2006

An examination of the direct versus indirect effects of parenting behavior on academic achievement: The potential role of perceived competence and motivational orientation

Ana Veronica Garcia

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT EFFECTS OF PARENTING BEHAVIOR ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AND MOTIVATIONAL ORIENTATION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Psychology:
Clinical Counseling

by
Ana Veronica Garcia
September 2006
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Approved by:

Dr. Eugene Wong, Chair, Psychology
Dr. Yu-Chin Chien
Dr. Edward Teyber

8/23/06
ABSTRACT

Over the past several decades, extensive research has examined predictors of children’s academic achievement. Among the variables that have generated the most research interest are children’s perceived competence, children’s academic motivation, and parenting styles. In this thesis, the interrelationships among these predictor variables and children’s academic achievement were examined. It was hypothesized that perceived parent responsiveness and demandingness would be positively correlated with children’s perceived competence, motivation, and academic achievement. Additionally, it is hypothesized that the relation between perceived parenting behavior and achievement is indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation. The sample consisted of 50 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from an ethnically diverse Southern California private school. The correlational-regressional approach was used in this study. Results from the regression analyses provided some support for the proposed hypotheses. More specifically, the correlations among perceptions of competence, preference for challenge (i.e., motivational orientation), and achievement were supported. However, the correlations among the parenting behavior were only partially
supported. Finally, this study suggests that to a certain degree the effect of parenting behavior on achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge. The significance and implications of the findings were discussed with respect to the importance of maintaining and increasing children’s perceived competence and intrinsic motivation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my mentor and thesis advisor, Dr. Eugene H. Wong, for his time, expertise, guidance and dedication to this project and all of my educational endeavors. Thank you for always believing in me and encouraging me to take on new challenges. I would also like to thank my thesis committee members: Dr. Yu-Chin Chien whose statistical expertise was invaluable to this project and Dr. Edward Teyber whose clinical insight brought a different light to the project. Thank you both for the time and support you’ve given me, not only with this project but also throughout my graduate career.

I want to express my gratitude to my family for their unconditional support. Mom, I have accomplished as much as I have because I have you to look up to as my role model.

Finally, I would also like to thank Jose R. Paleo for his unconditional support and encouragement throughout this project and graduate career. Thank you for always listening and being there for me when I needed you the most.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

In order to support children's academic achievement, it is important to examine variables that are associated with academic performance. Over the past several decades, extensive research has examined predictors of children's academic achievement. Among the variables that have generated the most research interest are children's perceived competence and motivational orientation (e.g., Wong et al., 2002; Guay et al., 2001; Aunola et al., 2000; Grolnick et al., 1991). Moreover, a substantial amount of research has been carried out to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles and academic achievement (e.g., Marchant et al., 2001; Paulson, 1994; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). However, very few studies have attempted to study the potential interrelationships among the above-mentioned variables. Thus, one of the major purposes of the current study is to investigate whether children's perceived competence and motivational orientation play a significant role in mediating the effects of children's perceived parenting behavior (e.g., responsiveness and demandingness) on their own academic achievement.
Perceived Competence

Recently Wong, Wiest, and Cusick (2002) reported a significant relation between children's perceived academic competence and achievement. Specifically, perceived academic competence predicted scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) (a standardized measure of achievement). Earlier projects (e.g., Boggiano, Main, Katz, 1988; Gullo, 1987; Shen & Pedulla, 2000) have also supported a relation between perceived academic competence and academic performance. For example, in a cross-national study, Shen and Pedulla (2000) found that, in general, there exists a positive relation between students' achievement and perceived competence. However, interestingly enough, Shen and Pedulla (2000) found that students from highest achieving countries tend to report a lower level of perceived competence than students from lower achieving countries. For example, American students reported a high level of perceived competence compared to Japanese and Chinese students but they demonstrated lower performance on the largest international comparative study on achievement—the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).
Motivational Orientation

In addition to perceived competence, children's motivational orientation (i.e., intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation) has also been linked to academic achievement. Specifically, intrinsic motivation was found to be positively correlated with student's grades and achievement scores on standardized tests (Lepper et al., 2005). Intrinsic motivation has for many years been defined as "the desire to engage in behaviors for no reason other than the sheer enjoyment, challenge, pleasure, or interest" (Lepper et al., 2005, p. 184). This concept assumes that the desire for learning in the classroom is determined by varying degrees of either intrinsic motivation (e.g., pursuing a task for its inherent enjoyment) or extrinsic motivation (e.g., pursuing a task for the grade) (Harter, 1980). As a result the motivational continuum consists of intrinsic motivation at one end and extrinsic motivation at the other end.

Boggiano et al. (1991), proposed that the use of controlling strategies (e.g., rewards, surveillance, etc.) produced extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation, in contrast to intrinsic motivation, is subsequently linked to decreased mastery strivings, and impaired problem
solving skills (Boggiano et al., 1991). Such evidence, stresses the importance of helping children attain intrinsic motivation. More recently, Guay et al. (2001) reported that when children possess intrinsic motivation, it may suffice as a buffer for the adverse effects of controlling strategies (e.g., low levels of autonomy support). Thus, intrinsic motivation plays an important role in children’s coping strategies.

Moreover, according to Gonzalez-DeHass (2005), early investigations in the area of motivational goal orientation concluded that when children adopt mastery goals (i.e., being interested in learning new skills, improving their understanding) they tend to also have a preference for seeking out challenges. That is, these children are intrinsically motivated. Thus, in this study children’s intrinsic motivation was determined by the child’s preference for challenging schoolwork.

Parenting Behavior

When examining the different variables that may influence academic achievement it is important to take into account the different environmental contexts that may be affecting a student’s academic achievement. Therefore, it seems imperative to consider the parental influences on
children's development. Work that has centered on parenting styles has demonstrated that the authoritative parenting style, which is comprised of high parental demandingness (control), and high parental responsiveness (warmth), is significantly related to students' school achievement (e.g., Marchant, Paulson, & Rothlisberg, 2001; Dornbusch et al., 1987). Parental responsiveness consists of providing children with attention, warmth, reinforcement and love. Parental demandingness, on the other hand, is comprised of discipline, structure, and control strategies. In particular, high levels of both parental behaviors were more predictive of student’s academic success than were other parenting characteristics (Paulson, 1994). Comparably, Shek et al. (1998) found that students from lower achieving schools perceived their parents to be less responsive and less demanding than did students from higher academic attainment schools.

Similarly, Grolnick and Ryan (1989) suggest that specific parenting styles (e.g., autonomy supportive) have a significant effect on the development of children’s autonomy and competence in school. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) conclude that by fostering autonomy in their children, parents can better equip their children for an environment that requires independent mastery and
self-regulation, variables that have demonstrated a significant relationship to academic success.

Children’s Perceptions

Of particular importance, in the current project, is the way in which a child perceives him or herself, as well as, his or her environment. A review of the literature (e.g., Paulson, 1994; Paulson et al., 1996) stresses the importance of using the child’s perceptions of his/her parents’ behavior in determining school achievement. Paulson (1994) has reported that adolescent’s perceptions rather than the parents’ own perceptions of parental involvement (i.e., achievement values, interest in schoolwork, and involvement in school functions), were more important for predicting outcomes (e.g., achievement). One study (Paulson et al., 1996) examined the differences in parents’ view of their parenting styles and the adolescents’ view of how they felt they were being parented and found that children tended to perceive their parents lower on all aspects of parenting (e.g., less demanding, less responsive, and lower achievement values) than what the parents’ rated themselves as. Consequently, it highlights the value of examining the perceived vs. the ascribed variables. Moreover, such findings lend support
for making the measurement of parents’ perceptions secondary and not necessary in most cases.

Purpose and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to extend achievement-related research by examining the potential interrelationships among children’s perceptions of parental responsiveness and demandingness, competence, motivational orientation, and academic achievement among fourth, fifth, and sixth grade regular education students. Specifically, this study was conducted to examine the relation between parenting behavior (e.g., demandingness and responsiveness) and academic achievement and to identify whether this relation is direct or indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation (i.e., preference for challenge). For example, Figure 1 shows a direct relation. On the other hand, Figure 2 demonstrates an indirect relation.

![Diagram](Parenting Behavior → Academic Achievement)

Figure 1. Direct Relation Between Perceived Parenting Behavior and Academic Achievement
relationship between children’s perceived competence and their academic achievement (i.e., the higher the perceived competence the higher the academic achievement; the lower the perceived competence the lower the academic achievement). 5) There will be a positive relationship between children’s intrinsic motivation and their academic achievement (i.e., the higher the intrinsic motivation the higher the academic achievement; the lower the intrinsic motivation the lower the academic achievement). 6) There will be a positive relationship between children’s perception of parental behavior and their reading achievement (i.e., the higher the perceived parenting behavior the higher the reading achievement; the lower the perceived parenting behavior the lower the reading achievement). 7) There will be a positive relationship between children’s perception of parental behavior and their math achievement (i.e., the higher the perceived parenting behavior the higher the reading achievement; the lower the perceived parenting behavior the lower the math achievement). Additionally, it is hypothesized that the relation between perceived parenting behavior (e.g., demandingness and responsiveness) and overall achievement (i.e., math and reading combined) is indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation (i.e.,
preference for challenge). Similarly, it is hypothesized that the relation between perceived parenting behavior and math achievement is indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation. Finally, it is hypothesized that the relation between perceived parenting behavior and reading achievement is indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation.
CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Design

In this study, a correlational-regressional approach was adopted to test the proposed hypotheses. The predictor variables were children's perceptions of parental responsiveness and demandingness; the criterion variable was children's academic achievement and the potential mediating variables were children's perceived competence and motivational orientation. These five variables are quantitative and continuous variables. The variables, (perceived parental responsiveness, perceived parental demandingness, academic achievement, perceived competence, and motivational orientation), were measured by the Parenting Measure (Paulson, 1994), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985), and the Scale of Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation in the Classroom (Harter, 1980), respectively.

Participants

Participants were 50 regular education fourth (n = 22), fifth (n = 15), and sixth (n = 13) grade students recruited from a local private school in Southern California. The student sample included both males
(n = 26) and females (n = 24). Among the sample of students the age range was 9-12 years of age. The sample was primarily of Hispanic (72%) ethnicity. The remaining students consisted of 20% Asian American, 6% Caucasian, and 2% African American.

Materials and Scoring

In this study the following materials were used: Two informed consent forms, one for the parent or guardian (see Appendix A) and one for the child (see Appendix B), one demographic sheet (see Appendix C), the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC, see Appendix D), the Scale of Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Orientation in the Classroom (SIEO, see Appendix E), The Parenting Measure (PTS, see Appendix F), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS, see Appendix F).

Informed Consent/Assent Forms

In the informed consent form (see Appendix A) the following information was included: identification of the researchers, explanation of the nature and purpose of the study and the research method, the expected duration of research participation, description of how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained, statement of participants' rights to withdraw their participation and
their data from the study at any time without penalty, availability of the questionnaire for parents review, information about the reasonably foreseeable risks and benefits, mention of the voluntary nature of their participation, and information on who to contact regarding questions about participants' rights or injuries. The child informed assent (see Appendix B) contained the aforementioned concepts in an age-appropriate language.

**Demographic Sheet**

The demographic sheet (see Appendix C) solicited the following information: participant's age, gender, grade level, ethnicity, number of extracurricular activities, adults in the home, indication of who the child felt took care of him/her the most, hours spent doing homework, and hours spent doing activities with parents.

**Self-Perception Profile for Children**

Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) (see Appendix D). This scale is a domain-specific measure of children's judgments of competence and self-worth. The scholastic competence subscale (comprised of 6 items) was employed. Students responded to structured alternative items in which they indicated whether the descriptors were "really true" or "sort of true" of them. Mean scores were computed by dividing the sum of item ratings (each item
was rated on a 4-point scale) by the number of valid
responses (e.g., 6 valid responses for the scale). Higher
scores indicated greater perceived competence. Cronbach’s
Alphas for the scholastic competence subscale range from
.80 to .85 across four samples.

A Scale of Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation
in the Classroom

A Scale of Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation in
the Classroom (Harter, 1980) (see Appendix E). This scale
is a domain-specific measure that evaluates a student’s
motivational orientation. The Preference for Challenge vs.
Preference for Easy Work Assigned subscale (comprised of 6
items) was employed in the project. Students responded to
structured alternative items in which they indicated
whether the descriptors were “really true” or “sort of
true” of them. Items were scored on a 4-point scale, in
which a 4 indicated high levels of intrinsic motivation
and a score of 1 indicated high levels of extrinsic
motivation. Mean scores were computed by dividing the sum
of item ratings by the number of valid responses (e.g., 6
valid responses for each scale). Cronbach’s Alphas range
from .78 to .84 for the preference for challenge subscale
across multiple samples.
The Parenting Measure

The Parenting Measure (Paulson, 1994) (see Appendix F). This scale was used to measure each student’s perception of parenting behavior. Parenting style can be measured on two dimensions: demandingness (authority) and responsiveness (warmth). For this study, both the responsiveness (comprised of 15 items) and demandingness scales (comprised of 15 items) were included for each parent. Students responded to each of the 15 items on each scale using a five-point Likert-Type scale that ranges from very unlike (1) to very like (5). Total scores for each parenting dimension were obtained by adding across all of the items within their respective scales. The possible range of scores for each parenting behavior is 15-75. Higher scores indicated higher levels of parenting behavior (responsiveness or demandingness). Cronbach’s Alphas range from .77 to .82 and .80 to .90 for maternal and paternal demandingness, respectively. Cronbach’s Alphas range from .82 to .87 and .86 to .88 for maternal and paternal responsiveness, respectively.

Measure of Achievement

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores for math and reading were employed as indices of each student’s academic achievement. The math and reading scores were
used as separate indices of achievement. Additionally, the math and reading scores were combined to provide an index of overall achievement for each student.

**Debriefing Statement**

In the debriefing statement (see Appendixes G), participants and their parents or guardians were informed of the major research questions addressed in the study, whom they could contact if the child participants experienced distress due to the study and/or if they wanted to discuss or obtain the results of the study. Moreover, to ensure the validity of the study, the participants were asked not to discuss the details of the study with potential participants. Age-appropriate language was used in the debriefing statement for children.

**Procedure**

With the support of the administrators of the participating school, informed consent from the students and parents or guardians was requested. Letters and consent forms requesting the students' participation were sent home to all of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students in the participating school. Students, who returned both signed informed consent forms, were allowed
to participate. The participants were told about the general nature of the study and were asked to complete the demographic sheet, the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC), the Scale of Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Orientation in the Classroom (SIEO), and the Parenting Measure (PTS) during a 30-minute block of time during the school day. The three scales/questionnaires (SPPC, SIEO, and PTS) were arranged in six counterbalanced orders [(1) SPPC - SIEO - PTS, (2) SIEO - PTS - SPPC, (3) PTS - SPPC - SIEO, (4) PTS - SIEO - SPPC (5) SPPC - PTS - SIEO, (6) SIEO - SPPC - PTS] each with the demographic questions at the beginning. With the permission of the parents and administrators of the school, the students' most recent achievement test (ITBS) scores were recorded and used as a measure of academic achievement.

Analyses

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients among children's perceptions of parental responsiveness and demandingness, perceived competence, motivational orientation, and academic performance were calculated, and their significance tested.

A series of simple multiple regressions and hierarchical regressions were conducted in order to
examine the direct vs. indirect relation between perceived parent behavior and academic achievement.
CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

The primary focus of this study was to examine whether the relation between perceived parent behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) and academic achievement is direct or indirect via perceived competence and motivational orientation (i.e., preference for challenge). In the following sections, we first report the descriptive statistics, then the correlations among the measures and finally the simple and hierarchical multiple regressions are presented.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the self-perception and perceived parenting measures are presented in Table 1. The mean scores for the self-perception measures were as follows: 2.84 (SD = .601) for perceived competence and 2.50 (SD = .572) for preference for challenge. Student ratings of perceived parent responsiveness and demandingness yielded mean scores of 48.08, 43.82, 49.90, 51.46 for father responsiveness, father demandingness, mother responsiveness, and mother demandingness, respectively. As can be seen from Table 1 students perceived mothers to be slightly more responsive. However,
students also considered mothers to be considerably more demanding than they perceived their fathers to be.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Students’ Self-Perceptions Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Competence</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for Challenge</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad Responsiveness</td>
<td>48.08</td>
<td>16.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dad Demandingness</td>
<td>43.82</td>
<td>14.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom Responsiveness</td>
<td>49.90</td>
<td>11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom Demandingness</td>
<td>51.46</td>
<td>10.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations

Correlations among perceptions of competence, preference for challenge, parenting variables and achievement were calculated in order to examine relations among student self-perceptions and achievement. As can be seen in Table 2, there was a significant correlation between perceived competence and preference for challenge ($r = .609$, $p < .05$). Only one significant correlation was found between the parenting variables and perceived competence; mom demandingness was correlated with perceived competence ($r = .291$, $p < .05$). Significant correlations between perceived competence and achievement
variables were found. Perceived competence was significantly associated with math achievement ($r = .296$, $p < .05$) and reading achievement ($r = .443$, $p < .01$).

Finally, significant correlations between the motivational variable, preference for challenge, and achievement scores were found. Specifically, math achievement was associated with preference for challenge ($r = .325$, $p < .05$); and likewise there was a significant correlation between preference for challenge and reading achievement ($r = .309$, $p < .05$). However, as can be seen in Table 2, no significant correlations were found between each of the parenting variables (i.e., parent demandingness and parent responsiveness) and achievement. It should be noted that when the two parenting dimensions were examined separately no meaningful results were found. This suggests the need to examine the two parenting variables together. Thus, multiple regressions were conducted so that the parenting variables could be examined together.
Table 2. Correlations Among Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRCVD. COMP</th>
<th>PRCVD. COMP</th>
<th>DAD RESP.</th>
<th>DAD DMND</th>
<th>DAD DMND</th>
<th>MOM RESP.</th>
<th>MOM DMND</th>
<th>MOM DMND</th>
<th>MATH SCORE</th>
<th>READ SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRCVD. COMP</td>
<td></td>
<td>.609*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRCVD. COMP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.152</td>
<td>-0.066</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DAD RESP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.766**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAD DMND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.291*</td>
<td>0.258</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOM DMND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>-0.117</td>
<td>0.426**</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MOM RESP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.296*</td>
<td>0.325*</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH SCORE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.443**</td>
<td>0.309*</td>
<td>-0.091</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.715**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READ SCORE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

** p = < .01, * p = < .05

In order to examine the direct vs. indirect relation between perceived parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) and achievement, a series of simple multiple regressions and hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. In the simple regressions, the effect of perceived parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) on achievement without controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge was examined. In the hierarchical regressions, the effect of perceived parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) on achievement was examined after
controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge.

Simple Multiple Regressions
Without controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, the effects of perceived parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) on achievement are summarized in Table 3. The amount of variance ($R^2$) in achievement accounted for by perceived parenting behavior is reported in the table for each of the three indices of achievement (i.e., overall, math, and reading achievement).

Table 3. Effects of Perceived Parenting Behavior on Achievement without Controlling for Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Parenting Behavior</th>
<th>Achievement Index</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Achievement</td>
<td>.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Achievement</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mother Parenting Behavior  | Overall Achievement           | .066  |
|                            | Math Achievement              | .062  |
|                            | Reading Achievement           | .053  |
Hierarchical Multiple Regressions

Hierarchical multiple regressions examining the effect of perceived parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) on achievement (after controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge) are summarized in Table 4. In the table, $R^2$ represents the proportion of variance in achievement accounted for with the complete set of predictor variables (i.e., the two parenting variables and the two self-perception variables). The $R^2$ change represents the proportion of variance in achievement accounted for with the two parenting variables after controlling for the two self-perception variables.
Table 4. Effects of Perceived Parenting Behavior on Achievement after Controlling for Self-Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Parenting Behavior</th>
<th>Achievement Index</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Achievement</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Achievement</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Parenting Behavior</th>
<th>Overall Achievement</th>
<th>.192</th>
<th>.019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math Achievement</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Achievement</td>
<td>.209</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direct Versus Indirect Relationships

With respect to the effect of perceived father parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children’s overall achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 11.60% of the variance in overall achievement. After controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 5.30% of the variance in overall achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of father parenting behavior on
children's overall achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.

With respect to the effect of perceived father parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children's math achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 15.0% of the variance in math achievement. After controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 8.60% of the variance in math achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of father parenting behavior on math achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.

With respect to the effect of perceived father parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children's reading achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 5.90% of the variance in reading achievement. After controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge, father parenting behavior accounted for 1.60% of the variance in
reading achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of father parenting behavior on overall achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.

With respect to the effect of perceived mother parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children's overall achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 6.60% of the variance in overall achievement. After controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 1.90% of the variance in overall achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of mother parenting behavior on overall achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.

With respect to the effect of perceived mother parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children's math achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 6.20% of the variance in math achievement. After controlling for
perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 2.40% of the variance in math achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of mother parenting behavior on math achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.

Finally, with respect to the effect of perceived mother parenting behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) on children’s reading achievement, the results indicate that without controlling for the effects of perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 5.30% of the variance in reading achievement. After controlling for perceived competence and preference for challenge, mother parenting behavior accounted for 1.00% of the variance in reading achievement. This suggests that to a certain degree the effect of mother parenting behavior on reading achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge.
CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project was to examine the relation between perceived parent behavior (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness) and academic achievement in order to determine if the relationship is direct or indirect via the effects of perceived competence and motivational orientation (preference for challenge). The results of this study provide some support for the hypotheses. Specifically, the results of this project suggest that the relation between perceived parenting behavior and achievement is indirect via perceived competence and preference for challenge. Such findings emphasize the importance of student’s self-perceptions in relation to their own academic achievement and are consistent with previous work in this area of research (e.g., Grolnick et al., 1991; Marchant et al., 2001). In fact, Grolnick et al. (1991), found that three critical motivational variables (i.e., control understanding, perceived competence, and perceived autonomy) mediated the effects of children’s perceptions of their parents (e.g., involvement/autonomy support) on academic achievement. Grolnick et al. (1991) concluded that the aforementioned
variables accounted for much of the variance in achievement outcomes. Specifically, all three motivational variables were significantly correlated with each of three outcome variables (e.g., grades, achievement scores, and teacher-rated competence).

Additionally, Marchant et al. (2001), found that student’s self-perceptions (i.e., motivations and competence) predicted achievement above and beyond other contextual characteristics. Moreover, Marchant et al. (2001), suggest that the self-perceptions serve as mediators between family and school factors and academic achievement. Much like in this study, when the self-perception variables (i.e., perceived competence and preference for challenge) were held constant the effect of parenting behavior (i.e., responsiveness and demandingness) on academic achievement decreased. Thus, supporting the notion that the relation between parenting behavior and academic achievement is at least to some degree mediated by perceived competence and motivational orientation.

Beyond the results regarding perceived parenting behavior and achievement, the project also found that the relations between perceived competence and achievement were in the expected direction and consistent with other
studies (e.g., Boggiano, Main, & Katz, 1988; Gullo, 1987; Shen & Pedulla, 2000; Wong, Wiest, & Cusick, 2002). These results support the notion that children’s sense of competence is associated with their academic performance. Thus, it is important that we highlight ways of enhancing and maintaining children’s sense of perceived competence and motivation.

The literature suggests that perceived competence can be enhanced and maintained in numerous ways. First, the provision of an autonomous learning context, generally leads to changes in perceived competence and likely enhances it (Guay, Boggiano, & Vallerand, 2001). An autonomous environment, for example, is one where teachers are willing to take the child’s perspective and provide choice and opportunities for them to exert themselves as independent individuals (as opposed to using controlling techniques where children have little opportunity to initiate their own goals), provides an opportunity for students to enhance their sense of competence. Secondly, the use of reinforcement and encouragement has also been linked to the improvement in perceived competence (Guay et al., 2001).

Also consistent with previous work (e.g., Grolnick et al., 1991; Lepper et al., 2005), intrinsic motivation, as
measured by a preference for challenge, was correlated with academic achievement. The results suggest that the greater the preference for challenge, the greater the academic achievement. Furthermore, it emphasizes the value in focusing on maintaining and increasing a student’s intrinsic motivation. In fact, Guay et al. (2001) proposed that when adults interact with children in autonomous and supportive ways, children’s intrinsic motivation will be enhanced. Furthermore, Grolnick et al. (1991), suggest that children be given the opportunity to gain a sense of control in the classroom as this will more likely enhance their self-perceptions (e.g., intrinsic motivation and perceived competence).

Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations in this study that need to be highlighted. First, a more diverse sample of students would be necessary to be able to fully take into account student differences and to allow a greater degree of generalizability beyond the current sample. For example, a more diverse sample may allow for the examination of ethnic differences in parenting behavior and its influence on academic achievement.
Secondly, the limited sample size may have contributed to lower statistical power. Future research should utilize a larger sample in order for the analyses to be more sensitive.

Thirdly, the perceived parenting behavior measures employed in this study may have been a limitation. Specifically, the parenting behavior measure does not allow for an aggregate score (that is reflective of parenting approach) to be computed. It is possible that a scale using aggregate scores would be a more accurate measure of parenting behavior. Additionally, a measure that examines the parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) rather than just the individual dimensions (e.g., responsiveness and demandingness) of parenting styles may yield cleaner data regarding the relation between parent behavior and achievement.

Future research would benefit by looking at the differences in parenting styles and their influence on academic achievement while taking into account a child’s perception of parenting behavior. For example, do children perform well in school because they are afraid of getting in trouble or is it because they themselves have placed intrinsic value on doing well in school?
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

The study, in which your child is being invited to participate in, is designed to investigate the relationship among children’s perceived competence, intrinsic motivation, perceived parental responsiveness and demandingness, and achievement. This study is being conducted by Ana V. Garcia, under the supervision of Dr. Eugene H. Wong, Professor of Psychology. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study your child will be asked to respond to a survey about his/her self-perceptions, including questions about their perceptions on your parenting style (e.g., parental responsiveness and demandingness). A copy of the questionnaire will be available in the principal’s office for your review, if interested. The questionnaire should take approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete. All of your child’s responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researchers. His/her name will not be reported with his/her responses. In addition, with your permission we will be given access to your child’s achievement scores from the last academic school year. In order to obtain these scores, we will be accessing your student’s school record. If interested, you may receive the group results of this study upon completion after June 16, 2006 at California State University San Bernardino, Social and Behavioral Science building (SB-523) or by contacting Dr. Eugene H. Wong at (909) 537-5573.

The participation of your child in this study is voluntary. He/she is free not to answer any questions, free to remove data, and to withdraw at any time during this study. When they have completed the questionnaire they will receive a debriefing statement describing the study in more detail. In order to ensure the validity of the study, we ask that students not discuss this study with other students or participants. The anticipated benefit of this project is that parents and educators will better understand how students’ perceptions relate to their achievement. Additionally, it will help us learn how we can better assist children in their schools. There are no anticipated risks associated with this project beyond those routinely encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Eugene H. Wong, at (909) 537-5573.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely give my child __________________________, consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Participant’s Parent/Guardian

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APPENDIX B

INFORMED ASSENT
INFORMED ASSENT

The study, you are being invited to participate, was set up to help us understand how students’ attitudes are related to success in school. We are asking you to help us because we want to learn more about how kids your age see themselves, their parents and their schoolwork. My name is Ana Garcia, and I am working on this study with the help of Dr. Eugene Wong.

If you agree to be in this study, all you have to do is answer some questions about yourself, your parents, and your attitudes on schoolwork. The survey should take about 25 to 30 minutes to finish. I think you will find that these questions are easy to answer. All of the answers you give will be kept confidential, this means that no one will know this information came from you. Your name will not be put on in any of the surveys. Also, if you want to be in this study, and if you say it’s okay, we will be looking at your student record so that we can get your math and reading test scores.

Your participation is optional, and this means you can choose to be in the study or you can choose not to be in the study. You can also decide not to answer any questions. If you decide that you don’t want to do this anymore, all you have to do is tell me. You can just say, “I don’t want to do this anymore.” We ask you to please not talk to other students about the questions you are answering. A good thing about of being in this project is that the information we get will help your teachers and parents understand how they can best help you in school. There are no estimated risks from being in this project other than the risks you might find in daily life.

If you sign your name below, it means that you read and understand this, and that you want to be in the study. If you don’t want to be in the study, please do not sign. Remember being in this study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you don’t sign below or if you change your mind later and want to stop.

If you have any questions about this project, please ask you parent or guardian to call Dr. Eugene Wong at (909) 537-5573

Signature: _____________________________  Date: ______________
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET
TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

DIRECTIONS: Please tell me about yourself by answering questions A-G

A. What is your gender? _______ Female _______ Male

B. What is your age? ______________

C. What grade are you in? _______

D. Ethnic Background: (check one)
   _____ African-American       _____ Asian-American
   _____ Hispanic              _____ Caucasian
   _____ Other (please specify) __________________________________________________________________

E. Who are the adults in your home? (check all that apply)
   _____ My mom and dad        _____ My father only
   _____ My mother only        _____ My mother and step-father
   _____ My father and step-mother _____ my grandparents
   _____ other (please specify) __________________________________________

F. Who takes care of you the most? (check one)
   _____ My Mom                _____ My Dad                 _____ My grandmother
   _____ My grandfather       _____ Other (please specify) ______________

F. How many extracurricular activities (e.g., drama, sports, cheer, band, clubs, etc.) do you participate each year?
   _____ none                 _____ one each year
   _____ 2 or 3 each year    _____ 4 or more each year
G. How much time do you spend per NIGHT on homework?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 30 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min. to 1 hour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour to 1 hour 30 min.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour 30 min. to 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or more hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H. How much time do you spend per WEEK doing activities with your parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

SELF-PERCEPTION PROFILE FOR CHILDREN
**WHAT I AM LIKE**

**Directions:** You will first need to decide kind of kid is most like you. After you decide which kid is most like you then mark if this is only sort of true or really true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True for me</th>
<th>Sort of True for me</th>
<th>Sort of True for me</th>
<th>Really True for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids feel that they are good at their school work.</td>
<td>Other kids worry about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids feel like they are just as smart as other kids their age.</td>
<td>Other kids aren't so sure and wonder if they are as smart.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids are pretty slow in finishing their school work.</td>
<td>Other kids can do their school work quickly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids often forget what they learn.</td>
<td>Other kids can remember things easily.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids do very well at their classwork.</td>
<td>Other kids don't do very well at their classwork.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some kids have trouble figuring out the answers in school.</td>
<td>Other kids almost always can figure out the answers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

SCALE OF INTRINSIC VERSUS EXTRINSIC ORIENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM
### WHAT I AM LIKE

**Directions:** You will first need to decide kind of kid is most like you. After you decide which kid is most like you then mark if this is only sort of true or really true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True for me</th>
<th>Sort of True for me</th>
<th>Other kids prefer easy work that they are sure they can do.</th>
<th>BUT</th>
<th>Really True for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like hard work because it’s a challenge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like difficult problems because they enjoy trying to figure them out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids would rather just learn what they have to in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like to go on to new work that’s at a difficult level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like school subjects where it’s pretty easy to learn the answers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids don’t like difficult schoolwork because they have to work too hard.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When some kids don’t understand something right away they want the teacher to tell them the answer.**

**When some kids make a mistake they would rather figure out the right answer themselves.**

**Other kids like difficult schoolwork because they find it more interesting.**

**Other kids would rather try and figure it out by themselves.**

**Other kids like those school subjects that make them think pretty hard and figure things out.**

**Other kids would rather stick to the assignments which are pretty easy to do.**

**Other kids would rather learn about as much as they can.**

**Other kids don’t like to figure out difficult problems.**

**Other kids prefer easy work that they are sure they can do.**
**WHAT I AM LIKE**

**Directions:** You will first need to decide kind of kid is most like you. After you decide which kid is most like you then mark if this is only sort of true or really true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Really True for me</th>
<th>Sort of True for me</th>
<th>Sort of True for me</th>
<th>Really True for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If some kids get stuck on a problem they ask the teacher for help.</td>
<td>Other kids keep trying to figure out the problem on their own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like the teacher to help them plan what to do next.</td>
<td>Other kids like to make their own plans for what to do next.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like to try to figure out how to do school assignments on their own.</td>
<td>Other kids would rather ask the teacher how it should be done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some kids like to do their schoolwork without help.</td>
<td>Other kids like to have the teacher help them do their schoolwork.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

THE PARENTING MEASURE
MY MOM AND I

(DEMANDINGNESS, 1-15, RESPONSIVENESS, 16-30)

DIRECTIONS: Using the scale below, indicate the number which best describes your MOTHER from 1 (Very Unlike) to 5 (Very Like) for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Unlike</th>
<th>More Unlike than Like</th>
<th>Neither Like nor Unlikely</th>
<th>More Likely than Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My mother has rules for me about watching TV.
2. I would describe my mother as a strict parent.
3. It is okay with my mother if I do not follow certain rules.
4. When I do something that is wrong, my mother usually does not punish me.
5. I think my mother disciplines me a lot.
6. My mother usually wants to know where I am going.
7. My mother gives me a lot of freedom.
8. My mother makes most of the decisions about what I am allowed to do.
9. My mother gives me chores to do around the house routinely.
10. My mother lets me do pretty much what I want without questioning my decisions.
11. My mother rarely gives me orders.
12. My mother has few rules for me to follow.
13. My mother expects me to be home at a certain time after school or in the evening.
14. It does not really matter to my mother whether or not I do assigned chores.
15. My mother sometimes tells me that her decisions should not be questioned.
17. My mother expects me to tell her when I think a rule is unfair.
18. My mother encourages me to look at both sides of an issue.
19. It is hard for my mother to admit that sometimes I know more than she does.
20. My mother does not think that I should help with decisions in our family.
21. My mother encourages me to talk with her about things.
22. My mother does not believe that she should have her own way all the time anymore than she believes I should have mine.
23. My mother would rather I not tell her my troubles.
24. My mother expects me to do what she says without having to tell me why.
25. My mother seldom praises me for doing well.
26. My mother believes I have a right to my own point of view.
27. My mother takes an interest in my activities.
28. My mother encourages me to talk to her honestly.
29. My mother usually tells me the reasons for rules.
30. My mother does not believe I should have a say in making rules.
MY DAD AND I

(DEMANDINGNESS, 1-15, RESPONSIVENESS, 16-30)

DIRECTIONS: Using the scale below, indicate the number which best describes your FATHER from 1 (Very Unlike) to 5 (Very Like) for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Unlike</th>
<th>More Unlike than Like</th>
<th>Neither Like nor Unlikely</th>
<th>More Like than Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My father has rules for me about watching TV.
2. I would describe my father as a strict parent.
3. It is okay with my father if I do not follow certain rules.
4. When I do something that is wrong, my father usually does not punish me.
5. I think my father disciplines me a lot.
6. My father usually wants to know where I am going.
7. My father gives me a lot of freedom.
8. My father makes most of the decisions about what I am allowed to do.
9. My father gives me chores to do around the house routinely.
10. My father lets me do pretty much what I want without questioning my decisions.
11. My father rarely gives me orders.
12. My father has few rules for me to follow.
13. My father expects me to be home at a certain time after school or in the evening.
14. It does not really matter to my father whether or not I do assigned chores.
15. My father sometimes tells me that his decisions should not be questioned.
17. My father expects me to tell him when I think a rule is unfair.
18. My father encourages me to look at both sides of an issue.
19. It is hard for my father to admit that sometimes I know more than he does.
20. My father does not think that I should help with decisions in our family.
21. My father encourages me to talk with him about things.
22. My father does not believe that he should have his own way all the time anymore than he believes I should have mine.
23. My father would rather I not tell him my troubles.
24. My father expects me to do what he says without having to tell me why.
25. My father seldom praises me for doing well.
26. My father believes I have a right to my own point of view.
27. My father takes an interest in my activities.
28. My father encourages me to talk to him honestly.
29. My father usually tells me the reasons for rules.
30. My father does not believe I should have a say in making rules.
APPENDIX G

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
Study of Self-Perceptions and Achievement
Debriefing Statement (PARENT)

The study your child has just completed was designed to investigate the relationships among self-perceptions and achievement. In this study several individual relationships were examined (e.g., relationship between achievement and perceived competence, the relationship between parental responsiveness/demandingness and achievement.) Specifically, this study is being conducted to determine the potential mediating roles children’s perceived competence and motivation may play in the relationships between their perceptions of parents’ responsiveness and demandingness and academic achievement.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Eugene H. Wong at (909) 537-5573. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Professor Dr. Eugene H. Wong at (909) 537-5573 at the end of June, 2006.
Study of Students’ Attitudes and Schoolwork
Debriefing Statement (CHILD)

The study you have just completed helps us to understand how students’ self-perceptions are related to achievement in school. We were interested in how you see yourself as a student and how that might be related to your schoolwork.

Thank you for your participation. Please do not talk to other students about the questions that you have just answered. If you have any questions about the study, ask your parent/guardian to contact Dr. Eugene H. Wong at (909) 537-5573.
REFERENCES


