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Authoritative Parenting and the Relationship to Academic Achievement: Views of Urban African American Adolescents

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Authoritative Parenting and the Relationship to Academic Achievement: Views of Urban African American Adolescents

Abstract

Authoritative parenting and the relationship to academic achievement was the prime focus of this study. The research questions of this study addressed what parenting behaviors do urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance and did the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Baumrind's authoritative parenting. This qualitative study interviewed a purposeful sample of urban African American adolescents in grades 7-10 from a midsize urban city in upstate New York, recruited in the after school setting. In addition, parents completed a survey regarding their parenting behaviors in relationship to their child's academic achievement. There were four main themes in this study: "Use specific language with your child": verbal motivation, I have a routine and I have rules, Parent Involvement: I want your help, and Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences. This study found that the voice of African American adolescents provided clear and concise insight and great voice to the parenting behaviors from their perspective. This study also found that the parent behaviors fit within the authoritative parenting framework of D. Baumrind with adjustments and modifications in their expression to fit the culture it is servicing. Future research would benefit from an expansion to include additional grade levels and qualitative parent interviews to expand the research base for African American parenting.

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Authoritative Parenting and the Relationship to Academic Achievement:
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By

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of the requirements for the degree
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Dedication

Giving all honor and glory to God my heavenly father who is my maker and creator, the reason I am here today.

This dissertation, blood sweat and tears is dedicated to my family and friends who have been with me from beginning to end without pause or hesitation.

To my husband Lavonne A. Richards Sr.: Words cannot express my love and gratitude for you, your support, your patience and your love. Thank you for being my encouragement and shoulder. I love you.

To my daughters, Chyna and Indya Richards: You two are the reason I do the things I do. I want you know you are my greatest gift. I am passing you my torch to light yours. May it carry you through to achieve all you desire. Thank you for being Mommy's back –up. I love you to pieces!

To my Mommy and Daddy, Barbara and Cleveland Brown Sr.: Thank you both for being my solid foundation. You are true strength and I am so proud to have you as my parents! Thank you and I love you.

To my siblings Nicole Brown-Johnson and Cleveland Brown Jr., second children Elijah Brown and Asia Brown; my sons Von and Fran, and the rest of my family: you guys have been great, Thank you for all you love and support!

To my Dear Friends: Kimberly DeLardge, Susan Ladd, Felicia Hepburn, Essie Potts, Vanessa Ryland-Buntley, and Kamahria Hopkins: Thank you guys for giving the words of encouragement and the kick to keep moving when I needed it. Love you!

To my Prayer Warriors: We know “Through Christ, all things are possible”
Thank you guys!

To those in my St. Luke Family: Thank you for having faith in me and giving me continuous support.

To my Sorors of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.: Thank you for your support, and your sisterhood.

To my Get'er Done Ladies: You ladies are a first class act! You are great and now forever my friends. Hugs and Kisses.

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professor, Chair, and Advisor. I learned so much from you. Not only did I walk away with having the greatest Dissertation Chair, but I also walked away with a friend. I am forever grateful.

Biographical Sketch

Christine Brown-Richards is currently the Supervising Director of the Youth Development and Family Services Division at the Rochester City School District. Mrs. Brown-Richards attended Central State University from 1989 to 1993 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1993 in Political Science/Criminal Justice. She attended the University of Rochester from 1994 to 1996 and graduated with a Master of Sciences degree in 1996 in Counseling and Human Development. Mrs. Brown-Richards also attended the State University at Brockport where she received her Certification of Administration in 2005. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2008 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mrs. Brown-Richards pursued her research in Authoritative Parenting and Academic Achievement under the direction of Dr. Guillermo Montes and received the Ed.D. degree in 2011.

Abstract

Authoritative parenting and the relationship to academic achievement was the prime focus of this study. The research questions of this study addressed what parenting behaviors do urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance and did the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Baumrind's authoritative parenting.

This qualitative study interviewed a purposeful sample of urban African American adolescents in grades 7-10 from a midsize urban city in upstate New York, recruited in the after school setting. In addition, parents completed a survey regarding their parenting behaviors in relationship to their child's academic achievement.

There were four main themes in this study: "Use specific language with your child": verbal motivation, I have a routine and I have rules, Parent Involvement: I want your help, and Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences. This study found that the voice of African American adolescents provided clear and concise insight and great voice to the parenting behaviors from their perspective. This study also found that the parent behaviors fit within the authoritative parenting framework of D. Baumrind with adjustments and modifications in their expression to fit the culture it is servicing. Future research would benefit from an expansion to include additional grade levels and qualitative parent interviews to expand the research base for African American parenting.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

Low academic achievement of urban adolescents has been a topic of interest throughout the educational field. In particular, during the last three decades, concerns have mounted regarding an unacceptably high failure rate. Several attempts have been made to identify the driving forces of low student academic achievement that contribute to the drop-out phenomenon (Park & Bauer, 2002). While there are persistent outside forces such as violence and substance abuse that give students the idea that school may not be worth the effort, there are also driving forces within a student's school and home environment that give students the courage to move forward (Park & Bauer; Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003). Among the positive factors from their home environment, parental support and guidance in the form of the parenting style used are particularly salient (Bean et al.). Within the parenting literature, there is an ongoing examination of the relationship between parenting style and academic achievement, although focused mostly on the parents' perception (Park & Bauer; Bean et al.; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005; Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007). This literature is briefly reviewed under Research Background. Families provide the social, cultural, and emotional support that urban youth need to function well in school. Families can also have a significant effect on the students' academic achievement, good grades and the decision not to drop out (Park & Bauer; Bean et al; DePlanty et al.).

Given the national preoccupation with dropout rates, urban adolescent academic success is a focus of much research (Park & Bauer, 2002). For students to succeed, parenting support and guidance, and resistance towards outside forces must be active (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007). Success in high and middle school can be defined in various ways including the student's attendance, graduation from high school, or even having a significant number of friends. In this study, academic success in high and middle school is defined by the grades and grade point average of the students.

Research Background

Urban African American adolescents in our society are burdened with a lot of adult-like responsibilities (Long, Monoi, Harper, Knoblauch & Murphy, 2007). They face stressors in their homes and in their neighborhoods that many other adolescents do not have to face. For some, this responsibility extends far beyond what should be required at this developmental stage in their lives. Along with the pressures of home, there are also the pressures of school (Long et al.). Amidst these challenges, students must maintain good grades and avoid negative peer pressure if they want to succeed academically.

Urban African American adolescent students also face challenges in their lives not faced by other students that contribute negatively to their educational experience. Violence, poverty, and racism hinder students academically as well as socially and emotionally. In their community, urban African American students typically experience low-income family status and economically poor neighborhoods. In their schools, they face low social status, higher competition among students, and low self-esteem (Long et al., 2007; Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2008.). This is the context in which research on

the achievement gap between urban African American students and the majority of American students is taking place.

The achievement gap between African American (Black) and other students continues to grow. African American students are consistently at the underachieving end of the spectrum. There are some contributing elements that are unique to the African American experience, including racism, the legacy of slavery, discrimination, and the power of negative stereotypes (Long et al., 2007).

Research has been done on urban high achievers, low achievers, and the various motivating dynamics of their academic experiences. In investigating the research of early adolescent perspectives relevant to academic achievement, many look at the parents and their involvement and support as a motivating factor (Schmakel, 2008; Somers et al., 2008).

It may be uncertain exactly what degree of parental involvement should be taken to ensure urban adolescent students' academic success, but there is no denying that some level of involvement is needed to give students the best options to achieve academically (Somers et al, 2008; Schmakel, 2008). Parents often provide the social, cultural, and emotional supports that youth need to function well in school (DePlanty et al., 2007). The more parents are involved in the adolescent students' education at home, the more opportunities students will have to be academically challenged and successful in school and in life (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). When parents become involved and apply systematic strategies and techniques at home, these actions constitute a parenting style or parenting practice. Unfortunately, much is not known about what are the best parenting practices to raise successful urban African American adolescents.

Parenting style. Research on parenting styles and the relationship to academic achievement in adolescents has identified various factors that are associated with positive outcomes for adolescents in the classroom (Bean et al., 2003; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005). Some of the factors are environmental, such as socioeconomic status of the family or parental education (Spera). Other factors reside in the child, including intrinsic motivation and the will to learn and set future goals (Attaway & Bry). Among the external factors, parenting style and family involvement have been strongly associated with long-term academic achievement mostly through the work of Diana Baumrind.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Baumrind classified four types of parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, based on observational studies of middle class white parents (Susskind, 2005).

Authoritative parents displayed high levels of warmth and affection and placed reasonable demands on their children. The children were given assurance by their parents through love and moderate demands. Authoritative parents were willing to listen to their children and adjust their parenting behaviors based on their children's views or opinions (Grant & Ray, 2009).

Authoritarian parents placed high levels of controls on the children, their actions, and their behaviors, but showed little or no warmth (Susskind, 2005). Authoritarian parents were more punitive focused mainly on extracting obedience from the children (Grant & Ray, 2009)

While *Permissive* parents showed great warmth and caring towards their children, they placed few demands on their children's actions and behaviors (Susskind, 2005). The parents also used this style as a strategy to manipulate the child to do what

they needed or wanted them to do (Grant & Ray, 2009). Permissive parents had children with social or self-esteem problems, who ended up rebellious and disobedient as they matured (Wagner, Foley & McNeil, 2008).

A fourth parenting style, *Neglectful parenting*, was contributed by Baumrind in 1989 and is sometimes called the *Rejecting-Neglecting parenting*. The *Neglecting parent* does not show any interest in the development of the child socially, academically, or emotionally. This style of parenting was associated with many negative outcomes in children including psychological problems, lower social and academic functioning, schooling, or social life (Wagner et al., 2008; Grant & Ray, 2009).

Research findings regarding parenting style have been inconsistent across cultures. Authoritative parenting did not produce the same results for minority families as it did for Caucasian families (Park & Bauer, 2002; Bean et al., 2003; Smalls, 2009). Although studies showed the positive link between parenting styles and academic achievement, the findings were inconsistent across cultures (Park & Bauer; Bean et al.; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005; Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; DePlanty, Coulter-Kern & Duchane, 2007). Regardless of culture, low academic achievement was associated with neglectful and authoritarian parenting. Students of neglectful parents sampled in a longitudinal study during their eighth, tenth, and twelfth-grade year had the worst academic achievement outcomes (Park & Bauer). In particular, among African American children, researchers found that the more control the parents had, the lower the students' grades were. This relationship was also found in the amount of control parents *thought* they had versus what they truly held (Attaway & Bry). Yet, the research was far

from consistent. A study by Dornbusch, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, and Fraleigh (1987) looking at the association of parenting style and academic achievement with African American students from 14 to 18 years of age did not show any relationship between parenting style and grades.

Researchers found that authoritative parenting was positively correlated with academic achievement, suggesting that the benefits of good parenting accumulate over time (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch & Darling, 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994; Bean et al., 2003; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Turner, Chandler & Heffer, 2009). Steinberg et al. found through their two-year longitudinal study of 14- to 18-year- old adolescents, the relationship between parents exhibiting warm, firm, democratic behavior and adolescent academic achievement improved specifically in high school students. In 1994, Steinberg et al., continued to research their sample, and found an even larger academic achievement gap between adolescents parented with neglectful and authoritarian styles and those raised in authoritative and indulgent style homes.

Studies also showed that even in early adolescence, evidence began to demonstrate the sustainability of authoritative parenting at the beginning of college years (Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009). College students will refer to their own experience as children being parented with a particular style as they begin to navigate and learn through their own activities how to become functioning adults. Thus, the authoritative parenting practices students encounter during adolescence have an influence on their performance and success in college (Turner et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. What parenting behaviors do urban high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance?
2. Do the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Diana Baumrind's authoritative parenting?

Significance of the Study

The study could provide practical and tangible strategies to help parents of adolescents by providing suggestions for child rearing and strategies for educators that could help in teaching adolescents. Research consistently shows that adolescents, who experience consistency in parental guidance, limit setting, monitoring, support, and high expectations, are more likely to have higher academic achievement (Steinberg et al., 1992, 1994; Bean et al., 2003; Mandara & Murray, 2002, 2006; Simmons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Turner, Chandler & Heffer, 2009). As demonstrated in Figure 1.1, if you have specific parenting behaviors such as routine, open communication, rules and nurturing, you would get high expectations, school engagement and good grades symbolizing a successfully academic student. This study examined what urban minority adolescent students report as parenting behaviors that influence their academic success. To help students succeed, parents need to know successful parenting strategies that will promote higher academic success for their children (Wilson & Williams, 2009). This study will facilitate this process by lending a forum for the voice of the minority adolescent, and opening the possibility of reorganizing the categories of parenting styles for urban African American families, their schools, and community support systems.

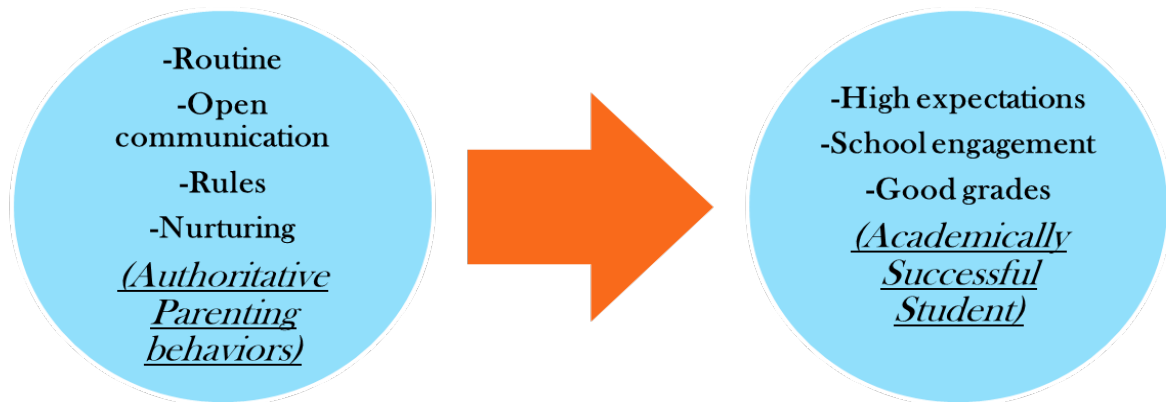


Figure 1.1. Parenting behaviors and successful student.

The perspective of the urban African American middle and high school student is crucial because it will provide insight and feedback to the parents and teachers for effective ways of parenting and educating their population. Research about effective parenting strategies for African American adolescents could also be transferable to the classroom setting. Research suggests that engaging students in conversation, planning, and managing their education will influence them to take ownership of their learning (Schmakel, 2008). The benefit of this knowledge could provide a reciprocal relationship between educators and parents, the schools, and the community.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be considered.

Parental involvement is the act of a parent or guardian participating in the educational process and experience of their child or children. It includes Type 1- Parenting; Type 2- Communicating; Type 3- Volunteering; Type 4- Learning at Home; Type 5- Decision Making; Type 6- Collaborating with the community (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis., 2002). These are all ways that parents can be

involved in their child's academic career, and learning can be reinforced between home and school.

Parent is the person who cares for the child. This is the person who handles the child's physical, mental, and emotional needs. For the purpose of this study, this is the person who is caring for the child regardless of biological connection but who has at least legal connection.

Parenting is the act of child rearing and educating the child. This involves teaching the child from the social aspect and the emotional, and engaging them mentally and physically to live responsible and productive lives.

Parenting Style is the technique or method used to apply the act of parenting. The person can use various practices, procedures, or methods to gain the appropriate or desired behavior from the child (Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; Grant & Ray, 2010).

Parenting behavior(s)/practice(s) are the actual behaviors demonstrated by parents in child rearing. These are actions that can have a desired outcome attached (Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; Grant & Ray, 2010).

Authoritative is a style of parenting with firm limits and high expectations set in collaboration with warmth, love, and nurturing. There is also an open communication with the children and the parent. The parents want to make sure the child understands the concepts of different things throughout life as they grow, in addition to following the rules (Grant & Ray, 2010).

Authoritarian is the style of parenting where the parent has firm control over the child's behavior, but there is no warmth or nurturing included. This type of parenting

style follows the colloquial phrase of “do as I say because I said so.” The parents who follow this style do not use open communication with their children (Grant & Ray, 2010).

Permissive is a parenting style where parents act the role of a friend or peer instead of caretaker. There may be warmth and nurturing, but few if any limits are placed on the child. These parents consult with the child when making family decisions. If there is a disagreement, this parenting style simply gives in to what the child wants (Grant & Ray, 2010).

Neglectful is the parenting style where there are few demands placed on the child or control over their behavior, and the parents are not involved in the child’s life or any of their activities. There is no warmth or nurturing with this parenting style. The parents take no interest in their child (Grant & Ray, 2010)

Summary

This study researched what parenting behaviors foster academic success from the perspective of urban, minority middle and high school students. The study addressed an important gap in our knowledge regarding what behaviors are useful to promote academic success of urban adolescents. This study provided valuable insight to the fields of parenting and education. It may give educators and parents information that would allow them to work collaboratively in producing an adolescent who will become a citizen of social, emotional, and intellectual balance and positive academic achievement.

Chapter 2 will review the literature of how parents can help their children succeed academically with particular emphasis on parenting style literature. Chapter 3, presents the research methodology of the proposed study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the

study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the study's implications for policy, practice and research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

When parents are involved in their children's education, the child benefits and the achievement level increases (Galinsky, 1999). This chapter will provide a review of the literature on parenting style theory, African Americans and parenting, and parent involvement.

Parenting Style Theory

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Baumrind classified four types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and (rejecting-) neglectful (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). Originally, she reviewed three of the four styles mainly as styles of parental control (Baumrind, 1966). In a later study, Baumrind (1967) conducted research on how parents interact with their children in different settings. Baumrind's study consisted of 32 preschool students, ages 3 to 4 years old. There were 110 students enrolled in the preschool, however, based on the five dimensions Baumrind chose to measure the students on, only 32 were chosen for the study. The purpose of the study was to examine specific parent child-rearing practices and specific child behaviors. This study observed how parents interacted with their pre-school age children. Data were collected from several observations of pre-school age children in their nursery school classrooms. The study continued with parent-child interactions and relationships observed during two different home visits. There were three particular findings: Parents of children who were the most competent and mature were very

loving, firm, demanding, and understanding; parents of those who were anxious, restless, or disassociated were firm, punitive, and unaffectionate; parents of children who were dependent and immature lacked parental control and loved the children immoderately.

Baumrind (1971) conducted another study based on the findings from the previous two studies to replicate previous findings and to provide more distinction in the patterns of parental authority. The 1971 study was conducted with 146 preschool children 3 years and 9 months old. This study was conducted using similar methods to the 1967 study with one major difference being the observation of the students in their pre-school environment. The study concluded with two home visits just as did the 1967 study. In the summation of the findings, the neglectful style of parenting was combined with authoritarian based on the similarities of the parental behavior. Later on, Baumrind reintroduced the neglectful parenting style in the late 1980s and 1990s (Baumrind, 1989, 1995).

Throughout this research parenting styles were categorized based upon the different levels of responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 1991, 1995). In the early 1990s, Baumrind (1991) provided a more distinctive description of parenting styles related specifically to adolescence. The major variable in the study was the adolescent's substance abuse. The study was part of the larger Family Socialization and Developmental Competence longitudinal research project. The project was designed to identify family patterns as determinants of their adolescents' competence and the type of substance abuse engaged in by the adolescent. The data were gathered over three different time periods: at the age of 4, 9, and 15 years old. Baumrind (1991)

determined that parenting styles shift at the age of 15. She identified six parenting styles: authoritative, democratic, directive, good-enough, nondirective, and unengaged.

Other researchers have used Baumrind's typology. Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi (2000) sampled 354 14-year-old, eighth grade adolescents (177 girls, 177 boys) and their parents from a mid-sized community in Sweden. The purpose was to examine the extent to which adolescents' achievement approaches are associated with the parenting styles they experience with their families. The students completed the Strategy and Attribution Questionnaire and the parents completed the Strategy and Attribution Scale for Parents. There was a set of findings for each group. Parents who practiced the authoritative parenting style reported more monitoring of their child's behavior along with more trust and engagement with the child. Adolescents reported more task-oriented, but less passive behavior. Overall, adolescents displayed positive academic achievement strategies that bear the characteristics of low failure expectations and they used self-enhancing skills. In conclusion, the characteristics and concepts of authoritative parenting teach children how to think and function independently, provide self-structure, and pursue global aspirations (Aunola et al.; Steinberg & Silk, 2005; Pellerin, 2005; Grant & Ray 2010).

The Four Basic Parenting Styles

According to research, parenting styles are constructed of two main dimensions: responsiveness and demandingness. *Responsiveness* refers to the warmth the parents display towards their children, including the amount of acceptance and involvement parents exhibit with their children *Demandingness* is the amount of control the parent exhibits and how it relates to the level of maturity that is expected of the child, and the

amount of supervision the parent displays. Parents who apply the authoritative style of parenting are in possession of both characteristics (Aunola et al., 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005). Researchers agree there are three main elements to the framework of authoritative parenting: warmth, structure, and autonomy support. Warmth is characterized as the extent to which adolescents feel love and acceptance from their parents. Structure is described as rules and limits. The adolescent is supervised and there are expectations for his or her behavior. Autonomy support is illustrated by the amount of reinforcement and encouragement given to the adolescent to develop as an individual. The child is taught and provided examples of how to become an independent and critical thinker as well as problem solver (Aunola et al; Steinberg & Silk; Pellerin; Grant & Ray 2010). Figure 2.1 illustrates the parenting style relationships.

	High Warmth	Low Warmth
High Control	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Low Control	Permissive	Neglecting

Figure 2.1. Baumrind's Parenting Style Matrix. Retrieved from <http://daneseblog.blogspot.com/2008/10/what-is-your-parenting-style.html>

Authoritarian. Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1995) classified parents who were highly demanding of their children, but not responsive to the children's needs as authoritarian. Children of this style were likely to be highly socially assertive but not socially responsible. Authoritarian parents placed high levels of controls on the children, their actions and their behaviors, but showed little or no warmth (Susskind, 2005).

Authoritarian parents may appear to be more punitive with the focus being on obedience from the children (Grant & Ray, 2009) Children of authoritarian parents often exhibited behavior problems, lower social skills, and low self-esteem (Wagner et al., 2008).

Permissive. Parents who were highly responsive but not demanding were classified as permissive (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 1995). Baumrind's research suggested that children of these parents would *not* be socially assertive and moderately socially responsible. Permissive parents show great warmth and caring towards their children, but they place few demands on the children's actions and behaviors (Susskind, 2005). In essence, the children of permissive parents are allowed to do what they want. Children of permissive parents do not have social or self-esteem problems, but they grow to be rebellious and disobedient (Wagner et al., 2008).

Neglectful. Parents who were low on both dimensions of the unengaged and the rejecting or uninterested style had children who were not socially responsible and not socially assertive. As previously mentioned, the "neglectful" style of parenting was identified in 1971 and re-introduced as a separate style in the 1980s. Baumrind's neglectful style is often referenced as uninvolved or rejecting-neglecting. The neglectful parent does not have any interest in the development of their child socially, academically, or emotionally. The children of neglectful parents are at risk for many negative outcomes because the parents are uninterested in their activities with friends or at school, (Grant & Ray, 2009). These children often have psychological problems and function socially and academically at a lower level (Wagner et al., 2008).

Authoritative. Parents who were both demanding and highly responsive to their children's needs were classified as authoritative. Their children were both socially

responsible and socially assertive. Authoritative parents display high levels of warmth and affection and place reasonable demands on their children (Baumrind, 1991, 1995). Children of authoritative parents tend to have few discipline problems (Wagner et al., 2008). Authoritative parents are willing to listen to their children and adjust their parenting behaviors based on children's actions, views, or opinions (Grant & Ray, 2009).

Of the four parenting styles classified by researchers, authoritative parenting is the one established as the most effective in rearing productive, well-rounded, cognitively developed, and functioning children (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Grant & Ray, 2010).

Authoritative parenting has been classified as a balance between permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. Parents allow children periods of learning where the child is allowed to make mistakes without any interference from the parents. This would be a characteristic of a permissive parent. There are times when a parent needs the child to obey their directions regardless of what the child wants or how the child feels about the situation. This would be a characteristic of the authoritarian parenting style (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Grant & Ray, 2010). The combination of these characteristics provides for balance and maximization of parenting skills (Baumrind, 1989; Steinberg & Silk; Pellerin).

As previously defined, authoritative parenting is a style of parenting where there are firm limits and high expectations set in collaboration with warmth, love, and nurturing. There is also open communication with the children and the parent. The parents want to make sure the child understands different concepts throughout life as they mature in addition to following the rules (Grant & Ray, 2010). Authoritative parents are

controlling as they allow for flexibility in their decisions. In authoritative parenting, the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the child is the focus (Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005). The authoritative parent structures and directs the child's activities in an organized approach. In this application, encouragement and support are given as the parent guides the interest of the child (Baumrind, 1989).

Baumrind's classification of parenting styles has been the subject of criticism. One of the various criticisms is due to the inconsistency of parents being classified solely on the basis of a single style. Research says diverse situations could require the parent to handle each situation differently, thus displaying multiple styles (Grant & Ray, 2010). A screaming child refusing to leave a toy store may require a different parenting style than a child who is questioning why they cannot have the toy if they have money to purchase it.

Another criticism of Baumrind is that her classifications do not have the same meaning across all cultures. Baumrind's original studies were based on middle class, white American families (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 1989). Studies have shown the same parenting style classifications have slightly different meanings and characteristics for other cultures. For example, an African American authoritarian family (based on Baumrind's typologies) may yield different results on children from a Latino family using the same style. Conversely, if you alter the characteristics or behaviors of each style based on the culture of the family, the results may be more favorable (Spera, 2005; Sorkhabi, 2005; Grant & Ray 2010). The socioeconomic and education status of the parents and family members may interact or moderate with the parenting styles and lead to different child outcomes as well.

Some research has questioned if there is a significant difference between parenting styles and parenting practices. Parenting styles and parenting behaviors are frequently used interchangeably in research. Some researchers have suggested that parenting styles may be an intermediary stage for parenting practices (Lee et al., 2006). The outcomes of parenting styles are in direct correlation with the parenting practices actually implemented (Spera 2005; Grant & Ray 2010). Parenting style is classified as the emotional environment of warmth and responsiveness in which the child is reared. This takes into consideration the parents' attitude toward the child, displays of emotional affection toward the child, the tone of voice used with the child, etc., (Spera; Lee et al.; Grant & Ray). Parenting practices are classified as specific behaviors administered with children to produce outcomes and results. The practices or behaviors are what has direct link to the child's behavior.

African Americans and Parenting

While Baumrind's (1967, 1971, 1991, 1995) definitions of parenting styles have been established with much research, these models of parenting have been studied and developed with an almost exclusive focus on European-American families (Querido, Warner, & Eyberg, 2002). An important weakness of the early studies is that most researchers did not investigate African American and other racial groups separately (Mandara, 2006). There are few studies of how Baumrind's parenting styles apply to other cultures where the context, standards, and implications for parenting are different (Querido, et al.). Thus, this arena of research on parenting has a dearth of knowledge.

The parenting style of African Americans in relation to their children's academic achievement is different from their cultural counterparts (Mandara, 2003 &

2006). Mandara reviewed several articles to clarify the roles and functioning of African American parenting. He summarized the current state of knowledge in four relevant areas of family functioning. The analysis looked into empirical research articles to clarify parenting styles, physical discipline, racial socialization, and direct academic involvement related to the academic achievement of Black males.

While Mandara's (2006) review was not intended to be totally exhaustive on the subject, it did show important similarities and discrepancies in the literature. Mandara was able to identify African American styles of parenting that resembled Baumrind's parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, but they were qualitatively different from European American parenting styles. In particular, the authoritarian style for African Americans would be considered the same as the authoritative style of European Americans as defined by Baumrind (1967, 1971). Mandara concluded that when African American parents used their version of authoritative parenting, the results were observably different than from those of white parents.

An African American version of authoritative parenting includes teaching children about their cultural heritage and personal power to achieve in spite of barriers, being actively involved by monitoring homework and academic studies, and limiting time doing counterproductive activities (Mandara, 2006). In other words, it looks far more controlling than the white authoritative parenting style. In his review, Mandara speaks of African American boys with parents who were classified as neglectful, who scored higher than those with authoritarian or authoritative parents. Previously, in his 2002 study conducted in collaboration with Murray, his results suggested similar

findings. In that study, the participants were 111 15-year-old African American adolescents. The purpose of the 2002 study was to identify typologies of African American families and to determine the typologies' consistency over time (Mandara & Murray, 2002). The data for this study were collected from African American families who were part of a specific project in southern California over three time periods: first assessment 1994 to 1995; second assessment 1995 to 1996; and third assessment 1996 to 1997. The data used for this study were taken from the first and second assessments. Participants were given a stipend of \$10 per student and \$25 per parent for a single two-hour session where they were given two separate survey instruments. The first instrument consisted of 90 questions and the second consisted of 65 questions. Consistent with Mandara's (2006) review, the findings from this study suggested a specific type of parenting related directly to African Americans – a more accurate picture of their family functioning. The types identified by Mandara and Murray (2002) were cohesive-authoritative, conflictive-authoritarian, and defensive-neglectful. They also noted these typologies were conceptually similar to Baumrind (1991).

Attaway and Bry (2004) conducted a study of 59 African American mothers. The purpose of this study was to show whether the authoritarian or authoritative parenting styles of a small selection of single African American mothers and female guardians were associated with higher academic outcomes. The goal of this study was to help clarify the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement. The study looked at the relationship between maternal belief in control and responsiveness and adolescent academic achievement. The first variable, *parental belief in control*, was measured by the way the parents answered questions that were modified

from the Maternal Expectations, Attitudes and Belief Inventory (Rickard, Graziano, & Forehand, 1984; Attaway & Bry). Parents indicated whether they agreed with items that assessed the degree of control the mothers and female guardians thought they should have in parenting (Attaway & Bry). Items taken from the Revised Parent Attribution Test (Bugental & Shennum, 1984; Attaway & Bry) measured the second variable, parental belief in responsiveness. It used two questions that measured the amount of openness or sensitivity used when parenting their children's actions and behaviors. The two variables considered were the behaviors of the authoritarian and authoritative styles of parenting. The study sampled 59 Black mothers and female guardians of adolescents ages eleven to nineteen. Through examination of the student's final report card and face-to-face community-based interviews, they found that the greater the amount of control parents and guardians thought they should have in their parent-child relationship, the lower the academic grades of the adolescent. This suggests that the authoritarian style of parenting leads to lower academic achievement in African Americans, a finding consistent with previous research (Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent & Flay, 1996). It corroborated the relationship between parenting beliefs and African American academic performance (Attaway & Bry). They also cautioned that when translating the study's findings, if you are using the definition of parenting styles by Baumrind (1967), some of the findings may be inconclusive and have no relationship (Baumrind 1967; Attaway & Bry). This is a direct correlation between the Mandara (2006) study of the differences in African American parenting styles to those of their European-American parents. Empirical studies have shown when African American children are raised with an African American version of authoritative

parenting; it is most conducive to positive outcomes that include their academic achievement (Mandara).

A limitation of this research is the exclusion of fathers or male guardians (Attaway & Bry, 2004). This information could have contributed to an entirely different look on the parenting style between mothers and fathers. The relevance of culture due to the socialization and the acculturation of each ethnic group have to be considered as it is likely to influence both parenting styles and developmental outcomes for children (Querido, et al., 2002). The skills of observation and modeling behaviors are transferred to children through education and training and experience. This adaptation is known as socialization (Spera, 2005). Skills, attitudes, and behaviors as listed are a requirement for children to become accustomed to the environment and culture they live in. This process details parents transferring their values, goals, habits, and morals to their children (Spera). Research in this area also shows a direct connection linking the socialization applied by parents and the environment of the families' home and students' classroom (Spera, 2005 & 2006). There is variance of socialization across the races and parenting; the meaning is relatively different across cultures.

Components of African American Parenting

Socialization fully supports the concept of learning behaviors. Socialization has been defined as the processes or methods by which we learn the ways of a given society, group or structure (Hill, 1999). Maccoby (1968) suggests that social learning theory is the dominant point of view in the study and work of socialization. The key component of socialization, the reason for learning the behavior, is to fit in with people or a certain "group." When we discuss the aspects of parenting, we are using a point of reference that

ties the child and the parent together as a family or a specific “group.” Culture plays a critical role in parenting when it deals with teaching children how to belong. Parents tend to teach their children from their own experience (Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology, 2007 (EEP)).

Racial socialization is defined as what black children think, or what parents think and teach their children about being black in a predominantly white society (Hill, 1999). African American parents who have had a high exposure to racial discrimination tend to teach their children more in-depth detail about their history and the struggle of slave ancestors (Hill, 1999; Lareau, 2003). It is these types of behaviors that allow socialization to become an important part of our study of parenting and parent behaviors.

Acculturation is an important component of socialization within the African American culture. Acculturation is the extent that the members of any particular culture or group demonstrate or display their beliefs or practices of their group (Lareau, 2003). In researching African American parenting, acculturation can often be found in two categories: concerted cultivation and accomplished natural growth. These two categories have been linked also to child rearing practices or parenting style. Concerted cultivation is the parent taking responsibility for the child’s leisure activity. In the case studied by Lareau, the child is taught through the modeling and participation of organized activities. The parents of the adolescent involve the child in various organized activities and seek the child’s input for the activities in which they participate. Established parent control demonstrates how the children are taught to conform to the society they are part of. This has been viewed as a feature or characteristic of authoritative parenting.

Accomplished natural growth is fairly viewed to be the opposite of concerted cultivation. Accomplished natural growth expresses the concept of parents who give their children directives and allow little to no space for reasoning or compromises with the child to lead their own leisure activity or play. Accomplished natural growth has been viewed as a characteristic or feature of authoritarian parenting.

As research begins to infer the implications of authoritative parenting in relation to supplementary concepts, it shows there is a correlation between authoritative parenting and adolescent academic achievement (Spera, 2006). There is a need for additional research in parenting styles across cultures.

Parental Involvement

Families provide the social, cultural, and emotional supports that youth need to function well in school. Parent involvement is a critical component of school success. DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007) noted this in their study of three different groups of participants. The study consisted of parents, teachers, and students from a rural school district in the Midwest. A total of 301 parents (165 women, 136 men), 234 students (130 girls, 104 boys) and 22 staff (1 counselor, 1 librarian, 1 paraprofessional; 15 women and 7 men) participated in the study. The purpose of the study was to understand from the three subgroups the types of parental involvement they believed had an effect on student academic achievement. The participants took part in a focus group first, followed by a survey. The study began by interviewing the principal. The interview with the principal provided suggestions of the level of parental involvement that was expected from the school's perspective. The focus groups were used to develop the questions for the survey. The data collection suggested that all groups believed parent

involvement is important to academic achievement, however, they felt direct involvement at home was most important. High on the list was making sure the child attends school as an important strategy for involvement. In the frequency of responses, the three groups agreed attending parenting conferences and talking to your child about school would be the top two factors of parent involvement.

For students to succeed, parents must participate actively especially through the adolescent years (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane, 2007). The more parents are involved in the student's education at home and school, the more academically successful they will be (Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman's study assisted in the validation of this theory in the urban context. Although their study was composed of only parent participants, the ethnicity was very similar to that of the previously mentioned study. There were 220 participants in the study. The parent ethnicity was 30% Caucasian, 31% Hispanic and only 18% African American (Black). This research examined Epstein's (2002) six types of parent involvement. The study was conducted in three of Chicago's public schools. The purpose was to determine which of the types was consistently present in schools considered high achieving. Through a survey sent out to over 800 parents, the 220 respondents chose Type I-Parenting and Type IV-Learning at home as the top two best practices of parent involvement. Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman surveyed parents of elementary students and DePlanty, Coulter-Kern and Duchane surveyed parents of junior high students. It is easy to understand from both studies that parent involvement from the home is important.

Definition of Parental Involvement

The term parental involvement is defined in many different ways. According to Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman (2007), there are three constructs that influence the meaning of parental involvement in their child's education: (a) what parents think their role is, (b) parents' sense of responsibility (and efficacy), and (c) parents' perception to the invitation, demand, and opportunity to get involved from their child and from the school. The most widely accepted typology is that of Epstein (2002). The typologies are Type I: Parenting; Type II: Communicating; Type III: Volunteering; Type IV: Learning at Home; Type V: Decision-making; Type VI: Collaborating with the community. These typologies are a combination of studies and work conducted by various educators and researchers.

Parental expectations, parental interest, the parental involvement in school, the family and community as shown by Jeynes (2003) could range from checking homework to reading a book with the child, to the parenting style of the caretaker. This meta-analysis of 20 studies had nearly 12,000 subjects ranging across three major ethnic groups: African American, Latino-American, and Asian-American. The purpose was to determine the impact parental involvement had on the academic achievement of minority children. The outcomes suggested that parent involvement generally affects academic achievement of the minority groups studied. Interestingly enough, the one common factor across these studies that range across K-12th grade is the parent expectations of the student.

In this review, we adopted the same definition as Jeynes (2007). The term parent involvement is defined as the act of a parent or guardian participating in the educational

process and experience of their child or children. As stated previously, the most widely accepted typology is that of Epstein (2002). The framework of Epstein helps schools identify different ways that family and community can become involved in student academic success. It allows them to create programs and other activities that enable the parents to be engaged in their child's schooling or educational structure. Epstein (1991, 2002) noted that this research to develop the six types of involvement was conducted in several studies across elementary, middle, and secondary grades. In her 1991 study, Epstein and Dauber compared school programs and the teacher practices' of parent involvement. The study was conducted with 171 teachers from 8 elementary and middle schools from the inner city in the Baltimore area. The purpose was to examine the relationship and connections between the school parental involvement programs, the practices that teachers use to involve parents, and the attitude of the teacher. The teachers were given a 10-item questionnaire, which was divided into sub-questions regarding the specified topics of parental involvement. The results suggested that teachers have a strong belief that parents should be involved but neither the programs in their school nor their actions support those beliefs. Once a parent makes the choice to become involved, there are steps that should be taken by the teacher/school to encourage them to remain engaged throughout the child's educational career. Parent involvement has positive effects on a student's academic achievement (Trotman, 2001; Jeynes, 2005, 2007). Furthermore, the more intensively the parents are involved, the more beneficial and effective are the outcomes (Jeynes, 2007). In particular, parent-child discussions about school help improve academic achievement and reduce problematic behavior (DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane, 2007). Additional benefits of parental involvement include

higher attendance, higher test scores, increased motivation, improved self-esteem, and better student attitude (Trotman; Jeynes, 2003, 2005, 2007). Higher GPAs, increased achievement in reading, lower dropout rates, fewer retentions, and less special education placement have also been found to be associated with parental involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). When a parent is involved during the early adolescent years, the student learns the ability to self-regulate their behavior, resulting in positive behavioral outcomes (Jeynes, 2005). The earlier this influence is placed on the high-school age child, the earlier improvements in academic achievement will begin to occur (Jeynes, 2003, 2005).

Research says that there is a much higher level of parent involvement at the elementary level than at the high school level (Jeynes, 2005). Children are more influenced at the elementary level by their parental values (Jeynes, 2007). Parents are more likely to be involved with the children who are younger versus older. This phenomenon is attributed to the parent feeling less needed when the student attends bigger schools and encounters a more sophisticated curriculum. This independent stand allows the parent to be more involved in the post-secondary and future planning as opposed to day-to-day activities (Jeynes, 2005, 2007).

How does parent involvement translate into parenting style? There have been studies that examine parenting characteristics. This research considers parenting style and parent involvement both "parenting characteristics." Parent involvement has been considered an important aspect of parenting, especially in relation to the child's academic and education achievement. Interest in student grades has also been found to be a strong dimension of parental values and expectations, which are characteristics of parenting

style (Paulson & Sputa, 1996). Paulson and Sputa used Baumrind's (1967, 1971) framework to discuss their conceptualization of parenting styles.

Parent Behaviors and Actions

The attributes produced from authoritative parenting are characteristics that parents instill in their children through application of the authoritative style of child-rearing. These parenting behaviors award the child with the opportunity to grow and develop as a well-balanced, high performing, mature, healthy individual (Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Hines & Paulson, 2006; Lee, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006; Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Grant & Ray, 2010). The behaviors performed by the parents are instrumental to producing a child with a strong social and cognitive skill set. Research has offered evidence that an authoritative parent who has asserted some characteristics of the authoritarian and permissive styles of parenting is effective. Ultimately, it is the behaviors of the authoritative style implemented in the majority of the parents behaviors that create their style (Steinberg & Silk; Pellerin; Brown & Iyengar).

In the execution of parent behaviors, there are parent actions to support the outcome (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Spera, 2005; Lee et al., 2006; Brown & Iyengar, 2008; Grant & Ray, 2010). Parents whose behavior exhibited the practices incorporated with the corresponding action in the Sample Parent Behavior Guide (SPBG) (see Appendix A) allow for the development of a healthy, well-functioning adolescent (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Hines & Paulson, 2006; Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; Brown & Iyengar; Grant & Ray). An authoritative parent promotes verbal conversation with the child. In this verbal

conversation, they supply the reasoning for specific rules and strategies (Brown & Iyengar).

Additional research informs us that authoritative parenting promotes positive adolescent development through positive encouragement, open communication with reasonable feedback, flexibility, and high expectations set through rules and routines forwarded to the child(ren) (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Grant & Ray, 2010). Research still seeks to know if the behaviors and actions of authoritative parents when duplicated by teachers and educators will be able to produce high academics and positive behavior for students (Hines & Paulson, 2006; Lee, Daniels & Kissinger, 2006; Grant & Ray, 2010).

Parenting and Adolescent Academic Achievement

Parenting style has an effect on academic achievement. The research in this area is in need of more distinct clarification (Mandara, 2003; Brown & Iyengar, 2008). The parents' perception and the students' perception of the effects are from two different perspectives. Parents will view this from a more clinical perspective where students view it from a more practical perspective. Parents analyze what is not being done from the school's angle and students observe what their parents "do or don't do," (Brown & Iyengar).

Authoritative parenting is positively associated with healthy adolescent behavior development (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Researchers have also have found authoritative parenting has a positive relationship to adolescent academic achievement (Park & Bauer, 2002; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005; Mandara, 2006; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie, 2008). However, several researchers have also found this is inconsistent across cultures

(Attaway & Bry; Spera, 2005; Mandara; Spera, 2006). Studies have shown authoritative parenting for some cultures looks different from the standard authoritative parenting style classified by Baumrind (1966, 1971, and 1989). Parents who use the standard authoritative style of parenting also incorporate elements from the other styles of parenting. They also take specifics from the authoritative style, concentrate on those particular characteristics, and adapt them to the child (Park & Bauer; Attaway & Bry; Spera, 2005; Mandara; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie).

As researchers explored the relationship between authoritative parenting and academic achievement, the focus was on specific practices. Park and Bauer (2002) examined the authoritative characteristics of supervision, support, strictness, and parental involvement and the effects they had on student achievement. Spera (2005 & 2006) investigated the authoritative characteristics of emotional support, parental explanations, and parental communications. Emotional support provides the child with a feeling of security and comfort that contributes to the activities and actions in school, therefore increasing their participation and achievement (Spera, 2005 & 2006). Mandara (2003 & 2006) investigated the effects of “an African American version” of authoritative parenting and adolescent achievement in boys. The characteristics of being more demanding (of the child) and less compliant (to the child) yielded positive results for their academic achievement.

The results of these various findings were consistent: the specific characteristics had a positive effect on academic achievement. Researchers concluded that there might not be a “direct” influence of parenting on adolescent academic achievement from one particular style; however, the connection is through the characteristics and practices that

are applied (Park & Bauer, 2002; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Mandara, 2006; Spera, 2006). The students had higher grades, higher levels of self-esteem, and productivity, which motivated them to be active and perform at higher levels in their academics, producing positive outcomes (Park & Bauer; Attaway & Bry; Spera, 2005; Mandara; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie, 2008).

Gaps and Need for the Study

There is a gap in the literature as it pertains to African American adolescents and parenting styles in reference to the adolescent's academic achievement. There have been several studies that speak to the notion of authoritative parenting not showing any relationship to the academic achievement of African American adolescents (Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999; Steinberg, 2001; Spera, 2005).

Bluestone and Tamis-LeMonda (1999) tell us that parenting styles in African American families has been significantly understudied. The earlier investigations of African American parenting unfairly portrayed the parenting practices for African American adolescents. In the studies conducted, African American parenting is inaccurately compared to Caucasian parenting (Bluestone & LeMonda, 1999). Any relationship to the African American adolescents' academic achievement was unfounded (Steinberg, 2001).

One component missing in the literature is the relationship of authoritative parenting specifically to African American adolescents. The previous work done on authoritative parenting, existing from its origination until the present, shows the majority of the studies were done with Caucasian middle class families (Julian, McKenry & McKelvey, 1994; Bluestone & Tamis-LeMonda, 1999); Steinberg, 2001; Spera, 2005).

The few studies that investigated this issue tend to look more at the negative aspects of parenting as it relates to African American adolescents. The majority of the research states the effects of authoritarian parenting and its relationship to African American parenting (Steinberg. Steinberg also tells us that research has shown that authoritative parenting (across the cultural scope) has no effect on school performance or academic achievement. What proves to be interesting is the review of Julian, McKenry and McKelvey, in which African American parents are not strictly authoritarian or authoritative yet tend to value certain aspects of both authoritarian and authoritative parenting behaviors. According to Dornbusch et al. (1987), where Baumrind found that traditional authoritarian parenting elicited fear in Caucasian children, it elicited assertiveness in African American children.

In addition to the two literature gaps previously listed, the voice of the students is not present in the existing literature. The studies focused on talking to the parents and eliciting their opinions regarding their parenting styles and how they influence their child's academic achievement. The voice of the adolescent is crucial because it suggests to the student that the adults, educators, and parents are taking an interest in what they feel makes a difference in their academic career and other aspects of their lives.

The findings of this study could be used to develop guidelines and best practices to apply to the education and child rearing of African American adolescents. If listening to the perspective of the adolescent can provide us with some pertinent information as to what helps them study, improve their academics, listen to their parents, and create a positive, well-rounded, supportive atmosphere for them to learn and grow, we could do tremendous work with our children.

Summary

There is significant literature on the relationship between parenting style, academic achievement, and adolescents. Unfortunately that literature does not expand across the African American cultural realm. There is a need for additional research. Many researchers contend there is a need for more studies of parenting styles across the various cultures (Park & Bauer, 2002; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005; Mandara, 2006; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie, 2008). Some researchers contend that more work needs to be done with parents and their behaviors (Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Hines & Paulson, 2006; Lee, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006). There are those who think the focus should be on the adolescent staying in school (Bean et al., 2003; DePlanty et al., 2007). There needs to be a focus on the population of students who are at great risk. African American students are still on the lower spectrum of the achievement gap compared to their white counterparts (Attaway & Bry; Mandara; Grant & Ray, 2010). In conclusion, the literature gives the next steps. Future research needs to examine the specific causes and effects of this phenomenon and what needs to be done to correct the problem.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to (a) establish which parental behaviors urban African American adolescents believe foster their academic achievement and (b) to determine if these behaviors fit within the authoritative parenting framework of Baumrind. The study will explore what adolescents in grades 7-10 grade report as their perceptions about parenting behaviors and the effect they have on their academic achievement.

This chapter covers eight sections: research questions, research context, research participants, data collection, document collection, data analysis, credibility of the study, and a summary. The research questions encompass the probing details of what the study is asking. The research context and participant sections offer a background of the research environment and population that will be studied. In the document collection and data analysis, there is an overview of what documents will be collected and how the data will be coded and examined. The summary will review the key points of the chapter.

Research Questions

Research lacks consistent results in understanding how parenting behaviors contribute to high academic achievement among urban, African American adolescents (Park & Bauer, 2002; Bean et al., 2003). In particular, few studies were found that investigated the question from the adolescent's point of view. In this study, the researcher investigated what parenting behaviors adolescent, urban, high achievers attribute as

supportive of their performance in school. It is possible that comparable adolescents with lower achievement identify the same behaviors, thus, the research questions in this study are:

1. What parenting behaviors do urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance?
2. Do the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Baumrind's authoritative parenting?

Research Context

As previously stated, studies have shown the same parenting style classifications have slightly different meanings and characteristics for other cultures. For example, an African American authoritarian family (based on Baumrind's typologies) may yield different results on children from a Latino family using the same style. Conversely, if you alter the characteristics or behaviors of each style based on the culture of the family, the results may be more favorable (Spera, 2005; Sorkhabi, 2005; Grant & Ray 2010).

This study was conducted in a community recreation campus composed of six satellite centers that are used as an after school site on the northwest side of the city in Lilac, New York. The population of this campus is comprised with the majority of the students being African American. It is anticipated that 25,000 plus students participate in some form of after school program or activity at the Education Recreation Center Campus (ERCC). The after school sites of this campus are in various schools and stand-alone recreation centers. There are 26 recreation centers in Lilac, New York: 11 community centers, 10 school-based centers and 5 neighborhood centers (City of Lilac, 2010). For the purposes of this study, a community recreation center was utilized to draw

participants. Community Centers were chosen as the setting for this study because they provide students and families with various activities. These activities are open for the family to participate together, allowing parent and student interaction to be increased. Community recreation centers typically were open from one o'clock in the afternoon and close (at the latest) at eight o'clock in the evening. The hours vary from center to center depending on the programs offered. The staff averaged between four to five recreation counselors, one director and one assistant director. The community centers offered an array of social emotional, culturally relevant, and recreational activities. The after school programming operates from September to June of the academic school year. The summer programming operated from July to August. This allowed the recreation centers to offer students, families, and neighborhoods year-around activities. These activities were open to the entire community, not just families who live in the area. The ERCC site was specifically chosen because of the high volume of family activities that were inclusive of students in grades 7-10. These activities included (but were not exclusive to) family fun nights, parent information classes, after school clubs and events, etc. During the investigation for sites, ERCC offered the best number of satellite site opportunities to secure participants. After consultation with the city recreation officials, this site was considered to be the best choice.

Research Participants

Type of sampling. Sampling involves decisions about who is interviewed, where, when, and how (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Purposeful sampling is when the researcher selects its participants of research sites because they will inform an understanding of the problem or the study (Creswell, 2007). The research participants were students in grades

7-10 who attended school in the Flower City School District (FCSD) and were active in programs at this particular after school site. In order to use the after school site, permission from the Assistant Commissioner of Recreation and Youth Activities was requested and granted. Seventh through tenth grade students were chosen because it is well known that in the FCSD, as in many other districts, many of those students do not continue into tenth and eleventh grade. Working in collaboration with the Director of the recreation center, the participants were chosen by the demographic information they provide on the registration form to participate in the after school program. African American students in grades 7-10 were identified and invited to the consent event. There has been a lack of previous research with this grade range.

Consent procedure. This study was a qualitative study, consisting of interviews with students under the age of 18. Human subjects' approval was obtained from the St. John Fisher Human Subjects Board through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendices).

The researcher and the site director met to discuss the research project and identify the students. The researcher and director identified 25 to 30 students with the goal of a minimum of 15. The total number of students who participated in the study was 7. Although the goal was 15, 7 students were identified and consented. This may be attributed to the underutilization of the recreation center during the season the study was conducted. According to the center and program directors, student enrollment was unusually low during the winter season.

The students were offered a gift card incentive. The incentive served as an encouragement to participate and complete the interviews and was distributed at the end

of the interview session. After identifying the students, the parents were given an invitation to a parent information event with refreshments. The researcher met with the director of the recreation site. The researcher, collaborating with the director, wrote a letter inviting the parents of students in grades 7-10 to an information session. They were notified by postal mail of the event with a form for the students to return to the site by a specified deadline. This evening event was designed to provide the parents with food and beverage and will also serve the purpose of gaining parent consent for the student to participate in the study. Parents who consented completed a brief information form to provide important contact information. The information regarding the study was disseminated at the event along with the consent packets. In this packet there was a short introduction of the researcher, explanation of the study, the incentive to be offered to the student, and consent forms for the parents and students (see Appendix B, C, and D). Parents were asked to turn in the forms the same night. In the event that parents would like additional time to consider the information, the consent forms packet contained a self-addressed stamped envelope to be returned via postal service to ensure authentication of the form and parent permission with a deadline of one week from the beginning date of interviews. The parents who chose this option were given a follow-up phone call three days after the information meeting night; this option was not utilized.

In addition to asking for the parents' approval for their child to participate, we also asked the parents for a copy of their students' academic report card. This allowed us to verify grade and GPA (grade point average). The consent told parents the reason for the interview, the nature of the questions asked, and how the information was going to be used. It also assured parents that the information collected will be kept confidential and

not shared with the district or used for academic purposes. A short questionnaire was included with the consent form asking the parents for the pertinent family/parenting information that was needed for triangulation of the data. These questions consisted of parent demographic information, self-reported ethnic background, parent report of student grades, and key questions that involve what they do to help their students succeed in school.

Eligibility criteria. Although gender was not specified, six males and one female student participated. The participants were students in grades 7-10 in the FCSD who attend programs and activities at the ERCC. The race of all students was African American. This data set was used in analysis and comparison of information self-reported by students and parents. The GPA was used as a categorizing criterion later in the research. This did not impact the interviewing order of students. The participants received pseudonyms.

Data Collection

Understanding that youth prefer to speak openly to adults whom they have some sort of established relation with, the researcher explored the best possible method to gather the data needed. The researcher took advantage of the center's activities and programs when the population of the study was participating by visiting the center frequently prior to conducting the study and allowing the students to become familiar with her as a person. This allowed the researcher to be more welcoming versus threatening to the students. The first method of data collection was the parent questionnaire. The second method was the individual interviews of the participants. The third was the student report cards. In addition the researcher took field notes. The data in

the participant chart (Table 2.1) provide a summary of the demographic information of the students.

Individual interviews. The researcher conducted all the interviews for this study. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the researcher. The interviews took place at the ERCC to provide a familiar and comfortable environment for the students. There were a total of 10 interviews conducted. There were seven initial interviews conducted with three follow-up interviews conducted. The interview consisted of one 30 to 40-minute session with the option of a second session if determined to be necessary by the researcher. The purpose of the second session allowed the participant to give clarity to their answers provided in the first interview. One to two introductory questions will be asked to elicit conversation during the interview. The students were asked study questions such as (a) How do you think you are doing in school? (b) How do your parents react to your report card, (c) What do your parents do to help you do well in school? At this point of the interview, a sample parent behavior guide (SPBG) was provided to the student. The sample parent behavior guide was a collection of practices and behaviors compiled from the various researchers who studied parent behavior. The SPBG categorized different parent behaviors and the actions that are used to perform the behaviors. The SPBG was used to provide samples and help participants facilitate their thought process around parent behaviors. The interview continued with such questions as, (d) Do you think there is anything different or missing because you are African American? (e) If you were to become a parent, what would you do with your teenager to help them succeed in school? This sampling of questions (Appendix F) was created based on various studies examined throughout the research.

Table 2.1

Participant Chart

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	School	Grade Level	GPA by quarter 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd & Average (Out of 4.0 scale)	Parents in the household
SG	Female		JHS	10 th	1=4.25 2=3.50 3=4.08 A= 3.94	Mother
EG	Male	14 years old	JHS	9 th	1=1.17 2=1.42 3=1.00 A= 1.19	Mother
TT	Male	13 years old	JHS	8 th	1=3.58 2=4.00 3=3.42 A= 3.66	Mother
JG	Male	12 years old	WFS	7 th	1=3.61 2=3.72 3=3.78 A= 3.70	Mother Step Father
MR	Male	13 years old	JHS	8 th	1=3.60 2=2.25 3=3.33 A=3.06	Mother Father
AH	Male	15 years old	RBSCHS	9 th	1=3.07 2=2.71 3=2.25 A= 2.67	Mother Step Father
DB	Male	15 years old	WCHS	9 th	2=2.30 3=0.12 A= 1.21	Mother

The answers of the participants elicited additional questions. These questions were added to the original list and are in Appendix F.

Document Collection

Report cards. The participant report cards were collected as a method of data to verify the accuracy of the participants self-report of their grades. They also served as a source to verify the relationship between grade achievement and participant reported parent behaviors.

Parent information form. The parent questionnaire was utilized to get the parent perspective of what they do to help their student do well in school. The study focused on student participants. This was one method to obtain information from the parent.

Student questionnaire. The questions that were used in this questionnaire were crafted to solicit open, honest, and rich dialogue between the researcher and the participant. The participant was allowed to ask for clarification of questions if necessary.

Field notes. Field notes are notes taken by the researcher during the interview process. They consist of non-verbal cues recorded by the researcher. They are also notes or statements regarding the participants' physical movement or gestures as well as their facial expressions. The notes also depicted how the participants' were dressed for the interview. The field notes also captured anything noticeable or that attracted the researcher's attention during the interview.

Data Analysis

The analysis of this information was done by coding. Coding is the "breaking of text down into manageable segments and attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later retrieval of the segment" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The

themes for the segments were established based on Baumrind's (1967, 1971, 1991 & 1995) parenting style typology. To ensure consistency and achieve credibility of the data and information collected, the researcher interviewed until saturation was reached. Saturation is the process of finally coming to the point where the information received from the interviews and data collected is nothing-new (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). When saturation was reached, the researcher heard the same things over and over. It is the same information that has been previously obtained. It was the hope of the researcher that there would be triangulation with the previous data collected from the parents' questionnaire in the consent process.

Codes are the smallest units of meaning attached to a word or a phrase. Coding is the process of organizing the material into manageable groups, or chunks to help in the development of meaningful information or themes (Creswell 2007 & 2009). This process involves labeling the information with a term or title. The coding process we also utilized "in vivo" codes. In in vivo codes, are the terms or titles used were direct words, phrases or language stated by the participant (Creswell, 2007 & 2009). Codes start to and are used to build themes in data. Themes are categories were used for major findings and analysis in the research (Creswell, 2009). The data underwent three coding sessions. The coding sessions also gave meaning to what the participant's description of what parenting behavior or parent involvement meant to them. The first coding session used the categories from the SPBG as the list of codes. Based on the understanding of Baumrind and other researchers, these categories were an obvious choice. The second coding session looked for evidence of the responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control) of Baumrind's parenting style theory and put the evidence in these two broad categories.

In the third coding session any additional codes were derived from the interview texts that were not covered in the initial code list from the SPBG. There were 30 codes produced from the coding process of the data (see Appendix G).

Credibility of the Study

There has been a depth of research done to find qualitative research terms to equal quantitative research terms (Creswell, 2007). When discussing validation in relationship to qualitative research the term credibility is its equivalent. To establish the trustworthiness, the researcher looked for dependability, or authenticity of a study (Creswell). To establish credibility of this study two different techniques were used: peer debriefing and triangulation.

Peer debriefing is an external check of the research process (Creswell, 2007). The process allows the person serving as the peer debriefer or reviewer, to play the role of experts in the field. The person would ask the hard questions that would keep the “researcher honest” and ask the difficult questions about the methods used and interpretations of the data being made (Creswell, 2007 & 2009). Peer debriefing for this study occurred with the researcher and a professional colleague. The session provided stimulating verbal conversation and caused the researcher to apply a critical lens.

Triangulation is when the researcher uses different or multiple data sources to verify the information collected for analysis (Creswell, 2007). In triangulation the researcher also uses the various sources to “shed some light” on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 2007 & 2009). The data compliments each other.



Figure 3.1. Triangulation of the data.

Summary

The objective of the study was to examine (a) What parenting behaviors are identified as influential by adolescent African American urban achievers and (b) whether the identified behaviors conform to Baumrind’s parenting style taxonomy. Because studies are limited that allow adolescents to give their perspective of what types of parenting behaviors help or hinder their academic growth, and whether these opinions are related to the level of achievement, the results of this study from the voice of the urban African American adolescent could provide the field of knowledge with important information regarding education and parenting the African American adolescent.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish what parental behaviors the urban African American adolescent believed fosters their academic achievement and to determine if the behaviors fit within the authoritative parenting framework of Baumrind (1967, 1971).

This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative study conducted with seven African American adolescents on what parental behaviors they believe foster their academic achievement. Coding of the data into manageable groups, or chunks to help in the development of meaningful information or was completed (Creswell 2007, 2009). This process involves labeling the information with a term or title. The data underwent three coding sessions. The coding sessions gave meaning to what the participants described in their interviews. The codes were organized into two categories. The first category was “Student Perception or Opinion of their Parents Behaviors.” The second category was “Student Recommended Parenting Strategies.” The categories were reflective of the questions asked of the study participants and how they perceived the relationship between their parents parenting behaviors and their academic achievement in school. Within the categories several themes emerged. The themes were later classified into the two dimensions of Baumrind’s parenting style theory: demandingness and responsiveness. This will help address the second research question of the behaviors

fitting the literature's notions of authoritative parenting. A summary of the findings will conclude this chapter.

Study Findings

This study was conducted with seven research participants from the ERCC which services students from the FCSD in Lilac, New York. These study participants were students in grades 7-10 and met the requirements of attending the ERCC as part of their afterschool activity. The seven students included six males students (EG, JG, AH, TT, DB and MR) and a female student (SG). SG, the only female student, was also the only tenth grade student and JG was the only seventh grade student. Many of the students were in the ninth grade: three and two were in the eighth grade. The interviews took place at the ERCC. There were other students in the center; however, we were always in an office to minimize the amount of noise and distraction. All of the study participants had households where the mother was present. Three of the households had a father figure present.

The two categories "Student Perception or Opinion of their Parents Behaviors" and "Student Recommended Parenting Strategies," address the first research question: What parenting behaviors do urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance? The first category "Student Perceptions/Opinions of their Parents Behaviors" speaks to the statements and phrases students reported as their opinion and/or perception of what behaviors their parents were exhibiting or were expected to exhibit in their child rearing. Study participants spoke freely about what their parents "do and don't do." The students went into descriptions about the behaviors and actions their parents exhibited in different situations related to

their academic performance. They also described the details of the behaviors and how these behaviors affect what they do at home and in school.

The second category “Student Recommended Influential Parenting Strategies” speaks to the suggestions reported by the students of what parenting behaviors they suggest parents exhibit. Their descriptions often started with what they “would do” if they were the parent as well as what they “would tell” someone to do as the parent. Their descriptions expressed suggestions for what they believe are parenting behaviors and strategies that would work with youth of various ages.

Student Perceptions/Opinions of Parenting Behaviors

In this category, students described their perceptions of behaviors and actions their parents displayed and why their parents displayed the behaviors as they relate to their academic performance. In some cases they made the determination whether the behavior/action was good or bad and if it had a good or bad effect on their academic performance. Students often went into deep description about particular situations that have happened in their lives and how their parents’ behavior impacted their thought or belief process of how they should perform in school. The two themes under this category are: (a) “Use specific language with your child”: verbal motivation, and (b) I have a routine and I have rules.

“Use specific language with your child”: verbal motivation. Providing students with the support and encouragement they need to accomplish their goals consists of various aspects. The students in this study described the many forms of motivation they received and how that impacts their behavior and thought process regarding their academic performance. SG, (the only female study participant and the only 10th grader)

with an average GPA of 3.94 (on a scale of 4.0) described how her mother always told her she was doing a good job and how much she loves her. Her mom brags to her friends and co-workers about how well she was doing in school. SG continued to express that mom tells her, “I wish the other kids got grades like you.” She said this inspires her and “that makes me wanna stay doing good.” DB, one of the 9th grade study participants, whose average GPA is 1.21 out of a 4.0 scale, also conveyed similar thoughts as SG. DB stated that hearing mom use the specific language motivated him to want to get good grades. DB stated,

“It is making me do better, makes me feel good that I can keep doing it.”

Researcher: hearing what mom is saying and doing is making me feel good, so you want to keep doing it?

DB: “Yes”

DB’s mother clearly stated she helps him with his homework. Her involvement with his academics at home is how she offers her support and encouragement. TT, one of the eighth grade study participants, with an average GPA of 3.66 out of 4.0 scale, spoke about the words his mother used such as “never give up,” “try your best.” He expressed that these words encourage him to do well and they push him to do more than what usually does because she, “pushes him over the limit.” JG, the only seventh grade study participant, with an average GPA of 3.70 out of 4.0 scale, spoke in great detail about the encouragement and support he received from his mother that motivated him to have a high academic performance. JG shared that mom uses specific language with him,

“Yeah, like every time I bring a good report card home, my mom, she says I’m proud of you literally with a big smile. And she always tells me about like what

she did when she was younger, how she got a good report cards cause she studied hard.”

JG had an interesting concept of support and verbal motivation he shared with the researcher. He said mom gives him options. He shared,

“She says, JG, you have an option. You can always stay home with me and still learn about the world or you can go to school cause the school is going to teach you more than I could always teach you. She supports me by giving me an option and when I get that option I say I want to go to school because I want to meet different people and learn new things and make something of myself.”

This for JG provided him with the encouragement and support from mom to go to school and work hard. He stated that he believed mom was “testing” him to see what he would do because she knows how to “get in his brain and mess with him.” JG’s mom spoke about his positive outlook and how she provides support and encouragement for him through that lens. Interestingly, JG reflected on how he feels her support through her actions and life lessons.

EG, a ninth grader with a average GPA of 1.19 out of a 4.0 scale, added to this concept as he spoke about mom giving him “talks that make me change my behaviors.”

This verbal motivation was a key factor in his academic achievement. MR the other eighth grade student with an average GPA of 3.06 out of a 4.0 scale, expressed his motivation comes from words but also from the help of his parents. He shared that his parents help him with his homework when he needs help. He also talked about his parents making sure he had the resources he needed. MR shared,

“My mom helps me with my homework and stuff. Then we talk for a little while. Say like we had a project or something, my dad would help me over the weekend to finish all of it and my mom would do the same thing. Sometimes we would stay up the majority of the night just to finish it so I knew that I would have it tomorrow.”

Not all of the students felt motivated from positive words or influences. AH, a current ninth grader with an average GPA of 2.67 out of a 4.0 scale felt that there was a lack of relationship with his parents. He reported,

“I had to change myself when I came out of 8th grade cause I barely passed, so I stepped it up myself without their help, what they were doing was just making me angry.”

Although his mother spoke of giving him encouraging words, AH conveyed that his parent’s “negative” verbal language is what triggered him to want to succeed. He spoke of how “they yell at me all the time and tell me to improve.” AH shared that his motivation comes from himself. He stated he did not like the methods that his mother and stepdad used to “keep him in order.”

“Because in eighth grade I was struggling and I made the change myself from eighth to ninth grade and I decided to step it up myself without their help...looking at my report card from eighth grade.”

Researcher: How did report card make you feel?

AH: “Ashamed. No, I didn’t want their help, because they umm, blow things out of proportion.”

He continued to report that they rarely used encouraging words, but yell most of the time and sometimes they use profanity towards him. Adversely to what AH conveyed, his mother felt she provides him with help and support. She stated she does that through communication with the teachers, asking him about his homework.

I have routine and I have rules. The study participants shared their various experiences regarding routine, rules and structure within their family context. Having a set of rules or guidelines to follow was imperative to their academic performance and achievement. The students reflected upon the different rules, structure, routines, and circumstances that were a part of their lives. SG talks about the rules and structure the children of the household have to follow.

“We have a routine, but in my family, I’m like the good one out of five. So my brothers and sisters usually don’t follow the routine. But we have a routine. Come home, get out your school clothes, put on like play clothes or something, eat, do your homework, do your chores, get ready for tomorrow, like shower, next day clothes and go to bed.”

The rules and routine helps them do well in school because they demonstrates consistency and stability. JG also reflected upon the routines and structure within his household, and he also reflected upon how he has learned to be responsible.

“She does that and that’s what I love about her. Cause it’s not too many strict parents out there in the world and I just love my mom being strict. It tells me that she wants me to be something in life because if I’m out like past 11 pm at night, cause I think about that stuff when I’m walking home like dang, it’s so late and I’m walking by myself. If I’m out like 12 at night way past my time and I’m not

gonna get home and study...cause I usually go to sleep at like 12 cause I stay up studying and thinking real hard about things I gotta do the next day or how I'm gonna handle situations."

JG continues to share his perception of his routines and how they impact his academics,

"I think the routine that my mom got me on and always will have me on, until I'm out of the house, well, I think it's causing a good effect on my behavior. I think the outcome of that is always good, because me staying up late, to be able to study all the time gives me enough time to go to the rec center. You know have my fun there, come back home, study real hard, get my hard work in until I know I got it stuck in my brain, I think that enforces a good behavior on me cause you know I am able to have fun, cause there is a time and a place to have fun and get serious so when I'm at home and it's late at night, that's when it's my time to get serious cause that's the most time it really gets stuck in your brain."

JG, in an insightful manner, also recognized the responsibility that he bears as part of his conditions and family environment.

"I have a routine, I don't have a well basically a routine cause I go to sleep every night at 12 and like in the morning, my routine in the morning is to wake my little brothers up and make sure you know that they get dressed with the right stuff and wear everything that they need and look like gentlemen."

JG's mother contributed his academic success to his positive outlook. She conveyed being supportive of that is what she does to help him do well in school. JG continues he reflection on structure and routine,

“I was just talking about this with my cousin the other night when I spent the night with him I wish my mom was more strict, Like cause I don’t know why, but for some reason I know my mom loves me and I love her too much. It’s missing more strictness. She strict but I just don’t feel like she’s as strict.”

TT’s mother helped him to do well by “cutting back on tv time”. She also spoke to making sure his homework got done. TT also talked about the routines and rules that are a part of his environment yet he also spoke about how rewards and consequences play a significant role in his academics.

“My parents, they actually encourage me to do good. If I don’t do good it’s not like a punishment or anything. If I have all F’s then I will get punished, but if I have all C’s they would encourage me to do more. My parents play well my mom, plays a big factor in my academics in school.”

Another important aspect to the rules, routines, and structure is the parent monitoring of behaviors and activities. Students reflected on the expectation that you can be involved in activities, however your rule or structure is that your homework and school work should be followed to keep the high grades. TT relayed this message,

“It (the sample guide of parent behaviors) says monitor behavior and activities, every day I come in from RASA (after school program) or I come in from school or basketball practice they ask if I have homework. They think that homework is a big factor to passing my classes and stuff because if you don’t do homework then your grades will drop and stuff like that.”

Although he displayed a negative attitude towards the manner in which his parent kept him in order, AH did not dispute the monitoring of his activities.

The student comments and reflections provide a background for their perceptions and opinions of parenting behaviors that they expressed through the interview process. These reflect what students felt from their point of view, what their parents were or were not doing. The next major category will discuss “Student Suggested Influential Parenting Strategies.”

Student Recommended Influential Parenting Strategies

The second category discusses the parenting strategies and recommendations the students have suggested. When asked the question “what would you do with your teenager to help them do well in school,” the reflections and statements were varied across all seven of the students. Each student provided some insight as to the behaviors they feel parents should display and put into action with their teenagers. Within the second category there were two themes. The themes were (a) Parent Involvement: I want your help and (b) Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences. Students continued to express the need for parent to be for a part of their education and also to have methods and techniques to provide structure, guidance and rules and discipline within the child’s life.

Parent involvement: I want your help. The first theme, parent involvement was apparent throughout the interviews with each of the students. The students expressed that parents should know what is going on in their education. The students felt this would allow parents to assist and help them when they needed it. SG felt parents should not just ask their child if they have homework, but have a process of keeping track of homework completion. She shared:

“I will always ask my child if they have homework, or make sure my kid writes it in their planner so I could look at it. And I would try to stay in contact with the school or teachers, to know when my child takes tests so I could help them study.”

As part of the process, she also had a plan to engage in the child’s learning. Students often expressed interest in doing some of the same actions their parents were using with them. This was reflected in the response from EG. His reflection revealed he would “come up to the schools for meetings with the teachers and offer his opinion.” He felt this was an effective strategy his parent used, however he also wished his parent could come to the school more, participate, and try to help more. EG’s mother provided an interesting perspective as to what she does to help. She conveyed that he needs to “make better choices” and use “better verbal skills”. These are the things she assist him with that helps him succeed in school. This perspective provided a different parental outlook.

As the researcher interviewed TT, he had similar suggestions and he was able to place his strategy in a process outline. TT shared,

“I would try to follow the same steps my mom do with me by encouraging me or checking in with the teachers. And also have a runaround sheet to see like you know how they are doing every week so me and the teachers can communicate; and talk to each other.”

He continues to share what he thinks is a good practice to have with your child,

“I would tell the parents to do what my mom be telling me to do; try your best and if they bring you bad grades home, keep telling them to try. If they keep bringing

bad grades home, then put them on punishment and see if that does any better.
And give them good comments.”

The interesting aspects of the study participants’ interviews were the different perceptions they conveyed as adolescents, of what parent involvement meant and what actions and behaviors that includes that helps contribute to their academic success. The students conveyed throughout their responses how parent involvement is wrapped around the different parent teachings and life lessons you learn from the actions they put in place. JG reported a very interesting parent behavior he would suggest. JG recommended,

“I would try my best, right now I’m trying to keep all these papers from elementary school and high school. So when I get up there I can refresh my brain with like all the things I have learned cause you never know, there might be tricky questions in life that might come back from your childhood. Plus I’ll be able to be like here you go son or daughter and hand it down to them if they are having problems with their work. But if it’s not as simple as that, and that’s not the stuff they need in the situation then I’d probably stay up all night doing research and everything.”

JG presented a very insightful and target method of how he would help his child. MR continues to suggest a parent strategy that targets the help towards the adolescents’ future. MR reports,

“If I was a parent, I would motivate my child. I would also help them so they could succeed in life. So they could grow up and maybe be famous or get a good job or just be successful. To motivate them, I would say like, if they had

homework, I would stay up with them until they were tired so we could finish it so we wouldn't have to worry about it later.”

He continues to recommend parents do activities with their children. MR understands that parents may have “bad days” and may be tired, yet the importance of doing activities with your child is important. It shows the child how companionship and nurturing allows them to be involved in their life.

“Like say I didn't finish it, they help me with my homework. Say I did finish it; it leaves me with the weekend and stuff and makes me have more time for more activities and stuff like that. I would love to do activities with my child.”

As stated previously, parent involvement can encompass a variety of actions and behaviors. One concept the students spoke about was mentorship. DB felt that parents should be involved in their child's life and education by mentoring them and by doing this, it would help your child do well in school. DB explains,

“I would do the same, mentor my kid, help him or her with their work, like get involved as most I can in school. Like help with homework, go to school with them, like do activities and projects with them. Do more active things with the city like clean sweep and stuff, more active in community stuff. Like mentor your kids, stay connected with the school and teachers and like play with your kids and do activities and stuff with your kids cause some parents they don't.”

The study participants viewed many parental behavior as effective assistance. They also saw them as mentoring, as many different venues but they all contribute towards their academic performance. However, it was clear across the interviews that parent involvement is needed. The parent involvement is inclusive of home and school.

The second theme actually expresses how the suggestion of different discipline can be incorporated as a form of help in the students' academic performance. Some students need actions more than just words.

Give me discipline, rewards and consequences. Study participants during the interview had a variety of different reflections, responses and recommendations. The family unit, rewards and consequences, discipline, rules, and in some case the structure and routine were all considered as part of the infrastructure, governance, or order of events that was followed in the household. Even when students viewed their relationship with their parent as negative, they still felt the parents should have structure and rules in place. Having the physical discipline accompanied with the discipline of following a routine helped them do well in school. AH spoke freely about the negativity he feels from his parents' discipline. He did acknowledge the things they do, yet he was very candid about what they don't do, but should. He contributed to the notion of physical discipline as a method of operation. He communicated that even though it was not in the list of sample behaviors, his parents often use physical discipline as a solution but that it did not work all the time. When asked is there anything your parent don't do that you wish they did, he mentioned:

“Less physical discipline and less raising their voices cause they do that all the time, give them reward if they do good, umm, not yell as much as parents do, I know parents get stressed when the kids aren't doing good, but do not yell all the time cause that just makes the situation worse.”

AH offered these suggestions regarding physical discipline, rewards, and consequences. He describes a system of rewarding good behavior instead of punishment handed out for the bad behavior.

“I would encourage them and try to bribe them. Say you know if you get such and such on this marking period, I will take you to Horizon [Skating Rink] or something like that to make them actually have a goal. I will encourage them I wouldn't always hit them when they do something wrong. I will make them feel good about school, like not hit them and stuff like that. Make them actually wanna graduate and stuff like that, make them not slackers.”

In relationship to his own parents, and students in his age group, AH conveyed this statement,

“They don't bribe me or show me enough affection. We, me and her (my mom) keep having this discussion about this whole reward thing. Kids my age like to receive things and we like to know that our parents love us you know. Well my parent does not show that, that much.”

Beyond the physical discipline, there is structure and routine. The students spoke about the ways communication is incorporated into discipline. MR reflects on the example of talking to your child as a form of discipline and structure. He continues by giving the strategy of open communication and having flexibility while having the structure as an option. He suggests:

“I would tell them that don't always let down your child if they have bad grades, help them so they can achieve good grades. So they can be successful. Make sure

they have a curfew so they wouldn't be out in the streets and stuff and won't get in trouble or like go to jail cause that's what a lot of people do."

In this suggestion, MR has again communicated the need to have rules and structure but to be flexible is a key point. He reflected upon the need to be given confirmation and validation but not to have their need as adolescents overlooked. MR's mother added perspective of high expectations as part of a structure. She stated that "the expectations are set for him to do well". She was the one parent who suggested that this is also done by having him enrolled in an afterschool program.

JG gives his reflections on structure and routine. When asked if there were anything more he would like for his mom to do, he also shared more insight as to what student need to do.

"I want her be able to, umm, like for my little brothers (cause they like hard headed and all that), I want her to be able to like tell them once, And be like oh, you ain't gotta tell me twice. Cause she do gotta tell them twice but it depends on what they doing cause like my little brothers they do not like to clean. I want her to able to tell them once and be like (they be like) okay ma and just get right to it. I wouldn't want it to be more sternness cause that would be like let's see how you would call it, if there were punishment and consequences she could add on to it I think she'd be able to communicate to their brains. I don't always think there should be consequences, I think you need to just get up and do it when she say do it."

Study participants also conveyed the suggestion of building a relationship with your child. AH spoke passionately regarding this strategy. Parent/Child relationship also

encompasses how the parent and the child connect with each other; how well they know each other. AH provided insight into why parents behave toward their children the reason they do. When asked if he had anything else to offer, he stated,

“I feel that parents should not put a PINS¹ (Persons In Need of Supervision), that is just taking it too far. Unless their child is really really bad. But if your child is not a terrible child, I feel the reason parents put PINS on their children is cause they don’t really know them. PINS is person in need of supervision.”

This contributes to the bond that a parent and child may share. The bond of a relationship allows parent and children to share their expectations of each other. It involves the way the two communicate with each other. The communication can be both verbal and non-verbal. It can also consist of a physical relationship which encompasses providing physical actions of affection towards the child and parent. DB spoke about the physical display of affection:

DB: “The hugs and kisses, she stills do it but I don’t like it.”

Researcher: Why don’t you like it, cause you’re older?

DB: “Yeah I’m older. 15.”

Researcher: Is there anything else parents do with little kids, they shouldn’t do with older kids?

DB: “I think they should cut out on the hugs and kisses, not too much hugs but the kisses, like they are treating you more like a younger kid but they gotta realize that you’re growing up.”

¹ PINS, Persons In Need of Supervision are when legal assistance is provided to the parents through court proceedings. The proceedings usually take place in family court.

In his reflections, AH seems to disagree with DB. He felt that “kids my age like to receive things and we like to know that our parents love us.” AH thought that parent communication could overpower physical discipline at any point. The parent child relationship contributes to the students’ academic performance. AH conveyed,

“My mom gives me a certain look where I kinda back up a little bit. Because I know that after that look she usually swings on me. My dad he umm swings on me sometimes².”

When asked if he would use the same actions AH responded,

“I would sometimes use them like rarely I currently think that swinging on your child is not necessary I feel that parents that swing on their child don’t really know their child. They can’t connect with their child, they can’t you know talk to their child on a personal level to get them to change. That’s why I would do that with my child, I would get to know my child. Calm language, language and actions I would use, I would be to put my hand on my child shoulder, look them in the eye and say why aren’t you doing this why aren’t you doing that you know in a calm voice. I wouldn’t raise my voice or wouldn’t get mad because everybody does the same thing, if you are passing with straight A’s now either you were goofing in the past in school or you are going to goof off in the future, I mean everybody goes through that phase as a child.”

The students also communicated that spending time with your child was a good strategy or practice to provide support for their academic performance. JG offered,

“I would tell them to spend more time with them and think logically. Like sometimes when its like the time, give them wise sayings and tell them about your

² Given that I am a mandated reporter, I sought additional clarification. AH used the term figuratively.

past and if you had a bad past and a good past. It doesn't always have to be bad, but like tell about it. If I could go back to elementary I would do it all over again cause like my uncle told me that and it just changed my attitude, like cause in elementary school I was kinda bad boy and he said like J, if I could go back in time and do that all over again, I'd do it."

The students felt that when a parent and child have a good relationship, they know when things are wrong with the other and they can communicate better. It makes the relationship stronger. A strong relationship influences the students' ability to listen to their parents and follow their instructions regarding all situations including their education and academic performance.

"Like when my house caught on fire a couple of weeks ago like it was some people that my mom had as company and I really didn't like 'em cause it was one person that didn't like another person and they were both in our house. I was like mom I really, she was like, I just went upstairs with a sad face, a mad face like I didn't wanna tell her about it, but then she approached me she was like umm J what's wrong with you? I was like nothing ma, she was like you need to talk to me cause I know something wrong with you cause of your face, your whole facial expression changed when you went downstairs. She was like just talk to me and then like a few minutes later I just stopped talking I didn't wanna talk so she had came back, she was like J(G) you gonna talk to me about it? I was like and then you know, she knew how to you know get through my brain and mess with me and like I told her what happened and she was like well maybe if it's something wrong because if you not happy J(G), then I'm not happy cause we all go down in

this together and we work as a team everyday then I'm like encouraged to talk to her about everything.”

The parent and child building a relationship can be a foundation for the how well the student does in school. The students across all of the interviews communicated the varied suggestions and options for this parent behavior.

Baumrind: Demandingness and Responsiveness

The second research question of this study asks if the identified behaviors fit the literature's notion of Baumrind's parenting style theory. The two dimensions of the theory are: responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness refers to the warmth the parents display towards their children. This also includes the amount of acceptance and involvement parents exhibit with their children. Demandingness is the amount of control the parent exhibits. This is in addition to the level of maturity that is expected of the child, and the amount of supervision the parent displays. Parents who apply the authoritative style of parenting are in possession of both characteristics (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005).

As previously mentioned, researchers agree there are three main elements to the framework of authoritative parenting: warmth, structure, and autonomy support. Warmth is characterized as the extent to which adolescents feel love and acceptance from their parents. Structure is described as rules and limits. The adolescent is supervised and there are expectations for his or her behavior. Autonomy support is illustrated by the amount of reinforcement and encouragement given to the adolescent to develop as an individual. The child is taught and provided examples of how to become an independent and critical

thinker as well as problem solver (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005; Grant & Ray, 2010).

The themes have characteristics that fit across both dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness (see Table 4.1 Theme Classification). The findings seem to suggest that the identified behaviors indeed fit into the literatures notion of Baumrind’s Parenting Style Theory within respect to the four styles of parenting. As the themes are classified, the characteristics of authoritative and authoritarian seem to be the most apparent.

Table 4.1

Theme Classification

Theme	D. Baumrind	Comments
“Use specific language with your child”: verbal motivation	Authoritative	Encouragement, specific language, nurturing
I have a routine and I have rules.	Authoritarian	Rules, structure, routine
Parent Involvement: I want your help.	Authoritative	Going to the school, speaking with the teachers, helping with homework
Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences	Authoritative	Physical discipline, discipline of household structure

The identified behaviors extend across both dimensions because the characteristics and behaviors of warmth and control can be found collaboratively in some instances. The research findings previously have been inconsistent for cultures outside of white middle class. These findings demonstrate the effectiveness of specified parenting behaviors of adolescent African American parents as a positive effect on academic achievement. In particular, respondents were very clear that warm interactions were

perceived as positive to their academic success, as were reasonable routines, and good monitoring. Physical discipline, which would fit better under authoritarian parenting, was seen by AH in particular as detrimental and unnecessary to promote academic success. Thus, in general, this study showed that students unfamiliar with Baumrind's work are able to identify dimensions of parenting that largely fit with Baumrind's typology.

Summary

In summary, there were two major categories and four themes. The categories were determiners for the answers to the research questions. The first category was "Student Perception or Opinion of their Parents Behaviors." This category reported what the study participants conveyed as their perception or opinion of the parents' parenting behaviors. It was inclusive of the themes: (a) "Use specific language with your child": verbal motivation and (b) I have a routine and I have rules. The second category was "Student Recommended Parenting Strategies." This category discussed the behavior the study participant would recommend or that they would do themselves if they were parents. It was inclusive of the themes: (a) Parent Involvement: I want your help and (b) Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences.

The final chapter in this study will present a discussion of the findings. It will also offer limitations of the study, practical implications, and the potential for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the themes that emerged from the study and possible integrated characteristics of the categories. In addition, the relationship between the findings and the research questions, (1) what parenting behaviors do urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance? and (2) do the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Baumrind's authoritative parenting will be discussed. Conclusions relative to some of the research in Chapter 2 will be discussed. This chapter will conclude with implications for practical use and guidelines for best practice, future research and limitations of the study. Baumrind classified four types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful (Baumrind, 1967, 1971). Authoritative parents displayed high levels of warmth and affection and placed reasonable demands on their children (Grant & Ray, 2009). Authoritarian parents placed high levels of controls on the children, their actions and their behaviors, but showed little or no warmth (Susskind, 2005); Grant & Ray, 2009). Permissive parents showed great warmth and caring towards their children, they placed few demands on their children's actions and behaviors (Susskind, 2005; Grant & Ray, 2009). Neglectful parenting was contributed by Baumrind in 1989 and is sometimes called Rejecting-Neglecting parenting.

Findings

In studying what parenting behaviors urban middle and high school students identify as influential on their current academic performance, the students had some very strong opinions, perceptions, and ideas. The data grouped in two categories. Within the two categories: “Student Perceptions/Opinions of their Parents Behaviors” and “Student Recommended Influential Parenting Strategies”, four themes were developed. The first category reflected upon the themes: “Use specific language with your child”: verbal motivation” and I have a routine and I have rules. The second category reflected upon the themes: Parent Involvement: I want your help and Give Me Discipline, Rewards and Consequences.

Generally the study participants felt they were happy to have parents who had displayed warmth and control (Baumrind, 1967, 1971 & 1989). Overall, they felt the choices their parents made were in their best interest and were helpful in their childrearing. There were some suggestions as to what they should and should not do as parents, yet the majority were satisfied with the techniques and strategies the parents displayed. The study participants were not far removed making suggestions as to what parenting behaviors they would contribute in their own parenting and instances of what their parents should do.

The study participants had significant reflections regarding the verbal motivation their parents awarded them. In the two dimensions of Baumrind, verbal motivation would be classified as warmth/responsiveness. The words and phrases the parents chose to use provided both encouragement and verbal nurturing. It motivated the students to not only do well but to continue doing well in order to continue receiving the encouraging and

nurturing words. The students also reflected upon the verbal displays of affection their parents gave them. The encouraging words were wonderful, however hearing the parent say the words and the feelings and emotions that resonated within the students was also strongly conveyed. The students felt it made them feel loved and only influenced them to try harder and to continue to succeed. The students also reflected on the unfavorable words that some of their parents used, but how that also motivated them to excel in their academics. The adverse verbal motivation brought forth angry and upset feelings within the students towards how their parents were parenting, but it had a positive influences on their academic performance.

However, it was not the verbal motivation alone that influenced their academic performance; it was also the reinforcement of rules and structure that worked collaboratively with it. This would be known in Baumrind's theory as the control/demandingness. The rules, structure, and routines that were in place for the study participants, provided them with the reassurance that their parents truly cared and they were serious about their academic performance. The students gave an overall reflection that the routines and structure helped them achieve academically because it provided stability and consistency. The stability also provided comfort in knowing their parents were there to support them. The consistency allowed for other activities which enhanced their growth and social development. It offered valuable life lessons to be taught through the guidelines of a strong structural foundation while affording them the opportunity to make mistakes and having a safety net there to catch them.

They reflected in some instances on how they wish their parents provided more rules and structure but how their parent needed to also have rewards and consequences

for their behaviors. The study participants felt that there should be rewards for following the rules and achieving the high academic standards their parents set. The rewards and consequences also displayed consistency and stability in the fact that their parent meant what they said. It allowed the students to hold trust in what their parent said to them. The institution of a reward system conveyed that the parents were invested in their academics and wanted them to succeed, which helped reinforce the life lessons they were also teaching their students.

In cross referencing what the students perceived as their parents and their GPAs, it was interesting to see that students who felt strongly about the verbal motivation and the rules and routines, were students who displayed GPAs averaging 2.6+/3.0+ out of a 4.0 scale. These were also the students who, as well as their parents', applied the high levels of encouraging words, support balanced with the strong rules and structure, and routines. They also felt strongly regarding the need for parent involvement along with the rewards and consequences. The students whose GPAs fell below a 2.0 out of a 4.0 scale, still conveyed the parents' verbal motivation, be it adversely in some aspects. The students also displayed a sense of structure, rules and routines with the parents parenting behaviors, but felt the rewards and consequences were missing from the equation or were not sufficient. The interesting aspect was that the parents of the students below the 2.0 GPA felt they provided their students with the same support and encouragement as the parents of the student with the 3.0+ average GPAs. Even though we expected to find different parenting behaviors for students separated into the categories of high and low GPA. In this study we discovered there was no difference between the two. Parents of

students with a high GPA made the same statements as those of student with low GPAs. In this study, parenting is not related to GPA.

Connections to Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory

The second question of the study asked if the identified parenting behaviors of students fit the literature's notion of Diana Baumrind's authoritative parenting.

Researchers agree there are three main elements to the framework of authoritative parenting: warmth, structure, and autonomy support (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005). Responsiveness refers to the warmth the parents display towards their children. This also includes the amount of acceptance and involvement parents exhibit with their children. Demandingness is the amount of control the parent exhibits. This is in addition to the level of maturity that is expected of the child, and the amount of supervision the parent displays. Parents who apply the authoritative style of parenting are in possession of both characteristics (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002; Pellerin, 2005).

Culture

In general, minority urban middle school students concur with classification. There is a common nature of parenting. However, there is a strong cultural factor that provides a component that is absent in Baumrind's theory. Parents who use the standard authoritative style of parenting also incorporate elements from the other styles of parenting. Pure style parenting appears to be rare. In particular, parents also take specifics from the authoritative style, concentrate on those particular characteristics, and adapt them to the child (Park & Bauer; Attaway & Bry; Spera, 2005; Mandara, 2003; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie, 2008). The culture variable is how the components of parenting

are expressed. We understand there is a common nature of parenting. For example warmth and control are common in Baumrind and were common among the study participants. The impact of culture conveys the difference in how the warmth and control are displayed. The difference culture makes is in the how the parenting behaviors are delivered.

As a participant in the African American culture, norms and a speaker of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), it is known as a very descriptive form of communication (Smitherman, 1995). While not trying to make this a communication study, it is important to note that participants' use of AAVE surfaced while doing this study. AAVE is a highly expressive language and it uses large amounts of figurative expression. An example of this is displayed when AH reflects on the "physical and verbal" discipline his parents administer. He uses the words "swing on me" and "use profanity towards me." The physical discipline would be categorized as control/demandingness and the verbal profanity would be categorized as a warm demander. This in no way constitutes whether the researcher advises this as a right or wrong behavior on the part of the parent or whether AAVE is right or wrong. It merely offers some insight into some of the uses and expressiveness of AAVE. This can also be seen across the titles of the themes in this study. Some may call them clichés, however they are well known in the African American culture as positive forms of communication and ways we express how to best raise African American children.

Student Voice

Student voice is very apparent and important in this study. There is great value in student voice. Earlier researchers missed the opportunity to discover the valuable

information that was expressed by asking the students directly. Not having student voice would have been a loss and source of a great of information. The students were able to identify the aspects of Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory through identification of what they identify as the best practices and behaviors parents should display.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study could be used to develop guidelines and best practices for educators and parents in the child-rearing and educating of African American students to become well-rounded, strong, socially and emotionally sound individuals.

School. Researchers have also have found authoritative parenting has a positive relationship to adolescent academic achievement (Park & Bauer, 2002; Attaway & Bry, 2004; Spera, 2005; Mandara, 2006; Spera, 2006; Aye, Lau & Nie, 2008). In order for students to achieve parents have to be involved. The involvement has to be constructive and have a positive impact on the child at school as well as home. Park and Bauer examined the authoritative characteristics of supervision, support, strictness, and parental involvement and the effects they had on student achievement. Spera (2005 & 2006) investigated the authoritative characteristics of emotional support, parental explanations, and parental communications. The students reflected on parent communicating with the teacher on a consistent and scheduled basis. This allows for the school and the parent to be aware of what is taking place at educational times of the day.

School staffs also need to get to know their students and their families. They need to learn from the parents what rules, routines and structures the family have in place at home. This will also allow strengthen the connection and authority the school has when the child is in their care. If the student is aware that the school communicates with the

parents on a consistent basis, they will be less likely to display any behaviors outside of expectations.

Differentiation the treatment of students should be according to the way students behave and not according to their parenting style. In being aware of the students' family situation, you will be able to understand their reason for their behaviors. This will allow for the adults in the building to not misconstrue the reasons for the behaviors being displayed but to have empathy when dealing with the child and their behaviors.

Family/home. Authoritative parenting is positively associated with healthy adolescent behavior development (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Parents have to re-enforce the positive behaviors they want at school at home or vice versa. The student needs to be aware that their parent knows the rules for school and continues enforcing those when at home. The student needs to know the parent and the school staff are in agreement and “on the same page.” This closes the gap for student to try and have the school staff and their parents in disagreement about different aspects of their education.

The parents need to keep open communication with the student; always ask how their day went and what they have for homework. The parent should not only ask the questions, but engage the student in conversation about the day. This shows the student that you have an invested interest in what they are learning. The open communication will afford the student the opportunity to take ownership of their education and feel as if their opinion counts. Certainly, in this study, students praised their parents when they monitored their homework and were on top of their studies.

If family emergencies or difficult situations arise, inform the school staff. This does not mean everyone in the building needs to be aware of what happened, however,

the key educators in your student's life should be aware of the crisis. This allows them to give your student additional support in the event the structure of the day becomes difficult to handle.

School and families together need to set high expectations for their students. The students also spoke about the feeling of success and wanting to continue that through academic achievement. There are significant driving forces within a student's school and home environment that give students the courage to move forward (Park & Bauer, 2002; Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003). Among the factors from their home environment, parental support and guidance in the form of the parenting style used (Bean et al.). Together schools and families can make educating African American students more positively research reflected.

Limitations of the Study

This study is not without its limitations. An adolescent identifying a behavior as supportive it does not mean that it is. However, if adolescents feel strongly about the parenting information, that merits further investigation. This study does not consider many factors such as parental education or the influence of siblings. However, in spite of its limitations, the researcher expects the study will provide much needed information about adolescent views on this topic and whether these views vary by achievement and conform to the theoretical framework of Baumrind. These results will contribute to the literature and will hopefully have practical implications for the school district in its communication with parents of high school students. Several limitations were identified.

One of the limitations to this study was the sample size. The desired size for the study was fifteen study participants. The study yielded 7 students. This could have been

reflective upon the community center we partnered with. Yet it could have also been reflective of the time of year the study was conducted. The center expressed that their numbers were lower than expected. Even though we were limited in the number of participants, saturation was reached.

In the data collection, a second limitation was identified. Out of the parent information sheet, only six of the seven parents answered the question of what they did to help their child do well in school. Of those selected, the parents who answered were a majority of mothers. The numbers of parent who participated was not as large to provide a wide array of responses.

The third limitation of the study would be the weak parent input. The study would have provided more rich insight from the parent perspective if they parents would have provided more details in their answers. There would have been greater value in the information if the opportunity of going back to speak with them occurred the same as it did with the students. In the ability to go back and address them as additional questions arose from the data, we were able to get greater detail and elaboration on the information they gave us.

Recommendations

There are implications for future research. This study only sample students in grades 7-10. There could be a benefit from conducting a qualitative study of students below grade 7 as well as above grade 10. The collection of data with that group of participants may allow for understanding what some of the root causes to academic underachievement of African American students contain.

This study could also be expanded to include parent interviews. The parent only gave their perspective through an information sheet. A qualitative study allowing them to share their perspective of what they do to help their child do well in school could also expand the research base for African American parenting.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research examined Diana Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory and its relationship to African American parenting and students' academic achievement. The findings of this study answered the questions of what parental behaviors *they* believe foster their academic achievement.

In answering the question if the behaviors fit within the authoritative parenting framework of D. Baumrind (1967, 1971), it is clear that the behaviors may fit, but they have to be adjusted and modified in their expression to fit the culture it is servicing. It is questionable whether the parenting style research applies equally well to all cultural and ethnic subgroups. In this study, students themselves provided validity for the standard typology, although there were certainly cultural and ethnic nuances in the narrative.

The students provided clear and concise insight and great voice to the parenting behaviors from their perspective. They also offered suggestions as to what behaviors parents should display or use with their students. The students felt strongly about the behaviors that work and those that don't work with them as adolescents. I think it is imperative that we continue to listen to the information they are providing us as educators and as parents. It will provide insight into how African American students think and process what they need to be successful.

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Appendix A

Parental Behaviors and Actions (SPBG)

Sample Parent BEHAVIORS	Sample Parent ACTION
(not totally inclusive)	(not totally inclusive)
Encouragement	Use specific language with your child: “I’m proud of you”; “I knew you could do it”; share stories of your success
Companionship	Spend time with your child; do various activities with your child
Nurturing	Provide your child with hugs, kisses, and other displays of affection
Rules	Give/teach your child specific things they can or cannot do: You cannot stand on top of the coffee table, You may not stay out past 11 pm; You may go to your friend’s house, You may have 3 cookies; give them explanation for the rules: to keep you safe, to protect you, to teach you how to handle situations, etc.
Parental monitoring	Monitor behaviors and activities: “Do you have homework?” “Who is going to the movies with you?” “I will be there to pick you up.”
Open communication	Talk to your child about different topics and encourage them to approach you to talk about things they may have an interest in or have questions about; give them reasons for your decisions and be sure they understand them
Structure	Have routines in place: bedtimes, what to do when you get up and start your day, what to do after school, when to do homework, etc.
Flexibility	Allow yourself to change the rules sometimes/special occasions: allow them to stay up later during school vacations, maybe extra TV time on the weekends, etc.
Consistency	Apply the same rules and routines all the time; the same things to reinforce good behaviors/outcomes
Firmness	Don’t yell and scream all the time, talk in a strong tone; learn how to be strong in your decisions and not change your decisions back and forth

Appendix B

PARENT CONSENT FORM (For use with minors) St. John Fisher College

Title of study: Interviews with African American Adolescents on Authoritative Parenting and the Relationship to Academic Achievement

Name of researcher: Christine Richards 585-747-7040

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Guillermo Montes (For further information: 585-899-3734)

Purpose of study: To investigate what adolescents say parents use to help them with their academic achievement.

Approval of study: This study has not been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Edgerton Recreation Campus

Length of participation: December 2010/January 2011

Potential Risks: There are no expected risks to participating in this study. Participant confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times. All information provided by participants will be maintained in a secure location.

Potential Benefits: The results of this study may provide scholars and educators with better understandings for educating adolescent learners. The study findings may provide practical and tangible strategies to help parents of adolescents by providing suggestions for child rearing and provide strategies for educators that could help in the teaching of adolescents.

Method of protecting confidentiality/privacy: Participants' given names will be concealed and replaced with numbers to protect privacy and confidentiality. Cards used by participants in the pile sort task will be color-coded and matched to participants' numbers for analysis. All raw data will be stored and locked in the researcher's office. No personal identifying information will be used in the dissertation, transcript, field notes, or in any subsequent publication.

Your rights: As a parent/guardian of a research participant, you have a right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.

2. Withdraw your child's participation at any time without penalty.
3. Allow your child to refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of the results of this study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print Name (Participant)	Signature	Date
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Consent for a minor child:

I, the parent or guardian of _____, a minor, _____ years of age, consent to his/her participation in the above named study. I have received a copy of this form.

Print name (Parent)	Signature	Date
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Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date
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If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate approvals.

Appendix C

Letter of Introduction to the Participants

Dear Student:

I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College. I am conducting a study that will examine the perceptions of what minority ninth and tenth grade students from the urban environment report as behaviors displayed by their parents that do or would influence their academic success. This study will be a qualitative research study using interviews to acquire answers to the study's research questions. All information that is provided and the names of all participants will remain confidential. Participants will only be identified by a numerical coding system.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you were a student in seventh thru tenth grade. As a participant, you will be asked to attend one 30 to 40-minute interview where you will answer questions regarding you parents behaviors and parenting practices. (The possibility of a second interview maybe needed to clarify answers).

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline this offer or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. Should you decline or withdraw, there will be no risk associated with your decision. In the event that you choose to withdraw during the course of the study, any information you had already provided will remain completely confidential.

Thank you very much for your consideration in becoming a participant in this study. Your contributions will be very helpful to those interested in improving education for students in your age group. The information that participants provide for this study will result in findings and recommendations that will be shared with the participants, educators, and school leaders.

Sincerely,

Christine Richards
Supervising Director
Youth Development and Family Services
Rochester, New York

Appendix D

ASCENT FORM St. John Fisher College

Title of study: Interviews with African American Adolescents on Authoritative Parenting and the Relationship to Academic Achievement

Name of researcher: Christine Richards

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Guillermo Montes (For further information: 585-899-3734)

Purpose of study: To investigate what adolescents say parents use to help them with their academic achievement.

Approval of study: This study has not been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: Edgerton Recreation Campus

Length of participation: December 2010/January 2011

Potential Risks: There are no expected risks to participating in this study. Participant confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained at all times. All information provided by participants will be maintained in a secure location.

Potential Benefits: The results of this study may provide scholars and educators with better understandings for educating adolescent learners. The study findings may provide practical and tangible strategies to help parents of adolescents by providing suggestions for child rearing and provide strategies for educators that could help in the teaching of adolescents.

Method of protecting confidentiality/privacy: Participants' given names will be concealed and replaced with numbers to protect privacy and confidentiality. Cards used by participants in the pile sort task will be color-coded and matched to participants' numbers for analysis. All raw data will be stored and locked in the researcher's office. No personal identifying information will be used in the dissertation, transcript, field notes, or in any subsequent publication.

Your rights: As a research participant, you have a right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of this study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study. I understand that the results of this study may be presented at conferences and published in journals and give my permission for use of any data collected from my participation to be included in such presentations and publications. I understand that my anonymity and confidentiality will be protected.

Print name (Participant)	Signature	Date
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Print name (Investigator)	Signature	Date
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If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate approvals.

Appendix E

PARENT INFORMATION FORM
(Please print)

Parent Name _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Name of child: _____ Grade: _____

Ethnicity:

_____ African American/Black _____ Caucasian _____ Asian _____ Other

Please pick the option that best describes you child's academic performance.

mostly A's

mostly B's

mostly C's

mostly D's or F's

What do you do to help your child do well in school?

****Please have your child bring a copy of their most recent report card to the interview or send in to the address on the self-addressed stamped envelope.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix F

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Tell me about yourself? School you attend, number of people in your family.

2) How do you think you are doing in school?

3) How do your parents react to your report card?

4) What do your parents do to help you do well in school?

(at this question, bring out Sample parent behavior guide)

5) Do you think there is anything different or missing because you are African American?

6) If you were to become a parent, what would you do with your teenager to help them succeed in school?

7) Any else you want to add or any additional questions?

- 8) Is there anything your parent don't do that you wish they did?
- 9) Is there anything more you want them to do?
- 10) Do you think what they do at home is actually helping you achieve the grades you are achieving?
- 11) What would you say or tell adults or parents to do that would help students get the grades of C+, B's or A's in school?
- 12) If your parent didn't do the things they were doing now, do you think you would be getting the grades you are now?
- 13) When you say parents, who are you talking about?
- 14)
 - a. What specific language does your parent use?
 - b. Would you use the same language?
- 15)
 - a. What specific actions do your parents use?
 - b. Would you use the same actions?

Appendix G

Codes

Code	Name	Definition/meaning
Enc	Encouragement	Use specific language with your child: "I'm proud of you"; "I knew you could do it"; share stories of your success
Comp	Companionship	Spend time with your child; do various activities with your child
Nurt	Nurturing	Provide your child with hugs, kisses, and other displays of affection
Rule	Rules	Give/teach your child specific things they can or can not do: You cannot stand on top of the coffee table, You may not stay out past 11 pm; You may go to your friend's house, You may have 3 cookies; give them explanation for the rules: to keep you safe, to protect you, to teach you how to handle situations, etc.
Pmont	Parent monitoring	Monitor behaviors and activities: "Do you have homework?" "Who is going to the movies with you?" "I will be there to pick you up."
Open	Open communication	Talk to your child about different topics and encourage them to approach you to talk about things they may have an interest in or have questions about; give them reasons for your decisions and be sure they understand them
Struct	Structure	Have routines in place: bedtimes, what to do when you get up and start your day, what to do after school, when to do homework, etc.
Flex	Flexibility	Allow yourself to change the rules sometimes/special occasions: allow them to stay up later during school vacations, maybe extra TV time on the weekends, etc.
Consis	Consistency	Apply the same rules and routines all the time; the same things to reinforce good behaviors/outcomes
Firm		Don't yell and scream all the time, talk in a strong tone; learn

Code	Name	Definition/meaning
	Firmness	how to be strong in your decisions and not change your decisions back and forth
Ptalk	Parent talks	Parent tells others about their childs' behavior: positive or negative
Cuss	Cussing out/use of profanity	Use of inappropriate or foul language towards or around the student
Pteach	Parent teaching	Parent teaching the child something through words, direct instruction or situation(s)
Lless	Life lesson	Something taught to the child by the parent that is a survival technique or something they will be able to apply later in life
Steach	School teaching	Something the student specifically learns in school
Pdis	Physical discipline	Parent uses physical methods to discipline the child
Envaware	Environment awareness	The student is aware of their environment and surroundings
Ecostat	Economic status Awareness	The student is aware of their economic status
Paraexp	Parent expectations	What the parent expects of the student: behavior or academically
Gddesc	Good decision making	Making good decisions or choices
Learnbeh	Learned behavior	Learned behavior from a parent or from another family member or person in their life
Supp	Support	Parent gives the student help or assistance in some form
Relat	Relationships	Student or parent identifies a relationship of some sort with other family members
Ppart	Parent participation	Parent is involved and shows interest through activities: school community, etc.
Rew/conseq	Rewards/	Parent gives student rewards or consequences for their actions

Code	Name	Definition/meaning
	consequences	
Futgo	Future goals	Future goals or objectives
Parbond	Parent bonding	Strengthening the relationship with parent or adult figure
Lack of parrelat w/ child	Lack of parent relationship with child	Parent and child have no relationship established with each other
Mot	Motivation	Giving the support or actions to make the student want to do something
Respb	Responsibility	Student knows what their roles or job is handles it well