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Parenting styles and emotional intelligence of parents of grade school children

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PARENTING STYLES AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF PARENTS OF GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN

A Thesis

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in

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by

Mariah Marguerite Bussey Adams

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ABSTRACT

Since the family is the fundamental unit of society, it is important to understand possible causes for children's positive outcomes. Little is known about how parenting styles and emotional intelligence are linked to one another. Research has shown that parenting styles greatly affect a child's future development, and that individuals who can provide for the needs of children, score higher in emotional intelligence. It was hypothesized that there would be significant mean differences in emotional intelligence as a result of parenting style. Additionally, differences in parenting style and emotional intelligence as they relate to parenting education, gender, and marital status were also evaluated. One hundred and ninety two mothers and fathers of children in grade school (first through sixth grade) were recruited in the San Bernardino county area both from the California State University, San Bernardino campus and a local VA hospital. Participants completed a survey packet which included a demographic questionnaire, the Parenting Practices Questionnaire and the Emotional Intelligence Scale. Results showed a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence as a result of parenting style. Significant

results were also found for parenting education, gender, and marital status. These findings suggest the need for future research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Many of children's outcomes are related to the parenting styles that they experience. Considerable research has highlighted the effects of different parenting styles on the development of children (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, & Wilkinson, 2007; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). In addition, emotional intelligence, a newer field of research, has been found to be potentially predictive of parenting style (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 1991). Little is known about how parenting styles and emotional intelligence are linked to one another.

Parenting Styles

The family is the fundamental unit of society. The life that is experienced in a family will shape thoughts and actions through the lifetime, and consequently affect a child's development (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). When children are provided with positive models and encouragement for acceptable behavior, they are provided with a framework that can guide their future behaviors. For

example, parental warmth and control have been linked to positive development (Carlo et al., 2007).

Baumrind brought the effects of parenting styles on children's development to the forefront of the research field (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). She found that those children who experienced a developmentally appropriate parenting style had better overall adjustment (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). Researchers have found that when the parenting style is child-centered, the outcomes for the child are positive; on the other hand, when the parenting style is parent-centered, often, the outcomes for the child are problematic (Carlo et al., 2007; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009).

Baumrind defined four kinds of parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and rejecting-neglecting (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These parenting styles are the product of the amount of parental warmth and control exhibited in the parent-child relationship (García & Gracia, 2009). Warmth entails a parent's support, encouragement, responsiveness, consistency, and involvement and interest in the activities of his/her child, whereas control reflects the parent's demands for maturity, the setting of limits, and the level of supervision provided

(Cheung & McBride-Chang, 2008; Domenech Rodríguez, Donovick, & Crowley, 2009; Martinez & Garcia, 2008; Roskam & Meunier, 2009). Thus, an authoritative parenting style has been categorized as high warmth and high control (Karavasilis et al., 2003; Martinez & Garcia, 2008). The authoritarian parenting style is classified as having low warmth and high control (Karavasilis, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2003; Martinez & Garcia, 2008). The permissive parenting style is said to have high warmth and low control, and lastly, the neglectful parenting style has been characterized as having low warmth and low control (Karavasilis et al., 2003; Martinez & Garcia, 2008).

In general, parents using an authoritative parenting style set clear and rational limits, as well as goals and objectives for acceptable behavior (Firmin & Castle, 2008; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These parents explain the motive for rules and expectations, give explanations for consequences, and they present the information in a loving and understanding manner (Firmin & Castle, 2008). These children achieve greater self-esteem and self-worth as a result of this parenting (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). And when unacceptable behavior occurs these parents focus on the effects of the unwanted behavior (Heaven & Ciarrochi,

2008). These parents provide guidance and shaping for the child at his/her own level of development. These parents are aware of the child's emotional understanding.

On the other hand, the authoritarian parents set high standards for the behavior and accomplishments of their children (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). They are strict and shape their children's behavior through harsh punishment (Firmin & Castle, 2008; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These children report low-self esteem and experience more feelings of inadequacy due to these high standards and harsh punishments (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These parents focus on the failure of the child's behavior when the child does not accomplish or behave to the expected standard (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These children are not provided with the emotional support that would be needed from a parent.

Permissive parents allow their children to do as they wish and they provide no guidance (Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). These parents do not set rules or standards for the child and they show inconsistency in providing feedback about their child's behavior (Firmin & Castle, 2008). These children are off on their own, only learning from outside influences with respect to the guiding and directing of

their behavior (Firmin & Castle, 2008). These parents would therefore appear to be unable to provide for the social needs of their child, voice their disapproval in events that the child may engage in, or foresee the possible emotional consequences that an event may have on their child (Firmin & Castle, 2008; Keaten & Kelly, 2008; Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2008; Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2008).

Lastly, parents who display a neglectful parenting style have difficulties in discipline and organization (Firmin & Castle, 2008). The child is essentially left to do anything he/she wishes. When these children become difficult to handle, often the parent's reaction is to use physical means to manage the child (Firmin & Castle, 2008). These parent behaviors often occur as a result of anger, impulse, or desperation (Firmin & Castle, 2008). Children who experience this type of home, experience less competence in self (they tend to give in to peer pressure), show lower levels of maturity, and seem to cause more trouble than children experiencing other kinds of parenting styles (e.g., they may have a high probability of developing a conduct disorder) (Steinberg & Blatt-Eisengart, 2006).

Overall, Baumrind found that those children who experienced an authoritative parenting style demonstrated better overall adjustment in self-esteem, social and cognitive functioning, and academic achievement (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). In contrast, authoritarian parenting, a parent-centered approach, did not provide children with the autonomy and understanding that was needed for children's developmental stages. Similarly, a parent utilizing a permissive parenting style did not actively participate in guiding his/her child's behavior (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). Lastly, parents displaying a neglectful parenting style seemed to be uninvolved and unaware of their children's lives (Firmin & Castle, 2008). Therefore, these latter three parenting styles resulted in problematic outcomes, such as increased frequency of child psychopathology (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009; Firmin & Castle, 2008; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008).

Parent Education

Parents often discipline their children as they were disciplined as children (Firmin & Castle, 2008; Harlaar et al., 2008). Parent educators widely accept that "parenting patterns are learned in childhood and replicated later in

life when children become parents" (Bavolek, 2000, p. 2). In a study by Harlaar et al. (2008), between 17-30% of parental characteristics of warmth, control and abuse were found to be associated with genetic factors, but between 22-44% of these parenting behaviors were due to environmental influences. Thus providing evidence that environment has a major influence on these parenting behaviors.

Typically, parents hold beliefs about parenting children and how to care for their needs (Banks, Ninowski, Mash, & Semple, 2008; Bornstein, 2005). Becoming a parent is a major life style change and the transition to parenthood can be stressful. For a significant number of parents, the transition can lead to maladaptive changes (Cowan & Cowan, 1995). Often parents are young and uninformed about how to provide an environment that will help foster their child's development.

Millions of children worldwide suffer from abuse and neglect (Bavolek, 2000). "Social scientists agree that the continued maltreatment of children today is primarily the result of poorly trained adults who attempt to instill discipline and educate children within the context of the

violence they themselves experienced as children" (Bavolek, 2000, p. 1).

Bavolek (2000) suggested that:

> Many abusive parents have unrealistic expectations of their children's developmental skill level. These inappropriate expectations stem from abusive parents' own inadequate perceptions of self and from a lack of knowledge about the capabilities and needs of children at each developmental stage. (p. 4)

Research has shown that positive outcomes for both parents, as well as, their children are possible upon participation in a parent training program. Improved mothering skills have been acquired through attendance at parenting programs (Copeland & Harbaugh, 2005). Research conducted by Levac, McCay, Merka, and Reddon-D'Arcy (2008) found that parents were positively affected by the parent training sessions that they received. They received the needed support and acceptance in order to provide parenting for their children, but they also were able to gain an understanding of their own thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Levac et al., 2008). These parents felt more confident, less stressed and showed an enhanced ability to have a positive influence on not only their child, but themselves

and other family members (Levac et al., 2008). The changes that parents made as a result of the program resulted in higher levels of prosocial behavior in their children. This is especially important since proactive aggression demonstrated by children is often coupled with beliefs favoring harsh parenting (Kimonis et al., 2006).

Recently, Campbell and Gilmore (2007) found that positive parenting was also associated with level of education. The more education a parent had, the more positive the parenting behavior. Thus, it appears that education is crucial for successful parenting and positive child development. If parents are provided with education about their child's development they will more likely develop positive parenting behaviors.

After reviewing typical parenting education courses about child development, it appears that courses would need to be at least eight hours in length in order to accurately cover important topics that a parent would need to know and understand in order to better understand the development of his/her child. How this block of time is split up does not appear to matter, but rather what is important is the amount of time. This allows the instructor to cover basic

information about child development so that individuals are better prepared for their role as parents.

Gender

Gender seems to be associated with how a parent responds to his/her child (Warash & Demasi, 2008). Roskam and Meunier (2009) found that fathers displayed parenting styles that were most often associated with negative child outcomes as compared to mothers who displayed more positive types of parenting behaviors (see also Bornstein & Lamb, 2005).

Due to gender roles in society, it is more likely that the men will be more direct, strict, and controlling therefore representing an authoritarian parenting style, as compared to women who play the role of a comforter.

Marital Status

Marital status appears to be associated with a parent's response to his/her child's behavior (Warash & Demasi, 2008).

One in three children are born to unwed parents, and over half of all children will experience life in a single parent household (DeKlyen, Brooks-Gunn, McLanahan, & Knab, 2006; Laursen, 2005). These children have a higher risk for

experiencing poor parenting and therefore poor developmental outcomes (DeKlyen et al., 2006).

Becoming a new parent can be a very rewarding, but trying experience. There are many changes and challenges that take place within the lives of new parents. When parenting for the first time, if the first month is viewed in a stressful manner by unwed mothers, these mothers may engage in less caring and show less warmth towards their infants (Copeland & Harbaugh, 2005).

Cowan and Cowan (1995) found that a parent's overall health during the transition to parenthood is a significant predictor of children's academic success, social development, and behavior during elementary school. They later found that young, poor, unwed mothers often suffer with psychological and physical health problems and therefore their children are at high risk for future academic and developmental issues. Parental distress during the first critical years of a child's life is correlated with negative developmental outcomes for children in both preschool and elementary school (Cowan & Cowan, 1995). Unwed adolescent mothers who experienced high stress spent less time caring for their infant's needs (Holub et al., 2007). They also felt that they were less capable of

parenting their child (Holub et al., 2007). These children are at higher risk for socio-emotional and cognitive developmental delays (Holub et al., 2007).

Overall, there are major concerns for these young unwed parents and for their growing children. "Compared with their adult counterparts, [unwed] teenage mothers may interact with their children less positively and have unrealistic expectations of child behavior [which will] increase the risk of abuse and neglect" (Barnet, Liu, DeVoe, Alperovitz-Bichell, & Duggan, 2007, p. 224). Others have found similar results. Holub et al. (2007) found in their research that "adolescent mothers [displayed] more unrealistic expectations of child development, increased parenting problems, and higher rates of maltreatment. [These mothers were] also less responsive and less sensitive in interactions with their infants [when] compared to adult mothers" (p. 154).

On the other hand, married mothers and fathers were found to be similar in their parenting style, especially as time with the child in their life increased (Domenech Rodríguez et al., 2009; Roskam & Meunier, 2009). Typically, married parents display a form of authoritative parenting. However, in a study by Warash and Demasi (2008), they found

that when one parent displayed more authoritarian parenting, the other parent would display more of a permissive parenting style.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Blickle et al., 2009; Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2008). Typically, it is thought of as the perceiving of, understanding of, and regulation of emotions (Mayer, Perkins, Caruso, & Salovey, 2001; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). The perception of emotions is the recognition of emotions and the ability to correctly interpret their meaning in both self and others (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Understanding emotions includes: knowing how emotions can be affected through experiences, how these emotions have variations in degree, (such as, happy and ecstatic), and how emotions may change over time (e.g. from grief to anger) (Lam & Kirby, 2002; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Lastly, the regulation of emotions is the ability to control both the reactions of emotion in self and others (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Therefore, emotional intelligence is the degree to which a person can perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Salovey & Grewal, 2005).

Emotional intelligence is not only the ability to process information from emotional situations, but it is also the use of such information to shape one's own thinking and future behavior (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). Thus, emotional intelligence is made up of skills that enable people to handle emotional information in a social context (Salovey, & Grewal, 2005). Those with these skills are more capable of integrating their emotional experiences into their actions and thoughts (Brown, George-Curran, & Smith, 2003).

Studies have shown that higher emotional intelligence leads to better social outcomes (Keaten & Kelly, 2008). Children who can demonstrate skills of emotional intelligence relate to other children better and are therefore accepted by peers more often due to their emotional sensitivity and self-control (Keaten & Kelly, 2008). People who have greater emotional intelligence can better perceive the emotional consequences of an event, because they are able to better predict their reactions and feelings in response to an event (Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2001).

These positive social outcomes become more important with age and show greater advancement in social contexts.

People with higher emotional intelligence reported higher levels of satisfaction with relationships, greater success with people of the opposite sex, greater perceived support from their parents and fewer negative interactions with close relationships (Salovey & Grewal, 2005; Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2001). People with high emotional intelligence can more fully evaluate and organize the emotion experienced in peer relationships and accurately re-tell emotional situations (Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2001; Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2008). These people are often those that voice their disapproval to those who may be performing inappropriate acts against others or self (Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2001; Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2008). Emotional intelligence is also associated with increased respect for others and self, less use of tobacco and alcohol, and being less involved in violence (Mayer, Perkins, et al., 2001; Mayer, Salovey, et al., 2008).

Parent Education

There appears to be no direct research examining the link between emotional intelligence and attending parenting programs. Emotional intelligence programs have mainly focused on work place issues. Some studies have shown that organizations that provided such programs have experienced

increased organizational sales (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). Still others have found that these programs often are not correctly modeled after emotional intelligence theory. One of the main issues with these programs is that the workshops are short, and although they may educate the employees, they cannot provide what is needed for significant improvement (Zeidner et al., 2008).

Gender

Many studies have shown that males report significantly lower emotional intelligence than females (Alumran & Punamäki, 2008; Brown, George-Curran, & Smith, 2003; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Schutte et al., 1998; Tapia, 1999; Tapia & Marsh, 2006). Still others have found no gender differences (Brown et al., 2003; Roothman, Kirsten, & Wissing, 2003). Men and women are neurologically and biologically different from one another. Women are generally more supportive, empathetic, and emotionally self-aware. Women tend to seek out social support when dealing with something new and stressful, whereas men are more focused on fixing it (Brown et al., 2003; Tapia & Marsh, 2006).

In general, emotional intelligence is likely to be characterized by gender differences because of the

differences in emotional expression among men and women (Lam & Kirby, 2002). Since women seem to be more social beings it would seem probable that they would have a higher emotional intelligence in order to continue their extensive close relationships.

Marital Status

Limited research has been conducted on how a person's marital status may be related to their emotional intelligence. These findings are especially important for the family unit. The little research that has been done, has found that improved parental support and relationship quality are associated with higher levels of managing emotions in adults (Amitay & Mongrain, 2007).

One study found that couples that scored high on emotional intelligence reported having the greatest happiness, as compared to couples that scored low on emotional intelligence (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). Relationship happiness was affected by the participant's understanding of self and partner in their relationship.

Another study revealed that people with higher emotional intelligence as employees have been rated as more responsible for creating a positive environment, being easy

to handle, more sensitive to others, more sociable, and more capable of handling stress (Salovey & Grewal, 2005).

These concepts may be crucial for establishing a healthy environment in which a child develops. The positive aspects of an emotionally intelligent parent may be important in providing what a child will need in his/her life.

Due to married and cohabiting individuals being provided with different types of social interactions and having the opportunity to apply and practice more of their emotional abilities, they may show higher rates of emotional intelligence (Keaten & Kelly, 2008; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). On the other hand, single, separated, divorced, and widowed individuals experience greater stress as parents and have been shown to provide less care to their children as well as have unrealistic expectations for the abilities of their child, this would indicate that these parents are often not as skilled at interpreting their child's needs (Barnet et al., 2007; Bavolek, 2000; Copeland & Harbaugh, 2005; Holub et al., 2007).

The Current Project

Children learn to perceive, understand and regulate emotions through open communication and discussion about feelings (Keaten & Kelly, 2008). As research has shown, conversations between parents and children about emotions enables a child to learn to perceive, understand, and regulate the emotions he/she feels and then generalize his/her discoveries across situations (Keaten & Kelly, 2008). Research has found that children from families that do not openly communicate about feelings develop lower emotional intelligence (Keaten & Kelly, 2008). These outcomes may be related to parenting styles, as authoritative parenting includes active communication about rules and guidelines, but also about those concepts of life a child may be experiencing. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting may not have open communication about feelings because rules are established without explanation (Keaten & Kelly, 2008).

Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been found to be potentially predictive of parenting style (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 1991).

Parenting Styles

Research has been uncovering the effects that different parenting styles have on the positive development of children (Carlo et al., 2007; Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2008). Research has shown that there are variables that can alter a parent's parenting style.

Parent Education. Parent education has been shown to both: assist parents in their understanding of child development, and to provide parents with a greater ability to show positive types of parenting (Levac et al., 2008). It can thus be concluded that the more education individuals have in parenting, the greater the likelihood that these individuals will display positive types of parenting.

Gender. Research has shown that mothers display more positive types of parenting as compared to fathers (Roskam and Meunier, 2009).

Marital Status. Lastly, parents' marital status during the rearing of the children has been linked to parenting style (Warash, & Demasi, 2008). Parents who work together with one another provide a more positive parenting style whereas single mothers or divorced mothers may experience

much more difficulty and show negative types of parenting (DeKlyen et al., 2006; Laursen, 2005).

Emotional Intelligence

Higher emotional intelligence suggests that individuals are better able to perceive, understand and regulate emotion. This becomes very important for parents who become involved in many different social situations and relationships in parenting a child.

Parent Education. No research has been specifically done on what parenting education classes can do to increase emotional intelligence, but there have been some workshops that have been conducted in the labor field and the results have been showing some promise (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). Parenting education classes may be a key in helping parents to come to understand the needs and wants of their children and therefore increase their personal emotional intelligence.

Gender. Much research has compared the emotional intelligence of males and females, and often the results have shown that females tend to show higher emotional intelligence scores when compared to their male counterparts (Alumran & Punamäki, 2008; Brown et al., 2003; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Schutte et al., 1998; Tapia,

1999; Tapia & Marsh, 2006). This may indicate the need to provide fathers with some specific help and education about emotional intelligence in an effort to assist them in the raising of their children.

Marital Status. Lastly, although research has not been conducted that specifically examined marital status and emotional intelligence; marital status may be a significant factor (Amitay & Mongrain, 2007). Some research has indicated that a person's emotional intelligence does vary according to his/her happiness within his/her relationship.

Remaining Questions

While there has been extensive research on parenting styles and some work on emotional intelligence, there is a lack of empirical attention devoted to understanding the link between parenting styles and emotional intelligence.

Does a parent's style of parenting reflect his/her emotional intelligence? Humans are adaptive beings; is it possible that emotional intelligence helps select which form of parenting people decide to choose? Is a parent's emotional intelligence and style of parenting dependent upon: whether he/she has received some parent education, his/her gender and his/her marital status?

Some research, though limited, has suggested that factors such as those mentioned above do matter. It is important that research look at how these factors may be contributing to parenting and child rearing in our society. Are there variables that need to be focused on in order to ensure that society's children are provided with a fighting chance?

Testable Hypotheses

The purpose of the current project was to evaluate whether a link existed between parenting styles and emotional intelligence. The role of parent education courses, gender and marital status with respect to parenting style and emotional intelligence were also evaluated.

Hypothesis 1

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence among different parenting styles. Those that reported the highest levels of emotional intelligence would be those with an authoritative parenting style. Those that reported the lowest levels of emotional intelligence would be of a permissive parenting style. And lastly, those that reported an authoritarian

parenting style would report an emotional intelligence level higher than those of the permissive parenting style, but lower than those of authoritative parenting style.

Hypothesis 2

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of parenting education. Parents who had attended a parenting class would more frequently report positive parenting (authoritative) as compared to those whom had not attended parenting classes.

Hypothesis 3

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence between those who had attended parenting education courses as opposed to those who had not. Those who had attended parenting classes had higher emotional intelligence scores compared to those who had not attended parenting classes.

Hypothesis 4

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of gender. Men would more frequently report negative styles of parenting (such as, the authoritarian or permissive

parenting style) and women would more frequently report the positive (authoritative) parenting style.

Hypothesis 5

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence as a result of gender. Men would report lower emotional intelligence than women.

Hypothesis 6

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant frequency difference in parenting styles between parents who reported their marital status as married or cohabiting and those who reported their marital status as single, separated, divorced, or widowed. Married and cohabiting parents would more frequently report having an the authoritative parenting style, whereas single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents would more frequently report negative parenting styles; such as the authoritarian and permissive style of parenting.

Hypothesis 7

It was hypothesized that there would also be a significant mean difference in the emotional intelligence reported between single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents versus married and cohabiting parents. Single,

separated, divorced, and widowed parents would report less emotional intelligence than married and cohabiting parents.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Study Participants

Study participants were recruited from the California State University at San Bernardino campus. Flyers were placed throughout campus and the project was posted on SONA in order to inform those on campus about the study. Furthermore, emails and class announcements were utilized to publicize the study. Additionally, participants were recruited via public announcement at a local VA hospital. One hundred and ninety two mothers and fathers of children in grade school (first through sixth grade) completed the survey. All participants completed informed consents before completing survey measurements. Participants had the option of entering a raffle for a $20 gift card to a local restaurant or receiving extra credit for a psychology course upon the completion of the survey (about 50% of the participants signed up for one of the two incentives).

Among the 192 participants, 98 were mothers and 93 were fathers. Ethnic representation among the participants was as follows: 1.1% Native American, 21.7% African American, 37.6% Hispanic, 4.2% Asian, 1.6% Pacific

Islander, 21.2% European American, 3.7% Filipino, and 8.9% Other. Participant ages ranged from 21 to 77 years with a mean of 35 years and a median and mode of 32 years. Marital status among the participants was as follows: 22.2% single, 52.2% married, 7.2% cohabitating, 5.0% separated, 12.2% divorced, and 1.1% widowed. Participants classified their schooling as follows: 2.7% freshman, 1.1% sophomore, 17.9% junior, 22.8% senior, 14.1% graduate, 41.3% other. Respondents were asked the age at which he/she had his/her first child; ages ranged from 15 to 60 years, with a mean of 23.9 years. When asked about parenting education, 60.4% reported receiving no parent education, 7.5% attended hospital-based parent education, 12.8% had school-based parent education, 4.8% received religious-based parent education, 3.7% reported government-based parent education, and 0.5% indicated some other type of parent education. The remaining 10.2% of the sample reported that their parent education was some combination of the above mentioned formats.

Materials

A survey was developed that included a demographic questionnaire, the Parenting Practices Questionnaire and

the Emotional Intelligence Scale. The survey began with the demographic questionnaire, and was followed by the Parenting Practices Questionnaire and the Emotional Intelligence Scale in a counterbalanced fashion.

Demographics

Each participant was asked to provide information on his/her gender, ethnicity, marital status, current age, age when first child was born, education level, grade level of child, and type of parenting classes attended.

Parenting Styles

The Parenting Practice Questionnaire (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995) was used to determine the parenting styles of the participants. This was a 62 item scale based on Baumrind's global typology of parenting, which included authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Each item was evaluated on a five point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = always). The authoritative subscale consisted of 27 items and had a Cronbach coefficient of .91, the authoritarian subscale had 20 items with a Cronbach's coefficient of .86, and the permissive subscale had a Cronbach's coefficient of .75 and was comprised of the remaining 15 items.

Participant responses were summed to yield a raw score for each of the parenting style categories. The raw scores obtained were then converted into standard scores (z scores). The participant's predominant parenting style was the parenting style that received the largest standard score (Smetana, 1995).

Emotional Intelligence

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte, et. al., 1998) was used to assess parent's emotional intelligence. This inventory was designed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, and Dornheim (1998) to investigate emotional intelligence based on the components of appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion. The inventory consisted of 33 items which were evaluated on a five point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All items were summed to yield an overall emotional intelligence score. The Cronbach's coefficient was .90 for this scale.

Procedure

Surveys were administered to volunteers who were taking courses at the University or who resided within San

Bernardino county borders. Participants received the survey consisting of the consent form, demographic information, Parenting Practice Questionnaire, and Emotional Intelligence Scale.

On campus participants signed up through SONA for available time slots in order to complete the survey on campus. The survey was group administered at designated times; the survey took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Off campus participants from the local VA hospital were recruited by public announcement and participated in the study during their visit at the hospital. Those who were in need of assistance were read the individual item and the participant was given time to mark his/her answer; if the participant was in need of further assistance, the research assistant marked his/her response. Any type of assistance was required by less than 5% of the sample.

Upon completion, the surveys were returned to a box in order for the participants to maintain their anonymity. For the on campus participants, a signup sheet requesting the student's identification number was present near the box so that participants could record an identification number in order to receive extra credit for their current psychology

classes. However, if participants wished to be entered into the raffle for a $20 gift card, they wrote down their email address on a separate sheet of paper near the box. The email address was used to contact the winner of the raffle. Participants at the VA could enter the raffle or opt for no incentive after completing the survey.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Prior to any analyses, the data was screened for missing entries.

On the Parenting Practices Questionnaire, less than eight percent of the participants left items blank. As noted previously, items represent three distinct parenting styles. If there was missing data, the average score among the items comprising a specific dimension of a parenting style was used as the replacement value.

For the Emotional Intelligence Scale, less than two percent of the participants left items unanswered. Again, a mean score was used as the replacement value, if there was a missing value.

If a clear style of parenting was not revealed by the standardized scores on the Parenting Practices Questionnaire, the participant was not included in the present analyses.

Hypothesis 1

It was hypothesized that there would be significant mean differences in emotional intelligence among different

parenting styles. A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate this hypothesis. A significant mean effect for parenting style was found ($F(2,184) = 22.642$, $p < .05$). Parents reporting an authoritative style had the highest level of emotional intelligence; however there was no difference between permissive and authoritarian parents as hypothesized.

Hypothesis 2

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of parenting education. A Pearson Chi-Square test demonstrated that parenting styles did differ significantly according to parenting course attendance (χ^2 $(2, N = 183) = 17.889$, $p < .05$). Among the 82 participants with an authoritative parenting style, 36 had no parenting education while 46 had attended parenting classes. Among the 37 authoritarian parents, 29 had no parenting education, but eight had attended parenting courses. Lastly, among the 64 permissive parents, 46 had not attended parenting classes while 18 had attended such classes.

Hypothesis 3

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence between those who had attended parenting education courses as opposed to those who had not. An Independent Samples T-Test was significant ($t(185) = 3.486$, $p < .05$). Parents that attended a parenting course scored significantly higher on the emotional intelligence scale compared to those parents who had not attended some type of parenting course.

Hypothesis 4

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of gender. The results of the Pearson Chi-Square test showed a significant frequency differences by gender ($\chi^2(2, N = 186) = 14.944$, $p < .05$). Among the 92 males, 29 were authoritative, 22 were authoritarian, and 41 were permissive. Among the 94 females, 56 were authoritative, 15 were authoritarian, and 23 were permissive. Forty five percent of males reported displaying a permissive parenting style as compared to 60% of females displaying an authoritative parenting style.

Hypothesis 5

As hypothesized, an Independent Samples T-Test revealed that there was a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence across gender ($t(189) = 5.226$, $p < .05$). Men reported lower emotional intelligence than women.

Hypothesis 6

A Pearson Chi-Square test found that, as hypothesized, there was a significant frequency difference in parenting styles between parents who report their marital status as married or cohabiting and those who reported their marital status as single, separated, divorced, or widowed (χ^2 $(2, N = 176) = 14.709$, $p < .05$). Of the 71 single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents, 37 were authoritative, 21 were authoritarian, and 13 were permissive in their parenting. On the other hand, of the 105 married and cohabitating parents, 47 were authoritative, 13 reported authoritarian, and 45 reported permissive parenting practices. The most often reported parenting style regardless of marital status was authoritative. However for participants who did not report an authoritative style, there were interesting differences based upon marital status. Thirty percent of single, separated, divorced, and

widowed parents reported authoritarian parenting whereas 43% of married and cohabitating parents reported permissive parenting.

Hypothesis 7

Lastly, an Independent Samples T-Test showed that there was a significant mean difference in the emotional intelligence based upon marital status ($t(178) = 2.82$, $p < .05$). Surprisingly, single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents reported significantly higher emotional intelligence then married or cohabitating parents. These results are the opposite of what had been predicted.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to examine the relation between parenting styles and emotional intelligence. Additionally, a second objective was to examine the relations among demographic valuables (e.g., parental education, gender and marital status), and parenting styles and emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 1

There was a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence among different parenting styles. Although the literature suggests that emotional intelligence and parenting styles may be linked, as Salovey, Brackett, and Mayer (1991) had predicted, the current results provide direct evidence supporting such a relation.

The current results are also consistent with research that has focused on the construct of sensitive attunement. Sensitive attunement was derived from Ainsworth's attachment model and reflects a "type" of sensitivity that is characteristic of secure attachments (Pipp-Siegel, & Biringen, 1998). Grille (2005) noted that:

> Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in parenting, for it helps us to respond appropriately to our children's needs. For instance, our emotional [or sensitive] attunement helps us to interpret our baby's cries: when is it a tired cry, a hungry cry, a lonely cry or a scared cry? Emotional intelligence helps us to listen to our children with empathy, and to set clear boundaries of behavior with them without punishing or shaming them. (Why Emotional Intelligence Matters section, para. 4)

This sensitive attunement of a parent to his/her child enables the parent to be aware of, accepting of, supportive of, and responsive to the needs, state, internal experiences, and emotional and physical signals that the child is expressing; moreover, emotional attunement is associated with effective communication with a child in specific situations (L. Kamptner, personal communication, Spring 2009; Pipp-Siegel, & Biringen, 1998).

This finding opens up new and important possibilities for future studies and intervention. Future research can further look into the how and why such a link exists.

Hypothesis 2

There was a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of parenting education. Parents who attended parenting education courses displayed more positive types of parenting compared to those who did not receive parenting education courses. These results are consistent with Copeland and Harbaugh (2005), and Levac, et al. (2008) who reported that parenting education can help parents in determining how to best parent their children.

Hypothesis 3

There was a significant difference in emotional intelligence between those who had attended parenting education courses verses those who had not; attendees in a parenting course reported higher emotional intelligence. There is need for further research in this area since there is no direct research suggesting a link among these variables. Intuitively, effective parenting and caring for a child is associated with understanding the needs of the child, which is often expressed in the form of some emotion by the child. Thus if, parenting courses teach parents how to read these sometimes subtle clues, with patience, practice, and time, parents may become more accurate in

their perceptions of their child's needs. Consequently, there would be significant value in encouraging parents to attend such courses.

Alternatively, another possible explanation for the results may be that participants who have higher emotional intelligence may seek out parenting education or have more opportunities to be involved in such courses.

Hypothesis 4

There was a significant frequency difference in parenting styles as a result of gender. These results were consistent with Roskam and Meunier (2009) and Bornstein and Lamb's (2005) findings on parenting styles and gender. The most common explanation for this result is that it reflects societal gender roles.

Hypothesis 5

There was a significant mean difference in emotional intelligence as a result of gender. Consistent with previous research, men reported lower emotional intelligence than women (Alumran & Punamäki, 2008; Brown et al., 2003; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Schutte et al., 1998; Tapia, 1999; Tapia & Marsh, 2006).

Hypothesis 6

There was a significant frequency difference in parenting styles between parents who reported their marital status as married or cohabiting and those who reported their marital status as single, separated, divorced, or widowed. Regardless of marital status, authoritative parenting was most frequently reported; nevertheless, marital status does matter for authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Based on the literature, these findings, regarding authoritarian and permissive parenting, are expected. Research by Barnet, et al. (2007) and Holub et al. (2007) suggest that single parent households would have a greater likelihood of displaying a more authoritarian type of parenting as opposed to a permissive one. Furthermore, Warash and Demasi's (2008) study would suggest that two parent households may display a permissive type parenting from one parent if a more authoritarian parenting approach is displayed by the other parent.

Hypothesis 7

Lastly, there was a significant mean difference in the emotional intelligence reported between single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents versus married and cohabiting

parents. Surprisingly, single, separated, divorced, and widowed parents reported significantly higher emotional intelligence than married or cohabitating parents. Specific research on the relationship between marital status and emotional intelligence has not yet been conducted. Therefore these findings give reason to believe that such research may be important.

Strengths

An important contribution of the present work is that it represents an initial examination of the link between parenting styles and emotional intelligence. The significant results obtained certainly supports the need for future work in this area in order to more fully understand how parenting style is related to emotional intelligence.

Limitations

A limitation of the current work is that it relied on self-report surveys. There is always some concern with the validity of responses.

Future Directions

The results of this study provide numerous research possibilities for the future. There are many other variables to consider in future research as the relationship between parenting styles and emotional intelligence is more closely examined.

First, parent's age at birth of his/her first child may have an effect on the type of parenting style that is adopted and the amount of emotional intelligence the individual reports. There may be some truth behind the saying that "wisdom comes with age," or being young, flexible, and changeable is more beneficial. Future research should look more closely at this possible relation.

Second, the number of children that the parent currently has may be associated with parenting style and emotional intelligence. Parents with more children may have to adopt a different parenting approach than those with fewer children. For example, parents of one child are able to focus all of their time, attention, and resources on that one child, allowing the parents to develop a positive parenting style, whereas parents of multiple children may

adopt a more negative parenting style because parenting resources are spread thin.

Third, parents who have developmentally disabled children may utilize different parenting in order to address the demands and needs of these children. Thus, atypical development in children should be considered in future work.

Fourth, a child's temperament, has been found to be associated with parenting (Stright, Gallagher, & Kelley, 2008). This variable should be fully considered in future work.

Fifth, parent adjustment (e.g., depression, ADHD, anxiety, etc.) may be associated with differences in parenting style, and should be considered in future research.

Sixth, a parent's social economic status is likely associated with access to supportive resources (e.g., early educational experiences for a child). This variable needs to be considered when examining the relation between parenting style and emotional intelligence.

Seventh, culture, although highly debated, seems to play a role in how parents decide to parent and what experiences children may be exposed to during their

development (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997). American culture considers authoritative parenting the best means to provide positive child development, but research done in Spain, South Europe, and South America suggests differently (García, & Gracia, 2009). Further research with this variable is needed.

Eighth, Schottenbauer, Spernak, and Hellstrom (2007) found that spirituality can provide parents with particular types of behavior and coping mechanisms that have been associated with greater child health, social skills and fewer internalizing behavior problems, in addition to enhancing a person's well-being (see also Corey, & Corey, 2010). For example, parents who feel a strong sense of spirituality tied to nature and experiencing aspects of life through trial and error may adopt a much different parenting style than parents who have a strong sense of spirituality and see everything as "black and white." Future work should consider the role of spirituality in parenting and emotional intelligence.

Summary and Conclusion

This study found that parenting styles and emotional intelligence were associated with one another. Moreover,

parenting education, gender, and marital status were related to the type of parenting style and amount of emotional intelligence an individual reported.

Parenting styles and emotional intelligence research still has much to conquer and acquire. Since much is known about the negative effects that certain parenting styles may have on children's development, the greater challenge becomes developing effective interventions and educational experiences that can provide buffers to these children and possible rehabilitation for those that have already been affected. This highlights the importance of educating parents early in a child's life regarding parenting issues.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographic Information

Directions: Please circle or indicate the appropriate response for you.

Gender: Female Male

Your Academic Standing: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate

Marital Status: Single Married Cohabitation Separated Divorced Widowed

Age: _____

Age when first child was born: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Native American

_____African American

_____Hispanic

_____Asian

_____Pacific Islander

_____European American

_____Filipino

_____Other

Grade that your child(ren) is/are currently attending:

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th

Parenting Course Experience: Please indicate using the following which parent courses you have taken.

_____ no parenting course

_____ 8 hours or more of a hospital based parenting course

_____ 8 hours or more of a school based parenting course (e.g. community college, CSUSB, other colleges or universities)

_____ 8 hours or more of a religious based parenting course (e.g. Jewish, Buddhist, other)

_____ 8 hours or more of a government based parenting course (e.g. sponsored by the city of Rialto or county of San Bernardino)

_____ Other (please explain type and number of hours):_____

APPENDIX B

PARENTING PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Parenting Practices Questionnaire

Directions: Read each statement carefully and then rate for each item how often you exhibit this behavior with your child.	**1 Never**	**2 Once in awhile**	**3 About half of the time**	**4 Very often**	**5 Always**
1. I encourage our child to talk about the child's troubles.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I guide our child by punishment more than by reason.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I know the names of our child's friends.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I find it difficult to discipline our child.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I give praise when our child is good.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I spank when our child is disobedient.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I joke and play with our child.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I withhold scolding and/or criticism even when our child acts contrary to our wishes.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I show sympathy when our child is hurt or frustrated.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
10. I punish by taking privileges away from our child with little if any explanation.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I spoil our child.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I give comfort and understanding when our child is upset.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I yell or shout when our child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am easy going and relaxed with our child.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I allow our child to annoy someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I tell our child our expectations regarding behavior before the child engages in an activity.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I scold and criticize to make our child improve.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I show patience with our child.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
19. I grab our child when being disobedient.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I state punishments to our child and do not actually do them.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I am responsive to our child's feelings or needs.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I allow our child to give input into family rules.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I argue with our child.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I appear confident about parenting abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I give our child reasons why rules should be obeyed.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I appear to be more concerned with own feelings than with our child's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I tell our child that we appreciate what the child tries or accomplishes.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I punish by putting our child off somewhere alone with little if any explanation.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
29. I help our child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging our child to talk about the consequences of own actions.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I am afraid that disciplining our child for misbehavior will cause the child to not like his/her parents.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I take our child's desires into account before asking the child to do something.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I explode in anger towards our child.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I am aware of problems or concerns about our child in school.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I threaten our child with punishment more often than actually giving it.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding our child.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I ignore our child's misbehavior.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining our child.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
38. I carry out discipline after our child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I apologize to our child when making a mistake in parenting.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I tell our child what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I give into our child when the child causes a commotion about something.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I talk it over and reason with our child when the child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I slap our child when the child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I disagree with our child.	1	2	3	4	5
45. I allow our child to interrupt others.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I have warm and intimate times together with our child.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
47. When two children are fighting, I discipline the children first and ask questions later.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I encourage our child to freely express (himself)(herself) even when disagreeing with parents.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I bribe our child with rewards to bring about compliance.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I scold or criticize when our child's behavior doesn't meet our expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I show respect for our child's opinions by encouraging our child to express them.	1	2	3	4	5
52. I set strict well-established rules for our child.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I explain to our child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I take into account our child's preferences in making plans for the family.	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Never	2 Once in awhile	3 About half of the time	4 Very often	5 Always
56. When our child asks why (he)(she) has to conform, I state: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.	1	2	3	4	5
57. I appear unsure on how to solve our child's misbehavior.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I explain the consequences of the child's behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
59. I demand that our child does/do things.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I channel our child's misbehavior into a more acceptable activity.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I shove our child when the child is disobedient.	1	2	3	4	5
62. I emphasize the reasons for rules.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE

Emotional Intelligence Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully and then circle the appropriate response. There are no correct or incorrect responses.	**1 Strongly Disagree**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 Strongly Agree**
1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them	1	2	3	4	5
3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try	1	2	3	4	5
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me	1	2	3	4	5
5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people	1	2	3	4	5
6. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important	1	2	3	4	5
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	1	2	3	4	5
10. I expect good things to happen	1	2	3	4	5
11. I like to share my emotions with others	1	2	3	4	5
12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	1	2	3	4	5
13. I arrange events others enjoy	1	2	3	4	5
14. I seek out activities that make me happy	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	1	2	3	4	5
16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others	1	2	3	4	5
17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me	1	2	3	4	5
18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	1	2	3	4	5
19. I know why my emotions change	1	2	3	4	5
20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
21. I have control over my emotions	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	1	2	3	4	5
23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on	1	2	3	4	5
24. I compliment others when they have done something well	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	1	2	3	4	5
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself	1	2	3	4	5
27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	1	2	3	4	5
28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail	1	2	3	4	5

	1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Agree
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	1	2	3	4	5
30. I help other people feel better when they are down	1	2	3	4	5
31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	1	2	3	4	5
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	1	2	3	4	5
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do	1	2	3	4	5

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