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Self-esteem: The influence of parenting styles

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Abstract

This study examines parent/child relationships and their possible influence on self-esteem. The parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and unmatched, are assessed (by child report) and compared to levels of global and specific domains of self-esteem, to determine whether parenting style influences self-esteem in children. Eighty-four children aged 11-12 years of age; male and female were asked to complete three questionnaires. The questionnaires were: Child Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (Schluderman & Schluderman, 1970) to ascertain their parent's parenting style; Harter's (1985), Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC), to measure the child's self-esteem and a demographic questionnaire. ANOVA and ANCOVA were used to assess the influence of parenting styles on global and specific domains of self-esteem. The results found significantly higher global, scholastic and physical self-esteem in children of parents practicing authoritative parenting style in comparison to authoritarian parenting styles. No signficant results were found for permissive and unmatched parenting styles.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of appendices Page No

List of tables

Figures

Chapter One

Self-esteem: The Influence of Parenting Styles

Introduction

1.1 Background

The concept of self-esteem is an area of psychology that has gained considerable attention, but for many years has also caused much confusion, as exactly what it encompasses and how it develops, has been unclear.

The following are a sample of definitions of self-esteem provided by various researchers. Reber (1985) describes self-esteem as the degree to which one values oneself, whilst, Corkille Briggs (1975) explains self-esteem as how you feel about yourself privately, not what you present to the world, such as your wealth or status. Steffenhagen (1990) states that, "self-esteem is the very core of the personality and consequently, the basis of all behaviour, normal or pathological" (p.1). Van der Werff (1990) defines self-esteem as the evaluative aspect of the self-concept. These definitions combined appear to sum up the meaning of self-esteem, although explained differently they all point to the evaluation of the self.

The research literature on self-esteem provides an understanding of the consequences of low self-esteem for the individual. Harter (1993) reviewed the literature and found that self-esteem affects mood and found possible links between low self-esteem, depression, feelings of hopelessness and possibly suicide. Khantzian, Halliday and McAuliffe (1990) studied addicts and mention that addicts have dysfunctions in ego and self-structures responsible for regulating and maintaining self-

esteem. Hart (1993) suggests that low self-esteem can be linked to educational failure, drug and alcohol abuse, vulnerability to peer pressure, eating disorders and suicide. More specifically, Higgins (cited in Masling & Bornstein, 1994) conducted a study that explored the effects of discrepancies between actual self and ideal self. He found that the smaller the discrepancy between the ideal and actual self, the greater the likelihood of higher self-esteem, emotional stability and lack of depression. Conversely, the greater the discrepancy between ideal and actual self the lower the self-esteem. In summary, it would appear from the literature on self-esteem, that low self-esteem has an affect on the psychological functioning of individuals, often limiting their potential.

This research explores possible reasons for high or low self-esteem, concentrating on the development of self-esteem, by examining the potential influence of the parent's behaviour or type of child rearing approach. To categorize the parent's behaviour, Baumrind's styles of parenting are used. These are: Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive, which are defined as follows:

a) Authoritative parenting style, which combines unconditional regard, acceptance of the child's behaviour within certain limits, with relatively firm control.

b) Authoritarian parenting style, which involves the parent using unbending rules to shape the child's behaviour and imposing their will on the child without any give and take. The parent believes they are always right.

c) Permissive parenting style in which parents show warmth and allow the child a great amount of autonomy while exercising little control over them. They allow their

children to shape their own behaviour instead of being active in this process (Damon, 1989).

For this study it was felt that it was important to use the parent's combined style of parenting, this meant that some parents were categorised as having an unmatched parenting style, as both parents were different in their parenting style, i.e. one may be authoritarian and the other authoritative. Researchers such as Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts and Fraleigh (1987) have also used this concept of creating another group.

1.2 Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this research is to help clarify how parenting styles may be contributing to self-esteem levels in children. Although much research has already been conducted in this area, it is felt that more specific information such as examining domains of self-esteem and how they may be affected by different parenting styles, would help to broaden the knowledge about parenting and self-esteem. However, it must be emphasized that this study is based on white, middle class culture and may not be relevant for other cultures.

As it is already well documented throughout the literature how important a healthy self-esteem is for good psychological well being, further clarification towards determining what factors may be contributing to self-esteem levels would be important.

Preventing the development of low self-esteem in children would be invaluable, rather than trying to correct the problem of low self-esteem once it has already been

created. The findings of this study may help to provide some guidelines for future parenting programs that are designed to act as a preventative measure against the development of low self-esteem in children (keeping in mind that this study concentrates on white, middle class, European culture).

1.3 Hypotheses

The research objective is to examine parenting styles and their possible influence on global and specific domains of self-esteem. It is hypothesized that authoritative parenting style will have a significantly positive influence on global self-esteem and that in comparison, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are expected to have a less positive influence on children's self-esteem. It is also hypothesized that authoritative parenting style will have a significantly positive influence on specific domains of self-esteem in comparison to the other parenting styles.

Chapter Two

Literature review

Because of the complexity of the variables involved in this study i.e. self-esteem and parenting, the literature review firstly explores research on self-esteem and parenting separately, then combined, in order to provide a greater understanding to the background of the study. Therefore, information from the literature is provided in separate sections to explain what is meant by self-esteem, and its development and measurement. Likewise, literature on parenting background and specific styles of parenting are detailed and then links between parenting and self-esteem is discussed. A theoretical framework regarding self-esteem and parenting is also detailed separately.

2.1 Self-esteem Explained

Baumeister (1993) reflects back to research that was conducted as far back as 1892 by James, who was one of the earlier scholars exploring the concept of self-esteem. James proposed that high self-esteem is found in individuals who recognized their strengths, felt they had achieved and were contented with these strengths and achievements, no matter what level they had reached. Alternatively, low self-esteem was linked to individuals who feel that they have not reached their ideal, are not contented with their achievements and fall short of their expectations. This early concept of self-esteem has been tried and tested by researchers and found to be still relevant today.

One of the areas of confusion in the literature, has been the understanding of self-concept versus self-esteem. Van der Werff (1990) explains that self-esteem is the evaluative aspect of self-concept. Likewise, Beane and Lipka (cited in Forster & Schwatz, 1994) explain the differences between self-concept and self-esteem, distinguishing them as two distinct dimensions of self-perception. Self-concept is the description individuals attach to themselves based on the roles and attributes one believes one possesses, whilst self-esteem refers to the person's evaluation of their self-concept. A person could feel worthless or valued, regardless of their personal achievements, consequently, yielding negative or positive self-esteem.

Another aspect of self-esteem that has been highlighted more recently in the literature, has concentrated on the differences between global self-esteem and specific self-esteem (Rosenberg, Rosenberg, Shoenback & Schooler, 1995). Global self-esteem is described as the individual's positive or negative attitude toward the self in totality. Whereas, specific self-esteem indicates how a person feels about their ability in particular domains such as sport, academic performance, social competence etc. However, it is likely that people whose global self-esteem is low would possibly rate their specific domains of self-esteem as lower, as they are less likely to recognise their own strengths and are more likely to shrug them off as being of lesser value or importance than they actually are.

According to Rosenberg et al., (1995) global self-esteem is more important than specific self-esteem. Their study found that "specific self-esteem has a direct effect on behaviour (or behaviour outcomes), whereas global self-esteem has a direct effect on

psychological well-being" (p.148). For example, a person may have high athletic competence or high academic competence etc., but be unable to fully appreciate this achievement because they do not feel positive about it and do not recognize it as being particularly good, therefore, it does not contribute to their wellbeing.

2.2 Self-esteem – How it Develops

The research regarding the development of self-esteem has caused some confusion and is an area that is still being explored. Earlier thoughts about the development of self-esteem are included in the work of Cooley (1902), who was one of the leading writers on self-esteem development. He suggested that self-esteem development was based on a social support system, with significant others playing the major role by providing positive regard for the person. Accordingly, the individual internalizes the positive or negative feedback from significant others, which then provides the esteem for the self.

Cooley's view of self-esteem development is supported by more recent researchers (which are explored later in this section) but also reflects Freud's words, "A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror, that confidence of his success that often induces real success" (Pierce & Wardle, 1993, p. 1125).

Several researchers have examined self-esteem development. Coopersmith (1967) has been a major researcher in this area and suggests that a healthy self-esteem is created by the quality of the relationships that exist between the child and significant

adults in their life, maintaining that children value themselves to the degree that these significant adults have valued them. Likewise, Bower (cited in Kaplan, 1986) suggests that self-esteem evolves from a combination of feedback a child receives from others and the child's evaluation of their own subjective experience, with family being seen as the most powerful influence.

More recently, Hart (1993) suggests that self-esteem in children evolves through the quality of the relationships between children and significant adults in their life. Children draw conclusions of how important, lovable or possibly how worthless they are from these relationships. Similarly, McCormick and Kennedy (1993) explored parenting and adolescent self-esteem and concluded that what is most important for positive self-esteem is parenting through acceptance and independence-encouraging. Further support for the concept of parent child relationships being most important in the development of self-esteem in children comes from Schor, Stidley and Malspeis (1995) who found that positive parental expectations were linked to higher self-esteem in children.

Burns (1979) suggests that there are several sources that contribute to the development of self-esteem: these are body image, language ability, feedback from the environment such as significant others, identification with appropriate sex roles and child rearing practices. These sources are thought to be interwoven but some are more important at certain times during the life span. The child rearing practices would be more important in early childhood, as parents have the most influence on children in the early years. The awareness of self continues to develop as the child moves away from

the parents into other settings such as school. Here the importance of peer and teacher feedback and feedback from specific experiences in competence areas would begin to emerge.

There is very little research on the development of specific self-esteem areas such as scholastic, athletic, behavioural, physical and social self-esteem domains. Scholastic and athletic domains are possibly more competence based, developing more so through the feedback and experience the child has had within the domains. However, children are more likely to be stronger in some domains as a result of their global self-esteem. For instance, if they feel good about themselves they may do better socially and have a higher social self-esteem. Riggio, Throckmorton and DePaola (1990) explored social skills and self-esteem, finding that scores on general social self-esteem were significantly, positively correlated with general measures of self-esteem.

Researchers, Granleese and Joseph (1994) found that physical appearance was the single best predictor of global self-esteem. Therefore, it appears that physical self-esteem is possibly one of the most important of the domains, in that the physical body is constantly on display to the world and is initially the most noticeable part of the person, unlike other domain areas. This is likely to affect the older child's (early primary upwards) view of themselves as they become more aware of the physical differences between themselves and others, particularly once they attend school, as children tend to not only notice physical differences but usually point them out in cruel ways. Negative feedback about their physical appearance could impact on the child's view of themselves, and may in turn reduce their self–esteem in this area. Pierce and Wardle

(1993), examined the impact of parental appraisal of physical features of their children and found that self-esteem regarding physical differences such as overweight or underweight physical appearance depends on the feedback of significant others such as parents, relatives, peers and possibly teachers.

As the child matures and particularly during adolescence, physical attractiveness and development no doubt play a more important role in how the child/adolescent feels about themselves physically. Therefore, adolescents are most vulnerable to low or high physical self-esteem as their physical development becomes very noticeable and their attractiveness to the opposite sex becomes important (Burns, 1979). Further support for this view comes from research conducted by Simmons & Blyth, 1987 Zumpf, 1989 (cited in Dusek, 1996) who suggest that for adolescents in particular, physical self-esteem is possibly the single most important part of the self-esteem, especially for females.

Scholastic self-esteem would be expected to be high in the child who performs well at school, as they will be evaluated positively by teachers and most likely by other students. However, parents may have high expectations and be constantly giving the child negative feedback on high standard school work, if it is not considered good enough to them. This negative feedback may reduce the feelings of competence about their scholastic ability, as they are not reaching the parent's expectation, which becomes their ideal. This discrepancy between the ideal and the actual (even though the discrepancy is slight) as James suggests, can lower the self-esteem.

In conclusion, it would appear from the literature (Cooley, 1902; Coopersmith, 1967; Burns, 1979; Pierce & Wardle, 1993; Hart, 1993; McCormick & Kennedy, 1993) that the most important factor in the development of high self-esteem is the role of significant others and how those significant people convey to the child that they are valued and accepted. This would be particularly important for global self-esteem but would also impact on how they evaluated their specific strengths and weaknesses. Significant others are usually parents or other family role models but can incorporate peers and teachers as the child moves away from parents into other settings.

2.3 Measuring Self-esteem

The research literature highlights that there have been problems in measuring self-esteem (Burns, cited in Hoare, Elton, Geer & Kerley, 1993). Over the years, many scales and measures have been developed. The Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (1969), The Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventories (1981), and more recently, Harter Self-esteem Scales (1985) are representative of some scales. Bogan (1988) reviewed self-esteem measures suggesting caution in the use of the instruments because of methodological problems, however, he notes that Harter's Self Perception Profile for Children is one of the better scales.

Harter's scales provide a measure of self-esteem that reflects James' theory of self esteem, as it allows the children to rate themselves in the specific domains such as sports ability, scholastic ability etc., but also gives a global score that is set apart from

the results of the domain scores. In addition, Harter has incorporated an importance rating scale that allows the child to rate how important they perceive success in each domain. This again relates to James' theory that self-esteem can be high (even when the child scores low on specific domains) if the child does not place high importance on the domains in which they score low.

As research about self-esteem has progressed, the scales and measures of self-esteem have been examined in more detail and revised, helping to create more valid measures of self-esteem. With improved measurements of self-esteem, the research conducted in this field can be more meaningful.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Established theoretical frameworks can help to further explain self-esteem and how it develops. Harter (1993), one of the leading researchers on self-esteem today, combines James and Cooley's theories of self-esteem to form a theoretical framework about self-esteem, its meaning and development. This includes the discrepancy between perception of self and ideal self, and suggests that self-esteem develops from significant social interactions that create thoughts about the self, leading to high or low self-esteem. Underpinning this framework are established theoretical frameworks, including phenomenological theory, **symbolic interactionist theory**, humanistic theory, attachment theory and social learning theory. The following provides some detail of each of these theories.

Burns (1979) explored theories relating to self-esteem suggesting that much of the research is based on phenomenological reasoning, which relates to the person's perception of reality rather than the reality itself. He links the phenomenological approach particularly to Roger's humanistic theory (self-theory), as it involves the person's perceptions of self, and that the person develops these self-perceptions from the environment, especially the early social environment.

Humanistic theory is explained further by Rubin and McNeil (1985) as the way in which each person views and interprets their experiences and how this reflects the understanding of the self. One of the major contributors to humanistic theory, Rogers (1974) states that the most important aspect of the child's experience is that they are loved and accepted by their parents. This helps to explain the basis of Cooley's (1902) proposal of the development of self-esteem, suggesting that the self is constructed by looking into the social mirror, which reflects the opinions of significant others towards the self.

Attachment theory is based on survival and normal development of the child (Ainsworth, 1974; Bowlby, 1973). A secure attachment in infancy can boost psychological well being throughout the life span (Bowlby, 1982). Kaplan (1986) states that attachment theory has biological roots but that learning and cognition also play a part. Considering Bowlby's attachment theory, Cassidy (1988) proposes that "experiencing the parent as available, sensitively responsive, and affectively accepting, leads the child to develop simultaneously, both a secure attachment and the sense that as one who merits such treatment, he or she must be inherently worthy" (p. 122). More

specifically, Crittenden (1997) examined attachment theory and psychological disorders, suggesting that the parent's responses to the child can create disorders if the child has felt in danger or fearful of the parent. The child then distorts the bad experience and attachment is distorted, as the child grows up they have false or no memory of the bad experiences and often see the parent as perfect, whilst they have a lower opinion of themselves.

Social learning theory stems from Bandura's work and explains "human behaviour in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental determinants" (Hergenhahn, 1990, p.310). Bem (cited in Pierce & Wardle, 1992) provides this example of how social learning theory works: children learn that parents label their observable behaviours and the perception of those labels becomes a source of self-description. This suggests that there is a link between children's self-evaluation, parent's judgement and children's perception of this judgement. However, Noller and Callan (1991) suggest that the social learning theory involves the child learning from their parent's behaviour, for instance if parents are confident and have little self-doubt then the children will reflect this.

Further support of this aspect of the social learning theory and links with self-esteem development is suggested by Sroufe and Fleeson (cited in Cassidy, 1988) who mention that components of the attachment figure become incorporated into the self through the process of the child's learning or modelling of the parent. They propose that a child's early learning about self occurs mainly within the context of the relationships with significant people in their life.

To further clarify the social learning theory and compare it to the symbolic interactionist theory, which is similar, Openshaw, Thomas and Rollins (cited in Noller & Callan, 1991) examined the differences between these two theories. They suggest that the symbolic interactionist view of self-esteem and parenting is that the child's self-esteem is reflected from the appraisals they receive from their parent's i.e. the parental behaviour that confirms they are lovable and worthwhile. Whilst the social learning theory is more of a modeling of the self-esteem of the parents, i.e. if the parent is high in self-esteem the child will model this.

George Herbert Mead was one of the early and substantial contributors to symbolic interactionist theory. Matsueda (1992), explored the symbolic interactionist theory and found that reflected appraisals of self are substantially affected by parental appraisals. Furthermore, Matsueda, questions Cooley's concept of appraisals being a mirror reflection as a literal interpretation, and that it is more a selective perception of others appraisals that contributes to the self-appraisal.

This section has endeavored to explain how these theories relating to self-esteem incorporate the significance of parenting in the development of self-esteem. Harter's combined use of James and Cooley's theories provide a useful theoretical framework for understanding the meaning and development of self-esteem. As mentioned earlier, underpinning Harter's theoretical framework of self-esteem and its development, is a combination of humanistic, attachment, social learning, symbolic interactionist and phenomenological theories.

Therefore, examining Harter's theoretical framework more closely, Cooley's looking glass concept involves learning from significant others about the self, which relates to a combination of all the above mentioned theories. Whilst James' theory relates more to what this early learning creates in the person, which is a perception of the self. This view takes in the early learning theories as mentioned above, but then once the self-esteem is developed in childhood as suggested by the early learning theories, then a phenomenological theory of self-esteem is more appropriate. Therefore, people develop a perception about themselves based on their early environmental interactions and use this as a frame of reference for their behaviour.

2.5 Parenting

As mentioned in previous sections parents are the main source of human contact for young children and it is these early years that are the most impressionable for children. Burns (1979) suggests that a child's first five years are usually the ones in which the basic personality and self-esteem are established. He goes on to say that the family provides the initial indications to the child of acceptance, love and worthiness and the basis for socialization.

Parents generally want to bring up their children in the best possible way and are sometimes guided by their own childhood experiences of parenting, or are guided by information provided by experts in the field of parenting. Spock was one of the leading advisors on child rearing in the 1940's, promoting a more indulgent or permissive style, however, by the 1960's he had changed his views on his earlier child rearing suggestions

to include stronger discipline (Baumrind, 1975). Therefore, child rearing practices have swung from one extreme to another throughout this century, moving through authority based parenting, where parents have complete control and are strong disciplinarians, to child centered approaches, where the child's whims and needs are considered above anything else. More recently, a democratic or authoritative approach to parenting is being promoted (Maccoby, 1980; Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982; Hart, 1993; Biddulph, 1996).

Research into parenting was carried out extensively by Baumrind in the 1960's, and from her investigations she developed the notion of the following three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive, defined as follows:

a) Authoritative style, combines unconditional regard, acceptance of the child's behaviour within certain limits, with relatively firm control.

b) Authoritarian style involves using unbending rules that the parent has set to shape the child's behaviour, impose their will on the child without any give and take, believing that the parent is always right.

c) Permissive style, where parents show warmth and allow the child a great amount of autonomy with little control over them. Permissive parents allow their children to shape their own behaviour instead of being active in this process (Damon, 1989).

These parenting styles were categorized and have been used by many researchers including: Maccoby (1980); Boyes and Allen (1993); Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts and Fraleigh (1987); Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch (1994); Russell, Aloa, Feder, Glover, Miller and Palmer (1998); to assess the influence

of parenting on various aspects of behaviour and development of children and adolescents.

Baumrind appears to have set the pace with her categorization of parent behaviours, as her parenting styles continue to be used today and are generally known and accepted. There are however, parents who may not fit into these styles specifically. It may be that children completed the questionnaires incorrectly, or the parent is inconsistent and may move from one of the styles to the other. For instance an alcoholic parent may swing from authoritarian to permissive parenting on a daily basis. Therefore, it would be difficult to find a sample that would all fit the criteria for the above parenting styles.

Other researchers mention that they also found difficulties with fitting parents into the styles exactly. Boyes & Allan, (1993) had difficulties with some parents not fitting into any of the three styles, they attempted to categorize the parents depending on their scores. For example if the parent scored high on acceptance, psychological control and firm discipline, then they were categorized as authoritative, because they met two of the criteria for authoritative style.

In conclusion, parenting and society have been moving towards a more democratic (authoritative) way of living, where people, including children, have rights. These changes in society have produced challenges to parents and parenting, with the rights of children now established and a need to respect these rights (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982). Parents are often told what they can and can't do, with regard to the rights of

children. For instance, you can't smack your children (which may have merit) but often parents do not know how to alternatively discipline their children effectively, whilst maintaining the rights of the child.

Research that helps to determine the effects of certain parenting styles could assist parents in how to raise their children harmoniously and effectively and help them to reach their potential in the most constructive way. Of particular importance is the child's self-esteem, most parents would want their children to have a high self-esteem but do not always know how their role may influence this, the following section explores the influence of parenting on self-esteem.

2.6 Parenting and Self-esteem

Although the previous sections have provided some background on parenting and self-esteem, this section attempts to provide a more comprehensive view of the literature in this area. Generally, the literature on self-esteem and parenting appears to have concentrated on combined self-esteem, rather than exploring the impact of parenting on the global and domains of self-esteem separately. Therefore, there is little research on this more specific view of parenting and self-esteem. However, the following provides an overview of the literature that was found on parenting and self-esteem.

Coopersmith (1967) conducted extensive studies into the self-esteem of children. He found that children with low self-esteem have mothers who show them limited affection, whilst children with high self-esteem have mothers who express greater

affection towards them. He also found that the parents of children with high self-esteem assert their authority but at the same time, permit open discussion with their children. The authoritative parenting style is based on this type of parenting. However, this research considered the influence of the mother's behaviour more so than the combined parent behaviour.

Burns (1979) suggests that there are three family conditions that could help the development of high self-esteem, these are warmth and acceptance by the parents, established and enforced limits on behaviour, and respect for the child's initiative shown within these limits.

Studies that have attempted to further define the development of self-esteem by examining the parent child relationship have explored in more specific detail how certain parent child relationships may be involved in increasing or decreasing self-esteem levels. Enright and Ruzicka (1989) found that parental acceptance of the child and enforcement of clearly defined limitations enhance self-esteem. More specifically, a positive relationship was found with self-esteem and the degree to which the child perceived the mother as likely to explain her reasons for disciplining them. This type of parent behaviour is comparable to the authoritative parenting style.

Similar results were found in a study by Morvitz and Motta (1992) whose results indicated that children's perception of both maternal and paternal acceptance was significantly correlated with self-esteem. Another study by Oliver and Paull (1995) found that "perceived parental acceptance, familial cohesion, and a lack of parental control are related primarily to positive self-esteem" (p.476). Furthermore, Buri,

Murphy, Richtsmeier and Komar (1992) found that parental nurturance provides a stable basis for self esteem into early-adulthood.

Schor, Stidley and Malspeis (1995) examined the effect of a mis-match between children and parent's views of the child's self-esteem and behaviour. The results of this study found that parents who were more sensitive to the child's feelings and those whose expectations matched those of the child's self expectations, were more likely to have children with a higher self-esteem and fewer behaviour problems. This study prompted the authors to suggest that early intervention with parent child relationships should concentrate on enhancing the parent's sensitivity to their children and in improving other aspects of family communication. This would be expected to prevent or reduce child behaviour problems and increase self-esteem.

Maccoby (1980) explored the concept of the authoritative, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and their impact on child development. Findings suggested that children of authoritative parents are independent, take the initiative in the cognitive and social areas of life, are responsible, control their aggressive urges, have self-confidence and are high in self-esteem. Furthermore, it was noted that authoritative parents try to understand the child and talk with them, unlike authoritarian parents who impose their will on the child, and permissive parents who show little interest. Likewise, Steinberg, Elmen and Mounts (1989) found that children of parents that use an authoritative parenting style are more likely to have school success, suggesting that authoritative parenting helps to develop a healthy sense of autonomy and a healthy psychological orientation towards work.

Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts and Dornbusch (1994) examined parenting styles and competence, using authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent (like permissive) and neglectful parenting styles. Their results found that adolescents raised in authoritative homes had clear advantages, whereas children raised in neglectful homes were clearly disadvantaged, whilst children raised in authoritarian or indulgent homes had mixed outcomes.

Dornbusch et al., (1987), examined parenting styles and their influence on adolescent school performance, they found that students of permissive and authoritarian families did less well at school in comparison to students of authoritative parents who performed better at school. Although their study did not include self-esteem and parenting, it provided some insight about school performance and parenting.

Baumrind (1994) examined research on parenting styles and self-esteem across cultural differences and found that school grades were negatively associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting and positively associated with authoritative practices. However, Hispanic males and Asians were found to have a less negative influence from authoritarian parenting.

2.7 Conclusion

The literature examining links between parenting styles and self-esteem domains is sparse, however, it would appear from this literature that the quality of relationships, particularly the feeling of parental acceptance, are crucial to the development of high self-esteem generally (Coopersmith, 1967; Burns, 1979; Maccoby, 1980; Enright &

Ruzicka 1989; Steinberg, et al., 1989 &1994; Morvitz & Motta, 1992; Oliver & Paull, 1995; Harter, Stocker& Robinson, 1996). Parenting styles that create quality relationships would therefore be expected to be most appropriate for the development of a healthy self-esteem.

To further clarify possible specific links in the development of self-esteem, this study will explore the influence of parenting style upon children's global and specific domains of self-esteem. As other studies have concentrated on self-esteem results using a uni-dimensional model, this study is attempting to broaden the knowledge in this area by using a multi-dimensional model of self-esteem that allows the domains of self-esteem to be examined separately. Further knowledge in this area is important, as it could provide essential information for assisting parents in creating well-adjusted individuals.

Chapter Three

Method

3.1 Participants

Four state schools located in the northern suburbs were randomly selected from a list of northern suburbs government schools. Schools were chosen from one area as a means of controlling socio-economic differences. According to the Bureau of Statistics (Konrath, 1996) the area was mainly middle income earners. The schools were chosen at random by placing all school names on a numbered list. An independent person chose four numbers from the range on this list. The chosen schools were contacted by letter (Appendix A) and followed up with a phone call to arrange an interview with the principal. Two schools refused to be involved. Three other schools were randomly selected from the list, two of these schools agreed to participate the third declined.

Information was provided for those schools who participated. Notes were sent home to parents of grade seven children (Appendix B), to provide the parents with information about the research and to allow them to respond if they did not wish their child to be involved in the study.

Children in late primary school were chosen as the children needed to be old enough to be able to read and understand the questions adequately, as some questions had more complex words in them. However, high school children were not considered as they are experiencing some changes because of puberty and identity confusion that could have an impact on their self-esteem. Dusek (1996) mentions that adolescents may experience more fluctuations of what he called barometric self-esteem, meaning the

temporary alteration to self-esteem depending on a situation. These fluctuations could impact on the results of the self-esteem tests. It was also thought that the older children (high school level) might be more strongly influenced by peers than parents, which could impact on the results of the study might.

It was considered that children from single parent families might already have a lowered self-esteem due to the affects of divorce, as Dusek (1996) found that self-esteem is adversely affected by parental divorce. Furthermore, the study required each child to respond to both the father and the mother's parenting to examine a combined parenting style, therefore, participating children from single parent families were not included in the final research. One hundred and twenty eight, male and female children from four primary schools in the northern suburbs completed the questionnaires. Of those children completing the questionnaires, forty-four students were not used in the study because of the following reasons:

a) questionnaire was completed incorrectly or just not completed = 14.

b) not wishing to continue completing the questionnaire = 4.

c) from single parent families (did not fit the criteria) = 15.

d) if parents did not fit into any of the parenting styles i.e. they were unable to be categorized specifically into any of the parenting styles used in this study = 11.

The remaining participants were 84 grade seven children aged 11-12yrs. Of the 84 children participating in this study, 53 were female and 31 were male. The children in this study were primarily white, middle class, European children, therefore, the study

does not examine cultural differences. Chao (1994) suggests that using Baumrind's parenting styles would not be adequate for children from cultures other than European-American.

3.2 Design

This research uses an empirical, nonrandomized, quasi-experimental design. The independent variable is parenting style, which is comprised of three types of parenting style: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. A fourth group (unmatched) was created for parents who did not match each other in parenting style. There are six dependent variables: a measure of global self-esteem and five measures of specific domains of self-esteem i.e. scholastic self-esteem, physical self-esteem, social self-esteem, behavioural self-esteem and athletic self-esteem.

3.3 Measurement Instruments

(i) Harter's (1985), Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC), which measures specific self-esteem domains and global self-esteem, was administered to children to measure self-esteem. This is a revised version of the Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1979).

The SPPC consists of five specific domains and a global score as well as importance ratings for each area. The five domains are scholastic self-esteem, social self-esteem, athletic self-esteem, physical self-esteem and behavioural self-esteem

(Appendix D). Harter's instrument was used particularly because of the style of questioning, which allows the child to report their self-rating more indirectly than other scales, therefore, it was less threatening than direct questioning. This test is also unique because of the importance rating.

Harter's importance rating allows the child's rating of their ability, then a rating of how important each domain is to them. This attempts to provide information relating to how the child feels about their ability in each of the domains and how important this is to their feelings of self-worth. Consequently, the child who may rate themselves as low on a certain self-esteem domain (because they feel that they do not do well in this area) could then rate this as unimportant to them if they do not place value on doing well in this specific domain. On the other hand, the child who rates themselves as low on a specific domain but then rates this as important to them, could feel bad about themselves, as they are not measuring up to what they feel is important to them. The result then yields a more realistic measure of self-esteem.

This method of measuring self-esteem fits with James' theory (as mentioned earlier), that high self-esteem is found in individuals who recognized their strengths, felt they had achieved and were contented with these strengths and achievements. Alternatively, low self-esteem was linked to the individual who feels that they have not reached their ideal, are not contented with their achievements and fall short of their expectations.

Keith and Braken (cited in Braken, 1996) found the SPPC to be based on a strong theoretical model however, it is suggested that it has borderline consistency for clinical

usage. To test for internal consistency Cronbach Alpha was conducted and found that the test was reliable. The coefficient alphas ranged from .75 to .83.

(2) Schaefer developed the Child Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI) in 1965 (Margolies & Weintraub 1977). This instrument originally consisted of 26 10-item scales for children to complete. It was revised by Schluderman and Schluderman in 1970, to produce a much shorter version of the CRPBI. The CRPBI has forms that allow for the child to evaluate both their mother and their father. Children responded to questions according to whether the statements were "like", "somewhat like", or "not like" their parent (Appendix E). This instrument has been used in studies to identify the parenting styles of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive from the results of the child's responses. There are three dimensions used in the CRPBI to determine the parenting style, these are acceptance versus rejection, psychological control versus psychological autonomy and firm control versus lax control. If the child scored above the median they were considered to have a higher score and below the median was a lower score. Therefore, the scores on these dimensions related to the following:

High score = acceptance - low score = rejection

High score = psychological control - low score = greater psychological autonomy

High score = firm control - low score = lax control

These dimensions yielded the following patterns: Authoritative has high acceptance, high psychological autonomy and high firm control; authoritarian has low acceptance, high psychological control and high firm control and permissive style has

high acceptance, high psychological autonomy and low firm control (Boyes & Allen, 1993).

Margolies and Weintraub (1977) conducted a study of the CRPBI revised instrument to test the reliability and factor structure of this instrument. The results found the CRPBI to be a valid research instrument. This instrument was chosen after examining several instruments, as it was found to be the closest in measuring the criteria for the three parenting styles used in this research. It has been used by several researchers, Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, (1987); Steinberg, Elmen & Mounts, (1989); Boyes & Allen, (1993); Grimm-Thomas & Perry-Jenkins, (1994); Avenevoli, Sessa & Steinberg, (1999) to measure the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles

Each participant was required to complete the SPPC and the CRPBI. Participants were also asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (Appendix C).

3.4 Procedure

The four schools that had agreed to participate, sent home flyers to the parents of grade seven children (Appendix B). Children who were taking part in the study were group tested during school time. The testing was generally completed in one session. The average time for completion of the questionnaires was about twenty-five minutes. A school classroom was used and children were instructed on how to complete the questionnaires. The children were informed that participation was voluntary and that

they could stop completing questionnaires at any time but that the study would be helpful to children in the future and that it would be appreciated if they could complete the questionnaires. The purpose of the study was explained, then the children completed the questionnaires.

Chapter Four

Results

4.1 Introduction

This study was conducted to explore the influence of parenting on self-esteem. The self-esteem levels of eighty-four school children were measured using the Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). The child's global self-esteem and each of the self-esteem domains, scholastic self-esteem, physical self-esteem, social self-esteem, behavioural self-esteem and athletic self-esteem (dependent variables) were measured to gain information about the child's self-esteem.

To categorize the parents into the parenting styles (independent variable) each child was asked to complete the Child Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI). The child completed this inventory to provide information about how they experienced their parents, as for the purpose of this research, it is important to know how the child experienced the parents actions, rather than how the parents thought they were parenting.

The results from the CRPBI provided information to categorize the parents into Baumrind's parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. During the analysis it became clear that not all parents were both classified as having the same parenting style as each other, i.e. they may be a combination of an authoritarian father and permissive mother. As a result, to include parents that did not match in parenting

style, a further group (unmatched parenting style) was developed and included in the study.

Of the 84 children participating in this study, 53 were female and 31 were male. 22 classified their parents as authoritative parents, 17 authoritarian, 25 permissive and 20 had parents who were classified as unmatched.

4.2 Data Analyses

The data for each group were screened to assess the assumption for use of analysis of variance designs. A number of univariate outliers were identified. These were recoded to one score value above the next highest score as recommended by Tabachnich and Fiddell, (1996). Analysis of linearity assumptions and the homogeneity of variance assumption were satisfied.

To test the hypotheses, regarding the influence of parenting styles on self-esteem, a series of one way analyses of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Further testing was conducted to assess the effect of importance rating, which was an integral part of the self-esteem assessment as it provided information about how important it was to the child to have a good athletic, physical, behavioural, scholastic or social self-esteem. An analyses of co-variance (ANCOVA) was used, with importance rating as covariate. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS package. The results for the hypotheses are discussed in the following sections.

4.3 The Influence of Parenting Style on Global Self-esteem

It was hypothesized that children with authoritative parents would have significantly higher global self-esteem in comparison to those children of authoritarian, and permissive parents.

Results indicate a significant difference in global self-esteem across parenting styles ($F(3,80) = 4.8292$, $p = .0039$). Post hoc tests revealed a significant difference between authoritarian and authoritative parenting only. There were no significant differences between other parenting styles. This provides partial support for the hypothesis. Figure 1 illustrates the differences in scores on global self-esteem and parenting.

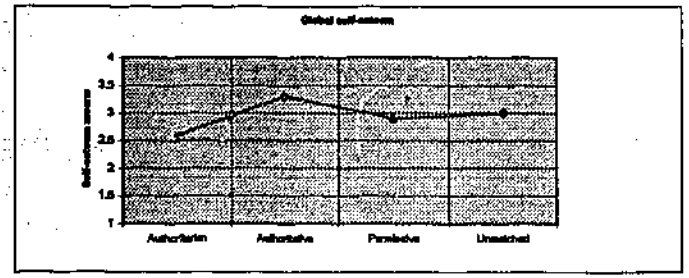

Figure 1. Comparison of results for global self-esteem on each parenting style

4.4 The Influence of Parenting Styles on Self-esteem Domains

It was also hypothesized that authoritative parenting style will have a significantly positive influence on specific domains of self-esteem in comparison to the other parenting styles.

ANOVAS revealed the following pattern of results: Significant difference were found for physical self-esteem ($F(3,80) = 4.0645$, $p = .0097$). Significant results were also found for scholastic self-esteem ($F(3,80) = 3.3208$, $p = .0239$). There was no significant differences for athletic self-esteem ($F(3,80) = 1.8968$, $p = .1386$); behavioural self-esteem ($F(3,80) = 2.0763$, $p = .1099$); social self-esteem ($F(3,80) =$ 105756, $p = .2018$).

Post Hoc Results

In the interest of a full exploration of the data, the post hoc test Tukey HSD was used (see Table 1 for results) and yielded significant differences in the following: Children of authoritative parents had significantly higher global self-esteem levels than children from authoritarian parents. For the specific domains of self-esteem, children from authoritative parenting had significantly higher scholastic and physical self-esteem levels than children from authoritarian parents. Means and standard deviations for each parenting style and for each self-esteem measure are recorded in Table 1.

Table 1 Table of mean scores for each parenting style

	Authoritarian (n = 17)	Authoritative (n = 22)	Permissive (n = 25)	Unmatched (n = 20)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Global	2.64 (.56)	3.36 (.57)	2.98 (.61)	3.04 (.59)
Scholastic	2.54 (.51)	3.13 (.49)	2.78 (.61)	2.97 (.75)
Physical	2.36 (.62)	3.01 (.54)	2.80 (.64)	2.66 (.55)
Social	2.55 (.61)	3.03 (.59)	2.87 (.78)	2.82 (.67)
Athletic	2.60 (.58)	3.05 (.62)	3.02 (.52)	2.93 (.79)
Behavioural	2.66 (.56)	3.10 (.49)	2.94 (.44)	2.92 (.68)

There were no other significant results from the analysis, however, the following provides details of other outcomes that, although not significant, could be helpful to explore. Social self-esteem was highest for children of authoritative parents with lowest social self-esteem found in children of authoritarian parents. Athletic self-esteem was highest in children of authoritative and permissive parents (almost equal), the lowest athletic self-esteem was found in children of authoritarian parents. Behavioural self-esteem was highest in children from authoritative parents and lowest in children of authoritarian parents. Overall, within the specific domains of self-esteem, the scores from children of permissive and unmatched parents fell between the scores from authoritative and authoritarian parents, with the exception of athletic self-esteem, which is noted above.

Global self-esteem was highest in children from authoritative parents with children from unmatched parents coming second highest, whilst children from permissive and authoritarian parenting had the lowest global self-esteem. Figure 2 illustrates the differences in global and domains of self-esteem for each parenting style.

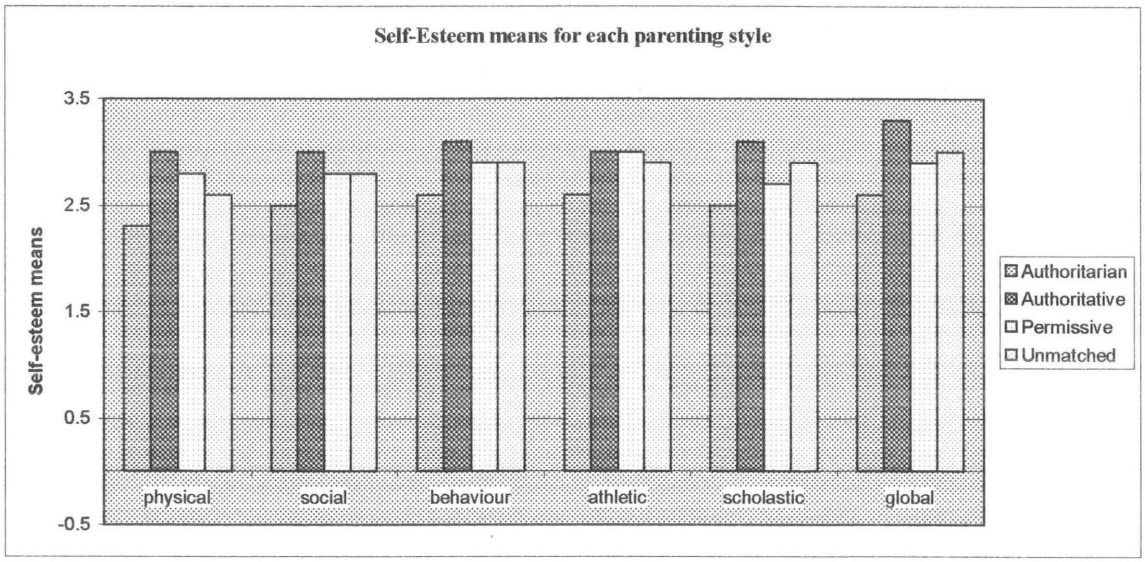

Figure 2. Comparison of results of self-esteem domains for each parenting style

The unmatched parents may have had a combination of permissive and authoritarian or authoritarian and authoritative etc, this obviously would make a difference to the way the parents were bringing up their children. However, this study has included these parents as a group to explore the possible impact of parents who are using different styles and whether this may be detrimental to the child's self-esteem.

Importance rating

A question remained as to whether participant's self-esteem scores would be influenced by the importance they attach to each self-esteem domain. To assess this the analysis was repeated using the importance ratings as a covariate. This has the effect of 'controlling' for differences in importance rating. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed using importance rating as the covariate. The results

indicate that using the covariate led to a significant adjustment of the dependent variable. Nevertheless, there was still a significant main effect for parenting style (see Table 2). The pattern was the same as that reported earlier. That is that significant differences exist for scholastic, physical but not athletic, behavioural and social domains. A perusal of adjusted means suggests that differences are slightly ameliorated, that is the mean differences were slightly lower (see Table 2).

Table 2 Results of importance rating (covariate) in comparison to main effect

Self-esteem	Main effect		Covariates		Oneway
Domains	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	
Scholastic	3.32	.02	4.66	.034	*
Physical	4.06	.00	2.351	.006	*
Athletic	1.89	.13	13.335	.073	
Behavioural	2.07	.10	3.309	.146	
Social	1.57	.20	9.290	.190	

*p<.05.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.1 Summary of Study

This study was conducted to explore the influence of parenting styles on children's global and specific self-esteem. The parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive were used to categorise parental behaviours. However, it became obvious during the analysis of the data that not all parents fit into these styles. Some parents did not match each other in their parenting style, i.e. the father was one style whilst the mother was one of the other styles. As this study was exploring the influence of the combined parenting style's, these parents were placed into a fourth group that were classified as unmatched parents. Other studies (Dornbusch et al., 1987), who were also looking at the combined parent style, found that many of their parents did not match each other in parenting style, therefore, they also created a separate group of unmatched parents.

There were some individual parents who were unable to be categorized into any of the parenting styles. They were deleted from the study as it was considered that altering the acceptable criteria would make the results meaningless. However, previous studies (Boyes & Allan, 1993) found similar difficulties with some parents not fitting into any of the three styles, they attempted to categorize the parents depending on their scores. For example if the parent scored high on acceptance, psychological control and firm

discipline, then they were categorized as authoritative because they meet two of the criteria for authoritative style.

The parents may not have fit the criteria because the children were completing the questionnaires inconsistently, leading to the results of these children's parents not fitting into any criteria. Alternatively, it could be that the parent was inconsistent (as mentioned earlier) such as an alcoholic parent who may swing from authoritarian to permissive parenting on a daily basis.

For this study it was hypothesized that the authoritative parenting style would have a significantly positive influence on children's global self-esteem and that in comparison, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were expected to have a less positive influence on children's self-esteem. It was also hypothesized that authoritative parenting style would have a significantly positive influence on children's domains of self-esteem in comparison to the other parenting styles.

5.2. Major Findings

The results indicate that for white middle class children, the authoritative parenting style would positively influence global self-esteem and certain domains of self-esteem in children, partially supporting the hypotheses of this study. The results support the first hypothesis that authoritative parenting style would have the most positive influence on global self-esteem, as it was found in this study that children whose parents had an authoritative parenting style, had significantly higher global self-esteem than children whose parents were classified as having authoritarian parents. These two parenting

styles were on the extremes, with self-esteem levels in children of unmatched and permissive parenting styles falling between the two.

There was partial support for the second hypothesis, that the authoritative parenting style would have a significantly positive influence on specific domains of self-esteem in comparison to the other parenting styles. Results for this study, found that authoritative parenting style had a significantly positive influence on physical and scholastic self-esteem in comparison to the authoritarian parenting style. The other domains of self-esteem showed no significant results.

The other self-esteem domains, behavioural, social and athletic self-esteem yielded non-significant results, however, the behavioural and social domains were highest in authoritative parenting and lowest in authoritarian parenting, whilst scores for permissive and unmatched parents fell between the authoritative and authoritarian results. The athletic self-esteem domain results, although again not significant, were highest in authoritative and permissive parenting (almost equal), the unmatched were the next highest and the lowest results were found in children of authoritarian parents.

The importance rating section of the self-esteem measure that each child completed was used as the covariate and was found to have no impact on the significant results of the study, suggesting that the findings are robust.

The self-esteem results in this study found that the authoritarian and authoritative styles were on the opposite extremes, with the authoritative parenting style yielding high self-esteem, whilst in comparison, the authoritarian parenting style was associated with lower self-esteem. The self-esteem levels for children of permissive and

unmatched parents fell between the authoritarian and authoritative results, with the exception of the athletic self-esteem domain, in which permissive parenting style results were almost as high as authoritative parenting style results.

Looking more closely at these results, the authoritarian style versus the authoritative style have extreme differences in the influence on self-esteem in children, although it must be remembered that this study did not look at other cultures, therefore, these results can only be considered for white middle class cultures. There are specific differences in these styles, which are high acceptance and high psychological autonomy for authoritative style and low acceptance or rejection and high psychological control for authoritarian style. The differences in parenting style can be seen more clearly when examining the dimensions in the CRPBI that were used to determine the parenting style. The parenting styles were classified as follows: authoritative = high acceptance, high psychological autonomy and high firm control; authoritarian = low acceptance/rejection, high psychological control and high firm control; permissive = high acceptance, high psychological autonomy and low firm control (Boyes & Allen, 1993).

As mentioned previously, the authoritative style provides an environment where the child feels secure and accepted for who they are, as this style provides unconditional regard and boundaries for behaviour. Furthermore, the authoritative parent involves the child more in decision making rather than dictating the decisions without question. In comparison the authoritarian style tends to be parent driven, where the child would feel less accepted unless they are behaving in the way the parent dictates, creating a more

conditional acceptance (Maccoby, 1980). In addition, the child of authoritarian parents may not feel worthy, as they are usually not involved at any level of personal or family decisions. The child in the permissive home has little or no boundaries, which may be interpreted by the child as parental disinterest; they are accepted but given a free reign to run their lives.

From this research and other studies in which have examined parenting and self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Burns, 1979; Maccoby, 1980; Enright & Ruzicka 1989; Morvitz & Motta, 1992; Oliver & Paull, 1995) parental acceptance appears to be the common thread for children who are higher in self-esteem.

It appears that global self-esteem is likely to be significantly influenced by parenting, whilst specific domains of self-esteem may be influenced more by a combination of parenting and of environmental factors. The environmental factors could include such things as peer relationships, extended family or significant others in the child's life, school experience and feedback from skills based experience. Research that examines parenting and the domains of self-esteem separately is scarce and is an area that requires more study. Looking at the specific domains more closely, the commencement of school may be a critical time for children to be aware of their personal differences in the specific domain areas. When children enter school they are then comparing themselves and their capabilities to others the same age as themselves, they are also judged by other influential and significant people such as the teacher (Burns, 1979). This creates a comparison of their competence in the different domains, possibly for the first time. They have to compete with others academically, athletically,

behaviourally, socially and the most easily noticed comparison, physically. Prior to school age personal differences in these areas, would generally not be as noticeable to the child. However, once at school these differences become more highlighted and are often targeted by other children.

The child at school will get feedback from other sources than the parents; however, the parents still have a very strong influence. For instance, with the scholastic domain, the child may be praised at school for their achievements but the parent may place higher standards on the child, making them feel that unless they get 100% it is not good enough. The child may feel that no matter how much effort they put in, they never get to the parents set ideal, which becomes their ideal. This short fall between their ideal and their actual performance may be small in reality, huge in the perception of failure for the child.

In this study, scholastic and physical self-esteem domains were found to be significantly higher in children of authoritative parents than for children of authoritarian parents. The reasons for this are not clear, however, it could be argued that the authoritarian parent, because of the controlling nature of the parent and conditions placed on acceptance, may make demands on the child's scholastic competence, and place conditions for acceptance around the scholastic achievements, as mentioned above. Therefore, the child who does not meet these standards may have lowered self-esteem in this area. On the other hand, the higher results of the children from authoritative parents could be explained by understanding that parents who do not place conditions of worthiness on scholastic results, may create children who feel more

positive about their scholastic ability regardless of how competent they are scholastically.

As for the physical self-esteem domain, it is difficult to understand why physical self-esteem should be significantly higher in children of authoritative parents in comparison to children of authoritarian parents. The only research found in relation to physical self-esteem and parenting was by Pierce and Wardle (1993) who found feedback about physical appearance from parents or significant others has an impact on self-esteem.

With little research to assist in explaining the reasons for differences in physical self-esteem and parent styles, it is difficult to provide an explanation for this outcome. It may be that children of authoritarian parents have a stricter regime about how their children dress or look, i.e. hair cuts, acceptable dress, neat and tidy appearance, placing more awareness and feelings of acceptance on the physical appearance. The impact of this could be that they are not meeting the ideals of physical appearance set by the authoritarian parent, which could lower their self-esteem. In comparison, the authoritative parent may be more accepting of the child's personal choices for physical appearance or may be not so focussed on it, enhancing the unconditional regard for the child.

The results of this study found the social self-esteem domain to be highest in children of authoritative parents, although not significant. The social domain could be more closely linked to the global self-esteem, as the child who has a high global self-esteem is more likely to be surrounded by love and acceptance, feels valued and

important and expects others to view them like that (Corkille Briggs, 1975). In support of this, Maccoby (1980) mentions that children from authoritative parenting demonstrated better social self-esteem than children of authoritarian or permissive parents. Furthermore, Riggio, Throckmorton and DePaola (1990) explored social skills and self-esteem, finding that scores on general social competence were significantly, positively correlated with general measures of self-esteem.

The behavioural self-esteem domain again was higher in authoritative parents and lowest in authoritarian parents, although not significant. This could be explained by the fact that children of authoritarian parents would have strict controls placed on them and a feeling of conditional regard around behaviour. If they do as the parent says, and please the parent, then they are worthy of regard, if they do not meet these standards, they could feel rejected. For the child who is a little more inclined to be headstrong or temperamental, good behaviour could be particularly difficult. Therefore, if their parents use an authoritarian style, there would be more conflict and feelings of inadequacy for the child. Schor, Stidley and Malspeis (1995) examined self-esteem and behaviour and found that when the parents were more sensitive to their children they had fewer behaviour problems and higher self-esteem.

The athletic self-esteem showed a different pattern of results (non-significant) with the authoritative parenting and the permissive parenting equally high in self-esteem. Children of authoritarian parents again scored the lowest self-esteem in this area. It would be expected that athletic self-esteem would be related more so to the actual ability in this area, as it is quite specific but it would also be highly influenced by the

reaction of peers and sports coaches. Although parents would have an impact on athletic self-esteem, these other influences could be particularly strong.

Overall the lower self-esteem results of children from authoritarian parents may be because of a general feeling of the child, that they are not quite meeting the strict expectations and high standards placed on them by authoritarian parents and therefore feel less accepted. However, the higher self-esteem of the children from authoritative parents appears to be related to acceptance, psychological autonomy and firm control. In support of this notion, there are several researchers that have found this type of parent behaviour to produce high self-esteem. McCormick and Kennedy (1993) found that what is most important for positive self-esteem is parenting through acceptance and independence encouraging. Burns (1979) proposed that the development of high self-esteem required warmth and acceptance by the parents, established and enforced limits on behaviour, and respect for the child's initiative shown within these limits. Enright and Ruzicka (1989) found that parental acceptance of the child and enforcement of clearly defined limitations enhance self-esteem. These researchers mention parent behaviours that are comparable to the authoritative parenting style. Avenevoli, Sessa, Steinberg (1999), found that parents from intact homes tend to be more authoritative or authoritarian and less permissive and neglectful than single-parent homes, regardless of social class or ethnic background. They also found that authoritative parenting is generally more beneficial to adolescents across cultures, however, African American, middle class adolescents may benefit less from authoritative parenting than others.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study provide further support and information towards the understanding of the influence of parenting style on self-esteem. Particularly, this research adds to the knowledge of more specific aspects of parenting and self-esteem, as it includes the domains of self-esteem and how these may be influenced by parenting style.

It would appear from these results, that authoritative parenting is the most ideal parenting style for developing healthy self-esteem in children. This study confirms findings by others (Coopersmith, 1967; Burns, 1979; Maccoby, 1980; Enright & Ruzicka 1989; Morvitz & Motta, 1992; Oliver & Paull, 1995) that parenting that involves parent behaviours similar to that of authoritative parenting has a positive influence on children's self-esteem.

This is important knowledge as according to the literature, a high level of self-esteem, could be a buffer against such things as depression should not be ignored. educational failure, drug and alcohol abuse, vulnerability to peer pressure, eating disorders and possible suicide (Hart, 1993; Khantzian, Halliday, & McAuliffe, 1990; Harter, 1993). Therefore, research in this area is very important, and any knowledge that may contribute to the understanding of how low self-esteem can be avoided should not be ignored.

Interestingly, when reporting the self-esteem results back to the primary schools involved, one school in particular, when given the results for their students, mentioned

that all the children who had scored a higher self-esteem overall, were the students who had been chosen as prefects this year.

5. 4 Limitations of the Study

A major weakness in this study is that it does not generalize across cultures, it is based on white middle class children and therefore, cannot be expected to be helpful to other cultural backgrounds.

The study should have had a greater number of participants, the numbers across the parenting styles were quite low, although it is not uncommon for researchers to end up with low numbers, a more meaningful result could be gained by greater participant numbers.

A further limitation of this study is that all data is produced from the child's self reports. The parenting style is derived from the child's perspective, or how the child experiences the parent, although this is thought to be a useful way of gaining this information, as it is important to know how the child experiences the situation, it may be helpful to match this to the parent's view.

There is also a lack of exploration into gender differences for this study. The literature exploring self-esteem often includes gender differences and have found this to be important, because of low numbers of participants in this research including gender differences was not feasible.

Future research in this area would benefit from larger numbers of participants to enable the researcher to examine the parenting style influences on girls and boys. It could also be beneficial for parents to be given a questionnaire that attempts to look at their perspective of the style of parenting they use, to compare with the child's results. Looking at the mother's and father's parenting style separately and together could also be useful, as other researchers have found differences in boys and gir depending on how they are treated by either the father or the mother. The influ significant adults in the child's life may also need to be considered, the a ce and love of an extended family member may have a strong influence on the self-esteem of the child. Nonetheless, despite these weaknesses, this research has provided an important insight into the influences of parenting on self-esteem and has added to the knowledge by providing more detailed information about the self-esteem domains and parenting.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Dear Principal,

I am a registered psychologist and am writing to seek your co-operation in a research programme I am undertaking as part of my Master of Psychology. The research involves examining self-esteem in children in relation to family dynamics. The research objective is to assess the influence of parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissive) on children's self-esteem. The aim of this research is to better understand the development of self-esteem in children.

I am writing to schools to request that children (in grade seven) from the school be involved in this research. This requires an advertisement to be placed in the school newsletters (see attached) to make parents aware of the study and provide them with the opportunity to refuse to allow their son/daughter to be involved. The testing is conducted on a group basis and will take about thirty minutes.

Results of the self-esteem questionnaires will be available to the school and could therefore, be of assistance to the school by identifying any child who's self-esteem is low. The parents are informed that the results of the research will be available to the school.

It would be greatly appreciated if the school could assist with this research into self-esteem and children. Please could you let me know if you are willing to allow your school to be involved. My contact number is 9306 4378. If you are able to assist I am willing to do other self-esteem testing in the school.

Yours faithfully,

Jean Wolff
Registered Psychologist

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH

A study is presently being conducted by a Psychology Masters student/registered psychologist from the School of Psychology at Edith Cowan University. The study will be examining the child's self esteem levels/family dynamics. Children in grade seven are required to participate in this study. All results will be kept strictly confidential and only available to the school. Children who participate will be asked to complete two questionnaires, this will not interefere with important school activities. If you do not wish your child to participate, please indicate by completing the form below and sending it into the school. Your child's participation in this research is voluntary. Results of your child's self-esteem levels will be provided to the school so they are able to help meet individual needs.

Thank you
Jean Wolff
Registered Psychologist 9306 4378

Research refusal

I do not wish my son/daughter..... to be involved in the above mentioned research.

Parents signature.....

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

The information in this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

Please complete the following:

1. Name .....

2. Adults in your family, **living at your home**: (please tick appropriate boxes)

Adults: mother [ ] father [ ] stepmother [ ] stepfather [ ]

Others over 18 living at home [ ]details.....

.....

Children in your family (including yourself): how many .....

Ages: (please put each child's age in years, in space provided)

Boys: .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs

Girls: .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs .....yrs

4. Does father work? [ ] yes [ ] no

Does mother work? [ ] yes [ ] no

Part time work: mother [ ] father [ ] tick if either work part time.

5. Has there been any trauma (i.e. death in the family, major illness, frightening experience) in your life in the past four years?. [ ] yes [ ] no

If yes you may wish to explain:

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your co-operation

APPENDIX D

Scoring Key for IMPORTANCE Ratings

Please tick box which is true for you.

	Really True for Me	Sort of True for Me				Sort of True for Me	Really True for Me
1.	☐	☐	Some kids think it is important to do well at schoolwork in order to feel good as a person	BUT	Other kids don't think how well they do at schoolwork is that important.	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	Some kids don't think that having a lot of friends is all that important	BUT	Other kids think that having a lot of friends is important to how they feel as a person.	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	Some kids think it's important to be good at sports	BUT	Other kids don't think how good you are at sports is that important.	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	Some kids think it's important to be good looking in order to feel good about themselves	BUT	Other kids don't think that's very important at all.	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	Some kids think that it's important to behave the way they should	BUT	Other kids don't think that how they behave is that important.	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	Some kids don't think that getting good grades is all that important to how they feel about themselves.	BUT	Other kids think that getting good grades is important.	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	Some kids think it's important to be popular	BUT	Other kids don't think that being popular is all that important to how they feel about themselves.	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	Some kids don't think doing well at athletics is that important to how they feel about themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids feel that doing well at athletics is important.	☐	☐
9.	☐	☐	Some kids don't think that how they look is important to how they feel about themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids think that how they look is important.	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	Some kids don't think that how they act is all that important	BUT	Other kids think it's important to act the way you are supposed to.	☐	☐

What I Am Like

Name _____ Age _____ Birthday _____ (Month / Day) Group _____

Boy or Girl (circle which)

SAMPLE SENTENCE

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
a)	☐	☐	Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time	BUT	Other kids would rather watch T.V.	☐	☐
1.	☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are very *good* at their school work	BUT	Other kids *worry* about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.	☐	☐
2.	☐	☐	Some kids find it *hard* to make friends	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty *easy* to make friends.	☐	☐
3.	☐	☐	Some kids do very *well* at all kinds of sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.	☐	☐
4.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with the way they look	BUT	Other kids are *not* happy with the way they look.	☐	☐
5.	☐	☐	Some kids often do *not* like the way they *behave*	BUT	Other kids usually *like* the way they behave.	☐	☐
6.	☐	☐	Some kids are often *unhappy* with themselves	BUT	Other kids are pretty *pleased* with themselves.	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	Some kids feel like they are *just as smart* as as other kids their age	BUT	Other kids aren't so sure and *wonder* if they are as smart.	☐	☐
8.	☐	☐	Some kids have *alot* of friends	BUT	Other kids don't have many friends	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
9.	☐	☐	Some kids wish they could be alot better at sports	BUT	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports.	☐	☐
10.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with their height and weight	BUT	Other kids wish their height or weight were *different.*	☐	☐
11.	☐	☐	Some kids usually do the *right* thing	BUT	Other kids often *don't* do the right thing.	☐	☐
12.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* like the way they are leading their life	BUT	Other kids *do* like the way they are leading their life.	☐	☐
13.	☐	☐	Some kids are pretty *slow* in finishing their school work	BUT	Other kids can do their school work *quickly.*	☐	☐
14.	☐	☐	Some kids would like to have alot more friends	BUT	Other kids have as many friends as they want.	☐	☐
15.	☐	☐	Some kids think they could do well at just about any new sports activity they haven't tried before	BUT	Other kids are afraid they might *not* do well at sports they haven't ever tried.	☐	☐
16.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their body was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their body the way it is.	☐	☐
17.	☐	☐	Some kids usually *act* the way they know they are *supposed* to	BUT	Other kids often *don't* act the way they are supposed to.	☐	☐
18.	☐	☐	Some kids are *happy* with themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids are often *not* happy with themselves.	☐	☐
19.	☐	☐	Some kids often *forget* what they learn	BUT	Other kids can remember things *easily.*	☐	☐
20.	☐	☐	Some kids are always doing things with *alot* of kids	BUT	Other kids usually do things *by themselves.*	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
21.	☐	☐	Some kids feel that they are *better* than others their age at sports	BUT	Other kids *don't* feel they can play as well.	☐	☐
22.	☐	☐	Some kids wish their physical appearance (how they look) was *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their physical appearance the way it is.	☐	☐
23.	☐	☐	Some kids usually get in *trouble* because of things they do	BUT	Other kids usually *don't* do things that get them in trouble.	☐	☐
24.	☐	☐	Some kids *like* the kind of *person* they are	BUT	Other kids often wish they were someone else.	☐	☐
25.	☐	☐	Some kids do *very well* at their classwork	BUT	Other kids *don't* do very well at their classwork.	☐	☐
26.	☐	☐	Some kids wish that more people their age liked them	BUT	Other kids feel that most people their age *do* like them.	☐	☐
27.	☐	☐	In games and sports some kids usually *watch* instead of play	BUT	Other kids usually *play* rather than just watch.	☐	☐
28.	☐	☐	Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked *different*	BUT	Other kids *like* their face and hair the way they are.	☐	☐
29.	☐	☐	Some kids do things they know they *shouldn't* do	BUT	Other kids *hardly ever* do things they know they shouldn't do.	☐	☐
30.	☐	☐	Some kids are very *happy* being the way they are	BUT	Other kids wish they were *different*.	☐	☐
31.	☐	☐	Some kids have *trouble* figuring out the answers in school	BUT	Other kids almost *always* can figure out the answers.	☐	☐
32.	☐	☐	Some kids are *popular* with others their age	BUT	Other kids are *not* very popular.	☐	☐

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
33.	☐	☐	Some kids *don't* do well at new outdoor games	BUT	Other kids are *good* at new games right away.	☐	☐
34.	☐	☐	Some kids think that they are good looking	BUT	Other kids think that they are not very good looking.	☐	☐
35.	☐	☐	Some kids behave themselves very well	BUT	Other kids often find it hard to behave themselves.	☐	☐
36.	☐	☐	Some kids *are* not very happy with the way they do alot of things	BUT	Other kids think the way they do things is *fine*.	☐	☐

APPENDIX E

CRPBL Questionnaire

Instructions

Please read each of the statements on the following pages and circle the answer that most closely describes the way each of your parents acts toward you.

If you think the statement is LIKE your parent, circle L.
If you think the statement is SOMEWHAT LIKE your parent, circle SL.
If you think the statement is NOT LIKE your parent, circle NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Some what Like	Not Like	Like	Some what Like	Not Like
1. Makes me feel better after talking over my worries with her/him.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
2. Isn't very patient with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
3. Sees to it that I know exactly what I may or may not do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
4. Wants to know exactly where I am and what I am doing.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
5. Soon forgets a rule she/he has made.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
6. Is easy with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
7. Doesn't talk with me very much.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
8. Will not talk to me when I displease her/him.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
9. Is very strict with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
10. Feels hurt when I don't follow advice.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
11. Is always telling me how I should behave.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
12. Usually doesn't find out about my misbehaviour.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
13. Spends very little time with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
14. Almost always speaks to me with a warm and friendly voice.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
15. Is always thinking of things that will please	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
16. Believes in having a lot of rules and sticking to them.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
17 Tells me how much she/he loves me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Some what Like	Not Like	Like	Some what Like	Not Like
18. Is always checking on what I've been doing at school or at play.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
19. Punishes me for doing something one day, but ignores it the next.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
20. Allows me to tell her/him if I think my ideas are better than his/hers.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
21. Lets me off easy when I do something wrong.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
22. Sometimes when she/he disapproves, doesn't say anything but is cold and distant for awhile.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
23. Forgets to help me when I need it.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
24. Sticks to a rule instead of allowing a lot of exceptions.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
25. Tells me exactly how to do my work.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
26. Doesn't pay much attention to my misbehviour.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
27. Likes me to choose my own way of doing things.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
28. If I break a promise, doesn't trust me again for a long time.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
29. Doesn't seem to think of me very often.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
30. Doesn't tell me what time to be home when I go out.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
31. Gives me a lot of care and attention.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
32. Believes that all my bad behaviour should be punished in some way.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
33. Asks me to tell everything that happens when I'm away from home.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
34. Doesn't forget very quickly the things I do wrong.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
35. Wants me to tell her/him about it if I don't like the way she/he treats me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
36. Worries about me when I'm away.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
37. Gives hard punishments.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Some what Like	Not Like	Like	Some what Like	Not Like
38. Believes in showing her/his love for me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
39. Feels hurt by the things I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
40. Lets me help to decide how to do things we're working on.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
41. Says some day I'll be punished for my bad behaviour.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
42. Gives me as much freedom as I want.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
43. Smiles at me very often.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
44. Is always going on at me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
45. Keeps a careful check on me to make sure I have the right kind of friends.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
46. Depends upon her/his mood whether a rule is enforced or not.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
47. Excuse my bad behaviour.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
48. Doesn't show that she/he loves me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
49. I less friendly with me if I don't see things her/his way.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
50. Is able to make me feel better when I am upset.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
51. Becomes very involved in my life.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
52. Almost always complains about what I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
53. Always listens to my ideas and opinions.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
54. Would like to be able to tell me what to do all the time.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
55. Doesn't check up to see whether I have done what she/he told me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
56. Thinks and talks about my misbehaviour long after its over.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
57. Doesn't share many activities with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Some what I like	Not Like	Like	Some what I like	Not Like
58. Lets me go any place I please without asking.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
59. Enjoys doing things with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
60. Makes me feel like the most important person in her/his life.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
61. Gets cross and angry about little things I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
62. Only keeps rules when it suits her/him.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
63. Really wants me to tell her/him just how I feel about things.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
64. Will avoid looking at me when I've disappointed her.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
65. Usually makes me the centre of her/his attention at home.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
66. Often praises me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
67. Says if I loved her/him, I'd do what she/he wants me to do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
68. Seldom insists that I do anything.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
69. Tries to understand how I see things.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
70. Complains that I get on her/his nerves.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
71. Doesn't work with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
72. Insists that I must do exactly as I'm told.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
73. Asks other people what I do away from home.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
74. Loses her/his temper with me when I don't help around the home.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
75. Does not insist I obey if I complain or protest.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
76 Cheers me up when I am sad.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
77. Sees to it that I obey when she/he tells me something.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Some what Like	Not Like	Like	Some what Like	Not Like
78. Tells me of all the things she/he has done for me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
79. Wants to control whatever I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
80. Does not bother to enforce rules.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
81. Thinks that any misbehaviour is very serious and will have future consequences.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
82. Is always finding fault me with me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
83. Often speaks of the good things I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
84. Makes her/his whole life centre about her/his children.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
85. Doesn't seem to know what I need or want.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
86. Is happy to see me when I come home from school.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
87. Gives me the choice of what to do whenever possible.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
88. If I've hurt her/his feelings, stops talking to me until I please her/him again.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
89. Worries that I can't take care of myself unless she/he is around.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
90. Hugged or kissed me goodnight when I was small.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
91. Says if I really cared for her/him, I would not do things that cause her/him to worry.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
92. Is always trying to change me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
93. Is easy to talk to .	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
94. Wishes I were a different person.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
95. Lets me go out any evening I want.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
96. Seems proud of the things I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
97. Spends almost all of her/his free time with her/his children.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL

	Mother			Father		
	Like	Somewhat Like	Not Like	Like	Somewhat Like	Not Like
98. I have certain jobs to do and am not allowed to do anything else until they are done.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
99. Is very interested in what I am learning at school.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
100. Doesn't like the way I act at home.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
101. Changes her/his mind to make things easier for herself/himself.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
102. Can be talked into things easily.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
103. Wishes I would stay at home where she/he could take care of me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
104. Makes me feel I'm not loved.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
105. Has more rules than I can remember, so is often punishing me.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
106. Says I make her/him happy.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
107. Will talk to me again and again about anything bad I do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
108. Lets me do anything I like to do.	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL
	L	SL	NL	L	SL	NL