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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND  
PARENTING STYLES IN MULTIPLE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AREAS**

by

Stephanie N. Rubin

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Psychology  
College of Science and Mathematics  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in School Psychology  
at  
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Thesis Chair: Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this manuscript to my family and boyfriend who have been nothing short of unconditional encouragement and support throughout my graduate studies.

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Roberta Dihoff for her continuous dedication to provide guidance and assistance through this research project, many thanks to you.

## **Abstract**

Stephanie Rubin

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND PARENTING  
STYLES IN MULTIPLE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AREAS

2016-2017

Roberta Dihoff, Ph.D.

Master of Arts in School Psychology

Academic motivation is an important topic that has been discussed in hopes to increase the levels within students, especially during college. Many factors can influence academic motivation, including the student's perceived parenting style and socioeconomic status. The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between undergraduate student's academic motivation and perceived parenting style as well as the relationship between academic motivation and socioeconomic status of the student. An anonymous survey was given to undergraduate students through Rowan University's SONA system. Bivariate correlational tests, one-way ANOVA tests, and Post-Hoc tests in SPSS were used to determine if the relationships between these variables were statistically significant.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Purpose

Academic motivation is a discipline for students that can be affected by many factors. Academic motivation refers to the desire, willingness, standard, and persistence the student demonstrates regarding their school work. The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the relationship between parenting styles and motivation in students to determine whether academic motivation in students is correlated to the parenting style conducted on the student. There will also be a comparison of academic motivation to the socioeconomic status to see if motivation levels are the same regardless of location. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines socioeconomic status as the social standing or class of an individual or group which is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Specific aims of the study are to compare 3 parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive/neglectful, to a student's motivation towards their academics to see if there is any correspondences, and to identify if the results of the comparison are similar or different in diverse socioeconomic status areas. According to Bianca Mgbemere and Rachel Telles (2013), authoritarian parenting is categorized by parents who are demanding, but not responsive, permissive parents are responsive, but not demanding, authoritative parents have a balance of manner of demanding and responsive, and lastly, neglectful parents are neither demanding nor responsive. Because neglectful parenting has recently been added as its own style, it will be combined with permissive parenting for the purpose of this study.

## **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that motivation levels will be highest in students who were raised by authoritative parents in a high socioeconomic status area compared to authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive/neglectful parents in a low socioeconomic status.

## **Definitions and Background**

Diana Baumrind is a developmental psychologist who spent her career studying parenting styles. Authoritarian parents challenge to “shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority” (Baumrind, 1966, pg. 890). Characteristics of an authoritarian parent according to Baumrind (1966) include: anxious, withdrawn, unhappy disposition, and poor reactions to frustration. She explains authoritarian parents honor obedience and forceful measures to ensure keeping the child in their opinion of correct conduct. The parent believes in limiting independence and may demand household chores to teach the child they must work for respect. In addition, Baumrind (1966) suggests authoritarian parents do not encourage verbal conversation or compromise because they believe the child should “accept her (the parent) word for what is right” (p.890). These parents’ expectations are very high regarding their child following their rules, with a reliance on punishment to teach a lesson if the child diverts.

Baumrind (1966) explains permissive parents “behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, affirmative manner towards the child’s impulses, desires, and actions” (p.

889). Permissive parents may check with the child about certain house rules, and ask very few demands regarding policies, chores, behaviors, or responsibilities. Permissive parents regularly allow their child to regulate their own life such as activities, homework, and other responsibilities. Children of permissive parents usually do not receive direction in changing themselves to learn from mistakes for the future. Characteristics of permissive parents include: “poor emotion regulation, rebellious and defiant if challenged, low persistence for challenging tasks, and antisocial behaviors” (Baumrind, 1966, pg. 889). They do not like confrontation and lack structure for their child, although they show love towards their child. The child may lack self-discipline and self-control due to permissive parents.

Authoritative parents are equally balanced and provide a healthy combination of being nurturing while having certain standards for the child to abide by in a rational way. Baumrind (1966) explains authoritative parents direct their child with guidance, verbally communicates giving reasons for their actions, and “... values both expressive and instrumental attributes, and both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity” (p.891). This means authoritative parents have control of their child while still having a purpose of allowing them to grow from their actions, not restricting them with excessive punishment or excessive leniency. Characteristics according to Baumrind (1966) of authoritative parents include: “lively and happy disposition, self-confident about ability to master tasks, well developed emotion regulation, and developed social skills” (p. 889). The communication between authoritative parents and the child are appropriate, without judgement or reprimand and provides insight to the child to further their best self.

The last parenting style that was more recently considered is neglectful parenting. This can also be referred to as “uninvolved” parenting and are not authoritarian, authoritative, nor permissive. Neglectful parenting is the absence of the responsibilities entirely. According to Mgbemere and Telles (2013), children who have a negative or absent relationship with their parent will have a harder time forming relationships with other people, particularly children their age. This leads to the child lacking any guidance or nurturing, which can result in damaging outcomes.

Motivation can be separated into two main types, known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Erlanger A. Turner, Megan Chandler, and Robert W. Heffer (2009), intrinsic motivation refers to completing an activity for itself and one’s own pleasure or satisfaction derived from participating, and extrinsic motivation refers to completing an activity to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency. Although there is much research on parenting styles, motivation, and socioeconomic status, there seems to be lack of studies specifically on undergraduate students which identify all three together and how they correspond, which explains the need of the conduction of this study. This research will demonstrate the significance of all three variables together.

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

The participants are all geographically residing in similar areas. In addition, this study may include students who was raised by two parents who practice different parenting styles. Assumptions of this study include the participant’s parents both practice the same type of parenting style if they were raised by two parents. It is also assumed

there will be researched collected from participants who have been raised by all three types of parenting styles.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The way a parent raises their child can affect many factors in that child's life. Academic motivation is one area that can be significantly influenced by the parenting style used. This is important because depending on how one is raised can determine their attitude, outlook, future goals, and performance within a school setting. This can potentially result in lifelong consequences in social, emotional, mental, physical, educational, etc. areas for the child. For the purpose of this study, this research is based on whether academic motivation level is influenced by the type of parenting style practiced on the student, as well as the influence that socioeconomic status has on the relationship between academic motivation and parenting style. The following literature are studies involving parenting style, academic motivation level, and socioeconomic background.

#### **Authoritative Parenting and Academic Motivation**

After reviewing the literature on authoritative parenting and academic motivation, it is evident that this style contributes to the student's highest academic motivation levels, compared to the other two parenting styles. Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) concluded that authoritative characteristics such as warmth and supportiveness result in college student's increased intrinsic motivation. Although the student may not be living at home due to residing on campus, previous exposure to parents still affect the student during their time away and have a lasting effect regarding their motivation towards their academics. The increased levels of motivation contributed to better overall academic

performance, higher self-efficacy, and easier transitioning to a more independent lifestyle at college. Similarly, Kenney, Lac, Hummer, Grimaldi, and LaBrie (2015) reported authoritative parenting to be a predictor of better college adjustment. Schunk (2008) discussed the general motivation enhancements made when the parent allows the child to have an input on decisions, provide alternative choices and explanations, acknowledge the needs and feelings of the child, and state expectations in a suggestive manner. These general parental behaviors help accelerate intellectual development. It was also suggested authoritative behaviors such as giving the child hints or prompts helped encourage the child to be motivated to figure problems out on their own by stimulating curiosity, opposed to supplying the child with the answer if struggled. Although these are parenting techniques used when the student is just a child, the relationship built between the parent and child by this method follows them to college years and beyond. “Recent evidence suggests that parental expectations for achievement formed in the early adolescence can predict educational plans and career choices 12 years later” (Schunk, 2008, p. 285). Authoritative parenting practices provide guidance and limits while helping the child regulate themselves and take responsibility for their behaviors, which are lessons that can follow the child into college regarding academic discipline and many other skills. Similarly, a study completed by Rivers in 2008 tested upperclassmen high school students on their intrinsic motivation and the relationship it has to their perceived style of parenting completed on them. “Based on the present study, authoritative parenting was positively related to intrinsic motivation, and several studies have linked intrinsic motivation with higher achievement outcomes” (Rivers, 2008, p. 49).



Students who perceived their parents as authoritative had a higher tendency to adapt mastery goal orientation demonstrated by a study conducted by Hoang (2007) in a self-reported survey. This means the student had a higher desire to learn information or master a new skill with high abilities. More specifically for college aged students, maternal authoritative was significantly associated with a student's tendency to obtain mastery goals. Similarly, Boon (2007) found students who reported their parents as authoritative had increased levels of self-efficacy and mastery goals. The findings of Kriegbaum, Villarreal, Wu, and Heckhausen (2016) study suggested that shared agency with parents was consistently beneficial for college students' academic motivation. Shared agency refers to the extent of which parents and students share the same academic goals and work together to obtain the goals in this study. Kriegbaum et al. concluded positive parental involvement and support is a significant contributor to a college student's academic strives, goal, and pursuits. "...parents who were perceived to be more authoritative...had adolescents who tended to adopt goals that reflect intrinsic motivations, such as improving their abilities, the enjoyment of learning, and overcoming a challenge" (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2009, pg. 212). Gonzalez and Wolters had parallel findings in their research with the other literature. Their study discussed students who perceived their parents to be authoritative to see their engagement in academic tasks as a result of their own values as well as higher feelings of autonomy in pursuing and regulating their academic behaviors.

Interestingly, a study conducted by Bassett, Snyder, Rogers, and Collins in 2013 which evaluated the concept of parenting styles on the instructor in a college classroom

setting, had similar results. Bassett et al. concluded teaching by the instructor who was perceived as authoritative by the students, were correlated better not only to the student's grades, but also to their interest in the subject matter. Students became more motivated by their increased interest in the class due to their instructors authoritative teaching style, such as giving explanations for the rules, setting expectations yet offering guidance, and appropriate communication methods, all regarding academics. Although most commonly parents are responsible for the motivation in students, this study demonstrates other authority figures who can influence motivation in students. Similarly, Ricard and Pelletier (2016) found both parental support and teacher support as significant predictors for academic motivation in their study on high school students.

Culture is another factor that must be considered while looking at academic motivation and parenting styles. Van Campen and Russell examined the cultural differences within parenting practices and discussed different characteristics that are considered appropriate within each culture. They found that Asian parents base their parenting method on the idea of training, known as "chiao shun". It is explained that although to an American parent the appearance of an Asian parent may not be authoritative, it is defined differently for each culture. "This strictness reflects Asian immigrant parents' belief that control is not only necessary, but a key role for parents" (Van Campen & Russell, 2010). Authoritative parenting means something different to the Asian culture, where the parents believe it is their responsibility to act in such a manner, such as physical discipline, which is commonly accepted in China. Warmth and control are two major factors while considering parenting style to Americans, but to other

cultures, such as Asians, there are other factors that are considered. For example, parental sacrifice is considered in other cultures. Although Asian parents may not demonstrate what Americans understand to be authoritative parenting, Asian parents meet the needs of the child in their academics, helping them daily to ensure their successfulness in school. Many authoritative parents in the U.S. do not help their children with school work daily, demonstrating the interpretation of parenting styles vary in cultures. Similarly, Chang (2007) conducted a study which also concluded authoritative parenting in Asian cultures is just a different norm than it is to Americans, due to the culturally accepted concept of “chiao shun”. Asian parents emphasize parental and elderly respect more than closeness and intimacy to parental figures, unlike Americans, according to Chang.

In regards to culture differences concerning motivation levels, Bae (2015) found that although authoritative parenting was linked to higher motivation levels for students in the United States, it did not predict Japanese children’s motivation levels. Japanese and other Asian cultured students identify their academic achievement motivation to be more influenced by factors other than parenting style, such as relationship with teachers, environment, and peer relationships. Watabe and Hibbard (2014) concluded that children in the United States have a significantly higher academic achievement motivation levels than children in Japan. They discussed factors that may contribute to lower achievement motivation found in Japanese students in their study. Japanese students often feel shame if they make a mistake, therefore they will less often raise their hand in class, resulting in the appearance of lower motivation. Although different cultures may appear less

motivated, they are just as willing to work hard. They often have different types of societal pressures which can result in the appearance of lack of motivation to Americans.

### **Authoritarian Parenting and Academic Motivation**

The literature demonstrated that although children of authoritarian parents may be extrinsically motivated, they demonstrate lower motivation levels than children of authoritative parents. Students of authoritarian parents may be motivated in the classroom; however, the academic motivation is desired for the satisfaction of their parents opposed to for themselves. Silva, Dorso, Azhar, and Renk (2008) suggested although authoritarian parenting is associated to lower grade point averages (GPA) in college students, the anxiety that could be brought on by authoritarian parents may actually increase academic motivation. “These findings suggested that interventions targeting college students’ experience of anxiety and motivation may be useful in promoting better academic performance” (Dorso et al., 2008, p. 164). Gonzalez and Wolters (2006) similarly concluded that students who viewed their parents as controlling, tended to report a greater focus in order to do better than their peers. “...students who saw their parents as strict and dictating adherence to a clear set of parent-defined rules tended to report a greater focus on doing their math work in order to outperform others” (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006, p.12). Results of a study conducted by Turner, Chandler, and Heffer (2009) suggested authoritarian parenting may be a motivational factor to academic success and children may lack any negative influence from authoritarian parents, in some cultures. These studies demonstrated children whose motivation increased due to having authoritarian parents.

Perfectionism in gifted college students were studied by Neumeister in 2004. Although parental perfectionism was a possible contributor to the child's perfectionistic tendencies, a more significant contributor to perfectionism in students was high parental demands. "The researchers found that neurotic perfectionists were more likely to have parents who were less encouraging, more demanding, and more critical..." (Neumeister, 2004, p. 272). Perfectionists in this study described their parent(s) as setting high, nonnegotiable standards as well as a low tolerance for showing emotions and lack of communication. Participants of this study reported their perfectionistic tendencies developed from their authoritarian parents, who led them to believe they must excel due to the high expectations and the fear of disappointing others. In order to prove worth to their parents, these students aimed for perfection and believed they can always do better. This can significantly alter one's academic motivation. Although a perfectionist is motivated to show their best, these tendencies can cause health issues such as anxiety or sleep deprivation.

Unlike the above studies, Schunk (2008) suggested parenting styles which are too controlling can undermine a child's motivation. He explained children are not producing a desired intention to learn due to the pressure of needing to learn something out of their control and they will be less motivated to have the desire to actually learn it. Similarly, Kriegbaum et al. (2016) found that a non-shared agency among parents and children was correlated with a less beneficial motivational profile and academic achievement. "...college students who perceive higher parental directing have higher amotivation and avoidance goal orientations..." (Kriegbaum et al., 2016, p. 14). This demonstrates parents

and children who do not share similar academic goals result in decreased motivation. Authoritarian parents and their child would not share similar academic goals due to the high expectations that are displayed and the need to always do better. "...results of this study showed that the adolescents who perceived their parents as authoritative had a relatively higher level of optimism than those who perceived their parents as authoritarian..." (Senk & Demir, 2015, p. 724). This demonstrates the levels optimism or motivation and achievement differentiation regarding the parenting style of the child. Love and Thomas (2014) concluded college students of authoritarian parents had lower predicted levels of emotional well-being and an increased predicted levels of emotional distress. Psychological issues such as depression or anxiety display greater difficulties in school due to the lack of motivation, energy, and concentration, as discussed in the study. "...controlling contexts diminish autonomous motivation and enhance controlled motivation" (Turner, et al., 2009, p. 4). It was also reported intrinsic motivation resulted in better academic success than extrinsic motivation. Authoritarian parents have overall diminished their child's self-esteem and the perception of their child's self-satisfaction which decreases their academic motivation. Senk & Demir (2015) reported levels of higher self-esteem, lower depression, and better adjustment in students with authoritative parents compared to students with authoritarian parents. "Low-SES parents are more likely to use physical discipline toward their children. Those practices are found to be associated with low self-confidence and self-esteem in children" (Lan, 2004, p. 14).

"Helicopter parenting" is a term used for parents who are over-involved and display controlling behaviors towards their child. Contacting professors, keeping track of

budgets, monitoring school work, intervening if there are issue with roommates, etc. are some examples of behaviors helicopter parents may demonstrate, which are inappropriate for a college student. Helicopter parenting is significant to authoritarian parenting because there are many similarities such as controlling demands and potential causes of mental health issues, such as depression. Schiffrin, Liss, Miles-McLean, Geary, Erchull, and Tashner (2013) found this phenomenon to be correlated with negative outcomes in college students. College students who reported having helicopter parents also had higher levels or depression, decreased satisfaction with life, as well as an increase in prescription drug use for depression. Similarly, Bae (2007) suggested children of authoritarian parents are more likely to compensate their independence in an unhealthy manner. It was also reported that the college students of helicopter parents felt that their parents do not believe they have the capability to be independent. This can diminish a student's academic motivation due to the perceived lack of confidence the parent displays in the child.

As previously discussed, culture impacts parenting style and academic motivation. A typical American child's responsibilities may include completion of homework and simple chores. Chinese children duties include: cleaning the home, cooking meals, and caring for younger sibling, which is atypical for many American families. The strictness that is displayed by an Asian American parent is said to be done for the protection of their children, not to inhibit them. High levels of concern are to display their involvement in their child's life, according to Asian parents. Control and warmth are described very differently for Asian American and White American parents.

Interestingly, Bae (2015) discussed how many previous studies suggested authoritarian parenting increases academic motivation in Asian countries. Similarly, one study discussed authoritarian parenting can be just as beneficial as authoritative parenting in regards to academics. "...first-generation Chinese youth from authoritarian homes do just as well in school as those from authoritative homes" (Van Campen & Russell, 2010).

A study conducted by Watabe and Hibbard (2014) concluded from their research and previous literature that authoritarian parenting is associated with negative academic outcomes in European-American, Asian- American, American, and Taiwanese students. They do however acknowledge that studies have been conducted in the past which displayed academic benefits from authoritarian parenting. Chang (2007) found Asian American parents to be more authoritarian towards their children than White American parents due to the interdependence of their culture. "Asian American parents may not be as willing to allow their child to choose for themselves because of the fact that the child's decisions may reflect the family as a whole" (Chang, 2007, p. 27). His findings were significant regarding Asian American's parental control to be correlated with lower ratings of parents' satisfaction of academically, socially, and personally. Because children of authoritarian parents are more likely to rebel due to the overwhelming sensation of never good enough or having any control, they may display lack of motivation in their academics to express a decision that is made by them opposed to their parents.



## **Permissive/Neglectful Parenting and Academic Motivation**

Although research on authoritative parenting came to the consensus of a positive impact on academic motivation and there are mixed reviews on the impact of authoritarian parenting on academic motivation, the literature on permissive/neglectful parenting has conclusively demonstrated the negative influence this style has on academic motivation. Gonzalez and Wolters (2009) found many results regarding permissive parenting and academic motivation. They suggested permissive parents are related to a less adaptive pattern of motivation in children. They also suggested children who reported their parents as permissive were less concentrated on improving themselves or overcoming challenges while completing math homework. This was proposed to result from the lack of encouragement or example the parent displays by not engaging in learning new information or setting self-standards. Similarly, Hoang (2007) conducted a study which demonstrated students who reported their parents as permissive also reported being less mastery goal oriented, meaning the student had less desire to learn something new.

Wischerth, Mulvaney, Brackett, and Perkins (2016) found children of permissive parents predicted lower emotional intelligence, which is associated with a predicted lower personal growth. Results revealed “permissive parenting might adversely influence the development of emotional intelligence by limiting both the number of challenging emotional experiences and the extent to which parents directly facilitate emotional growth” (Wischerth et al., 2016, p. 2). It is explained the possible lack of resulted personal growth in children of permissive parents may have derived from their

inexperience with negative emotions due to the lax of the parents. Overcoming negative emotions such as fear, anger, or frustration positively helps the child's overall wellbeing, and can be related to their intrinsic motivation levels. If the parents do not have any pressure on the child to achieve, the child is likely not going to have any motivation for themselves, especially if they have a low emotional intelligence or low personal growth level. Similar to the findings of negative personal growth, Barton and Hirsch (2015) concluded an overall lower score of wellbeing in the college students of permissive parents. Consistent with previous literature, Love and Thomas (2014) revealed that permissive parenting predicted low levels of self-esteem and emotional well-being. Kenney et al. (2015) reported permissive parents as a predictor of poorer college adjustment compared to authoritative parenting. If a person has low self-esteem and low emotional well-being, it makes sense for them to also have poor adjustment skills.

Academic entitlement was associated with students, which “significantly mediated the effects of permissive parenting...on poorer student outcomes in the areas of autonomy, relationships with others, and self-acceptance” (Barton & Hirsch, 2015, p. 5). Academic entitlement was also suggested to have intervened the relationship between permissive parenting and poorer student wellbeing, such as personal growth and purpose of life, as well as poor adjustment skills. It is explained that students raised by permissive parents may have an unrealistic expectation in college due to their potential lack of standards or need to conform academically. This may lead to frustration, cognitive dissonance, etc. when challenged academically because it requires skills such as self-sufficiency and good self-regulation. “...permissive parenting...appears to contribute to a

number of characteristics that may impede academic success, including less sense of meaning and purpose in life, less autonomy and mastery of the world around them, and poorer relationships with others (Barton & Hirsch, 2015, p. 6). Lack of academic motivation would result from a college student who had such characteristics. Schunk (2008) suggested parenting styles which are too permissive can undermine a child's motivation. Amotivation is referred to as one whose motivation, inspiration, etc. is weakened and lacks willingness to engage in behaviors that are challenging. Kriegbaum et al. (2016) and Alt (2014) both concluded permissive parenting behaviors were positively correlated to youth's amotivation. "...adolescents who perceive neglectful parenting...had lower overall mastery and self-efficacy, and high self-handicapping..." (Boon, 2007, p. 222). Boon (2007) discussed these factors are potentially caused by the lack of encouragement and support from parents as well as their lack of appropriate parental academic involvement. He explained many consequences, including risk of lower achievement and even school dropout. Parental uninvolvement was related to decreased intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels, less mastery approach goals, and increased amotivation, according to Kriegbaum et al. (2016).

Similar to the results found above, "neglectful parents neither control, demand, nor encourage, [therefore] their children will feel less impetus to perform and become amotivated" (Fox & Timmerman, p.4). They also found neglectful parents to be negatively associated with intrinsic motivation, meaning the more neglectful the parent was, the less intrinsically motivated the child was. Gonzalez and Wolters (2009) discussed an explanation in regards to why children of permissive/neglectful may be less

academically motivated. They explained a student who does not expect their parent to be present at school functions, question how they are doing academically, etc. will be less likely to try as hard as students whose parents are involved. If parents do not display interest and concern in their child's academics, the child is likely not going to display interest or concern in their own academics. Students who reported higher avoidance performance goals also reported lower feelings of autonomy in their schoolwork. Zilberstein (2016) reported more frequent rates of neglect may derive from "the hardships of poverty and the difficulties of coping with those challenges."

### **Parenting Style, Academic Motivation, and Socioeconomic Status**

Parenting style and socioeconomic status, do in fact, have an influence on a student's academic motivation. Schunk (2008) discussed when parents were able to afford items such as books, puzzles, and computers, it encouraged the child's interest, increasing motivation. "Families of higher socioeconomic status were more likely to provide cognitively stimulating home environments, which in turn, directly increased academic motivation" (Schunk, 2008, p. 284). Interestingly, Alt (2014) found students of higher socioeconomic status to be children of authoritative parents, suggesting demographic variables as a possible predictor of academic motivation. She explained minorities, such as Palestinian-Arabs, understand the significance of higher education which minority parents emphasize to their children, resulting in higher motivation to achieve in academic settings. Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) conducted a study to examine academic intrinsic motivation in association with cognitively stimulating home environments. They found students whose houses had more emphasis on learning

opportunities and stimulating activities were more academically intrinsically motivated than students whose houses had less emphasis on learning opportunities and stimulating activities. They suggested families who live in higher socioeconomic status areas are more likely to have a more stimulating cognitive home environment, resulting in students with higher academic motivation than students who live in lower socioeconomic status areas. It is important to note that Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried did not suggest higher socioeconomic status causes greater academic motivation, rather, they suggested a positive relationship. “Our view is that SES is indirectly filtered to the child through the proximal environment, that is, families of relatively higher socioeconomic status are more like to furnish a cognitively stimulating home...facilitating the development of academic intrinsic motivation” (Gottfried et al., 1998, p. 1457).

“As SES rises and families rely less on the help of their children, parents often switch to parenting strategies that incorporate affective parent– child interactions, contingent responses, child assertiveness and activities aimed at advancing cognition” (Zilberstein, 2016, p. 226).

Schunk (2008) suggested children students who are from a lower socioeconomic status display lower academic motivation. Similar to Gottfried et al. findings on high socioeconomic status, Schunk (2008) revealed students who live in low socioeconomic status areas are not guaranteed to have low motivation levels, suggesting there is no direct causation, rather a correlation. Academic assistance is necessary for many students, especially for students with learning disabilities. Families who are from a low socioeconomic status area often cannot afford any extra academic assistance such as a

tutor or after school program. This places the child at a disadvantage not only in academic performance, but also academic motivation because if the student cannot see progress due to lack of assistance, they are likely to not want to try harder in school themselves. The students know if they are struggling, and often times may not care enough to try harder if they are unable to receive assistance. Families of low socioeconomic status areas also do not have stimulating resources to provide in their home, such as books, puzzles, and computers to assist with learning. These families also lack in external cognitive stimulation, often lacking enough money for museums, libraries, etc.

Schunk (2008) also suggests schools in low socioeconomic status areas do not prepare students adequately for higher levels of schooling. Lack of proper training in the classroom resulted in more behavioral and disciplinary problems, which were negatively correlated to academic motivation, meaning the higher the behavior issues were, the lower the student's motivation in school were.

Students who live in low socioeconomic status areas may not understand the significance of education. Many believe college or higher level education is such a far reach, that there is no point in giving effort in school. These students focus on short term goals, such as immediate survival issues (their next meal, etc.) opposed to thinking they have a chance of earning a full education that can lead to a decent income. Students from low socioeconomic status areas often follow the lead of their parents or models, many who have dropped out of school and hold low paying jobs if not unemployed.

Because families in low socioeconomic status lacked easy access for transportation and relied on government income such as food stamps, “daily logistics were complicated, frustrating, and labor intensive, taking significant parental time” (Zilberstein, 2016, p. 225). This led to less monitored children, which was associated with less parental pressure to complete homework, and more time independently experimenting. Children living in poverty level displayed “lower developmental outcomes...higher rates of physical and mental health abilities, diminished cognitive and executive functioning, and lower academic achievement” (Zilberstein, 2016, p. 224). Feelings of depression, low self-esteem, and helplessness were often displayed in children of parents who are from lower socioeconomic status areas. The Urban Child Institute (2011) revealed children from low income homes that maternal unresponsiveness predicted aggressive and disruptive behavior later in life. Lan (2004) concluded similar results, suggesting children of lower socioeconomic status areas are more likely to display psychiatric disturbances and maladaptive social functioning compared to children of higher socioeconomic status areas. Less parental monitoring was also correlated with many low income homes occupied by single parents. Barajas (2011) found children of low income homes with absent fathers to have lower motivation levels, along with other negative associations. “Lower high school graduation rates, lower GPAs, and greater risk for drug abuse are only some of the negative outcomes associated with growing up in a single-parent home” (Barajas, 2011, p. 19). She also discussed higher risk of delinquent behavior, such as dropping out of school due to the single parent’s lack of monitoring or ability to provide emotional or other support. Interestingly,

Baharudin, Hong, Lim, and Zulkefly (2010) concluded single fathers tended more to their daughter's academic development, and single mothers tended more to their son's academic development. They suggested this could be to compensate for the absence of the same-sex parent.

“Lower-SES parents are more likely to suffer from low levels of energy and high levels of anxiety, hostility, and depression, have low social support levels, and experience distress from their jobs...those parents are more likely to use negative and harsh strategies to deal with parent-adolescent relationships, and provide less warmth, responsiveness, and monitoring” (Lan, 2004, p. 10).

Lan (2004) also discussed parental education as a significant predictor for the child's academic achievement and motivation. It is explained that lower educated parents are more likely to display authority, require conformity, and provide less warmth, compared to higher educated parents encourage their children towards self-direction, which is associated with intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Broide (2007) concluded college educated mothers monitor their child's progress and chose a high school curriculum that led their child to college admission. She explained an educated parent is more likely going to understand how to approach their child's school if they see their child struggling. The parent's support can benefit the student's academic achievement and motivation significantly.

Ultimately, the literature supports authoritative parenting as the best style for academic motivation with results of the highest beneficial outcomes. Authoritarian parenting had mixed results, with students demonstrating both higher and lower



motivation levels influenced by their parents. Lastly, students of permissive/neglectful parenting concluded a decreased level in academic motivation. Socioeconomic status did not have a direct causation to a student's academic motivation or parenting style, however there were significant correlations which suggested higher socioeconomic status areas displayed higher academic motivation, and lower socioeconomic status displayed lower academic motivation.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The study collected data from 10 participants of Rowan University. Each participant was an undergraduate student at Rowan University, who was at least 18 years old and 30% of participants were female and 70% were male. The participants were members of the Rowan Subject Pool and volunteered to participate in this study. Participants were able to receive credit in their Essentials of Psychology class by participating in research. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (7 participants; 70%). 20% identified as African American, and 10% identified as Hispanic. The majority reported having a yearly household income of \$76,000 or more. One participant did not disclose yearly household income. The current average GPA of participants ranged from 2.6-3.0.

#### **Materials and Design**

The information for this study was collected in spring 2017, beginning in April. Participants were not recruited through any flyers, advertisements, or offered any compensation. Participants of the study were through Rowan University's subject pool by Sona Experiment Management System database. Three questionnaires were completed by the participants. An alternate consent form was completed by participants prior to the questionnaires (Appendix A). The demographics of each participant was assessed through a questionnaire. Questions were based off of similar studies (Appendix B). An academic motivation survey was used, based off of on Pintrich et al. "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). These questions aimed at measuring the

student's behaviors, attitudes, study habits, etc. towards their academics to identify how driven the student was (Appendix C). Lastly, a parenting style survey was used based on Robinson et al. "Parenting Style Questionnaire." The original version of this survey was for parents to complete. Each question was modified to be suitable for the student to respond about their parent, for example, changing the beginning statement to "my parent" instead of "my child". These questions aimed at measuring levels of parental warmth, support, neglect, responsiveness, expectations, etc. Common behaviors in perceived parenting to identify which parenting style was exhibited at the highest level were considered (Appendix D).

The academic motivation questionnaire was based on a Likert-Scale 0-5, with 0 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The parenting style questionnaire was based on a Likert-scale ranging from 0-5, with 0 being never and 5 being always. The scoring process of each questionnaire was the same as the original versions. The academic motivation questionnaire was scored by adding up the responses and dividing by the number of questions assigned. Participants who scored 0-2.72 was categorized as having low motivation, 2.73-3.89 were categorized as having average motivation, and 3.90-5 were categorized as having high motivation. The parenting style was scored by adding up the responses and dividing by the number of authoritative (questions 1-13), authoritarian (questions 14-26), and permissive (questions 27-30) questions and the highest scored style was how the parenting style was determined for each participant. Socioeconomic status was concluded through the participant's responses to the demographic questions, specifically measuring their yearly income and education levels.

Participants who responded with an income of \$45,000 or less was categorized as low socioeconomic status, an income of \$46,000-\$69,000 was categorized as middle socioeconomic status, and an income of \$70,000 or more were categorized as high socioeconomic status.

### **Procedure**

Participants used Rowan University's Sona database subject pool to complete the questionnaires. Collection of the data took place on April 1<sup>st</sup>-April 30<sup>th</sup>, which took about 15 minutes for participants to complete. The data collected was submitted in SPSS to measure statistical significance. A bivariate correlational analysis was used and the responses were used to compare the relationship between an undergraduate's academic motivation and the perceived parenting style used. A one-way Anova test and Post-Hoc test was used to measure the correlation between participant's academic motivation and socioeconomic status to determine if they are statistically significant.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Academic Motivation and Parenting Styles

The hypothesis examined if the student's perceived parenting style was correlated to their academic motivation level. With a total of 10 participants, all perceived their parents as authoritative more than authoritarian or permissive, although there were some scores that were on the boarder of being considered another parenting style. 20% reported having low academic motivation, 60% reported having middle or average academic motivation, and 20% reported having high academic motivation. As shown in Figure 1, the average mean of academic motivation was higher in students with authoritative parents compared to students with authoritarian or permissive parents. The average mean of academic motivation in students with authoritarian and permissive parents were similar and lower than students with authoritative parents.

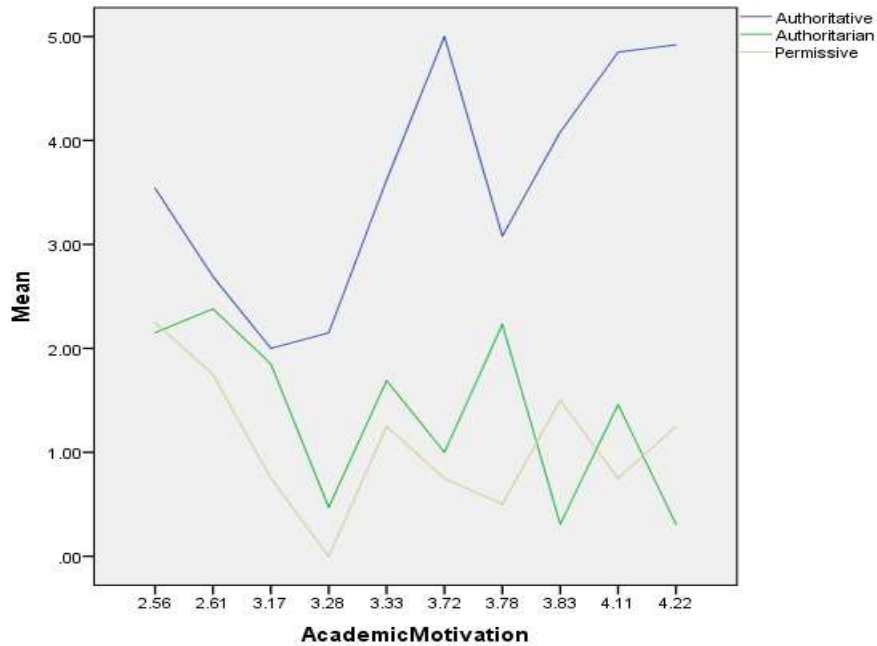


Figure 1. Comparison of Academic Motivation levels and Parenting Styles

A bivariate correlation determined the results which demonstrated authoritative parenting style and academic motivation levels were statistically significant  $r(10) = .65$ ,  $p < .05$  and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and academic levels were not statistically significant  $r(10) = -.66$ ,  $p > .05$  and  $r(10) = -.46$ ,  $p > .05$  respectively.

### Academic Motivation and Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status was considered in evaluating undergraduate student's academic motivation levels. 90% of participants reported their yearly income.

Participant's reported their the highest education level for their parents as a Master's degree, with 50% of participant's parents completing high school as the highest education

earned. 10% of participants reported not working at all, while 90% reported either working part time or full time jobs. When asked which class they would categorize their family in, 20% reported their family to be working class, 20% reported their family to be lower-middle class, 40% reported their family to be middle class, and 20% reported their family to be upper-middle class.

As shown in Figure 2, low, middle, and high socioeconomic status was not significantly correlated to academic motivation in the participants. The mean in students in relation to their socioeconomic status was also examined. Students who were low socioeconomic status had a higher average of academic motivation than students who were middle and high socioeconomic status. A one-way Anova analysis of variance determined the results were not statistically significant for SES  $F(2, 7) = 3.03, p > .05$ .

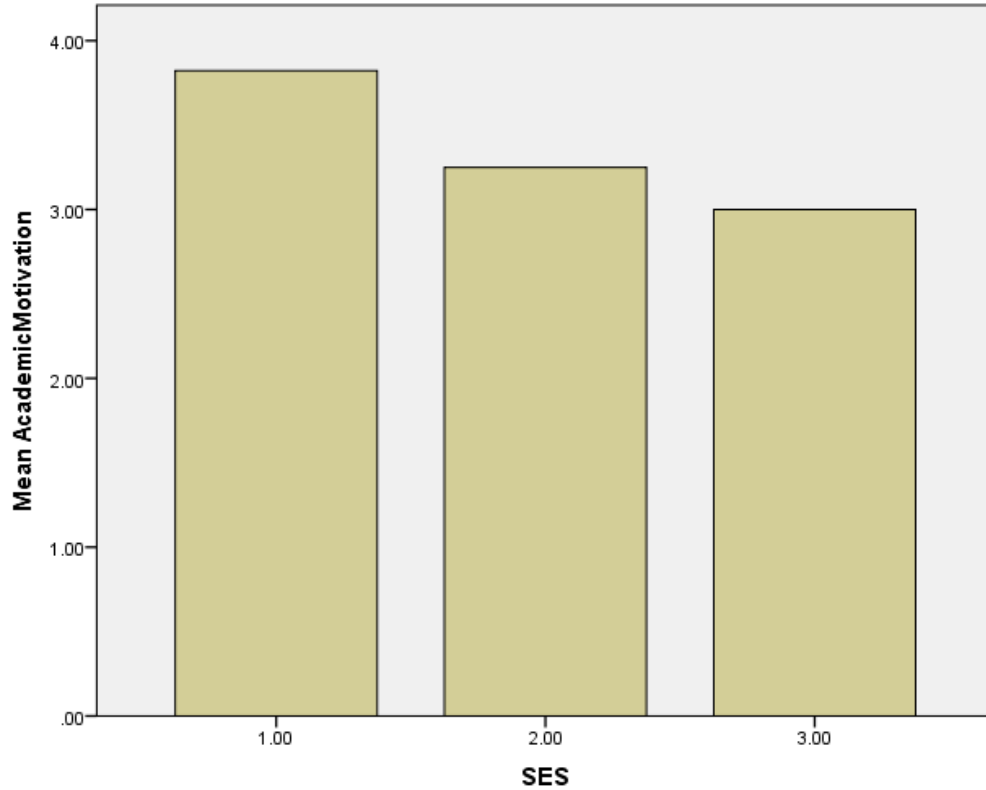


Figure 2. Comparison of Academic Motivation levels and Socioeconomic Status

Results demonstrated a significance between academic motivation and authoritative parenting style  $r(10) = .65, p < .05$ . 1 represents low, 2 represents middle, and 3 represents high. There was not a statistical significance between academic motivation and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles  $r(10) = -.66, p > .05$  and  $r(10) = -.46, p > .05$  respectively. Results also suggested there was not a significant relationship between academic motivation and socioeconomic status  $F(2, 7) = 3.03, p > .05$ .



## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### Summary

The study was created to evaluate if there was any significant relationship between undergraduate student's academic motivation and their perceived parenting style. More specifically, this study examined the correlation between authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive levels by asking questions associated with perceived levels of warmth, support, neglect, responsiveness, and expectations of parents to the levels of academic motivation with questions associated with attitudes towards performance, willingness to be challenged, study skills, and self-efficacy. Determining a statistical significance between authoritative parenting and academic motivation was consistent with prior research with similar results to this study. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles both had lower overall means in academic motivation and were not statistically significant. These results demonstrated that the overall mean of academic motivation was higher in students with authoritative parents compared to students with authoritarian or permissive parents. The average mean of academic motivation in students with authoritarian and permissive parents were similar and lower than students with authoritative parents.

The study also evaluated the relationship between the student's academic motivation and socioeconomic status. Family income, education level, and perceived level of socioeconomic status were considered to determine the socioeconomic status of each participant. Results demonstrated participants of lower socioeconomic status to have

a higher overall mean in academic motivation compared to students of middle or higher socioeconomic status. The results demonstrated no statistical significance, denying the hypothesis of having higher socioeconomic status area students as more motivated than lower socioeconomic status area students.

### **Limitations**

Participants in this study were recruited through Rowan University's Sona systems database and only included students in the Essentials of Psychology course looking to obtain research credit. Because Essentials of Psychology is an introductory course, the majority of participants were younger in age and of lowerclassmen status, which did not accurately represent the Rowan University population. This study also had 10 participants, which is a very small sample size to determine an overall consensus. Within the 10 participants, there was an unequal group size for each variable. There were 5 students who reported low socioeconomic status, 2 who reported middle, and 3 who reported high. All 10 participants were measured as having authoritative parents, which made it difficult to compare results to the other parenting styles.

Lastly, a limitation to this study was the time of the year the questionnaires were given to participants. Motivation levels in undergraduate students can vary per semester and grade level. For example, a student who has received low grades all semester and realizes this is his/her last opportunity to improve would be more motivated than someone who has done well all semester and does not feel like putting in any more effort because it will not impact their grade. If the questionnaire was available for participants to take earlier in the year, this may impact the responses of the participants.

## **Conclusion**

Through the bivariate correlation test, it can be inferred that authoritative parenting style will result in the highest academic motivation level in undergraduate students compared to authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Students who reported higher levels of parental warmth and support ultimately had a higher average of academic motivation than students who lower levels of parental support and warmth. These results were consistent with previous research similar to this study. The one way Anova test and Post-Hoc test was not consistent with previous research. Results demonstrated lower socioeconomic status area students with higher academic motivation than higher socioeconomic status area students. These results suggest that socioeconomic status does not determine how academically motivated a student is during undergraduate years at a university.

## **Future Directions**

This study examined the relationship between academic motivation and parenting styles as well as socioeconomic status. Future research should consider the student's high school academic motivation to see if there are further correlations that could be made. Questionnaires should be accessible to students outside of a specific course to gain more participants and be available online for a longer duration of time. Future research should consider a larger sample size from multiple universities which would representative more participants from a larger geographical region as well as more participants. It can be assumed that a larger sample size would more accurately and more evenly distribute results representing demographics, parenting styles, and academic motivation levels. To

better explore the relationship between an undergraduate student's academic motivation, parenting style, and socioeconomic status, longitudinal research should be conducted. Longitudinal research would be beneficial to determine whether there is a long term effect of academic motivation from parenting style and socioeconomic status and how it may change over time.

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**Appendix A**  
**Consent Form**



You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled “The Relationship between Academic Motivation and Parenting Styles in Multiple Socioeconomic Status Areas”. You are included in this survey because this study is based on undergraduate college students. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 100.

The survey may take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. We expect the study to last until June 2017.

The purpose of this research study is to determine whether academic motivation in college students is correlated to the parenting style used. There will also be a comparison of the results in high and low socioeconomic areas to see if motivation levels and parenting styles relationship are the same regardless of location.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand the correlation between academic motivation, parenting style, and socioeconomic status.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me or Dr. Dihoff at the addresses provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Please complete the checkbox below.

To participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey

Stephanie Rubin: Rubins0@students.rowan.edu

Roberta Dihoff: Dihoff@rowan.edu



**Appendix B**  
**Demographic Questionnaire**

**1. Are you 18 years or older?**

Yes

No

**2. What is your gender?**

Male

Female

**3. What is your ethnicity?**

Caucasian

African-American

Asian

Native American

Pacific Islander

Hispanic

Other

**4. What is your household's yearly income?**

30,000 or less

30,000-45,000

45,000-60,000

60,000-75,000

75,000 or more

**5. Were you raised by more than one parent/guardian?**

Yes

No

**6. What is the highest level of education in your immediate family?**

Below high school

High school

Bachelors

Masters

Doctoral

Other

**7. Do you work full time or part-time?**

Yes

No

**8. Do you have any children?**

Yes

No

**9. Do you have siblings?**

Yes

No

**10. In terms of education and income, would you say your parents are**

Upper class

Upper-middle class

Middle class

Lower-middle class

Working class

**11. What is your current GPA?**

0-0.5

0.6-1.0

1.1-1.5

1.6-2.0

2.1-2.5

2.6-3.0

3.1-3.5

3.6-4.0

## Appendix C

### Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire Subscales

Please rate the following statements regarding academic motivation. . Scores range on a 5-point scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”

1. During class time I often miss important points because I'm thinking of other things.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
2. When reading for this class, I make up questions to help focus my reading.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
3. When I become confused about something I'm reading, I go back and try to figure it out.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
4. If course materials are difficult to understand, I change the way I read the material.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
5. Before I study new course material thoroughly, I often skim it to see how it is organized.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
6. I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the material I have been studying in this class.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
7. I try to change the way I study in order to fit the course requirements and instructor's teaching style.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
8. I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it was all about.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree
9. I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying.  
Strongly Disagree 0      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly Agree

10. When studying for class, I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
11. When I study for class, I set goals for myself in order to direct my activities in each study period.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
12. Taking notes in class, I make sure I sort it out afterwards.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
13. Getting a good grade in class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
14. In a class, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
15. The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern for class is getting a good grade.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
16. In a class, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
17. I want to do well in class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
18. When I have the opportunity in class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
19. The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree
20. If I can, I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students.  
Strongly Disagree 0 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree



## Appendix D

### Parenting Style Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements regarding the different parenting practices, listed below. Scores range from “Never” to “Always” on a 5-point scale.

1. My parent(s) is/are responsive to my feelings and needs:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

2. My parent(s) take my wishes into consideration before they ask me to do something:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

3. My parent(s) explain to me how they feel about my good/bad behavior:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

4. My parent(s) encourage me to talk about my feelings and problems:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

5. My parent(s) encourage me to freely “speak my mind”, even if I disagree with them:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

6. My parent(s) explain the reasons behind their expectations:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

7. My parent(s) provide comfort and understanding when I am upset:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

8. My parent(s) compliment me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

9. My parent(s) consider my preferences when they make plans for the family (e.g., weekends away and holidays):

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

10. My parent(s) respect my opinion and encourage me to express them:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

11. My parent(s) treat me as an equal member of the family:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

12. My parent(s) provide me reasons for the expectations they have for me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

13. My parent(s) have warm and intimate times together with me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always



14. When I ask why I have to do something, my parent(s) say it is because they said so, they are your parent, or because that is what they want:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

15. My parent(s) punish me by taking privileges away from me (e.g., TV, games, visiting friends):

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

16. My parent(s) yell when they disapprove of my behavior:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

17. My parent(s) explode in anger towards me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

18. My parent(s) spank me when they don't like what I do or say:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

19. My parent(s) use criticism to make me improve my behavior:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

20. My parent(s) use threats as a form of punishment with little or no justification:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

21. My parent(s) punish me by withholding emotional expressions (e.g., kisses and cuddles):

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

22. My parent(s) openly criticize me when my behavior does not meet their expectations:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

23. My parent(s) find themselves struggling to try to change how I think or feel about things:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

24. My parent(s) feel the need to point out my past behavioral problems to make sure I will not do them again:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

25. My parent(s) remind me that they are my parent(s):

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

26. My parent(s) remind me of all the things they are doing and they have done for me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

27. My parent(s) find it difficult to discipline me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

28. My parent(s) give into me when I cause a commotion about something:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

29. My parent(s) spoil me:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always

30. My parent(s) ignore my bad behavior:

Never      0      1      2      3      4      5      Always