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THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLE ON PARENT-ADOLESCENT CONFLICT

By

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ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLE ON PARENT-ADOLESCENT CONFLICT

By

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Parent-adolescent conflict has become a subject of increasing concern to researchers and clinicians alike. Although family variables, such as parenting style, have been shown to be very important to adolescent well-being, an examination of the influence of parenting style on how adolescents and parents perceive conflict in the family is lacking in the literature. Therefore, in this self-report questionnaire study, high-school students and their parents reported on their perceptions of parenting style and parent-adolescent conflict within their family in order to address these questions. Results indicate that adolescents' perceptions of parents' authoritativeness were the strongest predictors of both parents' and adolescents' perceptions of low parent-adolescent conflict. In addition, adolescents' perceptions of mothers' and fathers' authoritarianism were positively related to parents' reports of conflict, and adolescents' perceptions of fathers' authoritarianism were positively related to adolescents' perceptions of conflict with fathers.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, parent-adolescent relationships and, more specifically, parent-adolescent conflict have become subjects of increasing concern to researchers and clinicians alike. The understanding of relationships between parents and their adolescent children has recently undergone a series of transformations from the prevailing theoretical view of conflict as essential and inevitable during this stage. On the contrary, empirical studies of parent-adolescent relationships in the 1960's suggested that this stage was much less conflictual than had previously been imagined and that, in fact, parent-adolescent relationships were quite harmonious (Offer, 1969; Douvan & Adelson, 1966). This was later tempered by the currently popular view that mild conflict is a normal part of family relations at this time of the life cycle, although a small portion of families experience quite severe conflict (Montemayor, 1983). Severe conflict has been shown to be associated with many negative outcomes for adolescents, including drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, physical abuse, dropping out of school, running away from home, emotional disturbances, and suicide (Hall, 1987; Montemayor, 1983). It is unclear whether conflict is the cause, the outcome, or merely a concomitant of these problems, yet regardless of causal directions, severe parent-adolescent conflict is certainly symptomatic of other adolescent difficulties (Montemayor, 1983), and cannot be ignored.

The study of parent-adolescent conflict to date has been primarily limited to quantification of conflict, examination of the issues surrounding

conflict, and adolescent variables which may influence the conflict. However, many researchers have noted the need for an investigation of family variables which predict parent-adolescent conflict (Montemayor, 1983; Papini & Sebby, 1988). "Transitional" stages are commonly considered to be the locus of increased stress and conflict within families (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988). A child's passage into adolescence is often a particularly difficult transition stage, because the adolescent begins to make increasing demands for behavioral autonomy[1] and control within the family, necessitating changes in the family's customary interactional and relational patterns. Some families appear to find the process of adjusting their expectations about responsibility and decision-making more difficult than others, which is likely to lead to greater conflict within these families. It is unclear, however, what factors mediate the ease or difficulty with which the transition occurs. Belsky & Vondra (1985) argue that parents must be flexible in response to their children's changing developmental needs, and that throughout childhood they must make efforts to direct their children's behavior without denying their developing sense of individuality. Parents who raise their children in this manner, most characteristic of the authoritative parenting style as delineated by Baumrind (1971), will be more prepared for the transition to adolescence. They will be accustomed to allowing their child to maintain an optimal level of autonomy, making it less difficult to allow the adolescent increasing amounts of freedom and personal control within the family. Thus, parenting style may have strong implications for how

1 Early to middle adolescents are primarily concerned with behavioral autonomy (manifested in seeking more influence in family interactions, making decisions about dating, friends, employment, economic resources, etc.; Garbarino, 1985) as opposed to emotional autonomy, which is not generally achieved until much later in adolescence or young adulthood. Therefore, references to autonomy throughout this paper generally refer to behavioral autonomy unless otherwise specificed.

families handle the transition to adolescence and how they manage conflict. Although parenting style has been shown to be very important to adolescent self-esteem (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Buri et al., 1988; Buri, 1989b) and school performance (Dornbusch et al., 1987b; Steinberg et al., 1989), with authoritative parenting relating positively to adolescent well-being, an examination of the influence of parenting style on family conflict at adolescence is lacking in the literature.

CONFLICT

Although adolescence has often been referred to as a period of stress and conflict, attention has traditionally been focused on the stressful and tumultuous nature of individual adolescent development. Later, this view was expanded to include the supposed turmoil of family relations, and the adolescent's inevitable and essential rebellion or separation from his/her parents. Theorists have claimed that one of the primary tasks of the adolescent is to establish an identity and become separate and independent from the parents (Erikson, 1950). As the notion that adolescents must inevitably rebel and families must experience extreme conflict in order for the adolescent to become independent was not supported by empirical evidence, other researchers broadened traditional views of identity formation. They refer to the process of becoming an autonomous individual as individuation, in which the developmental task of the adolescent is to attain an independent identity, yet the adolescent does so within the relational context of the family (Sabatelli & Mazor, 1985; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Bell & Bell, 1983). That is, the family is an integral part of the adolescent's attempts at gaining independence, and the task of individuation is transactional rather than

individual. Therefore, the developmental task of the adolescent becomes the developmental task of the family.

This process clearly demands change within the family and, as Montemayor (1983) found, the mild conflict which appears to be a normal part of family relations during adolescence reflects the difficulties inherent in this transition. However, it is important to stress that some conflict is to be expected, but severe conflict is not. While it is impossible to delineate a particular point when mild conflict turns into severe conflict, the extremes are distinguishable by the intensity, frequency, and duration of the disagreements (Robin & Foster, 1984). Thus, parent-adolescent conflict can be conceptualized as existing along a continuum of severity, from "normative" conflict to more troublesome conflict.

A large body of literature has addressed the issue of normative parent-adolescent conflict. The existing research has focused on several questions: 1) What are adolescents and parents arguing about, or what is the content of their conflicts?; 2) When during adolescence do different kinds of conflict take place?; and 3) When is conflict in general the greatest? An examination of these questions will help to better understand the process which is taking place during adolescence.

Topics of Conflict

What are the topics and issues on which parents and adolescents most commonly disagree? Montemayor and Hanson (1985) looked at the amount and nature of parent-adolescent conflict and found that the conflict primarily concerned relatively ordinary interpersonal issues such as teasing, annoying behaviors, and disagreement about turn-taking, and concerned rule enforcement much less frequently. These issues were the same ones which

tended to cause conflicts with the adolescents' siblings, indicating that, for the most part, the conflict consists of general interpersonal issues which tend to create problems between any set of people who interact regularly. Hill & Holmbeck (1987) and Montemayor (1982), too, suggest that parent-adolescent conflict generally involves common, everyday issues, such as schoolwork, chores, and disobedience, rather than the more "serious" topics of sex, drugs, religion, and politics. In fact, in a review of 17 studies conducted between 1929 and 1982, Montemayor (1983) found that the conflictual issues between parents and adolescents have remained remarkably consistent over time.

Adolescent Variables Influencing Conflict

In addition to conflict content, researchers have attempted to determine when different kinds of conflicts occur and when conflict is greatest, examining adolescent variables such as age and pubertal status. Smetana (1988) asked adolescents in fifth through twelfth grades and their parents who they felt should make decisions concerning conflictual issues. She found that the age of the adolescent and the type of issue were important in differentiating who should make the decision. Both parents and adolescents generally agreed that moral issues, such as stealing, lying, and hitting siblings, and conventional issues, such as doing chores, keeping parents informed of one's activities, and calling parents by first names were subject to parental jurisdiction. However, personal issues, such as sleeping late on a weekend, and talking on the phone when no one else wanted to use it, and multifaceted issues (entailing a personal component but also seen as violating parental conventions), such as hanging out with a friend that parents do not approve of, and dressing in "punk" clothes were much less subject to parental jurisdiction than the moral and conventional issues. In

addition, the older the adolescent, the more likely parents and adolescents were to judge the personal and multifaceted issues as under the adolescents' jurisdiction. However, at all ages, the adolescents were more likely to view these issues as under their personal jurisdiction than were parents, suggesting that parent-adolescent conflict may be related to the discordant expectations parents and adolescents have regarding legitimacy of parental decision-making power.

The findings of Feldman & Quatman (1988) also indicated that adolescents have earlier age expectations for autonomy-related behaviors (e.g. choosing clothes, hairstyles, how to spend own money etc.) than do parents. There was strong agreement across the sample concerning the sequence in which these events should come under adolescent jurisdiction, but there was discrepancy between parents and adolescents as to when these events should occur. It was concluded that these discrepancies have the potential to become serious disagreements, and may play a large part in parent-adolescent conflict.

Researchers have also suggested that pubertal status, more so than age, may be the important factor in family conflict during adolescence. Papini & Sebby (1988) found that families with prepubertal and transpubertal adolescents experienced more conflict over leisure and time management issues than families with postpubertal adolescents. Steinberg & Hill (1978) and Steinberg (1981) found that conflict between mothers and adolescent sons was greatest during early puberty. As adolescents became more assertive, family conflict increased. Mothers and sons began to interrupt each other more in discussions, but the sons deferred to their mothers less. During the later part of puberty, the conflict decreased, and mothers began to defer to their sons more. Fathers, however, became more influential over their sons during this period.

Hill et al. (1985b) found that boys' oppositional behavior was highest during the apex of puberty, and maternal satisfaction and boys' involvement in family activities decreased during this time. With adolescent girls, Hill et al. (1985a) found that when menarche occurs at approximately the average time, disturbances in the relationship increase between mothers and daughters at menarche and then decrease again within one year. When menarche occurs earlier than average, however, the pattern differs in that the disturbances do not decrease within the next year. Thus, there appears to be a consistent pattern of increased conflict during puberty when puberty occurs approximately "on-time"; however, this pattern may be altered when puberty occurs "off-time".

Hauser et al. (1985) also examined the effect of pubertal timing, that is, whether the adolescent is on- or off-time as compared to his/her peers. They found that for on-time adolescents, there was less explaining by adolescents and mothers and more constraining by mothers and fathers at the time of puberty, again supporting findings of a pattern of increased family conflict at puberty. Off-time adolescents, both early and late maturers, differed considerably however, exhibiting more explaining and less constraining than the on-time group, indicating that pubertal timing significantly affects the normative pattern of family interactions at puberty.

Papini et al. (1988) suggest that perhaps there may be a decrease in affective interactions, rather than increased conflict, at the transpubertal stage as opposed to the pre- and postpubertal stages. In accordance with previous findings, the mother-adolescent dyad was particularly unsupportive during the height of the pubertal stage. Adolescents' assertive interactions increased during puberty and then decreased postpubertally, while parents' assertive interactions remained constant. The researchers concluded that during

puberty, adolescents are redefining their relationship with their parents by decreasing affective interactions and increasing assertive interactions.

Other adolescent characteristics in addition to pubertal status and age have been examined in terms of their relevance to family interaction and conflict at adolescence, including emergence of formal thinking (Steinberg & Hill, 1978), and development of social-cognitive abilities (Smetana, 1987). Although it appears that conflict may vary as a function of pubertal status, age, etc., it seems clear that in addition to these adolescent variables, the family variables that relate to parent-adolescent conflict need to be explored.

FAMILY VARIABLES

Although the content of parent-adolescent conflict has been extensively explored, the process by which decisions are made and disagreements are resolved in the family has been a more recent question raised in the literature. The ways in which family members interact and communicate, and mutually influence one another, largely determine how conflicts are handled within the family. Steinberg (1987) refers to a shift in research in which "unidirectional models of parent-child socialization [are moving] toward the more reciprocal and systemic approaches to the study of the family" (p. 193). Within systems theory, conflict is clearly viewed as endemic to the family system, rather than the adolescent alone (Hall, 1987). Again, developmental issues are essential in understanding the mutual forces adolescents and parents place upon each other. As children begin to undergo the biological, psychological, and social changes which signify the beginning of adolescence, they begin to reassess their role in the family. The adolescent seeks a more symmetrical, egalitarian relationship with his/her parents than had previously existed (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986), which

necessitates flexibility within the system. This challenges interaction patterns which have previously been successful, and upsets the family's balance or homeostasis. The family's ability to negotiate a new homeostatic arrangement determines its level of functionality (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980).

Sabatelli & Mazor (1985) discuss the characteristics which affect the way that families negotiate this stage and regain homeostatic functioning. The system's level of differentiation, or the ability to regulate interpersonal distances such that cohesion is maintained but individuality allowed, is highly relevant in determining how the family will adapt to the adolescent's attempts at individuation. A well-differentiated system can easily adjust itself to an individual's independence needs, while the poorly differentiated system resists change and finds it difficult to accomodate the adolescent's needs for autonomy. This factor is likely to affect both the frequency and intensity of parent-adolescent conflict (Robin & Foster, 1984).

Quality of Communication

Given that disagreements are likely to occur to some extent in parent-adolescent relationships, there are several factors which may affect the severity of parent-adolescent problems and conflict. The quality of the family's communication is one factor which researchers have examined. Indeed, poor communication and low levels of positive communication are commonly found in distressed families and families with a disturbed adolescent (Hall, 1987; Robin & Weiss, 1980; Alexander, 1973). Alexander (1973) found that families with a delinquent adolescent exhibited more defensive communications, or threatening and punishing communications which invite defensive behaviors in return, while "normal" families

exhibited more supportive communications, or interaction characterized by information seeking and giving, problem solving, and understanding. Also, "normal" families allowed the adolescent to partake in more independent and adult-like communication than the delinquent families did. Smetana (1990) found that enabling family interactions, as opposed to constraining interactions, predicted successful conflict resolution. Grotevant & Cooper (1983) claimed that positive communication helped families to maintain an optimal level of separateness and connectedness between the members.

Problem-Solving Skills

In addition to quality of communication, the family's conflict resolution skills appear to play a major role in troubled parent-adolescent interactions. Vuchinich (1987) points out that verbal conflicts can produce positive results, including more open communication, as long as conflict management skills prevent conflict from becoming too frequent or severe. Indeed, a study by Martin et al. (1987) showed that verbally and physically violent families report much less successful outcomes from conflict resolution than do nonviolent families.

Foster & Robin (1988) propose that conflict resolution involves both communication skills and problem-solving skills, among other things. They explain that these factors interact to determine how and whether or not problems get resolved. For instance, the family may lack problem-solving skills entirely, or they may have the skills but they also engage in negative communication habits, such as personal attacks, hostile criticism, and unresponsiveness, which prevent them from utilizing those skills. When problem-solving skills are lacking or are not utilized and disagreements are not resolved, conflicts continue to occur and with greater antagonism (Foster

& Robin, 1988). Robin (1981) suggests that parent-adolescent conflict, in particular, is the result of a deficit in the problem-solving skills necessary to dealing with the adolescent's movements towards independence. Again, although all families are likely to experience some difficulties with this stage, many families have sufficient skills to deal with the problems so that conflict does not escalate to unmanageable levels. Other families lack basic skills and cannot overcome the obstacles of adolescence without severe difficulties.

Social learning theory-based treatment approaches have focused on the problem-solving skills of parents and adolescents, in which the intent is to help the family to resolve their disagreements democratically (Robin, 1981). This involves practices taken from Gordon's Parent Effectiveness Training (1970), including explanations of rules by parents, non-threatening communication, listening to and understanding each other, negotiating solutions which meet each other's needs, etc.. Outcome studies have indicated that implementing problem-solving communication training (which involves other components in addition to problem-solving training) improves problem-solving skills (Robin et al., 1977) and produces improvement on self-report measures of communication and conflict (Robin, 1981).

However, an examination of the way that "normal" families resolve conflict indicated that 36% of conflicts are stopped before they truly get underway, 35% are ended with specific social arrangements, and 61% end in a standoff. The researchers conclude that most conflicts simply "run their course," without negotiation or compromise (Vuchinich, 1987).

Although there are clearly differences between distressed and nondistressed families in communication and problem-solving abilities, the causes of these differences remains unclear. If some degree of conflict is

common in adolescence, what factors enable some families to work through the conflict and adapt to the changes engendered by the transition to adolescence easier than other families? The existing research on parent-adolescent conflict focuses on the content and the process of conflict, but studies examining predictive factors are lacking. Montemayor, in his review of parent-adolescent conflict (1983), states that studies using adolescent or parent characteristics, or types of family organization to predict different levels of conflict simply do not exist. Steinberg (1990), too, concludes that studies have not examined how earlier family characteristics are linked to the nature of the family's transition to adolescence. The question continues to be raised in the literature: why is this transition to adolescence so difficult for some families and not others (Montemayor, 1983; Robin & Foster, 1984; Hall, 1987; Grotevant, 1989)?

It has been suggested that how parents have resolved conflict in the past will have much to do with how they work through conflict once adolescents begin demanding more autonomy (Hall, 1987). Belsky & Vondra (1985) argue that parents must be flexible in response to their children's changing developmental needs, and that throughout childhood they must make efforts to direct their children's behavior without denying their developing sense of individuality. Successful parents will have "set the stage" for the transition to adolescence, because they will be accustomed to allowing the child to maintain an optimal level of autonomy; thus, it will not be a huge leap to allow the adolescent more freedom and control over his/her actions and decisions. As Hall (1987) points out, children learn patterns of interaction from their parents, so the way that parents socialize their children will largely influence how parents and adolescents deal with conflict. If the family's interaction patterns have undergone a gradual, rather than abrupt,

shift and have allowed the members to slowly become comfortable with their new roles, the family will find the transition less stressful (Montemayor, 1983). It follows from this that families who have and who utilize conflict resolution skills will also be less challenged by conflict in adolescence.

Parenting Styles

Clearly, the way that parents socialize their children will have strong implications for how they handle the transition to adolescence. How families respond to the adolescent's autonomy-seeking behaviors may be determined in large part by their parenting or child-rearing style. In particular, Baumrind's (1971) typology of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles may be quite useful in examining how families handle conflict at adolescence. Briefly, Baumrind defines authoritarian parents as those who expect their children to conform to a rigid set of standards. The parents are the sole decision-makers, and children are expected to obey unquestioningly. Often, they use harsh, punitive methods of discipline. Authoritative parents also guide their children firmly, but they attempt to explain their reasoning and allow their children input into decision-making. In addition, their firm discipline and control are accompanied by warmth and respect. Although permissive parents are also warm and supportive, they avoid the use of control and regulation. They allow their children to make their own decisions, and do not take responsibility for shaping their childrens' behavior (Baumrind, 1989).

In an examination of "normal" adolescents' perceptions of their parents' typical parenting practices, Douvan & Adelson (1966) found that approximately 33% of the adolescents sampled reported that their parents displayed patterns of authority most similar to the authoritarian parenting

style, while 50-75% described their parents in a way most similar to the authoritative pattern. Offer's (1969) study showed that about 20% of his sample thought their parents were too lenient, 20% thought that their parents were too strict, and 60% thought that their parents' disciplinary techniques were variable and unpredictable.

Based on adolescent self-report data, Kandel & Lesser (1969) found that American adolescents perceived their parents as being significantly more authoritarian, with fathers being more authoritarian and mothers more democratic, than did Danish adolescents. In addition, authoritarian patterns were found to be more common in families of lower socioeconomic status (Jurkovic & Ulrici, 1985; Dornbusch et al., 1987a). It appears that families of higher SES exhibit a more gradual shift of authority, allowing adolescents to contribute to the decision-making process before allowing them complete autonomy. Lower SES families tend to shift more abruptly from parents having complete control over decision-making to adolescents having control, without going through a process of joint decision-making (Dornbusch et al., 1987a).

Other researchers have examined how parents and their adolescents typically resolve disagreements in order to determine parents' authority practices. Youniss (1988) claimed that conflict resolution between parents and adolescents usually involved the adolescent complying with the parents' wishes, but that there was commonly discussion between parents and adolescents first, and parents usually offered explanations for their views. Although Selman (1981) and Maccoby & Martin (1983) suggested that collaboration and compromise may be more mature and healthy methods of resolving conflicts, Smetana (1990), utilizing a laboratory family interaction task with adolescents and their parents, found that there was no increase in

compromise with adolescents' age. She did find, however, that adolescent concession to parents decreased with age.

Researchers have examined the relationship between different parenting styles and various measures of social and academic success in adolescence. Buri (1989b) and Buri et al. (1988), using a questionnaire developed by Buri to assess parenting style, found that authoritative parenting is positively related to adolescents' reported self-esteem, while authoritarian parenting is negatively related to adolescents' self-esteem. These relationships were particularly salient for girls. Permissive parenting was not found to relate to self-esteem. Gecas & Schwalbe (1986) broke down the authoritative pattern of parenting into separate aspects of control/autonomy, parental support, and participation in a questionnaire they derived from two other measures of parental behavior commonly used with children. They found that parental control/autonomy strongly affected boys' feelings of self-esteem, while parental support and participation affected girls' feelings of self-esteem. In addition, fathers' child-rearing behaviors were more closely related to self-esteem than were mothers' child-rearing behaviors, and both parents had a stronger influence on boys' self-esteem than on girls' self-esteem. Using adolescents' reports on questionnaires regarding parental behavior and adolescent self-esteem, Litovsky & Dusek (1985), too, found that parental acceptance and the granting of psychological autonomy were related to high self-esteem. However, in contrast to Gecas & Schwalbe's study, their results indicated that mothers' child-rearing practices were more closely related to the child's self-esteem than were the fathers' child-rearing practices.

Other researchers have looked at the association between parenting styles and school performance. Bowerman & Elder (1963), using a structured

questionnaire, found that adolescent boys who had high scholastic performance and goals tended to have fathers who were democratic in child-rearing. Dornbusch et al. (1987b) developed a questionnaire assessing adolescents' perceptions of their parents' parenting styles and discovered that authoritativeness in parents related to adolescents' self-reported grades and grade point average, while permissiveness and authoritarianism were negatively related to school success. Steinberg et al. (1989), in a longitudinal questionnaire study, extended the above research by examining the unique contribution of the different aspects of authoritativeness to school success. They found that separate components of authoritative parenting, that is, acceptance and allowance of psychological autonomy (as opposed to psychological control), each contributed to the positive relationship between authoritativeness and academic success.

In addition, Steinberg et al. (1989) addressed the issue of how and why authoritative parenting is related to positive outcomes in adolescence. They delineated the characteristic of psychosocial maturity, which was a factor comprised of self-reliance, identity, and self-direction, as being an important mediator in the relationship between authoritativeness and academic success. The researchers found that the impact of parenting style on academic success was mediated by psychosocial maturity, and that the factors of acceptance, psychological autonomy, and behavioral control each contributed independently to psychosocial maturity. Thus, they concluded that authoritative parenting facilitates, rather than simply accompanying, school success. Similarly, the process by which authoritativeness leads to other positive outcomes in adolescents may well be mediated by the family's interactional patterns, and their methods of handling the conflict associated with this transitional stage.

Finally, Steinberg et al. (1991) questioned whether the relationships researchers were finding between authoritative parenting and positive adolescent outcomes were limited to certain ethnic groups or socioeconomic classes. They conducted a large-scale self-report questionnaire study with a diverse sample of high school students and found relationships between authoritativeness and four measures of adolescent adjustment, including school performance, self-reliance, anxiety and depression, and delinquent behavior. Moreover, these relationships were consistent across ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and family structure (intact versus nonintact families). The findings of Dornbusch et al. (1987b) also indicated that the positive consequences of authoritativeness and the negative consequences of authoritarianism were consistent across ethnic backgrounds.

PARENTING STYLES AND CONFLICT

When adolescents begin to seek more autonomy, the legitimacy of parental authority will need to be renegotiated (Smetana, 1987), and parents and adolescents will need to learn to relate in an increasingly egalitarian manner (Smith & Forehand, 1986). These changes often throw the family into disequilibrium, resulting in increased stress within the parent-adolescent relationship (Montemayor, 1982). Montemayor (1983) points out the importance of flexibility and the need to be able to adjust parenting styles with the changes of adolescence, suggesting that the parenting skills which have previously been successful may no longer work in adolescence. Smetana (1987), too, states that parents' patterns that were functional in childhood may become maladaptive in adolescence. However, as was suggested earlier, parents' responses to adolescent demands will depend largely upon previous patterns of response. Thus, as adolescents begin to question parental control,

parents who are used to reasoning with their children and explaining their points of view (authoritative parents) will find adolescent demands less threatening. Parents who use more flexible parenting styles will be able to accomodate shifts in relationships and allow adolescent individuation, and are likely to negotiate this stage with relative ease.

On the contrary, parents who have always exerted complete dominance over their children and have not allowed their child any say in decision-making (authoritarian parents) will find this stage more trying and conflictual. The flexibility that is necessary and the new roles that are demanded will be unfamiliar to the family, making the restoration of homeostasis a difficult process. If the parents are unable to adapt to the adolescent's emerging needs for autonomy, it is likely that the adolescent will be very unsatisfied and possibly rebellious (Garbarino, 1985). Parents' rigidity will get in the way of conflict resolution skills, leading to hostility and escalating negative responses within the family (Foster & Robin, 1988). Holmbeck (1990) found that when the mother was not willing to grant autonomy to an adolescent who desired more autonomy, which is most characteristic of the authoritarian parenting style, mothers reported more frequent and intense conflict, and adolescents reported more emotional detachment from mothers and had more emotional and behavioral problems. Over time, this pattern resulted in the greatest increase in adolescent reported conflict and the greatest decreases in adolescent self-concept.

Children who have never been offered any direction in decision-making, that is, those with permissive parents, may feel insecure and neglected, and may have a difficult time making appropriate decisions. As the consequences of inappropriate decisions may be more severe in

adolescence than in childhood, parents may suddenly find the adolescent's decisions unacceptable, where previously they have not questioned their child's judgment, and conflict may be intensified. Holmbeck (1990) described a pattern most characteristic of the permissive parenting style, in which the mother was willing to grant more autonomy to the adolescent but the adolescent did not desire more autonomy. He found that these adolescents were likely to be impulsive, aggressive, and lacking in self-governance, and that mothers reported more conflict while adolescents reported less conflict and more emotional detachment.

Parents' and Adolescents' Perceptions of the Family

In addressing the above hypotheses, it is necessary to consider the varying perceptions of different family members. It has been argued, based on a symbolic-interactionist perspective, that an individual's perception of a phenomenon is the most important variable affecting his/her own behavior (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Buri et al., 1988). Thus, researchers often rely on self-report data from only one family member (Buri et al., 1988). However, the reliance on self-report data, and particularly on only one family member's report, raises many important issues. Perhaps the most commonly raised issue concerns the similarity or difference between different family member's perceptions of a phenomenon. If each family member has a different "reality", is it truly sufficient to rely on only one person's report?

Some researchers have suggested that parents and children differ systematically in their presentations of the family. Havighurst & Davis (1955) and Miller & Swanson (1958), for example, suggest that mothers may give socially appropriate or idealized responses when answering questions regarding their own parenting practices. In the same vein, Herbst (1952) and

Ausubel et al. (1954) have suggested that children tend to be less biased and better reporters of family life than their parents.

This issue is particularly important when dealing with parents' versus adolescents' perceptions of family characteristics, due to the nature of the parent-adolescent relationship. Callan & Noller (1986) suggest that some of the stress found in families with adolescents may be related to the differing perceptions of parents and adolescents regarding their family. They suggest that as adolescents begin to seek increasing autonomy and freedom from the family, they may also become more critical of it. At the same time, parents may be invested in presenting their family in a positive light. Indeed, researchers who have compared parents' and adolescents' reports of family characteristics have suggested that parents tend to give more socially desirable responses than adolescents do, and adolescents tend to present a more discordant picture of family life (Niemi, 1974; Callan & Noller, 1986). Niemi (1974) concluded that parents were perhaps minimizing actual differences between themselves and their adolescents, while adolescents were perhaps exaggerating actual differences. Similarly, Lerner & Knapp (1975) found that adolescents tended to overestimate the number of different attitudes between themselves and their parents, while parents underestimated their differences.

Although Jessop (1981) found differences between parents and adolescents, she also found that parents and adolescents reported similar levels of closeness in the family. The primary difference between the reports of parents and adolescents was that each member tended to exaggerate the amount of influence and control s/he had over the family, rather than one member systematically presenting a more or less idealized picture of family life. Callan & Noller (1986) concurred that parents and adolescents did not

differ in reports of friendliness, and Smith & Forehand (1986) similarly found that parents and adolescents had similar perceptions of conflict.

Niemi (1974) pointed out that although each person's report may indeed reflect his/her perception of the relationship, comparisons between parents' and adolescents' reports indicate only level of agreement, rather than accuracy, when there is no objective measure of the variable with which to compare reports. Noller & Callan (1988) attempted to address this issue by comparing parents' and adolescents' reports of family interaction with the reports of outside observers. In addition to parents' and adolescents' reports of the behavior of themselves and one another (the "insider" family), the researchers had a trained observer and another family consisting of two parents and an adolescent (the "outsider" family) rate the interactions of the first family. They found that, overall, ratings of the outsider family were more negative than those of the insider family and that the ratings of the trained observer were more closely related to, but less negative than, the ratings of the outsider family. In addition, the adolescents rated their own families more similarly to the outsider family than to their own parents, and the perceptions of parents and adolescents were more similar in the outsider family than in the insider family. Finally, ratings of the self by both parents and adolescents were more similar to the trained observer's and the outsider family's ratings than were their ratings of other family members, indicating that they were more able to be objective about themselves than about other family members.

Although parents and their adolescent children clearly differ in their perceptions of at least some aspects of their families, it is important to determine if any member's perception tends to be more relevant in predicting either adolescent or family outcomes. Gecas & Schwalbe (1986) found that

there was little relationship between parents' and their children's reports of parental behavior, and that the children's reports were much more strongly related to children's self-esteem. Buri (1989b), too, found that adolescents' reports of their parents' behavior were more strongly related to adolescents' self-esteem than were parents' reports of their own behavior. Similarly, Smith & Forehand (1986) found that adolescents' perceptions of parental conflict were more consistent predictors of conflict with parents than were parents' perceptions of parental conflict. Although Wierson et al. (1988) found that parents' reports of interparental conflict were significantly related to their adolescent children's functioning (e.g. school performance, behavior problems, cognitive and social competence), the adolescents' perceptions of interparental conflict accounted for unique variance (ranging from 2% to 10% depending on the measure of adolescent functioning) beyond that contributed by the parents' reports.

HYPOTHESES

It is hypothesized that perceptions of authoritative parenting will relate to low levels of perceived conflict between parents and adolescents while perceptions of authoritarian and permissive parenting will relate to higher levels of perceived conflict. Based on the equivocal nature of existing literature regarding the importance of permissiveness as compared to authoritativeness and authoritarianism on adolescent outcomes, it is expected that the relationships between conflict and both authoritativeness and authoritarianism will be stronger than those between conflict and permissiveness.

The assessment of both parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parenting style and conflict will allow examination of the relationship

between different family members' perceptions of the variables, and also which member's perceptions of parenting style, if any, are more predictive of level of conflict. It is predicted that each family member's own perception of parenting style will be most closely related to his/her own perception of conflict. However, as parent-adolescent conflict is an interactional variable, it is likely that the experience of each person involved will play a role in the prediction of conflict. Therefore, it is also hypothesized that other family members' perceptions of parenting style will relate to the individual's own perception of conflict (e.g., mothers' perceptions of their parenting styles will relate to adolescents' perceptions of conflict, and adolescents' perceptions of mothers' parenting styles will relate to mothers' perceptions of conflict). Moreover, it is expected that the combination of both adolescents' and parents' perceptions of parenting style will best predict perceptions of conflict. That is, parents' perceptions of parenting style are expected to account for unique variance beyond that accounted for by adolescents' perceptions of parenting style in predicting adolescents' perceptions of conflict. Conversely, adolescents' perceptions of parenting style are expected to account for unique variance beyond that accounted for by parents' perceptions of parenting style in predicting parents' perceptions of conflict.

METHOD

Subjects

Twenty-five adolescents (sixteen girls and nine boys), twenty-five mothers, and twenty-three fathers (two families were single-parent families) volunteered to participate in the study. Five of these families had a stepparent living in the home. Adolescents ranged in age from 14 to 17, with a mean age of 15 1/2 years. Four percent of the sample were 14 years old, 48% were 15, 36% were 16, and 12% were 17 years old. Students were in 9th through 12th grades, with the majority (sixteen) being in 10th grade. Subjects were recruited through students' classes in two public high schools in a middle to upper-middle class community. Participants included those students and their parents who completed and returned the instruments given to the student in school.

Procedure

Approximately four hundred students in two midwestern high schools, grades 9-12, were given an envelope containing a letter describing this study, informed consent forms for parents and student, and an individual packet of questionnaires for the student and for each parent. Each family member was given a questionnaire about parent-adolescent interactions (Conflict Behavior Questionnaire), and a questionnaire about parenting beliefs (Parental Authority Questionnaire). The student filled out each questionnaire twice, once regarding his/her mother and once regarding

his/her father. In addition, the student's packet included a demographics questionnaire. The student and parents were asked to sign the consent forms if they agreed to participate in the study. They were then asked to fill out the questionnaires and return them in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. They were told that their voluntary agreement to take part in the study would be indicated by the signed consent forms and the return of the envelope. Anonymity of the participants was ensured by the absence of any identifying information on the forms, with the exception of the informed consent forms. The consent forms were removed from the packet when it was returned to the researchers. Twenty-five packets were returned with complete information (all questionnaires filled out by the student and each parent living in the home), giving a return rate of 6%.

Measures

The demographics questionnaire provides information regarding the subject's age, sex, grade, and a list of the members in the family (unnamed). The adolescent was asked to fill out the questionnaires regarding the parents with whom s/he was currently living.

The Parental Authority Questionnaire, developed by Buri et al. (1988), measures authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and permissiveness in parenting practices. The 30 questions on the PAQ are based on Baumrind's (1971) prototypes of parental authority. There are 10 items on each of the three scales, and each item is answered on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Thus, the total score on each variable ranges from 10 to 50. Test-retest studies resulted in reliabilities ranging from .77 for father's permissiveness to .92 for father's authoritativeness (Buri, 1989a). Content validity was achieved by having 21 professionals evaluate

each of the items as to its appropriateness in reflecting the construct in question. Ninety-five percent agreement was required in order to include an item on the scale. Discriminant validity was shown in the divergence of responses on the three different scales. Scores on one scale were either insignificantly related or inversely related to scores on the other scales (Buri, 1989a). Means from a normative sample (adolescents only) reported by Buri (1989a), in addition to means on the PAQ for the present sample, are presented in Table 1.

In this study, the PAQ was filled out twice by the adolescent, once in reference to his/her mother and once in reference to his/her father, reflecting the adolescent's perception of the parenting practices of each of his/her parents while s/he was growing up. The PAQ was also reworded so that it could be answered by the parents, and was filled out by each parent reflecting beliefs about his/her own parenting practices while the adolescent was growing up.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations on Parental Authority Questionnaire for Present Sample and Normative Sample

	Present Sample				Norm Sample	
	Adolescent		Parent		Adolescent	
Parenting Style	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
			Mother			
Authoritativeness	35.76	6.44	43.92	3.75	36.82	5.12
Authoritarianism	26.68	7.99	23.92	8.07	27.20	7.12
Permissiveness	24.60	5.68	22.20	4.66	25.38	5.31
			Father			
Authoritativeness	34.26	7.41	41.35	5.73	33.20	8.24
Authoritarianism	29.13	7.57	26.78	7.47	29.03	8.54
Permissiveness	24.04	6.71	22.87	5.44	23.48	5.64

The Conflict Behavior Questionnaire assesses positive and negative interactive behaviors exhibited by parents and adolescent, yielding a score of overall distress in the relationship (Foster & Robin, 1988). The twenty items are answered as either true or false. Test-retest reliability with distressed parents and adolescents ranges from .37-.85 over a period of 6-8 weeks. Internal consistency ranges from .88 for the mothers' report of adolescents' behavior to .95 for the adolescents' report of mothers' behavior. There is 66-68% agreement between parents and adolescents in distressed families, while in nondistressed families, there is 84% agreement, indicating that particularly in distressed families, this scale should be recognized as measuring perceived conflicted interaction. The CBQ has also been shown to reliably discriminate distressed from nondistressed families (Robin & Foster, 1984; Foster & Robin, 1988).

In this study, the CBQ was filled out by both parents and twice by the adolescent (once for father and once for mother), thus providing a measure of each family member's perception of parent-adolescent conflict. Because the 20-item version (CBQ-20) has been shown to correlate .96 with the longer form (Foster & Robin, 1988), it was used. Means from the CBQ-20 for a normative nonclinic sample, in addition to means for the present sample, are presented in Table 2 (Foster & Robin, 1988).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations on Conflict Behavior Questionnaire for Present Sample and Normative Sample

Family Member	Present Sample Mean	Present Sample S.D.	Normative Sample Mean	Normative Sample S.D.
		Mother		
Adolescent	3.6	4.5	2.0	3.1
Parent	3.5	3.9	2.4	2.8
		Father		
Adolescent	3.9	5.1	1.6	1.6
Parent	4.2	4.7	3.2	3.0

RESULTS

Demographic Variables

Preliminary analyses were conducted on the data in order to determine if scores on the conflict and parenting style variables were related to the demographic variables of sex or age. Because there were very few 14 and 17 year olds, age was separated into two groups: 14 and 15 year olds, and 16 and 17 year olds. Sex and age were then entered into one-way ANOVAs with each of the conflict and parenting style variables (both adolescent and parent perceptions). A consistent sex difference was found in both parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parents' authoritarianism. Sex was related to both mothers' and fathers' perceptions of their own authoritarianism, with mothers ($F[1, 23]=8.04$, $p<.009$) and fathers ($F[1, 21]=20.51$, $p<.001$) reporting more authoritarianism with daughters than with sons. Sex was also related to adolescents' perceptions of their mothers' authoritarianism ($F[1, 23]=7.30$, $p<.01$), with girls reporting that their mothers were more authoritarian than did boys. Finally, there was a trend towards significance, consistent with the above findings, in adolescent girls' perceptions of their fathers' authoritarianism as compared to adolescent boys' perceptions, with girls reporting that their fathers were more authoritarian ($F[1, 21]=3.34$, $p<.08$). There were no significant differences across sex or age on any of the other parenting style variables or on the conflict variables.

Comparisons Between Each Family Member's Perceptions

Correlation coefficients were computed to explore the relationships between adolescents' and parents' reports of conflict and of parenting style within their families in order to determine the similarity of different family members' reports. The correlation matrices are represented in Tables 3 and 4. Significant associations were found between adolescents' and parents' reports of conflict. Specifically, adolescents' reports of conflict with mothers and with fathers were significantly correlated ($r=.59$, $p<.01$), as were mothers' reports of conflict with their adolescents and fathers' reports of conflict with their adolescents ($r=.44$, $p<.05$). A significant relationship was also found between adolescents' reports of conflict with their mothers and mothers' reports of conflict with their adolescents ($r=.43$, $p<.05$).

Significant relationships were also found between adolescents' reports of mothers' and fathers' permissiveness ($r=.64$, $p<.01$), mothers' and fathers' authoritativeness ($r=.70$, $p<.01$), and mothers' and fathers' authoritarianism ($r=.72$, $p<.01$), indicating that the adolescents believe that their parents have similar parenting styles. Also, a significant relationship was found between

Table 3

Correlations between Parents' and Adolescents' Perceptions of Conflict

	Mother (n=25)		Father (n=23)	
Family Member	Adolescent	Parent	Adolescent	Parent
Mother				
Adolescent	1.00	.43*	.59**	.33
Parent	.43*	1.00	.09	.44*
Father				
Adolescent	.59**	.09	1.00	.33
Parent	.33	.44*	.33	1.00

*p<.05
**p<.01

Table 4

Correlations between Parents' and Adolescents' Perceptions of Parenting Style

	Authoritativeness				Authoritarianism				Permissiveness			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	Adol	Par	Adol	Par	Adol	Par	Adol	Par	Adol	Par	Adol	Par
Authoritativeness												
Mother												
Adolescent	1.00	.03	.70**	.41	-.23	-.19	-.15	-.20	-.17	-.01	.06	.08
Parent	.03	1.00	.22	-.05	.30	.28	.11	.03	-.21	-.23	.07	-.45*
Father												
Adolescent	.70**	.22	1.00	.44*	-.23	-.11	-.34	-.34	-.30	-.19	-.03	.00
Parent	.41	-.05	.44*	1.00	.06	.15	.05	-.09	.08	.04	.13	-.06
Authoritarianism												
Mother												
Adolescent	-.23	.30	-.23	.06	1.00	.63**	.72**	.64**	-.26	-.08	-.26	-.15
Parent	-.19	.28	-.11	.15	.63**	1.00	.56**	.58**	-.33	.08	-.46*	-.05
Father												
Adolescent	-.15	.11	-.34	.05	.72**	.56**	1.00	.67**	-.22	.20	-.41	-.27
Parent	-.20	.03	-.34	-.09	.64**	.58**	.67**	1.00	-.17	.22	-.30	-.34
Permissiveness												
Mother												
Adolescent	-.17	-.21	-.30	.08	-.26	-.33	-.22	-.17	1.00	.39	.64**	.14
Parent	-.01	-.23	-.19	.04	-.08	.08	.20	.22	.39	1.00	-.06	-.05
Father												
Adolescent	.06	.07	-.03	.13	-.26	-.46*	-.41	-.30	.64**	-.06	1.00	.18
Parent	.08	-.45*	.00	-.06	-.15	-.05	-.27	-.34	.14	-.05	.18	1.00

Note: For mothers, n=25; For fathers, n=23

*p<.05 **p<.01

mothers' reports of their own authoritarianism and fathers' reports of their own authoritarianism ($r=.58$, $p<.01$), but not between mothers' and fathers' reports of their own authoritativeness or permissiveness, suggesting that parents perceive their parenting as being highly similar only in the domain of authoritarianism.

As predicted, significant associations were also found between adolescents' reports of fathers' authoritativeness and fathers' reports of their own authoritativeness ($r=.44$, $p<.05$), and adolescents' reports of fathers' authoritarianism and fathers' reports of their own authoritarianism ($r=.67$, $p<.01$). In addition, adolescents' reports of mothers' authoritarianism were significantly related to mothers' reports of their own authoritarianism ($r=.63$, $p<.01$).

Comparisons of Aggregate Responses

T-tests were performed on mean conflict and parenting style scores in order to examine overall group differences between parents and adolescents. Again, Tables 1 and 2 present the mean scores on each of the conflict and parenting style variables for this sample, as well as for normative samples. Although there were many similarities between perceptions of conflict and parenting style by parents and adolescents from the same families, it is important to also examine aggregate response patterns to determine if there are any systematic differences between parents and adolescents. An examination of aggregate responses indicates that, overall, parents and adolescents reported similar levels of conflict in their relationships. The mean conflict scores of fathers and adolescents, of mothers and adolescents, of fathers and mothers, and of adolescents regarding their mothers and their fathers showed no significant group differences.

However, an examination of group means for parents' and adolescents' reports of parenting styles indicates that both mothers and fathers tended to give more socially desirable reports of their parenting styles overall than adolescents did. Although the following group differences were statistically significant, in all cases the mean scores of both mothers and fathers were in the direction of what was hypothesized as being more positive (i.e. more authoritative, less authoritarian, and less permissive) than the mean scores of adolescents. A significant difference was found between mothers' and adolescents' reports of mothers' authoritativeness ($t[25]=5.55$, $p<.001$), with mothers reporting that they were more authoritative than adolescents reported. A similar difference was also found between fathers' and adolescents' reports of fathers' authoritativeness ($t[23]=4.79$, $p<.001$). Therefore, although the reports of fathers' authoritativeness by fathers and adolescents from the same families were significantly related, in the aggregate, fathers reported that they were more authoritative than did adolescents. Additionally, mothers reported that they were less authoritarian than adolescents reported ($t[25]=2.00$, $p<.05$). Again, within individual families, mothers' and adolescents' reports of mothers' authoritarianism were related, yet overall mothers reported that they were less authoritarian than did adolescents. Finally, there was a trend towards significance in mothers' reports of their permissiveness as compared to adolescents' reports of mothers' permissiveness, in that mothers reported less permissiveness ($t[25]=2.07$, $p=.057$).

Adolescents' Reports of Conflict

Correlation coefficients were computed to explore the relationships between each conflict variable (i.e. adolescents' reports of conflict with fathers

and with mothers, mothers' reports of conflict with adolescents, and fathers' reports of conflict with adolescents) and the parenting style variables (i.e. adolescents' and mothers' reports of mothers' authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and permissiveness, and adolescents' and fathers' reports of fathers' authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and permissiveness). This correlation matrix is represented in Table 5. Looking first at adolescents' reports of conflict, the hypothesized inverse relationship between authoritativeness and conflict was strongly supported for adolescents' reports of conflict and parenting style for both parents. As expected, significant inverse relationships were found between perceptions of conflict with mothers and adolescents' perceptions of their mothers' authoritativeness ($r=-.62$, $p<.01$), and perceptions of conflict with fathers and their perceptions of their fathers' authoritativeness ($r=-.67$, $p<.01$), indicating that adolescents who perceive their mothers and fathers to be high on authoritativeness report low levels of conflict with parents.

Table 5

Correlations between Parenting Styles and Conflict

	Parenting Style					
	Authoritativeness		Authoritarianism		Permissiveness	
Conflict	Adol	Parent	Adol	Parent	Adol	Parent
			Mother (n=25)			
Adolescent	-.62**	.29	.28	.28	.09	.17
Parent	-.69**	.07	.48*	.15	-.10	-.21
			Father (n=23)			
Adolescent	-.67**	-.48*	.45*	.42*	-.26	-.17
Parent	-.53**	-.27	.44*	.43*	-.08	-.38

*p<.05
**p<.01

Also, as predicted, a positive relationship was found between perceptions of conflict with fathers and their perceptions of their fathers' authoritarianism ($r=.45$, $p<.05$), indicating that adolescents who perceive their fathers to be high on authoritarianism report higher levels of conflict with their fathers. This relationship held true only for fathers, as adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritarianism did not relate significantly to adolescents' perceptions of conflict with mothers.

In addition to the within-subject associations, adolescents' reports of conflict with father were also inversely related to their fathers' reports of their own authoritativeness ($r=-.48$, $p<.05$) and positively related to their fathers' reports of their own authoritarianism ($r=.42$, $p<.05$). This did not hold true for adolescents' reports of conflict with their mothers and mothers' reports of parenting style.

Parents' Reports of Conflict

Interestingly, not only were adolescents' reports of parenting style closely related to their own reports of conflict, but they were also more closely related to parents' reports of conflict than were parents' own reports of their parenting styles. Adolescents' reports of both mothers' and fathers' authoritativeness and authoritarianism related to parents' reports of conflict in the predicted directions. Specifically, a significant inverse association was found between mothers' reports of conflict and adolescents' reports of their mothers' authoritativeness ($r=-.69$, $p<.01$), while a significant positive relationship was found between mothers' reports of conflict and the adolescents' reports of their mothers' authoritarianism ($r=.48$, $p<.05$). Similar to mothers' reports, fathers' reports of conflict were inversely related to adolescents' reports of their fathers' authoritativeness ($r=-.53$, $p<.01$) and

positively related to adolescents' reports of their fathers' authoritarianism ($r=.43$, $p<.05$).

Only fathers' reports of their own authoritarianism followed the expected relationship to their own reports of conflict, with reports of authoritarianism relating positively to reports of conflict ($r=.43$, $p<.05$). Contrary to prediction, fathers' reports of conflict were unrelated to their own reports of their authoritativeness. Moreover, mothers' reports of conflict were not significantly related to their own reports of their parenting styles. Although fathers' reports of their own permissiveness were not statistically significantly related to their reports of conflict, the inverse association between the two is not small ($r=-.38$) and runs contrary to prediction.

Regression Analyses

Stepwise multiple regression analyses were computed with each of the parenting style variables (both adolescents' and parents' perceptions) predicting the four conflict variables. Table 6 summarizes the results of these regressions, with only the significant predictors remaining. The regression analyses corroborated the correlational data, indicating that, across the board, adolescents' reports of parents' authoritativeness were the strongest predictors of low parent-adolescent conflict, regardless of whose report of conflict was being examined. Not only were adolescents' perceptions of parents' authoritativeness most highly predictive of their own perceptions of conflict but they were also most highly predictive of mothers' and fathers' perceptions of conflict. In fact, adolescents' perceptions of parents' authoritativeness accounted for more of the variance in mothers' and fathers' perceptions of conflict than in adolescents' own perceptions of conflict.

Table 6

Multiple Regressions of Parenting Styles on Conflict

Predictor	B	Beta	T	Sig T	R^2	Adj R^2
Adolescents' perceptions of conflict with mothers (n=25)						
Adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritativeness	-.43	-.62	-3.77	.001	.38	.36
Mothers' perceptions of conflict with adolescents (n=25)						
Adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritativeness	-.41	-.69	-4.52	.001	.47	.45
Adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritarianism	.16	.34	2.36	.03	.58	.54
Adolescents' perceptions of conflict with fathers (n=22)						
Adolescents' perceptions of fathers' authoritativeness	-.35	-.66	-3.97	.001	.44	.41
Adolescents' perceptions of fathers' permissiveness	-.28	-.51	-4.03	.001	.70	.67
Fathers' perceptions of conflict with adolescents (n=22)						
Adolescents' perceptions of fathers' authoritativeness	-.40	-.72	-4.68	.001	.52	.50
Fathers' perceptions of their own permissiveness	-.25	-.33	-2.42	.03	.64	.60

It is recognized that the small sample size in this study pushes the limits of this test's reliability since the minimum number of subjects tested should be approximately four to five per independent variable when executing multiple regressions (Bordens & Abbott, 1988; Pedhazur, 1982). For this reason, and because of the possibility that outlying subjects would significantly influence the findings, the sample was scrutinized for outliers. First, a regression was run on adolescents' perceptions of conflict with their mothers. The six relevant parenting style variables were entered together: adolescents' and mothers' perceptions of mothers' authoritativeness, authoritarianism, and permissiveness. As expected, adolescents' perceptions of their mothers' authoritativeness was the strongest predictor of adolescents' perceptions of conflict with their mothers. This variable accounted for 36% ($p<.001$) of the variance in conflict with mothers. However, none of the other variables significantly increased the predictive ability of the equation beyond that accounted for by this variable.

A second regression was executed with adolescents' perceptions of conflict with their fathers as the dependent variable. The following predictor variables were entered: adolescents' and fathers' perceptions of fathers' authoritativeness, authoritarianism, and permissiveness. An outlier was discovered in this analysis. As suggested by Bordens & Abbott (1988), due to the small sample size and the possibility that the outlier would significantly skew the results, it was removed from the data set. Adolescents' perceptions of their fathers' authoritativeness accounted for 41% ($p<.001$) of the variance in adolescents' perceptions of conflict with their fathers. In addition, adolescents' perceptions of their fathers' permissiveness significantly increased the predictive ability of the equation to 67% ($p<.001$) of the variance

in conflict with fathers. Contrary to expectation, permissiveness predicted low levels of conflict with fathers rather than high levels.

A regression was run on mothers' perceptions of conflict with their adolescents with the following variables entered as predictors: mothers' and adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritativeness, authoritarianism, and permissiveness. Adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritativeness accounted for 45% ($p<.001$) of the variance in mothers' perceptions of conflict with adolescents. The only variable which accounted for a significant amount of variance beyond that afforded by the first variable was adolescents' perceptions of their mothers' authoritarianism, which increased the variance accounted for in mothers' reports of conflict with their adolescents to 54% ($p<.03$).

Finally, a regression was executed on fathers' perceptions of conflict with their adolescents with the following predictors entered: fathers' and adolescents' perceptions of fathers' authoritativeness, authoritarianism, and permissiveness. Again, an outlier was found and was removed from the analysis. Adolescents' perceptions of their fathers' authoritativeness accounted for 50% of the variance in fathers' perceptions of conflict with their adolescents. Additionally, fathers' perceptions of their own permissiveness significantly increased the predictive ability of the equation to 60% ($p<.03$). Again, high permissiveness predicted low levels of conflict, which runs contrary to our hypothesis. In no case (mothers', fathers', or adolescents' perceptions of conflict) did the combination of both adolescents' and parents' perceptions of parenting style best predict perceptions of conflict.

DISCUSSION

The results of this examination of parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parenting style and conflict indicate that when adolescents perceive their parents to be highly authoritative, there is little conflict perceived in the parent-adolescent relationship. Moreover, this finding holds true when parent-adolescent conflict is reported by either adolescents or their parents. The finding that authoritative parenting is consistently the strongest predictor of perceived conflict is concordant with other researchers' findings regarding the importance of authoritative parenting to various positive adolescent outcomes. Buri et al. (1988), for example, found that parental authoritativeness was very important to adolescents' self-esteem, and was more highly related to self-esteem than authoritarianism or permissiveness. Steinberg et al. (1989), in an elaboration of a study by Dornbusch et al. (1987b) which examined the relationship between different parenting styles and academic success, chose to focus specifically on the effects of authoritative parenting in their study. They discovered that authoritative parenting facilitates, rather than just accompanies, school success, and that this relationship is mediated through the effects of authoritative parenting on the adolescent's psychosocial maturity. This suggests that the mechanism through which authoritativeness engenders positive outcomes in adolescents is its promotion of certain skills in children and adolescents.

In this study, the associations between authoritative parenting and low conflict were found to be stronger and more consistent than the associations

between authoritarian parenting and high conflict. The stronger effects of positive versus negative parenting suggest that perhaps authoritative parenting actually promotes skills within the family which lead to low levels of parent-adolescent conflict. Rather than simply being the absence of negative interaction, it is suggested that authoritativeness promotes more positive interaction.

Steinberg (1990) asserts that parent-adolescent conflict may have positive benefits for the family and for the adolescent's development, as long as the conflict is accompanied by parent-child closeness. That is, positive parent-child relationships may moderate the effect of conflict on the family. It is important to point out that the conflict Steinberg is referring to is disagreements between parents and adolescents, or perhaps the somewhat "normative" conflict of parents and adolescents, while our definition of conflict (as measured by the CBQ) is more strongly affective and indicative of a negative relationship between parents and adolescents. One of the functions of parent-adolescent conflict, Steinberg suggests, is that disagreements and negotiations between parents and adolescents help in the development of more mutual and mature relationships. Likewise, Vuchinich (1987) points out that verbal conflicts can have positive outcomes, as long as family members have good conflict management or conflict resolution skills. In addition, Foster & Robin (1988) note that when families do not have good problem-solving skills, conflicts continually recur and with increased antagonism each time. More specifically, this indicates that parent-adolescent conflict may be the result of a deficit in the skills needed in the family to resolve normative disagreements and allow the adolescent to gain more freedom and control within the family. Indeed, Robin (1981) found that

teaching parents and adolescents how to resolve disagreements democratically lowered conflict.

It is suggested that authoritative parenting may be responsible for those skills needed for redefining relationships in the family and adapting to the changes engendered by the transition to adolescence. Children clearly learn skills and patterns of interaction from their parents through modeling (Hall, 1987), and authoritative parents purportedly teach their children the skills of negotiation and compromise by the models they provide as democratic parents. They demonstrate flexibility in their parenting and gradually allow children to take part in decision-making processes. Therefore, when the child begins to move towards adolescence, the family should be better equipped to renegotiate parental control and decision-making power, allowing the adolescent to become more independent. Thus, the skills promoted by authoritative parents are likely to enable the family to deal with adolescence with a minimum of parent-adolescent conflict. However, further research examining how parents and adolescents actually work through disagreements would be necessary to determine whether authoritative families do indeed utilize problem-solving skills more effectively than other families.

Although the strongest associations were found between authoritativeness and low conflict in this study, positive relationships were found between fathers' authoritarianism, as reported by both fathers and adolescents, and reports of conflict by fathers and their adolescents, supporting the hypothesis that fathers' authoritarian parenting is associated with high levels of conflict. Associations between mothers' authoritarianism and conflict were less consistent, as adolescents' reports of mothers' authoritarianism were significantly related only to mothers' reports of conflict. Permissiveness was not significantly related to levels of conflict in

any case; however, the failure to find a significant relationship between fathers' reports of their permissiveness and fathers' reports of low conflict, in particular, may be due to the limited power engendered by our small sample size.

The regression analyses also indicated that in addition to the predictive power of authoritativeness, several other factors play a role in predicting perceptions of conflict. In the mother-adolescent relationship, adolescents' perceptions of mothers' authoritarianism is also a significant factor in predicting mothers' perceptions of conflict. In the father-adolescent relationship, fathers' permissiveness accounts for unique variance in both fathers' and adolescents' perceptions of conflict. In addition to the beneficial influence of the democratic discipline of authoritativeness, it is suggested that the dimension of warmth in parenting may influence the experience of parent-adolescent conflict. Specifically, when adolescents perceive that their mothers lack warmth (authoritarian parenting), it has particularly negative repercussions for mother-adolescent conflict. Contrarily, the presence of warmth in fathers (permissive parenting), even without the context of firm parental control, has positive benefits for father-adolescent relationships. As Steinberg (1990) points out, closeness between parents and children plays a role in determining the effects of conflict. This appears to be particularly salient when mothers, who are stereotypically thought to parent with warmth, lack warmth, and when fathers, who are stereotypically thought to parent with less warmth, do parent warmly.

The relationship between fathers' permissiveness and conflict is particularly interesting given the predicted negative effects of permissiveness. However, existing literature regarding permissiveness is equivocal due to the varying definitions of permissiveness, ranging from Baumrind's original

conception of permissiveness (warm, caring parents who offer little control) to neglectfulness (parents with lax control and little warmth). When permissiveness is defined as lax supervision and discipline, with no indication of parental warmth, permissiveness is generally found to have negative effects (Dornbusch et al., 1987b). However, when parental warmth clearly accompanies lax discipline, findings are more conflicting and permissiveness is often unrelated to the variables in question (i.e. self-esteem: Buri et al., 1988; Buri, 1989b). Here, the combination of warmth and firm, democratic control characterizing authoritative parenting is most conducive to low conflict; however, in addition to this factor, the warmth of permissive parenting in fathers is also predictive of low conflict.

It appears that adolescents' perceptions of their parents are most important to perceived parent-adolescent conflict. That is, how adolescents perceive their parents' behaviors is most predictive of the reports of conflict by both parents and adolescents. This finding lends credence to the argument of many researchers that the way that adolescents perceive their parents' behavior is most important to their own attitudes and behavior (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Buri et al., 1988). However, adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behavior were also most predictive of parents' reports of conflict, which can be explained in one of two ways. First, this finding could indicate that adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behavior towards them are the critical factors in the parent-adolescent relationship, regardless of the way parents perceive their own behavior or of the way that they actually behave. Thus, it would follow that when adolescents perceive their parents to be warm and receptive to their opinions and to gradually allow them increased input into decision-making, neither parents nor adolescents are likely to be as threatened by the transition to adolescence and lower levels of conflict result.

Alternatively, this finding could indicate that adolescents' perceptions of their parents' behavior are closer to their parents' actual behavior than parents' perceptions of their own behavior, as parents may be invested in presenting themselves in a positive light. Although there is no measure here of parents' actual behavior in a naturalistic situation, and thus no way of verifying this explanation, an examination of the aggregate responses of parents and adolescents further clarifies the differences between perceptions of parents and adolescents. The results indicate that parents did indeed tend to perceive their parenting styles in a more positive light than did their adolescents, particularly on the scale of authoritativeness. In addition, mothers perceived themselves as less authoritarian than did their adolescents. This is consistent with existing research which suggests that parents tend to perceive aspects of the family, and particularly parental behavior, in a more socially desirable light than do adolescents (Niemi, 1974; Callan & Noller, 1986).

However, parents' and adolescents' reports of conflict did not differ significantly, which is consistent with Smith & Forehand's (1986) finding that parents and adolescents had similar perceptions of conflict and Jessop's (1981) finding that parents and adolescents rate family members similarly on friendliness. This seemingly disparate finding may be due to the fact that questions referring to parenting style clearly reflect on the parent, and are thus subject to social desirability bias, while a measure of conflict may be seen to reflect as much or more on the child than on the parent. Additionally, the only situation in which parents' reports of their own parenting behaviors were related to their own reports of parent-adolescent conflict was fathers' perceptions of their authoritarianism to fathers' perceptions of conflict.

Fathers' perceptions of their authoritarianism was the parenting style variable which received the strongest parent-adolescent agreement.

Finally, a consistent sex difference was found indicating that parents with daughters were reported as being more authoritarian than parents with sons. The pattern of greater authoritarianism with daughters than with sons is consistent with typical sex-role patterns and may be due to parents' beliefs that they need to be stricter with their daughters as their daughters need more protection than sons. Moreover, adolescent boys are commonly considered to be more independent than adolescent girls (Belsky & Vondra, 1985; Steinberg, 1987), and thus, parents may believe boys need less structure. Additionally, Douvan & Adelson (1969) found that adolescent boys desired more independence from parental control and wanted more responsibility for their decisions and behavior than did adolescent girls. This finding may have important implications for parent-daughter relationships during adolescence given the associations between authoritarianism and many negative adolescent outcomes, including parent-adolescent conflict. Although a significant sex difference was not found here in levels of conflict with parents, girls' mean conflict scores with both mothers and fathers were higher than were boys' mean conflict scores. In addition, other studies have found that girls experience more conflict with their parents than do boys (Montemayor, 1982).

Methodological Concerns

The following limitations of this study should be noted. The population sampled in this study was a predominantly Caucasian, middle-middle to upper-middle class community, which limits the ability to generalize findings to more diverse populations. In addition, participation in

this study was voluntary, and the low response rate and small sample size obtained in this study make it difficult to determine representativeness even of the larger population from which it was drawn. Obtaining demographic information on the parents would have been helpful in determining if there was a selection factor. However, it is important to note that comparison of this sample to other normative samples indicates that the subjects in this study have characteristics which are roughly comparable to similar predominantly Caucasian, middle class samples (See Tables 1 and 2). Specifically, reports of parents' parenting styles by the adolescents in our study are remarkably similar to reports of parenting styles by the adolescents in Buri's (1989a) original normative sample. In addition, reports of conflict by both parents and adolescents in our sample are similar, but slightly higher, than reports of a nonclinic, normative sample found in Foster & Robin (1988).

The small sample size also restricts our ability to conduct more in-depth examinations of our variables. For instance, factor analysis of the conflict measure might result in several factors (e.g. affective vs. behavioral conflict) perhaps differentially relating to the various parenting styles. In addition, we have examined the relationship between conflict and the three different styles of parenting behavior, yet these styles are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As it is possible for a parent to obtain a high score on more than one parenting style scale, it would be useful to tease out the effects of combinations of parenting styles. That is, what is the relationship to conflict when a parent primarily uses one parenting style versus using a combination of two different styles? However, it is important to note that for the most part, the parenting styles which would theoretically be expected to be negatively related (e.g. authoritativeness and authoritarianism, and

authoritarianism and permissiveness) did indeed show negative correlations, particularly in adolescents' reports.

In addition, it is important to note that adolescents and their parents were asked about parenting practices "while the adolescent was growing up". Although it was hypothesized that perceptions of parenting practices during childhood would be related to parent-adolescent conflict and, indeed, this relationship was found, it is possible that some parents change their parenting practices in response to their developing adolescent. In this study, it was decided that it was theoretically defensible to assume that past parental behavior would be the best predictor of future parental behavior. However, it would be interesting to administer the parenting style questionnaire to adolescents and their parents twice, once regarding parenting practices during childhood and once regarding parenting practices during adolescence in order to determine whether some parents are able to adapt their parenting styles to the needs of the developing adolescent, and whether these families fare as well as families with parents who have utilized an authoritative parenting style all along.

Finally, our utilization of self-report measures means that although we can compare agreement between parents and adolescents, and can determine if one family member's perceptions of a variable are more highly predictive of another variable than other family member's perceptions, we cannot determine the accuracy of any member's perceptions. Behavioral observations used in conjunction with self-report measures would be beneficial in determining the similarity of reports to more objective measures of the variables of interest. In addition, our reliance on self-report measures restricts our ability to verify the assumption that the use of better problem-solving or conflict resolution skills is responsible for the lower conflict in

authoritative families. It would be important in further research to supplement the self-report data with behavioral observations of families engaged in conflict resolution of disagreements either in an experimental situation (e.g. a family interaction task) or a more naturalistic situation (such as that utilized by Montemayor & Hanson, 1985 or Vuchinich, 1987) in order to determine how families truly work through conflict and whether authoritative families do indeed utilize problem-solving skills more effectively.

APPENDIX A

Letter to Student and Parents

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH BUILDING

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824-1117

Dear Student and Parent(s):

The East Lansing Public School Administration has kindly let us get in touch with you by allowing us to give you this envelope. This envelope is being brought home only by students in Health and Psychology classes.

We are researchers from Michigan State University who are interested in learning more about high school students and their relationships with their parents. We are asking you to help us to better understand family life by agreeing to take part in this study. If you do agree to help us, we would ask you each to fill out several questionnaires.

You will find three packets in this envelope, one for each of you. Included in each packet are separate forms for students and for parents. In the student's packet, there is also a brief form which simply asks your age, grade, sex, and the number of people in your family.

The forms that you fill out will be marked with a code number, not your name, so your answers will be anonymous. No one will see what you write except the people doing the study, and they will not know who you are. We are doing things this way in order to protect your privacy, and to let you feel free to write what you really think.

You can let us know that you agree to take part in the study by signing the enclosed Informed Consent forms, and filling out all of the questionnaires and returning them in the envelope we have provided. If you are interested in receiving a report of the results of this study, please print your name and address in the spaces at the bottom of the Informed Consent form. If you have any questions about this study, either before agreeing to participate or at any time after this, we'd be happy to answer them. You can call or leave a message at 353-8877. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Susan Jackson

Susan Jackson

Gary Stollak

Gary Stollak, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology

APPENDIX B

Informed Consents

INFORMED CONSENT - PARENT(S)

I have been informed that the purpose of this study is to better understand relationships between high school students and their parents. My participation in this study will include filling out several questionnaires, which will take approximately 30 minutes. I have been told that these questionnaires ask for information about family life.

I understand that the questions being asked are fairly personal, and that my participation is entirely voluntary. I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, and I know that I have the right not to answer certain questions if I choose not to. However, I understand that all of my answers are valuable to the study and that my decision to not answer certain items may make it difficult to use the information that I do provide. I have also been told that information from both student and parent(s) is important to this study, and that I should only return the envelope if all questionnaires have been completed and both student and parent(s) have signed this Informed Consent form.

I understand that my answers will be anonymous, and that the information I provide will be identified by code number only. I have been told that this form is not marked with a code number and will be kept apart from all other information, and that my confidentiality will be thus guaranteed.

Lastly, if I have any questions or concerns regarding this study, I know that I am encouraged to contact Dr. Gary Stollak or Susan Jackson at 353-8877 in the Department of Psychology at Michigan State University to discuss these concerns.

_____ _____
Signature of Parent Date

_____ _____
Signature of Parent Date

I would like to receive a report of the results of this study.

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

_____

APPENDIX C

Demographics Questionnaire

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Your age: _____

Your birthday: _____

Your grade: _____

Your sex: _____

Please list the members of your family; that is, list their relationship to you (e.g. mother, stepfather, sister, brother), but do not write their names; also indicate their ages, and if they are living at home with you or not:

Relationship	Age	Living at Home?
----------	------	------
----------	------	------
----------	------	------
----------	------	------
----------	------	------
----------	------	------

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRES REGARDING THE PARENT(S) WITH WHOM YOU ARE PRESENTLY LIVING.

However, if you are living with a stepparent, or have not always lived with one or both parents who you are living with now, please answer the questions below regarding this parent (or parents):

Which parent have you not lived with all of your life? _____
At what age did you begin living with this parent? _____
How many years or months have you lived with this parent? ___yrs___mos

Please feel free to add any information that will help to clarify the above questions: ----------

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APPENDIX D

Conflict Behavior Questionnaire - Adolescent and Parent Versions

APPENDIX D

CBQ: ADOLESCENT VERSION FOR FATHER

These statements below have to do with you and your father. Read the statement, and then decide if you believe the statement is true, or mostly true. If it is true, then circle true, and if you believe the statement is not true, circle false. You must circle either true or false, but never both for the same item. Please answer all items. Your answers will not be shown to your parents.

true	false	1.	My father doesn't understand me.
true	false	2.	My father and I sometimes end our arguments calmly.
true	false	3.	My father says I have no consideration for him.
true	false	4.	We almost never seem to agree.
true	false	5.	I enjoy the talks we have.
true	false	6.	When I state my own opinion, my father gets upset.
true	false	7.	At least three times a week, we get angry at each other.
true	false	8.	My father listens when I need someone to talk to.
true	false	9.	My father is a good friend to me.
true	false	10.	My father understands me.
true	false	11.	At least once a day, we get angry at each other.
true	false	12.	My father is bossy when we talk.
true	false	13.	The talks we have are frustrating.
true	false	14.	My father understands my point of view, even when he doesn't agree with me.
true	false	15.	My father seems to be always complaining about me.
true	false	16.	In general, I don't think we get along very well.
true	false	17.	My father screams a lot.
true	false	18.	My father puts me down.
true	false	19.	If I run into problems, my father helps me out.
true	false	20.	I enjoy spending time with my father.

FATHER FORM

CBQ: PARENT VERSION

You are the child's _____mother __X__father (check one).
You are filling this questionnaire out regarding your _____son
_____daughter (check one) who is _____years old.

These statements below have to do with you and your child. Read the statement, and then decide if you believe the statement is true, or mostly true. If it is true, then circle true, and if you believe the statement is not true, circle false. You must circle either true or false, but never both for the same item. Please answer all items. Answer for yourself, without talking it over with your spouse. Your answers will not be shown to your child.

true	false	1.	My child is easy to get along with.
true	false	2.	My child is receptive to criticism.
true	false	3.	My child is well behaved in our discussions.
true	false	4.	For the most part, my child likes to talk with me.
true	false	5.	We almost never seem to agree.
true	false	6.	My child usually listens to what I tell him/her.
true	false	7.	At least three times a week, we get angry at each other.
true	false	8.	My child says that I have no consideration of his/her feelings.
true	false	9.	My child and I compromise during arguments.
true	false	10.	My child often doesn't do what I ask.
true	false	11.	The talks we have are frustrating.
true	false	12.	My child often seems angry at me.
true	false	13.	My child acts impatient when I talk.
true	false	14.	In general, I don't think we get along very well.
true	false	15.	My child almost never understands my side of an argument.
true	false	16.	My child and I have big arguments about little things.
true	false	17.	My child is defensive when I talk to him/her.
true	false	18.	My child thinks my opinions don't count.
true	false	19.	We argue a lot about rules.
true	false	20.	My child tells me he/she thinks I am unfair.

APPENDIX E

Parental Authority Questionnaire - Adolescent and Parent Versions

APPENDIX E

PAQ: ADOLESCENT VERSION FOR MOTHER

Instructions: For each of the following statements, fill in the circle on the attached answer sheet which corresponds to the number on the 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) that best indicates how that statement applies to you and your mother. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your mother during your years of growing up at home (that is, until approximately age 13). There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

1. While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.

2. Even if her children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she thought was right.

3. Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.

4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my mother discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.

5. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.

6. My mother has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.

7. As I was growing up my mother did not allow me to question any decision that she had made.

8. As I was growing up my mother directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.

9. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.

10. As I was growing up my mother did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.

11. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.

12. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.

13. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.

14. Most of the time as I was growing up my mother did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.

15. As the children in my family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.

16. As I was growing up my mother would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her.

17. My mother feels that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.

18. As I was growing up my mother let me know what behaviors she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.

19. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her.

20. As I was growing up my mother took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.

21. My mother did not view herself as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.

22. My mother had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but she was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.

23. My mother gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow her direction, but she was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.

24. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.

25. My mother has always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.

26. As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.

27. As I was growing up my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her.

28. As I was growing up my mother did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.

29. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in the family and she insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her authority.

30. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if she had made a mistake.

PAQ: PARENT VERSION

Instructions: For each of the following statements, fill in the circle on the attached answer sheet which corresponds to the number on the 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) that best indicates how that statement applies to your beliefs regarding children. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your child during his/her years of growing up at home (that is, until approximately age 13). There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

1. While my child was growing up, I felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.

2. Even if my child didn't agree with me, I always felt that it was for his/her own good if he/she was forced to conform to what I thought was right.

3. Whenever I told my child to do something as he/she was growing up, I expected him/her to do it immediately without asking any questions.

4. As my child was growing up, once family policy had been established, I discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.

5. I have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever my child has felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.

6. I have always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.

7. As my child was growing up I did not allow him/her to question any decision that I had made.

8. As my child was growing up I directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.

9. I have always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.

10. As my child was growing up I did not feel that he/she needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.

11. As my child was growing up he/she knew what I expected of him/her in my family, but he/she also felt free to discuss those expectations with me when he/she felt that they were unreasonable.

12. I have always felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.

13. As my child was growing up, I seldom gave him/her expectations and guidelines for his/her behavior.

14. Most of the time as my child was growing up I did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.

15. As my children were growing up, I consistently gave them direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.

16. As my child was growing up I would get very upset if he/she tried to disagree with me.

17. I feel that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.

18. As my child was growing up I let him/her know what behaviors I expected of him/her, and if he/she didn't meet those expectations, I punished him/her.

19. As my child was growing up I allowed him/her to decide most things for him/herself without a lot of direction from me.

20. As my child was growing up I took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but I would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.

21. I did not view myself as responsible for directing and guiding my child's behavior as he/she was growing up.

22. I had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as my child was growing up, but I was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.

23. I gave my child direction for his/her behavior and activities as he/she was growing up and I expected him/her to follow my direction, but I was always willing to listen to his/her concerns and to discuss that direction with him/her.

24. As my child was growing up I allowed my child to form his/her own point of view on family matters and I generally allowed him/her to decide for him/herself what he/she was going to do.

25. I have always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.

26. As my child was growing up I often told him/her exactly what I wanted him/her to do and how I expected him/her to do it.

27. As my child was growing up I gave my child clear direction for his/her behaviors and activities, but I was also understanding when he/she disagreed with me.

28. As my child was growing up I did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.

29. As my child was growing up he/she knew what I expected of him/her in the family and I insisted that he/she conform to those expectations simply out of respect for my authority.

30. As my child was growing up, if I made a decision in the family that hurt him/her, I was willing to discuss that decision with him/her and to admit it if I had made a mistake.

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