



# The achievement of educational identity in adolescents and emerging adults adopted in Argentina and in Italy

## La adquisición de la identidad educativa en adolescentes y adultos emergentes adoptados en Argentina e Italia

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#### ABSTRACT:

This study presents the results of research carried out on adolescents and emerging adults adopted both in Italy and in Argentina. The main aim is to investigate the role and the associations of satisfaction with life, self-concept clarity, and parental attachment on educational identity. The main results showed: adopted Argentines perceive themselves as more satisfied with their lives, have higher levels of educational commitment and less scores of reconsideration, compared to their Italian counterparts.

**Keywords:** Adoption, Educational identity, Italy, Argentina

#### RESUMEN:

Este estudio presenta los resultados de la investigación realizada con adolescentes y adultos emergentes adoptados en Italia y en Argentina. Su objetivo fue investigar el rol y la asociación de la satisfacción con la vida, la claridad de autoconcepto y el apego parental con la identidad educativa. Los resultados mostraron que los argentinos adoptados se perciben a sí mismos como más satisfechos con sus vidas, tienen mayores niveles de compromiso educativo y valores más bajos de reconsideración, en comparación con sus homólogos italianos.

**Palabras clave:** Adopción, identidad educativa, Italia, Argentina

## 1. Introduction

International and national adoptions occur throughout the world with the largest numbers of international adoptions carried out in the United States of America, Italy, Spain, and France (Selman, 2017). Many of the adopted children come from South America.

According to the data of Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar (RELAF, 2019), in Argentina there are 19,579 children and adolescents without parental care. Only 11% of the children in alternative care can be found in foster families or in similar institutions (9% in public programs and 2% in private programs). Argentina is an interesting country for the study of adoptions because it has special procedures: for example, there is no international adoption.

Many recent studies indicate that internationally adopted adolescents neither evaluate their scientific skills positively nor expect to achieve the same level of success as non-adopted youth in various scientific fields (particularly in technology, engineering, and mathematics).

For these reasons, it is very important to study the achievements in terms of educational identity and the relationship among life satisfaction, self-concept clarity and parental attachment (Migliorini, Castaldi, & Rania, 2016; Migliorini et al., 2016). By recognizing the importance of such constructs, teachers and school psychologists can help these students to develop more adaptive self-perceptions.

Nonetheless, as far as we know, cross-national studies on this age group are rare, and no research has been conducted on the impact of the aforementioned constructs on the adopted children. One of the main reasons for such lack of studies can be the difficulty of finding adopted participants.

This study presents the results of a research carried out on adolescents and emerging adults adopted both in Italy and Argentina. Its main aim is to investigate the role and the associations of satisfaction with life, self-concept clarity, and parental attachment on educational identity in these two different realities.

### 1.1. Argentinian Context

Between 2010 and 2011, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Secretaría Nacional de Niñez, Adolescencia y Familia (SENNAF) conducted the first and unpublished study on the *Situación de niños, niñas y adolescentes sin cuidados parentales en la República Argentina* (RELAF, 2019). For the first time, a study that involved the 23 Argentine provinces, together with the Ciudad Autónoma of Buenos Aires, was undertaken with the aim of quantifying the children who were institutionalized and investigating the causes.

Although Argentina signed the 1993 Hague Convention, La Ley Nacional 24.779 of 1997, which claims that adoption is permitted exclusively to Argentine citizens and foreigners who have been residing in Argentina for at least five years, made adoption solely national.

In 2005, the Dirección Nacional del Registro Único de Aspirantes was created in Guarda con fines adoptivos (DNRUA) with the aims to develop a national register of people who want to adopt and to unify and manage the applications of the adopters. In the 2014, the DNRUA received 7077 adoption requests from Argentines. Out of them, 91.07% expressed their desire to adopt a 1 year old child, 31.50% to adopt children aged around six year old, and only 1.89% to adopt children around 12 years, preferably in a good state of health.

Regarding the number of adoptions, there is no precise statistical data. Argentina is a federal republic where each province has autonomy and applies different procedures for initiating the adoption practices. In some provinces, many children have not even been registered at the Registry Office (*Registros civiles*) because they were often subjected to irregular practices or were forced into the child prostitution market. As a matter of fact, until recently, the so-called *entregas directas*, i.e. the adoption of children through private agreements and notarial deeds, lacking of judicial mediation, were frequent. They have been however forbidden since 2015.

The results of UNICEF and SENNAF researches have shown that 44% of children and young people who are in institutions or with their families have suffered from violence and severe ill-treatment from their biological family, 31% have been abandoned and 13% have suffered some level of abuse. The province of Buenos Aires is the area with the largest number of minors in situations of vulnerability and social distress in the whole country. Indeed, 49% of children without families live in this province. The remaining 51% is located in the following areas of Argentina: 20% in the north east, 12% in the centre, 8% in the west, 6% in Patagonia and 5% in the north west.

Nevertheless, 64% of children remain institutionalized. More than half return to their biological family after resolving conflicts. At the age of 18, 20% leave the institution without a study project or a work perspective. The applications of candidates for adoption are significantly more numerous than those who are adoptable. However, the Nuevo Código Civil has established that the SENNAF has six months to assess the situation of children who have been taken in charge and the court has three months to decide on the state of adoptability of the minor.

After the collapse of the Argentinean economy in the late 1990s, funding for education was reduced. Children from poor families or without parents were the first to be affected. For financial reasons, many children had to drop out of school. Currently, 19 % of children in Argentina do not attend the school (UNICEF, 2017; Humanium, 2019). Many of them are the those who in the future will go into adoption.

## 1.2. The Italian Context

Italy is the second country, after the USA, with the highest number of international adoptions. In the decade 2004–2014, Italians adopted 3037 children. However, in 2017, the number of couples who, in possession of the eligibility decree, applied for authorization to bring foreign minors into the country at the Commission for International Adoptions (CAI, 2019) diminished (specifically, 1.163 requests, that are 25% less in comparison to 2016). Nevertheless, there were 1,440 minors (1.23 children for each couple) who were granted authorization to enter Italy in 2017.

The average age of adoptive couples is 46.6 years for men and 44.7 years for women. Among the adoptive couples, a medium-high level of education is confirmed as compared to the national average.

In 2017, as in previous years, the Russian Federation was confirmed as the main country of origin with 228 children adopted through international adoption. More than 100 adoptions came from Colombia (157), India (123) and Hungary (112). They were followed by Brazil with 76 adoptions, by Peru with 45, and by Chile with 29.

The breakdown by gender of the adopted is stable with a majority of males. Further, in the two middle age groups, i.e., the 1–4 years and the 5–9 years groups, the predominance of males was very strong and made up an average of 60% of adoptions. The average age of arrival is 6.1 years. Older children come from South America while the younger come from Africa and Asia.

62% of foreign minors adopted in Italy had parents whose parental rights had been revoked, 37% had been abandoned and the remaining 1% was orphaned. In Africa and Asia, the most prevalent cases were abandonment or renunciation by the parents, respectively 95% and 98%, while in America and Europe 90% of cases was due to the loss of parental authority.

Italy ratified the Aja Convention (signed in 1993) in 1998. Aja Convention is an international convention dealing with international adoption, child laundering, and child trafficking in an effort to protect those involved from the corruption, abuses, and exploitation which sometimes accompanies international adoption. The Convention has been considered crucial because it provides a formal international and intergovernmental recognition of intercountry adoption to ensure that adoptions under the Convention will generally be recognized and given effect in other party countries. In 2017, the authorized Italian associations, which followed the adoptive couples during the international adoption process, were 53.

## 1.3. Adoption, Skills, and Parents

Two meta-analyses (van IJzendoorn et al., 2005; van den Dries et al., 2009) have shown that, with regard to the intellectual quotient ( $d = 1.17$ ) and scholastic achievement ( $d = 0.55$ ), adopted children have an advantage over children remaining in an institution. However, when compared to their non-adopted classmates, their IQ does not differ ( $d = -0.13$ ), although their learning is problematic ( $d = 0.55$ ).

In children adopted during the first year of life, even the secure attachment to their parents does not differ as compared to their non-adopted peers. However, the risk of developing a disorganized attachment is doubled as compared to the regulatory control group (Rosnati & Marta, 1997; Rosnati, 2010).

Researchers have shown that 14.8% of the adopted sample got a degree, while 66.1% only got a high-school diploma. The medium level of commitment and motivation to study are similar in adopted persons as compared to the non-adopted. Nevertheless, psychological literature recommends intensifying the research on school inclusion and the variables that could have an impact on learning difficulties.

Parental beliefs about their children's abilities are related to educational outcomes (Anderman et al., 2018). The variables that most impact an adopted child's performance and well-being are parental anxiety and closeness (Rosnati, 2010).

An important theme identified by Palacios and Brodzinsky (2010) was the recovery subsequent to the early adversity. Further, van IJzendoorn and Juffer (2006) studied whether adoption (domestic or international) was a risk factor or curative intervention in the development of adopted children. They found that both domestic and international adoptions are effective

as catch-up interventions in the areas of physical growth, attachment security, cognitive development and educational achievement, and well-being.

Frome and Eccles (1998) found that children's self-perceptions of their math abilities were positively correlated with their parents' perceptions of them. Thus, positive parental beliefs may contribute to academic achievement and prosocial behaviours of youth. Nevertheless, research suggests that, on average, parents tend to believe that the educational performance of adopted youth may be lower than that of non-adopted youth (Anderman et al., 2018).

It is therefore important to measure the quality of parental attachment in adolescents and emerging adults through the application of multidimensional instruments (Fermani et al., 2016).

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## 2. Aims of the study

Arnett (2000) has argued that the expression "young adults" may be improper because it conveys the idea that adulthood has been achieved. Contrarily, when asked the question "do you think you have reached adulthood?", most people aged 20–29 respond with "in some respects yes, in others not" showing that they are in a transition phase in which the transition to adulthood is near but has not been reached. On the contrary, individuals over the age of 30 begin to perceive themselves more and more frequently as adults. On the basis of these considerations, the Author proposes to distinguish three phases: adolescence (10–18 years), emerging adulthood (19–29 years), and adult age (after 30 years). Adolescents and emerging adults are privileged because they are in the transition phase that leads to educational and identity formation. In light of Arnett's theory, we have privileged those who belong to these two phases of development.

The main aim of our analysis is to describe the characteristics of adopted adolescents and emerging adults involved in the process of identity acquisition (in particular, we considered educational identity achievement) in Italy and Argentina and the quality of their relationships with their father and mother. Through the multidimensional scale approach used in the related data collection to measure attachment to the father and mother, we expect to be able to identify the factors that have the greatest impact on the well-being and acquisition of educational identity.

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## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

There were 141 participants: 69 from Argentina (49%) and 72 from Italy (51%).

Out of them, 67 were adolescents (47%) and 74 were emerging adults (53%) between the ages of 11 and 29 (Argentine average age: 18.97 years, DS: 2.99; Italian average age: 21.88 years, DS: 5.27). There were 39 females (28%) and 30 males (21%) from Argentina and 55 females (39%) and 17 males (12%) from Italy.

The Italian participants were of 18 different nationalities. The most represented were the following: India (12%), Brazil (10%), Ukraine (8%), Russia (7%), Colombia (5%), and Peru, Bolivia and Belarus (4%). Conversely in Argentina, adoptions are only national.

The age at which the adoption was made for Argentine participants was not available. There were 17 Italians who were adopted and arrived within the first year of age, six within the second year of age, and one within the tenth year of age, while three arrived as adolescents.

There are 44 of the Argentine participants enrolled in secondary school (63.8%), while the rest attended mostly technical or vocational institutes (n= 7, 10%). There are 15 at university (only 1 male attends an engineering class), and three are graduates.

The Italian participants are enrolled in a secondary school in grade I (n= 5, 7%) or secondary school of grade II (n= 30, 41.7%), 15 have a diploma, while the rest are at university (n= 9, 13%), and 12 are graduates. The parents' level of education both in Argentina and Italy is high with around 49% being graduates and 45% with diplomas.

### 3.2. Procedure

The target population represents a specific segment within a wider population that is positioned to serve as a primary data source for the research, and it is used for the selection of a convenience sampling or a snowball sampling (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012).

Some associations of Argentine and Italian adoptive families were contacted and permission was requested to administer the questionnaire to adolescents and emerging adults. The associations gave their permission and contacted the families with adopted individuals of this age. Some families were available and, in turn, by word of mouth, other people were also contacted.

Participants completed the self-report measures and demographic information. The total time required to complete the questionnaires was approximately 40 minutes. Participants were given the option of completing the questionnaires at home. Approximately 99% of the adoptees approached chose to participate. All participants were informed that their participation was anonymous.

Prior to initiating the study, we obtained permission from the scientific committee in charge of the PhD in Psychology, communication and social sciences (University of Macerata-Italy), the supervisor of the Argentine University of San Luis, the Italian and Argentine family associations and the parents (in case of minors). The study was conducted according to the APA Ethics Code. For all the data analysis, we have used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22, running on Windows - SPSS, Chicago, IL, 2002).

### 3.3. Measures

The measures were translated from Italian to Spanish by a bilingual psychologist and back-translated from Spanish to Italian by a second bilingual psychologist. The two initial Italian versions were then compared by the two translators who discussed and resolved any discrepancies. Using a procedure for comparing Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficients (Feldt & Ankenmann, 1998), we found that the scales were significantly more internally consistent in the Argentine sample than in the Italian sample.

We employed the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985; Italian validation by di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2012), a five-item questionnaire designed to measure attitudes toward life. Each item is scored on a seven-point scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). A sample item is "In most ways, my life is close to ideal". Life satisfaction can be

assessed both for a specific domain (e.g., work, family) or globally as in this case. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were 0.91 and 0.81 in the Argentine and Italian samples, respectively.

The self-concept clarity construct was measured using the Self-Concept Clarity Scale (SCC) (Campbell et al., 1996; Italian version by Crocetti et al., 2010). The SCC consists of 12 items, each scored on a five-point scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). A sample item is "In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am". Cronbach's  $\alpha$  were .70 and .69 in the Argentine and Italian samples, respectively.

To measure parental attachment, we applied the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Italian validation by San Martini, Zavattini & Ronconi, 2009) in its reduced version (Nada-Raja, McGee, & Stanton, 1992). It is a self-report tool aimed at measuring the quality of the relationship between adolescents and their fathers (12 items) and mothers (12 items), respectively. The IPPA was developed to assess adolescents' perceptions of the positive and negative cognitive dimensions of relationships with their parents, specifically to measure how well these figures serve as sources of psychological security. The theoretical framework is the attachment theory, originally formulated by Bowlby (1969) and recently expanded by others (San Martini, Zavattini, & Ronconi, 2009). The development samples were 16 to 20 years of age; however, the IPPA has been used successfully in several studies with adolescents or those in emerging adulthood (Fermani et al. 2016). A six-point Likert scale ranging from one (completely untrue) to six (completely true) was used. The factors singled out measured three dimensions in the relationship between adolescents and their parents: trust, communication, and alienation recoded as closeness. Sample items include the following: "My father/mother respects my feelings" (trust); "I talk to my father/mother about my problems and worries" (communication); "My father/mother does not care much about me (reverse)" (closeness). According to Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , the reliability of the IPPA subscales was adequate: .84 and .82 for trusting the father, .89 and .89 for trusting the mother; .88 and .87 for communication with the father, .91 and .85 for communication with the mother; .78 and .70 for closeness with the father, .69 and .68 for closeness with the mother in the Argentine and Italian samples, respectively.

To measure the educational identity, we employed the Italian validation of the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS) (Crocetti et al., 2010). The U-MICS consists of 13 items with a response scale ranging from one (completely untrue) to five (completely true). In the current study, we assessed the identity dimensions about education. Specifically, 10 items measure commitment, 10 items assess in-depth exploration, and six items assess reconsideration of commitment. In this context, "commitment" refers to enacting enduring choices with regard to various developmental domains and the self-confidence individuals derive from these choices, "in-depth exploration" represents the extent to which adolescents think actively about the commitments they have enacted, reflect on their choices, search for additional information about their commitments, and talk with others about them and finally, "reconsideration of commitment" refers to the comparison of present commitments with possible alternatives because the current commitments are no longer satisfactory. Sample items include the following: "My education gives me certainty in life" (commitment), "I think a lot about my education" (in-depth exploration), and "I often think it would be better to try to find a different education" (reconsideration of commitment). Using Cronbach's  $\alpha$ s, the reliability of the U-MICS subscales was found to be adequate with values of .96 and .77 for commitment, .77 and .77 for in-depth exploration, and .79 and .77 for reconsideration of commitment in the Argentine and Italian samples, respectively.

## 4. Results

We performed a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) on SWLS, SCC, IPPA, and U-MICS. Gender, age (11–19 and 20–29) and nationality (Argentine vs Italian) were also included as independent variables to control whether differences between participants from the groups could be moderated by variable such as gender, age, or nationality.

The results indicated that, according to Wilks' Lambda criterion, the combined dependent variables were significantly affected by nationality ( $F(1, 141) = 3.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .03$ ) but not by interactions or significant differences between gender or age. The results of the follow-up MANOVA analyses (see Table 1) highlighted that the Argentine adoptees scored significantly higher on the level of life satisfaction ( $F(1, 141) = 11.01, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ ), educational commitment ( $F(1, 141) = 9.09, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ ), and lower level of educational reconsideration ( $F(1, 141) = 7.46, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$ ) compared to their Italian counterparts.

In general, the level of satisfaction with life was problematic and below the midpoint of the scale (four). The participants perceived self-concept clarity slightly below the midpoint of the scale (three).

The attachment to the mother was stronger than to the father, and the three factors of attachment were above the midpoint of the scale (3.5). Finally, the participants showed a good level of educational commitment and exploration above the midpoint of the scale (three). On the contrary, the educational reconsideration was just below the midpoint.

It is possible that those who have not achieved good self-concept clarity can then find themselves having to reconsider the commitment. Reconsideration of commitment is a crisis situation and refers to the comparison of present commitments with possible alternatives because the current commitments are no longer satisfactory (Crocetti et al. 2010).

**Table 1**  
Mean scores and standard deviations of  
Argentina/Italy and SWLS, SCC, IPPA and U-MICS

	Nationality	Mean	SD
<b>SWLS</b>	Argentina	<b>2.94</b>	.71
	Italy	<b>2.56</b>	.63
<b>SCC</b>	Argentina	2.92	.68
	Italy	2.96	.55
<b>Trust father</b>	Argentina	4.61	1.25
	Italy	4.92	1.37
<b>Communication father</b>	Argentina	3.97	1.46

	Italy	4.06	1.53
<b>Closeness father</b>	Argentina	4.05	1.17
	Italy	4.39	1.11
<b>Trust mother</b>	Argentina	4.74	1.01
	Italy	4.90	1.26
<b>Communication mother</b>	Argentina	4.58	1.29
	Italy	4.66	1.45
<b>Clonesess mother</b>	Argentina	4.35	.96
	Italy	4.64	.93
<b>Educational commitment</b>	Argentina	<b>3.64</b>	1.06
	Italy	<b>3.18</b>	.73
<b>Educational exploration</b>	Argentina	3.27	.86
	Italy	3.33	.82
<b>Educational reconsideration</b>	Argentina	<b>2.40</b>	1.00
	Italy	<b>2.87</b>	.99

Note: Significant differences are noted in **bold**

General bivariate correlations' findings (the same results obtained from Argentina and Italy) reported in Table 2 indicate that SWLS was positively associated with educational commitment and exploration and negatively with educational reconsideration. SCC correlates negatively with educational commitment and positively with educational reconsideration. This could be explained in light of the difficulty that the adoptees face with regards to the identity acquisition process. The conscience of who they are and of what they have experienced probably makes the demands and the scholastic goals too much because of their emotional difficulties (Guerrieri & Nobile, 2016).

Trust, communication, and closeness with the father were positively associated with educational commitment and exploration, while trust and closeness were associated negatively with educational reconsideration. Further, trust, communications, and closeness with the mother were positively associated with educational commitment, while trust and closeness were associated negatively with educational reconsideration.

**Table 2**  
General correlations SWLS,  
SCC, IPPA and U-MICS

	<b>educational commitment</b>	<b>educational exploration</b>	<b>educational reconsideration</b>
<b>SWLS</b>	<b>.537***</b>	<b>.228**</b>	<b>-.310***</b>
<b>SCC</b>	<b>-.290***</b>	-.141	<b>.314***</b>
<b>Trust adolescent father</b>	<b>.397**</b>	<b>.216**</b>	<b>-.213**</b>
<b>Communication father</b>	<b>.394***</b>	<b>.264**</b>	-.105
<b>Closeness father</b>	<b>.361***</b>	.175*	<b>-.249***</b>
<b>Trust mother</b>	<b>.254**</b>	.055	<b>-.270***</b>
<b>Communication mother</b>	<b>.274***</b>	.109	-.121
<b>Clonesess mother</b>	<b>.228**</b>	.092	<b>-.262**</b>

Note: \* p<.05 \*\* p<.01 \*\*\* p<.001  
Significant differences are noted in **bold**

The linear regression findings indicated that only in Argentine adoptees closeness with the father and trust in the mother were negatively linked to educational reconsideration (Proportion Explained Variance: R2=.38, p<.001). Standardized betas for the

regression analyses of closeness to the father and trust in the mother as predictors of educational reconsideration in Argentine adoptees were  $-.33$  ( $p < .05$ ) and  $-.31$  ( $p < .05$ ), respectively.

The age of adoption of the Italian participants did not predict the factors examined by our study. Our scientific evidence has shown how, at least in the Italian sample (this data is not available for Argentina), the age of arrival of adopted children is not associated with satisfaction for life, self-concept clarity, parental attachment, and educational identity. International literature presents contradictory results in this regard, and while some research show that adoption beyond the first year of age is problematic, others reveal no significant differences (Rosnati, 2010; Fermani & Muži, 2019). To clarify this aspect, further investigations are probably necessary. We obtained the same results that we would have if we had considered gender (males vs females) and age (adolescents vs emerging adults). This uniform data partly explains how males and females, who are adolescents and emerging adults, acquire their adopted identity in the transition phases of development.

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## 5. Conclusions

Our study compared the Argentine context, where the adoption is national, and the Italian one, where a large part of the adoptions is international. The main aim was to describe and analyse the impact that life satisfaction, self-concept clarity, and parental attachment have on the acquisition of educational identity in adopted adolescents and emerging adults.

Even if adopted children face different situations from their peer migrants, they can live in similar situations in the educational context. In particular, adopted youth live in situations even worse than those of migrants because, in addition to the trauma of abandonment, they must face the renunciation, sometimes even at home, of their culture and language. Minors from adopted families live unaccustomed to the norms of social interaction both at home and at school. With conditions of strict cultural and information restrictions, teaching is conducted in a language that is obscure to them; contact with peers is often complicated by external dissimilarity (Rerke et al., 2018). The impact can be long term and determine the attitude and the behaviour with others in future academic institutions. This can cause tension with both peers and parents. The climate of closeness and trust in parents can be, once again, decisive with regards to calming inter-ethnic conflicts and predicting educational commitment.

The problem of assessment of identity achievement in adoption with the aim of developing adequate preventive strategies is relevant both for educators working with adopted students in a multi-ethnic community and for specialists in mediation services. However, cross-cultural studies of this kind are rare in the literature.

In our results adopted Argentines perceive themselves as more satisfied with their lives, have higher levels of educational commitment and less scores of reconsideration, compared to their Italian counterparts. In general, the satisfaction levels were low in both cases and the average of the reconsideration of the educational commitment was too high.

On the one hand, it is interesting to consider whether the fact that all Argentine adoptions are national can have a role with regards to better social adaptation unlike Italy, where participants are of different ethnicities and may also have problems linked to inter-ethnic prejudices.

On the other hand, when these data were compared with that of research on non-adopted participants, our study confirmed that adoptees have greater difficulties in terms of academic performances and identity achievement compare to non-adopted individuals (Fermani et al., 2016).

As the correlations and regressions have shown, parents have an important impact on the scholastic success of the participants. Specifically, both the father and the mother play a positive role in the educational commitment and can limit educational reconsideration. This causes reflection on how much both parents, especially if they establish relationships of closeness and trust, can represent a factor of protection from failure.

The adopted are a social group with their own characteristics and have faced traumas. Therefore, they deserve more attention in educational contexts. In Italy, in 2015, the Ministry of Education issued *the Linee di indirizzo per favorire il diritto allo studio degli alunni adottati* (Guidelines for promoting adopted scholars' right to study) through which a referring teacher is appointed for each school and specific inclusive teaching methods are suggested. In the document, there are indications to encourage good communication between adoptive families, and professional network (e.g. psychologists, therapists) and teachers.

### 5.1. Limitations

The contributions of this study should be interpreted in terms of three limitations.

First, we were unable to determine the age at which children were adopted in Argentina or children's experiences prior to adoption. Prior research suggests that children who are adopted after their first birthday or who have experienced neglect or malnutrition prior to adoption are at greater risk of a range of learning difficulties (van IJzendoorn & Juffer, 2005). Thus, future studies that include reliable data regarding students' age at adoption and preadoption experiences are recommended.

Second, generalizations to these populations should thus be made with caution due to the aforementioned limitations in terms of information, especially given the paucity of research on educational identity achievement in adopted youth that consider complex variables such as satisfaction with life, self-concept clarity, and parental attachment. Future studies could attempt to replicate our findings with multiple items from well-established measures.

Finally, cross-sectional data do not allow for the investigation of cause-effect relations between attachment processes and educational identity. We cannot ascertain whether there are moderation or mediation variables (e.g., gender or age or the age at which children were adopted) between these constructs. As a result, future researches should extend our understanding of these processes by using longitudinal approaches that permit the examination of educational trajectories and antecedents and consequences of attachment styles.

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