13.

Results

Adolescents with ethnic minority backgrounds reported significantly higher levels of self-perceived school competence ($M = 16.1, SD = 2.7$) than ethnic Norwegians ($M = 14.9, SD = 2.9$); $t(213) = -3.15, p = 0.002$ (two-tailed).

No significant difference was observed between the two groups in terms of the perception of parenting styles; support: ($M = 22.6, SD = 2.7$) for the ethnic Norwegian group; ($M = 22.1, SD = 2.7$) for the ethnic minority group; monitoring: ($M = 12.5, SD = 2.2$) for the ethnic Norwegian group; ($M = 12.6, SD = 1.9$) for the ethnic

minority group); and neglect: ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.7$) for the ethnic Norwegian group; ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.8$) for the ethnic minority group.

Table 2 shows the relationships between the three parenting styles and self-perceived school competence, which were investigated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. As shown in the correlation matrix, support and monitoring were positively correlated with self-perceived school competence, whereas neglect was negatively correlated (at the 0.01 level) for the overall group. When separating the two low-income groups, only neglect correlated (at the 0.01 level) with self-perceived school competence for adolescents with an ethnic Norwegian background; support and monitoring did not. In the ethnic minority group, all three parenting styles were significantly correlated (at the 0.01 level) with self-perceived school competence. Based on the results in the correlation matrix, we conducted multiple regression analysis. This analysis provides an indication of the relative contribution of each of the predictors, support, monitoring and neglect, and denotes the best predictor of self-perceived school competence.

[Place Table 2 here]

To examine the linear relationship between parenting styles and self-perceived school competence in the ethnic Norwegian and ethnic minority groups, standard multiple regression analyses were performed separately for the two groups. Neglect had a negative effect on self-perceived school competence in both the ethnic minority group ($b = -0.369$, $p = 0.015$) and the ethnic Norwegian group ($b = -0.430$, $p = 0.012$). The total variance explained by the model for the ethnic minority group was 15.8 percent, $F(3, 94) = 5.88$, $p = 0.001$. The total variance explained by the model for the ethnic Norwegian group was 9.6 percent, $F(3, 106) = 3.75$, $p = 0.013$ (see Table 3).

[Place Table 3 here]

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine school competence among adolescents in low-income families and the predictive value of parenting style. Our main finding was that adolescents with ethnic minority backgrounds reported higher levels of self-perceived school competence than adolescents of ethnic Norwegian backgrounds. Secondly, no significant difference in the perception of parenting styles (support, monitoring and neglect) was observed between the two groups of adolescents. Support and monitoring were positively correlated with self-perceived school competence, whereas neglect was negatively correlated with school competence. Third, when analysing the two groups separately, neglect significantly predicted school competence in both groups. The

explained variance of parenting styles (support, monitoring and neglect) was larger for the ethnic minority group (15.8 percent) than for the ethnic Norwegian group (9.6 percent).

The finding that ethnic minority adolescents from poor families reported higher self-perceived school competence than ethnic Norwegian adolescents from poor families is supported by Leirvik (2014) and Modood (2004). The authors argued that SES is less important among descendants of immigrants than among individuals in the majority population. Recent Nordic studies show that minority adolescents from non-Western countries are characterised by high educational aspirations (Borg, 2013; Jackson et al., 2012; Kilpi-Jakonen, 2014; Støren, 2011). One possible explanation may be what Louie (2012) designated “immigrant optimism”, which means that both parents and children share an understanding of the opportunities that exist in the new country. Parents with ethnic minority backgrounds from non-Western countries may have sacrificed much by migrating to a foreign country to help their children obtain a better future, including the possibility of education (Kao, 2014).

Research has shown that the school competence of ethnic minority adolescents with a non-Western background seems to be less affected from having low-educated parents than do ethnic majority adolescents (Støren & Helland, 2010). Støren and Helland (2010) claim that disadvantaged majority children in Norway with parents with lower educational levels may think that mediocre grades are “good enough”, which consequently affects their children’s studying efforts and school competence. The explanation of why this belief affects school competence may apply throughout one’s life and may be transferred from one generation to the next, as with the transfer of traditions and cultural factors such as value systems, including attitude towards education.

As shown in previous studies, having a lower SES background is correlated with lower school competence in majority children from Nordic countries (Fekjær, 2007; Schjølberg et al. 2008). Hence, in Nordic countries, lower SES may be more detrimental for majority adolescents than for minority adolescents. Moreover, low SES may affect ethnic minority adolescents differently than majority adolescents, whereas ethnic and subcultural capital may help improve self-perceived school competence.

The current study did not find differences in perception of parenting styles between ethnic minorities and the majority population, as suggested by other studies (Chao, 2001; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). This indicates that there might be similar perceptions of support, monitoring, and neglect across the two groups of adolescents. It should, however, be noted that the sample consisted of only 291 adolescents, and we do not know if the result would have been different with a more diverse sample (such as different ethnicity or

age groups). More research is therefore needed to study differences in parenting styles between different groups of immigrants.

An important finding from this analysis is that a high degree of neglect significantly predicted low self-perceived school competence in both ethnic groups. This finding is consistent with the result reported by García and Gracia (2009), who suggest that higher perceptions of neglect are associated with lower educational outcomes in adolescents. Furthermore, a meta-analysis including 308 studies and data on 362,155 adolescents found that parenting styles such as neglectful parenting are related to lower school competence in adolescents (Pinquart, 2016). In addition to poorer school competence (García & Gracia 2009; Weiss & Schwartz, 1996), neglecting parenting is associated with poorer outcomes in adolescents overall (Norman et al., 2012; Panetta, Somers, Ceresnie, Hillman, & Partridge, 2014). Examples are outcomes related to substance use (Berge, Sundell, Öjehagen, & Håkansson, 2016); poorer mental health such as the development of anxiety, depression and lower self-concept (McGinn, Cukor, & Sanderson, 2005; Milevsky, Schlechter, Klem, & Kehl, 2008); and child delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2008). This study confirms the importance of reducing neglect in families.

The claim that parents' non-monetary involvement in their children's education is a key determinant of children's school competence may be an overly simplified claim (Hartas, 2011). This claim may shift the debate from supporting parents' access to training and educational opportunities to holding parents responsible for their children's academic difficulties. Such a shift may also contribute to an interpretation of the negative outcomes of child poverty as being a family failing (Ridge, 2007; Sandbæk, 2007), not a challenge influenced by external factors in the environment such as welfare state policies, legislation and public welfare schemes (Esping-Andersen, 2015; Gillies, 2007). Non-monetary poverty is more distinctly related to psychological costs and subjective perceptions (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss, 2002), and it is argued that poor children have greater burdens and responsibilities than other children and are more excluded from participation in leisure activities than others (Chu, 2011; Harju & Thorød, 2011). A focus on children from families in poverty may draw attention to the type of support such families require in terms of considerable material, social and familial tensions (Ridge, 2011; Sandbæk, 2009).

Limitations

The most significant limitation is the division of the participants into ethnic Norwegians and ethnic minorities. There are large differences in the educational achievement of ethnic minority groups from different

countries of origin (Fekjær, 2007). Such differences are supported by several studies (Hummelgaard, Husted, Nielsen, Rosholm, & Smith, 2002; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Modood, 2004). However, this division was necessary due to the limitations of the dataset in terms of a restricted number of participants. Another limitation of our study is that some of the scales had low Cronbach's alphas for the groups, especially for the group from ethnic minority backgrounds (min. 0.57-max. 0.72). In addition, there was no "cut-off" point between satisfactory and unsatisfactory parenting (Elstad & Stefansen, 2014). Thus, we do not know how well these parenting scales measure "good" or "less good" parenting styles. Finally, a large proportion of the variance in self-perceived school competence is unexplained when support, monitoring and neglect are tested as predictors. Thus, the unexplained variance could be accounted for by variables not assessed in this study.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Oslo Metropolitan University and NOVA provided IRB approval for the study in collaboration with the University of Bergen.

Informed Consent

In this study, we used data from the main study Children's level of living – the impact of family incomes; therefore, there was no direct contact with human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the main study, whereas both the parents and the child were required to consent to the child's participation in the study (Sandbæk, 2009; Sandbæk & Pedersen, 2010).

Authors' Contributions

A. J. was the main author of the paper and performed the statistical analyses in collaboration with R. B. and A. C. I. R. B. collaborated on the writing of the paper, the analyses, and provided substantial contributions in terms of drafting the manuscript and editing the final manuscript. A. C. I. collaborated on the writing of the paper, the analyses, and provided substantial contributions in terms of drafting the manuscript and editing the final manuscript. M. S. was the Project Manager of the main study, collaborated on the editing of the manuscript, and provided substantial contributions in terms of drafting the manuscript and critically revising it throughout the whole writing process.

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Table 1

Sample Characteristics, 2009 (n = 261)^a

	Ethnic		Ethnic		χ^2
	Norwegians (n = 138)	Percent	Minorities (n = 123)	Percent	
Gender					0.079
Girls	75	54.3	53	43.4	
Boys	63	45.7	69	56.6	
Age					0.960
12–15	88	64.2	78	63.9	
16–18	49	35.8	44	36.1	
Family structure					<0.001***
Both parents	69	53.1	95	84.1	
Other family structures	61	46.9	18	15.09	
Father's education					0.499
Lower education	106	80.9	86	84.3	
University–level education	25	19.1	16	15.7	
Mother's education					0.344
Lower education	118	86.8	80	90.9	
University–level education	18	13.2	8	9.01	

Note. ***p < 0.001^aThe numbers (weighted) do not always sum to a total of 261 because of missing elements

Table 2

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Between Measures of Self-Perceived School Competence and the Independent Predictor Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
Full sample						
1. School competence	-	0.198**	0.223**	-0.295**	15.45	2.88
2. Support		-	0.432**	-0.323**	22.17	2.68
3. Monitoring			-	-0.223**	12.57	2.02
4. Neglect				-	4.46	1.76
Ethnic Norwegians						
1. School competence	-	0.160	0.183	-0.288**	14.90	2.91
2. Support		-	0.509**	-0.345**	22.26	2.67
3. Monitoring			-	-0.260**	12.51	2.16
4. Neglect				-	4.40	1.72
Ethnic minorities						
1. School competence	-	0.263**	0.264**	-0.317**	16.08	2.72
2. Support		-	0.341**	-0.299**	22.07	2.69
3. Monitoring			-	-0.182	12.63	1.88
4. Neglect				-	4.52	1.81

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) Correlation matrix, means and standard deviations for all variables for the full sample, the ethnic Norwegians and ethnic minorities separately

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Self-Perceived School Competence from Support, Monitoring and Neglect

Predictor	Ethnic Norwegians		Ethnic Minorities	
	B	95 % CI	B	95 % CI
Support (per unit change)	0.018	[-0.222; 0.258]	0.131	[-0.078; 0.340]
Monitoring (per unit change)	0.147	[-0.141; 0.436]	0.253	[-0.038; 0.544]
Neglect (per unit change)	-0.430	[-0.762; -0.099]*	-0.369	[-0.666; -0.072]*
R ²	9.6*		15.8**	
n	138		123	

*p < 0.05, ** p < 0.005