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PARENTING STYLES USED WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN JORDAN

Ву

Amal Jamal Al-Khatib

A THESIS

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

PARENTING STYLES USED WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN JORDAN

Ву

Amal Jamal Al-Khatib

This study explored the parenting styles used by Jordanian fathers and mothers of preschool children. Fathers and mothers of 172 preschool children from two-parent families (drawn from 8 kindergartens in the city of Amman using a multistage cluster sample) participated in the study. A modified version of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) was used to collect the data. Means and standard deviations of parent responses were calculated. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to test the study hypotheses.

The results revealed that the most common parenting style used by parents with their preschool children was authoritative parenting, followed by permissive parenting, and authoritarian parenting. Significant statistical differences in parenting styles were found as a function of parent gender and child gender. Fathers were found to be significantly more permissive than mothers, and both mothers and fathers more often used an authoritative parenting style with their sons than their daughters. The implications of these results are discussed and recommendations for future research offered.

To my best friend, best man, and favorite model, who taught me the value and joy of knowledge. Who else could it be, my greatest father, Jamal Al-Khatib, A million thank you for all of your support, love, and trust.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

Guiding children's behavior is one of the major tasks performed by parents in all societies. To guide their children in acquiring socially accepted behaviors, parents use different techniques, often summarized as parenting styles. These styles have an important role in shaping the social and emotional development of children (Darling, 1999). In light of this, extensive literature in the last several decades has addressed parenting styles, their influences on child outcomes, and characteristics associated with them (e.g., Banks, 2002; Baumrind, 1968, 1971, 1991, 1996; Chandler & McGrath, 2004; Koenig, 2002; Nelsen, 1995; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001; Sears & Sears, 1995).

Parenting style has been defined by Darling and Steinberg as "a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parents' behaviors are expressed" (1993, p 488). These authors differentiate between parenting styles and parenting practices. According to them, parenting styles refer to the tone of parent-child interactions, while parenting practices refer to parents' attempts to achieve specific goals in specific situations (e.g., helping children achieve academically). Thus, parenting practices are directed towards particular goals which will directly affect children's development, while parenting styles refer to the overall emotional climate in which particular parent-child interactions occur (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Baumrind's work (1967, 1968, 1971, 1991, 1996) on parenting styles has been very influential in the past five decades. Baumrind conceptualized parenting style as encompassing parents' attitudes, behaviors, and practices. The two main dimensions of parenting style emphasized by Baumrind (1991) were parental warmth (support and affection) and behavioral control (restrictiveness and imposition of rules). She described three main parenting styles that vary in the types of control and effects on children. These three styles are: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and non-responsive to children's needs. They emphasize obedience and respect of authority, and tend to use punitive methods. They insist on children's compliance and do not allow discussion about the correctness of the standards (Baumrind, 1971). Authoritative parents are generally warm and responsive to children's needs. They set clear limits for conduct, but use induction and direct children's behavior through discussions and reasoning (Baumrind, 1971). Permissive parents, on the other hand, are responsive to children's needs and non-demanding. They ignore misbehaviors and do not insist on child conformity to the rules and standards. They emphasize selfregulation by their children (Baumrind, 1971).

Several characteristics have been shown to influence the choice of parenting styles. For example, parenting styles are a function of cultural and social characteristics (Chao, 2001; Koramoa, Lynch, & Kinnair, 2002; Rao, McHale, & Pearson, 2003; Smith & Mosby, 2003; Tudge, Hogan, Snezhkova, & Etz, 2000; Wu, Robinson, Young, Hart, Olsen, Porter, Jin, Wo, & Wu, 2002). European-American parents have been found to be more authoritative, while African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic-American parents have been found to be more authoritarian (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, &

Darling, 1992). Middle eastern parents have typically been described as more authoritarian (e.g., Barakat, 1993), however, research-based evidence is lacking. Crosscultural differences in parenting styles are related to many variables, the most important of which are: economic status, educational level, family structure, and religious beliefs (Ritts, 1999). The relationship between parenting style and child outcomes has also been shown to be mediated by socio-cultural factors (Chao, 2001; Darling, 1999; Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, McNielly-Choque, 1998). Parenting styles are also influenced by parent gender (Hart & Robinson, 1994; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003) and child gender (Block, 1983; Lytton & Romney, 1991; Someya, Uehara, Kadowaski, Tang, Saburo, & Takahashi, 2000). In general, mothers have been described as more authoritative, while fathers have been described as more authoritarian and permissive (Holmbeck, Paikoff, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Russell et al., 1998; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003; Sametana, 1995). On the other hand, parents tend to be more authoritarian with boys than with girls (Day, Peterson, & McCracken, 1990; Giles-Smith, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995).

Research shows that in addition to cultural and gender issues, there are other characteristics which may influence parenting styles, such as: child behavior and characteristics (Howard, 1996; Russell et al., 2003), child birth order (Someya et al., 2000), parental education and age (Howard, 1996; Snyder, 1991), child age (Banks, 2002), parental knowledge of child development (Stevens, 1984), socio-economical status (Portes, Dunham, & Williams, 1986), methods by which parents were brought up when they were children (Banks, 2002; Smith & Mosby, 2003), and parents' perceptions

regarding autonomy versus interdependence in their children (Sorbring, Rodholm-Funnemark, & Palmerus, 2002).

Given the importance of parenting styles, the primary purpose of this study is to examine parenting styles of parents with preschool aged children in Jordan, a country where very little empirically based information about this important issue is available. Furthermore, the study will investigate whether parenting styles among Jordanian parents differ as a function of parent and child gender, as seems to be the case in the larger parenting literature. Before proceeding, however, brief information about Jordan, where the study will take place, may be helpful.

Jordan: Brief Information

Jordan is a small Middle Eastern Arab country that gained independence from the British administration in 1946. The government of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy. The total population is estimated at 5.3 million. About 29% of the population is under the age of nine years (UNICEF, 2003). Arabic is the official language, and Moslems represent 92% of the population. According to law, education is free in public schools (parents pay no school fees) and compulsory (all school-age children are expected to attend school up to grade nine). The literacy rate is 91% (96% for males and 86% for females). The population growth rate is 2.5%. External debt, poverty, and unemployment are the major economic problems facing the country. The unemployment rate is officially estimated at 15%, and 30% of the population is below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2003).

Amman, the city where this study was conducted, is the capital of Jordan. It is no more than four hours' drive from anywhere in the country. It is an ancient city that was

named Philadelphia by the Romans and is known for its ruins and museums. It currently is a modern urban area that spreads over nineteen hills. It is known by many as the "white city" because of its white houses. Amman is the commercial and administrative center of the country. It is Jordan's largest city with a population of over two million residents representing all other areas in the Kingdom.

Jordan has recently witnessed urbanization and modernization that have affected family structure and dynamics. The Jordanian family is gradually changing from the traditional extended form to the nuclear form. However, the extended family, in the emotional rather than in the physical sense, remains the dominant family type in Jordan and other Arab countries. There are mutual commitments and relationships of interdependence and reciprocity among all family members (Barakat, 1993). The extended family and kinship relationships satisfy the individual's need for belonging and provide him with security. On the other hand, they impose commitments on him and limit his individuality (UNICEF, 2003; Hammad, 1998).

The extended family system as well as the large household size (the average of which is 6 in Jordan at the present time) pose difficulties in parenting. Many adult members of the extended family engage in upbringing the child. Since the father is traditionally the generator of the family's income, he traditionally plays the role of an authority figure. He expects respect and obedience to his instructions. Because of work, fathers spend most of their time outside the home. Accordingly, mothers are typically responsible for upbringing the children, particularly in their early years. They also play a mediation role between children and their fathers (i.e., mothers ask for fathers' intervention when children misbehave or ask them to respond to children's needs). This is also changing

since women are getting more involved in work outside the home (Barakat, 1993; UNECIF, 2003).

Improvement in the status of children is not restricted to establishing preschools; there is also a focus on equipping Jordanian parents with the necessary parenting and childcare knowledge and skills. Additionally, there is a trend toward adopting a comprehensive national strategy, which addresses the social-cultural, educational, and psychological factors related to appropriate development of young children.

However, a report published by Save the Children (2002) on the situation of early childhood education and health in Jordan revealed several shortcomings. The important educational shortcomings revealed by this report are:

- (1) The percentage of 4-6 year old children enrolled in kindergartens is about 35%.
- (2) There are no national standards for the skills and knowledge that preschool children should acquire, and developmentally appropriate curricula and programs are unavailable.
- (3) The teacher-child ratio in kindergartens is almost 1:25 in Amman and 1:27 in other areas of the country.
- (4) The physical and learning environments in the majority of kindergartens are not developmentally appropriate.
- (5) Most kindergarten teachers lack adequate training in early childhood education.

According to this report, kindergartens are still limited in number and the majority are privately owned, or run by non-governmental organizations. This report revealed also that kindergartens' distribution in Jordan, generally, does not correspond to the population density or need. On the contrary, most kindergartens are located in the large

cities and cater the needs of children from the higher-and middle-income families, focusing on academic development, with little emphasis on the other developmental areas. However, at the beginning of the year 2000, the Ministry of Education established 50 new kindergarten classes in public primary schools, in different areas of the Kingdom, including remote locations. This report highlights the need for further consideration in future planning for kindergartens in Jordan. Although the purpose of this study was not to examine early childhood education in Jordan, this information was included to provide better insight into current understandings of child development in Jordan. Such information is useful as a context from which to understand contemporary parenting practices.

In addition, the Government of Jordan has recently made significant efforts to protect the rights of children. The ministries of social development, education, and health are the key providers of social, educational, and health services to children. Her Majesty Queen Rania's involvement in early childhood education and child abuse prevention has been very influential. The University of Jordan established a bachelor degree in child education in 1998, and the Hashemite University recently established Queen Rania's Institute for Early Childhood Education. The Government works actively with international institutions and local non-governmental organizations to achieve progress in child education and care. International institutions include; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and World Health Organization (WHO). Among the most active local agencies playing important roles in child care and education are: National Council

for Family Affairs, Jordan River Foundation, Noor Al-Hussein Foundation, Hashemite Fund for Human Development, and National Task Force for Children.

Statement of the Problem

Since parenting styles are influenced by socio-cultural attitudes and values (Chao, 2000), generalizations from one country to another should be made with extreme caution. Even studies investigating parenting styles in Arab countries, which share many similarities, provide seemingly contradictory findings. For example, Salama (1984) found that mothers of second graders in Egypt were more controlling of daughters than sons. Agha (1989) found that Syrian fathers and mothers of adolescents were more authoritarian with boys than with girls. On the other hand, Qurashi (1986) found that Kuwaiti fathers and mothers of school-age children were more authoritative than authoritarian or permissive, although fathers were more authoritarian than mothers. Moreover, studies conducted in the same country sometimes report different results. For example, Al-Amir (2004) and Malhas and Abdouni (1997) found Jordanian parents of youths to be more authoritative than authoritarian, while Hawamdeh (1991) found fathers to be more authoritarian than mothers with both sons and daughters. These contrasted findings provide a clear rationale for further studies of parenting practices. Moreover, given the fact that there are conflicting results in studies of parenting practices with school age children, studies examining parenting styles with younger children are warranted.

Studies addressing parenting styles in Jordan are few. The literature review will demonstrate that none of the Jordanian studies that could be located investigated the parenting styles among parents of preschool children. Furthermore, very few studies

addressed the patterns of parenting styles used or the influence of parent and child gender on parenting styles. Accordingly, studies aimed at investigating parenting styles commonly used by Jordanian parents and major characteristics related to parenting styles remain important.

Although the literature shows that parenting style tends to vary as a function of child and parent gender, it was speculated that gender-based differences in parenting styles in Jordan may not match the differences in parenting styles between mothers and fathers and between boys and girls in other countries due to socio-cultural factors. Also, of the relatively small number of studies that are now available on Jordanian and other Arab families, most were focused on mothers. Very few studies have examined both mothers and fathers or differences in parenting boys and girls. Accordingly, investigating whether parenting styles used by Jordanian parents vary as a function of parent gender and child gender is rationalized.

Importance of the Study

This study is expected to provide information on styles used by Jordanian parents with their preschool children. Such information is valuable for five reasons. First, given that there has been more emphasis on child development than ever before and that parents are getting more educated, contemporary parenting practices in Jordan may be changing. Since scientific evidence on this issue is lacking, investigations of current parenting practices are warranted. Second, the results will assist professionals working in early childhood settings design and implement appropriate education programs to parents of young children to increase their knowledge of appropriate parenting styles. Third, unlike previous studies that traditionally asked children to report (often

retrospectively) on parenting styles used with them, this study provided parents the opportunity to report on the current parenting styles they use. Fourth, this study is the first to be conducted with a focus on parenting styles used with preschoolers in Amman, Jordan. Finally, this study will also contribute to the refinement of across-culture measures of parenting styles. Although the parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire (PSDQ) has been used recently in cross-cultural studies in different countries including the United States, Europe (e.g. England, Ireland, and Sweden), Russia, China, and Iran, it has not been used yet in an Arab country. By using this questionnaire for the first time in Jordan (an Arab country), this study allowed the comparison of its findings with the results of studies conducted in other countries. Sharing the results and recommendations of this study with parents may also help them be aware of their own parenting styles and improve them positively.

Purpose of the Study

The overall goal of this study was to explore styles Jordanian parents use with their preschool aged children. In order to achieve this goal, three specific objectives were developed to guide this research: (a) describe the styles used most by parents of preschool children in Jordan; and (b) determine if there are differences in parenting styles as a function of parent gender; and (c) determine if there are differences in parenting styles as a function of child gender.

In particular, this study addressed the following research questions and hypotheses:

(1) What parenting styles are used most by Jordanian fathers and by mothers of preschool children?

(2) Are there differences in the parenting styles used with Jordanian preschool children as a function of parent's gender?

HO2: There are no differences between Jordanian mothers and fathers in the parenting styles they use for parenting their preschool children.

HA2₁: Mothers are more authoritative than fathers.

HA2_{2:} Fathers are more authoritarian than mothers

HA2₃: Mothers are more permissive than fathers.

(3) Are there differences in parenting styles used by Jordanian parents as a function of child's gender?

HO3₁: There are no differences in the styles used by Jordanian parents according to child gender.

HA3₁: Mothers and fathers are more authoritarian with their sons.

HA3₂: Mothers and fathers are more authoritative with their daughters.

HA3_{3:} Mothers and fathers are more permissive with their daughters.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Parenting Style, Conceptually, parenting style refers to parents' attitudes and values about parenting, their beliefs about the nature of children, and the specific practices they use to socialize them (Robinson et al., 2001). Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting styles as the overall emotional climate of parent-child interactions. Baumrind (1991) emphasized that parenting style involves the normal variations in parents' attempts to socialize their children.

Parenting Style was operationally defined as parents' responses to the 32 items in the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson et al (2001), to measure authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles (Appendix 1).

Authoritative Style, Conceptually, parents using the authoritative style are responsive and warm. Although they are controlling, they are democratic rather than restrictive.

They establish rules for conduct, but discuss them with their children (Baumrind, 1991).

Authoritative Style was operationally defined by 15 items and with the following three sub-factors: (a) connection (warmth and involvement) (Items 1, 7, 12, 14, 27), (b) regulation (reasoning/induction) (Items 5, 11, 25, 29, 31), and (c) autonomy granting (democratic participation) (Items 3, 9, 18, 21, 22).

Authoritarian Style, Conceptually, parents using the authoritarian style show low levels of warmth and responsiveness. They are directive and demanding, and restrict autonomy of their children. They expect their children to obey their rules without discussion (Baumrind, 1991).

Authoritarian Style was operationally defined by 12 items and has the following three sub-factors: (a) physical coercion (Items 2, 6, 18, 32), (b) verbal hostility (Items 13, 16, 23, 30), (c) non-reasoning/punitive methods (Items 4, 10, 26, 28).

Permissive Style, Conceptually, parents using the permissive style are responsive and, non-directive, and lenient. They do not insist on mature behavior and allow their children high levels of self-regulation (Baumrind, 1991).

Permissive style was operationally defined by 5 items representing indulgent parenting (Items 8, 15, 17, 20, 24).

Child's Gender, Conceptually, child gender refers to a child being a male or a female. Operationally, it was represented by parents' response to the child gender item in the demographic information form.

Parent's Gender, Conceptually, parent gender refers to a parent being a mother or a father. Operationally, it was represented by parents' response to the parent gender item in the demographic information form.

Preschool Children, Conceptually, they are children attending kindergartens in the city of Amman, ranging in age from 3 years and 8 months to 5 years and 8 months. This is the definition of the preschool period in Jordan. Operationally, child's age was calculated in years and months as reported by parents.

Research Assumptions

The following assumptions were made by the researcher:

- (1) The parents understood the questions they are asked in the PSDQ and the family information form.
- (2) The parents' responses to the items in the PSDQ and the family information form were true, meaning that they were not influenced by the researcher or anyone else.
- (3) The parents' responses to the OSDQ items represented the actual behaviors they exhibited towards their preschool children, not their practices with other children or their beliefs about parenting in general.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to investigate the styles Jordanian parents use with their preschool children and examine whether these parenting styles differ as a function of parent and child gender. This literature review addresses: (a) results of studies related to parenting styles, (b) differences in parenting styles as a function of child gender, (c) differences in parenting styles as a function of parent gender, and (d) results of Jordanian studies related to parenting styles.

Parenting Styles

For more than forty years, researchers have been interested in studying parenting styles and their effects on child development. Consistently, parental styles have been shown to have strong influences on self-regulation and social competence of young children (Eisenberg, Losoya, & Fabes, 2001; Kerr Lopez, Olson, & Sameroff, 2004). Repeatedly, Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1991, 1996) has emphasized that the authoritative style leads to positive childhood outcomes. Many studies have shown that authoritative parenting positively influences social, cognitive, and emotional development of children and adolescents (Baumrind, 1967, 1991; Beyers & Goossens, 2994; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996). Other studies have shown that children of authoritative parents are socially more competent, have lively and happy mood, and demonstrate high self-esteem and self-control (Darling, 1999; Domitrovich & Bierman, 2001; Laible & Thompson, 2002; Steinberg, 2001). Therefore, the authoritative

parenting style has traditionally been described as the optimal parenting style (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

However, parenting styles that are viewed as optimal to cope with the realities in one cultural context may be viewed as less than optimal in another cultural context (Fagan, 2000). Long (2004) also pointed out that "what is an effective parenting practice in one ethnic group may not be an effective practice in another" (p.124). The authoritative parenting style has routinely been associated with positive child outcomes for middle-class European-American families. However, research conducted on other families (e.g., African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American) has reported differential effects of parenting styles (Chao, 1994: Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). For example, Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, (1992), found that African American youngsters seemed not to benefit from authoritative parenting and were not harmed by authoritarian parenting in terms of their school achievement.

Likewise, in the last ten years, Ruth Chao (1994, 2000, 2001) has conducted extensive research on the parenting styles of East Asian immigrant families in the United States. In general, her research has demonstrated that the meaning and effects of parenting styles vary as a function of ethnic differences. In particular, Chao's studies have revealed contradictory results for Asian Americans compared to European Americans regarding the relationship between parenting styles and child outcomes (e.g., academic achievement). For example, Chao (1994) found that authoritative parenting does not have the same beneficial effects for Asian Americans as it does for European Americans. In light of her research findings, Chao introduced the parenting style of training. This parenting style is based on a form of parental control that is distinct from the control that

describes the authoritarian parenting style offered by Baumrind. The training parenting style proposed by Chao emphasizes parental respect and focuses on the importance of hard work, self-discipline, and obedience. In addition to the lack of focus on cultural variations, Baumrind's work has also been criticized (Harris, 1998) because it ignores the influences of other factors on children's behavior (e.g., peer groups, genetics, gender).

The authoritarian and permissive styles are most typically thought to result in negative child outcomes (Baumrind, 1971; Chamberlain & Patterson, 1995; Darling, 1999). Research has associated both of these parenting styles with acting out behavior and more loneliness and social withdrawal among preschool children (Coplan, Findlay, & Nelson, 2004; Lamborn, Mount, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). Children of authoritarian parents tend to be anxious and withdrawn, distrustful, and have poorer social skills and lower self-esteem (Baumrind, 1991; Darling, 1999; Laible & Thompson, 2002). The authoritarian style has also been related to externalizing behavior problems in childhood (Barber, 2000; Koshkanska & Aksan, 1995; Kerr et al., 2004). Children of permissive parents tend to be immature, impulsive, disobedient, demanding, dependent on adults, and perform less well in school (Barber, 2002; Darling, 1999). As mentioned before, however, the influence of parenting style on child development may vary as a function of ethnicity and socioeconomic differences. Accordingly, investigations of the association between parenting style and child development relative to cultural variations remain needed.

Since parenting styles are influenced by the child's age and characteristics, parenting preschoolers differs from parenting older children (Day et al., 1995; Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1998; Regalado et al., 2004). Parents have different beliefs, concerns, and

perspectives of the child's needs at each developmental stage as the child grows up (Hoghughi & Long, 2004). For example, parents of preschoolers may cite the need for security as key while parents of adolescents may pay more attention to the ethical and moral issues while parenting their children. Parents' views on norms of behaviors which are considered socially acceptable will influence their interactions with older children more firmly than with younger children (Hoghughi & Long, 2004). Several studies have reported that the authoritarian style is used most with preschool-age children and least with older children (Day et al., 1995; Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1998; Regalado et al., 2004).

Most of Baumrind's work was observational. However, parenting styles have typically been measured using questionnaires. Such questionnaires can be described as two types: parent self-report questionnaires and questionnaires measuring individual's perceptions of their fathers and mothers' parenting styles. The most commonly used have been: the parenting scale (Oleary, Arnold, Wolf, & Acker, 1993), the paternal and maternal parenting style scale (Lamborm, Mount, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991), the parental style and parental involvement scale (Paulson, 1995), and the parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire (Robinson et al., 2001). Additionally, behavioral observations and interviews have been used to measure parenting styles. Most of Baumrind's work was of this nature.

Differences in Parenting Styles as a Function of Child Gender

Relatively few studies have addressed differences in parenting styles as related to child gender (Bornstein, 2002; Fagot 1995; Flannagan & Hardee, 1994). The literature available shows that child gender generally influences parenting styles (Jutengren &

Palmerus, 2002; Lytton & Romney, 1991; Palmerus, 1999; Someya et al., 2000). Several studies have demonstrated significant sex differences in exposure to physical punishment, with more of it directed toward boys than girls (Lytton and Romney, 1991). In addition, it has been suggested that girls may elicit authoritative styles more than boys (Fagot, 1995; Kerr at al., 2004). Sorbring et al (2002), however, reported that Swedish studies showed that child gender had small effects on parents' choices of parenting styles. Further, George (2004) found no associations between parenting style and child gender among a sample of American parents with 9 -12 year- olds. Similarly, Jutengren and Palmerus (2002) found no differences in parenting styles used with boys and girls among Swedish or American fathers with 38 - 66 month olds. Information about whether parenting styles used by Jordanian parents with preschoolers vary as a function of child gender remains unavailable. Accordingly, this study would offer helpful information in this regard.

Studies investigating the influence of parent gender on parenting styles are also few (Fagan, 2000), although much research has examined parenting behaviors, such as the differing ways that mothers and fathers play with their children. Since mothers are involved with childcare more than fathers, research on parenting has focused on practices used by mothers (Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Dishion, Duncan, Eddy, Fagot, & Feltrow, 1994; Jutengren & Palmerus, 2002). Parent gender has been shown to influence the choice of parenting styles (Hart, Dewolf, Wozniak, & Butts, 1992; Dishion, 1990). In general, studies related to parenting in Western countries have shown that fathers are more authoritarian than mothers (Russell et al; 2003; Collins, Matsen, & Susman-Stillman, 2002). Fagot and Hagan (1991) conducted home observations to determine sex-

socialization methods used by mothers and fathers of infants and preschoolers. They found differences in mothers' and fathers' styles of interacting with children. Kerr et al (2004) reported that mothers were more authoritative than fathers. Mothers used higher rates of induction and warmth than did fathers. Sorbring et al (2002) also reported that mothers use reasoning and ignoring more than fathers. Other studies have also found that children believe that their fathers use physical punishment more than their mothers, and that mothers use induction, typically associated with the authoritative parenting style, more than fathers (Sorbring et al., 2002). As far as differences among Jordanian fathers and mothers are concerned, very limited empirically based data is available. It is expected that this study will help fill this gap in knowledge.

Jordanian Studies Related to Parenting Styles

The literature related to parenting styles in Jordan is sparse. It consists mostly of theoretical papers, rather than empirically based evidence. For example, Barakat (1993), states in his book *The Arab world: Society, culture, and state* that Arab families are generally restrictive, use physical punishment, and typically do not use reasoning with young children. It is difficult to tell whether this information represents current parenting practices in Jordan since it is more than a decade old and offers generalizations about Arab countries in general. It is also difficult to tell whether it is true since it reflects the author's opinions and judgments rather than results of scientific research. Another example is a report published by UNICEF (2003), which noted that in Jordan, boys are more likely to be physically abused than girls, and that fathers are more physically abusive than mothers. Likewise, this information is not empirically based and warrants further investigation. On the other hand, the limited research studies addressing

this topic focused on the relationship between parenting styles and child outcomes, rather than on the patterns of parenting styles used by parents. Finally, family structure in Jordan is changing (e.g., parents are getting more educated; family size is becoming smaller; women are joining the work force at an increasing rate; and both men and women are getting married at an older age).

A recent study by Al-Amir (2004) found that Jordanian parents of 6th through 8th graders used democratic, accepting, and caring patterns of parenting rather than autocratic, rejecting, and neglecting patterns. He also found that parenting patterns were not associated with student gender. In another study, Malhas and Abdouni (1997) studied 389 female and female secondary school students' perceptions of parenting styles. The results showed that 93.8% of the students surveyed reported that their parents used a democratic parenting style with them, while only 6.2% described their parents' styles as non-democratic. Finally, Hawamdeh (1991) found that mothers used more positive parenting styles with 16- to 18-year- old sons and daughters than fathers. Owaidat (1997) investigated the relationship between parenting styles and misbehaviors of 8th through 10th graders in Jordan. A total of 1,907 students participated in this study. The results showed that parenting styles were significantly associated with students' misbehaviors. Students who came from democratic, authoritative families were found to exhibit significantly less school misbehaviors than those coming from authoritarian families. Abbadi (1996) found that 10th graders coming from families using authoritative and permissive styles had a higher level of adaptive ability compared to students coming from families using the authoritarian style. Owaidy (1993), who

studied 277 male and female 10th graders, found that parenting styles had a significant influence on students' attitudes toward school, but not on their academic achievement.

Abu Ayyash (1992) investigated the relationship between parenting styles and selfassertiveness in a sample of 400 fifteen to seventeen year- old daughters. The results showed that parenting styles were significantly related to the level of self-assertiveness among girls. Specifically, it was found that democratic parenting was associated with higher levels of self-assertiveness, while dominant parenting was associated with lower levels of self-assertiveness. In another study that included 301 seventh grade male and female students, Sarayra (1992) found a positive association between parental practices supporting the autonomy of 12-year old children and their children's perceived selfefficacy. However, Najjar (1991) reported that parenting styles did not have significant effects on moral development of school-aged children. Hawamdeh (1991) found significant differences in Jordanian parents' socialization of their 16- to 18-year old sons and daughters. Fathers were found to care more about socializing sons, and mothers were found to care more about socializing daughters. Also, Matar (1991) did not find a significant relationship between parenting styles and both the independent perception and critical thinking in 10th grade students. Hanbali (1989) investigated the relationship between parenting styles as perceived by elementary school students and their personality types. A cluster sample consisting of 587 male and female 4th through 6th graders participated in the study. The results revealed high correlations between the two variables. In particular, the findings of this study revealed that inconsistent parenting, parental rejection, and parental dominance were associated with submissiveness, weak ego, and lower intelligence.

Other Jordanian studies have reported significant associations between parenting styles and child outcomes. For example, authoritative parenting has been related to achievement motivation among 6th and 9th graders (Abu Jaber, 1993), academic achievement of 7th to 9th graders (Al-Amir, 2004), creative thinking among 15- to 18-year- olds (Saqqar, 1984), feelings of security among 12- to 14-year- olds (Rihani, 1985), social adjustment among 12- to 16-year olds (Naji, 1994), and self-concept among 12- to 14-year- olds (Arda, 1989). On the other hand, authoritarian parenting has been connected to child behavioral disorders among 4th to 6th graders (Al-Natoor, 1991) and 9th graders (Tarawneh, 1995), feelings of loneliness among 16 to 18-year-olds (Al-Raie, 1990), juvenile delinquency among 11- to18-year olds (Abu Jabal, 1983; Akayleh, 1993; Hajjaj, 1998), and alcoholism among adults (Al-Farah, 1991).

In light of the above, the following facts about the existing literature on parenting in Jordan are evident: (1) all studies focused on school-aged children or on university students; no study was concerned with preschool children, (2) most studies investigated parenting styles as perceived by sons and daughters, and only few studies addressed parents' currently reported use of such methods, and (3) few studies examined the parenting styles as a function of parent and child gender, and (4) some of the research findings are seemingly contradictory; calling for additional work in this area. For example, while the AL- Amir study (2004) found that Jordanian parents of sixth through eight graders used authoritative patterns rather than authoritarian patterns of parenting, Barakat (1993) believed that Arab families are generally restrictive and use physical punishment.

In conclusion, socio-cultural characteristics influence the distribution and correlates of parenting styles; thus justifying an investigation of parenting among Jordanian parents. Parenting styles may also be related to several other variables, including parent and child gender. Research findings on the influence of parent gender have been shown to be more consistent than those related to the influence of child gender. Jordanian studies on parenting styles commonly used with children are very few, and studies related to parenting preschool children are nonexistent. The review of available studies revealed that they were mostly concerned with the relationship between parenting styles and child outcomes rather than on surveying the patterns of parenting styles commonly used. However, the few studies that addressed parenting styles used showed that Jordanian parents could generally be described as authoritative. Several factors may be precipitating this parenting style, which seems to be a part of a larger cultural shift. The most important of which probably is that both fathers and mothers today are becoming more educated. In general, parents are presently more aware of the importance of the first years of the child's life; and therefore, they may be influenced to change their attitudes, behaviors, and their parenting styles with children so that they will not affect negatively their outcomes.

The increasing number of kindergartens established in the last two decades, public campaigns sponsored by child-care institutes and delivered through the media (e.g., TV, radio, magazines, conferences, internet), and programs aimed at family planning and parent education have all played an important role. Moreover, Jordanian mothers, who remain much more actively involved with child-care than fathers, currently are entering the field of work at an increasing rate. This change will most probably help them become

more aware of children's development and the influence of surrounding environments on them. However, this change is still relatively limited and scientific research is obviously needed.

Moderating (Covariate) Variable

A covariate is a variable other than independent variables that may have influence on the dependent variable. The covariate is used in data analysis to adjust the scores of parents and better understand differences among groups (Borg & Gall, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Covariates, as used in this study, are variables that may be related to parenting styles. A careful review of the literature was undertaken to identify important covariate variables. Parent education was found to be the strongest predictor of parenting style (Christensen, Phillips, & Glasgow, 1984; Day, Peterson, & McCracken, 1998; Dunst et al., 1994; Hammad, 1998; Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998; Hoghughi, & Long, 2004). Low educational levels of parents are associated with both authoritarian and permissive parenting (Coohalan, McWayne, Fantuzzo, & Grim, 2002), while more educated parents rely more often on authoritative parenting (Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992; Kwok, Sing, & Wai-Lim, 1998; Simons et al., 1991). Furthermore, parent education is more strongly associated with parenting style than family income per se (McGauhey, 1993). In light of research findings, Cherlin (1996) suggested that parental education be viewed as a proxy to explain the relationship between socioeconomic status and parenting styles.

Some studies in Arab countries have also used parent education as moderating variable and reached similar conclusions. For example, Al-Amir (2004) found that parenting styles used by Jordanian parents were influenced by maternal and

paternal educational level. Compared to less educated parents, more educated parents were found to be more authoritative. Jebril (1989) found that Egyptian parents with higher levels of educational attainment were more authoritative while parents with lower levels of educational attainment were more authoritarian. Qasem and Mustafa (1998) found that the only factor related to Kuwaiti parent inclination to use physical punishment was parent education. Maternal and paternal education had an inverse association with the use of physical punishment. On the other hand, results of previous studies on other moderating variables (e.g., childbirth order,) have been inconclusive (Frias-Armenta & McCloskey, 1998; Gustafson et al., 1995; Regalado, Sareen, Inkelas, Wissow, & Halfon, 2004). In light of this review and for the purposes of this initial study of parenting styles among Jordanian parents, only maternal and paternal education levels were treated as covariates in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Research Design

This study used survey research methodology to investigate parenting styles used with preschool children in Jordan and to determine whether parenting styles differ as a function of parent and child gender. Mothers and fathers of 172 preschool children (ages 3 years and 8 months to 5 years and 8 months) drawn from kindergartens in the city of Amman were the units of statistical analysis. This age range was studied because it administratively represented preschool years in Amman. Parenting styles represented the dependent variables, which had three variables: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. There were two independent variables: parent gender, which had two levels (mothers, fathers), and child gender, which also had two levels (boys, girls). Maternal and paternal educational level represented the covariates in this study.

Research Subjects

Participants were drawn from the population of parents whose children were attending kindergartens in the city of Amman using the multistage cluster sampling technique (Babbie, 2004). This technique was used in this study because it was more convenient since the target population was large and spread out over a wide geographic area, excluding the use of the simple random sample (Babbie, 2004). A list of all kindergartens administered by the four educational directorates of the Ministry of Education in the city of Amman was obtained. Two kindergartens from each directorate were drawn using a table of random numbers to assure representation of various levels (high, medium, and low) of socio-economic status (SES) in Amman. In this way, all levels of SES, which had

been shown to affect parenting practices (George, 2004), were included in the sample since the four educational directorates represented different sub-populations with different SES levels in the city of Amman. Since several previous studies reported parental education to be a stronger variable in predicting the influence of SES on parenting style than family income or parent occupation (Kelley et al., 1992; Kwok et al., 1998; Simons et al., 1991), parental education was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status in this study.

After randomly selecting the 8 participating kindergartens in Amman, one classroom from each kindergarten was selected using random sampling. The number of children in each class ranged from 22-33. Children from single parent families were excluded from the sample with the help of the teachers and administrators, and questionnaires completed only by one parent were also excluded from the final sample. The total, final sample size consisted of parents of 172 children from two-parent families. This number was assumed to be satisfactory given the type of research methodology, the methods of data collection to be used, financial constraints, and the number of variables studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Research Instruments

Parenting Styles. To answer the questions of the study, the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson et al (2001), and a family information form was used. While Robinson et al's original questionnaire consisted of 62 items, the modified version used in this and most other contemporary studies consisted of 32 items. The questionnaire items address three parenting styles: 15 items address authoritative parenting (e.g., I emphasize the reasons for rules), 12 items address

authoritarian parenting (e.g., I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child), and 5 items address permissive parenting (e.g., I spoil my child). Mothers and fathers are to independently respond to questionnaire items. Each item on the PSDQ asks parents to report how often they exhibit certain behaviors towards their children (e.g., I slap my child) using the following Likert type scale: never = 1, once in awhile = 2, about half of the time = 3, very often = 4, and always = 5.

Although self-reported questionnaires have weaknesses, they allow researchers to obtain accurate answers and are relatively easy to implement (Dillman, 1978). The decision to use the PSDQ, in particular, was made because: (a) it is appropriate for use with parents of preschool children, (b) it has been used in several cross-cultural studies; and there is no reason to make it inappropriate for use in Jordan, (c) it measures authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles, and (d) it is adequate in terms of reliability and validity. To arrive at a total score for parents on authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles, the mean of all items within each subscale was calculated (Appendix 2).

The reliability of this questionnaire was calculated using internal consistency calculated by Cronbach's alpha. Alphas were .86 for the authoritative parenting style, .82 for the authoritarian parenting style, and .64 for the permissive parenting style (Robinson et al., 2001). In the current study, reliability of the PSDQ was established using the same method employed by developers of the PSDQ (Robinson et al., 2001). The internal consistency of the authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles, for the entire sample was calculated using Cronbach alpha. Alphas were .82 for authoritative parenting, .78 for authoritarian parenting, and .71 for permissive parenting.

That means the modified version of the measurement instrument has adequate reliability for the purposes of this study.

To adapt the questionnaire to the Jordanian families, the researcher followed the following steps:

- (1) After obtaining permission of the authors (Appendix 3), the PSDQ was translated from English to Arabic by the researcher. The validity of the translation was established by a panel of five experts who were proficient in both English and Arabic languages.

 No item was judged to be inaccurately translated. The experts suggested re-wording of portions of seven items to make the Arabic language clearer to respondents. All suggestions were taken into account when preparing the questionnaire in its final version.
- (2) After being translated, the questionnaire was given to a group of experts to judge the appropriateness of its items to the Jordanian culture for the purpose of establishing its face validity. The panel consisted of twelve faculty members from the departments of sociology, social work, and psychology at the University of Jordan. All items were judged to be appropriate by at least 90% of the judges.

Family demographics. In addition to the PSDQ, parents were provided with a demographic information form. In this form, parents were asked to respond to 11 items related to parents, target child, and family. Specifically, data were collected on parent and child gender, child age, educational attainment of mother and father, age of mother and father, family annual income, and number of children parents have.

Procedures

Following the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) approval of the thesis proposal, a modified version of the instrument was developed as outlined in the previous section. A cover letter (Appendix 4), parent consent form (Appendix 5), directions for parents form (Appendix 6), and the demographic information form (Appendix 7) were also prepared and enclosed with the questionnaire. Permission of the Ministry of Education in Jordan was obtained (Appendix 8). The researcher then visited participating kindergartens. The purpose of the study was explained to the administrators. Their collaboration in notifying parents that a questionnaire would be sent to them and encouraging them to respond was sought. Their permission to direct parents to return completed questionnaires to a special box located in the hallway next to the secretary's office at each school was also obtained. The researcher handed the questionnaire in person to parents, or met with them in groups in the kindergartens. For parents who did not attend informational sessions in the kindergartens, copies of the questionnaire were placed in their children's school bags, and they were informed of that by telephone by teachers. A covering letter explaining the survey's intent and asking parents to participate in the study was written by administrators. Parents were assured of confidentiality. Parents who wished to participate in the study, were requested to return the consent form and the completed questionnaire in 2 weeks to the box near to the secretary office designated for this purpose.

The researcher attempted to assure successful implementation of the survey and to obtain the highest response rate possible by taking into consideration the following

suggestions provided by Dillman (1978) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001): (a) assigning a serial number to each copy of the questionnaire so that non-responders can be followed up effectively, (b) writing a cover letter that is short, neat, and professional in appearance, (c) providing clear instructions to parents about who should respond and how to respond (d) emphasizing the importance of the study and of parents' answers, (e) ensuring parents of confidentiality of responses, (f) requesting cooperation of parents and stating the time limit for returning the questionnaire, (g) assuring that the questionnaire has been received by parents, and (h) stating clearly to whom the completed questionnaire should be returned. There were two follow-ups with non-responders to ensure the highest response rate possible. In the follow-ups, the researcher called parents by telephone.

Data Analysis

After receiving completed questionnaires, all data were coded and entered into the computer to perform appropriate statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To answer the research questions and test research hypothesis, several techniques of descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

To answer research question 1 (what parenting styles are used most commonly by Jordanian fathers and mothers of preschool children?), means and standard deviations for parents' use of each of the three parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) were calculated. To address research questions 2 and 3 and the corresponding hypotheses (regarding differences in the parenting styles used with Jordanian preschool children as a function of parent's gender and child's gender), means and standard deviations of parenting style by parent and by child gender were first

calculated to describe the data. In order to test the hypotheses, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used, entering parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) as the dependent variables, parent and child gender as the independent variables, and maternal and paternal education levels as covariates. The other demographic data gathered on parent ages, family size and birth order were used to describe the participating sample.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the parenting styles characteristic of Jordanian parents of preschoolers. The study also examined whether there were statistically significant differences in parenting styles as a function of parent gender and child gender. This chapter presents the findings related to the three research questions formulated in Chapter 1.

The total number of children in the eight classes included in the sample was 201. Parent consent was received from parents of 189 children. Accordingly, copies of the questionnaire and other forms (i.e., family information form and directions for parents' form) were sent to these children's parents. Initially, parents of 158 children returned completed questionnaires. The number of respondents became 168 after first follow-up contact and 172 after second follow-up contact. Thus 344 parents (172 fathers and 172 mothers) returned completed questionnaires with parent consent. This represented a 91% return rate. Children were an average of five years of age (M = 5.4 years, SD = .90).

Table1 presents family demographic data. As can be seen, 54% (93) of the children were girls and 46% (79) were boys. The children were distributed according to birth order as follows: first (30%), second (25%), third (20%), fourth (10%), and fifth and more (15%). Most fathers held a bachelor degree or held an advanced degree (51%), while 26% of mothers held a bachelor degree or more. The annual income of most families was less than US\$12,000.00 (80%). Only 3% of fathers were under the age of 30 years, while 29% of mothers were under the age of 30 years old. Most parents had fewer than four children (57%).

Table 1
Family Demographic Data

Variable	N	%
Child Gender		
Male	79	46
Female	93	54
Child's Birth Order		
First	51	30
Second	43	25
Third	35	20
Fourth	17	10
Fifth or More	26	15
Educational Attainment of Father		
General Secondary Certificate or Less	50	29
Intermediate Diploma	35	20
Bachelor Degree	69	40
Graduate Degree	19	11
Educational Attainment of Mother		
General Secondary Certificate or Less	69	40
Intermediate Diploma	58	34
Bachelor Degree	40	23
Graduate Degree	5	3

Family Annual Income				
Less than \$5140.00	130	38		
\$5140.00-12000.00	144	42		
More than \$12000.00	70	20		
Father Age				
Less Than 30 Years	5	3		
30-40 Years	93	54		
More Than 40 Years	74	43		
Mother Age				
Less Than 30 Years	50	29		
30-40Years	97	56		
More Than 40 Years	25	15		

Findings related to research questions addressed in the study are presented below.

To answer research question 1 (What parenting styles are used most by Jordanian fathers and mothers of preschool children?), the means and standard deviations for the measures of authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting used by Jordanian mothers and fathers of preschool children were calculated (see Table 2). As evident in the table, mothers and fathers reported that the most common parenting style they used with their preschoolers was authoritative parenting (M=4.06), followed by permissive parenting (M=2.85), and authoritarian parenting (M=2.08).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Parenting Styles

Parenting Styles	М	SD	
Authoritative	4.06	.59	
Authoritarian	2.08	.58	
Permissive	2.85	.71	

To address Research Question 2 (Are there differences in the parenting styles used with Jordanian preschool children as a function of parent's gender?) and Research Question 3 (Are there differences in the parenting styles used with Jordanian preschool children as a function of child's gender?) and the corresponding hypotheses, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was performed. Parent and child gender were the independent variables and parental education was the covariate. Parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) were the dependent variables.

Results revealed main effects for parent gender, Wilk's $\Lambda = .97$, F(3, 336) = 3.39, p < .02, child gender, Wilk's $\Lambda = .98$, F(3, 336) = 2.92, p < .03, and maternal education, Wilk's $\Lambda = .99$, F(3, 336) = 2.69, p < .05. Results are summarized in table 3. Univariate effects of parent gender were significant for use of the permissive parenting style, F(1, 343) = 4.09, p < .04, and child gender for parents' use of the authoritative style, F(1, 343) = 5.58, p < .02. Specifically, fathers were more permissive than mothers and parents more often used an authoritative style with their sons than with their daughters. Univariate effects were also significant for mother education on use of the authoritarian style, F(1, 343) = 7.73, p < .01, such that mothers with higher levels of education used

the authoritarian style less often than mothers with lower levels of education. Results are summarized in Table 4.

To determine the direction of significant differences in parenting style according to parent gender, child gender, and mother education, means and standard deviations were calculated (Tables 5, 6, & 7 respectively). It is evident from these tables that fathers used permissive style (M = 2.93) significantly more than mothers (M = 2.77), mothers and fathers were significantly more authoritative with boys (M = 4.14) than with girls (M = 3.99), and mothers with highest levels of education (M = 1.81) were significantly less authoritarian than mothers with lowest levels of education (M = 2.23). Based on these results mean the null hypothesis (HO2) "there are no differences between Jordanian mothers and fathers in the styles they use for parenting their preschool children" was rejected. Similarly, the null hypothesis (HO3) "there are no differences in the styles used by Jordanian parents according to child gender" was also rejected.

Table 3

MANCOVA of Parenting Styles

Effect	Wilk's	F	Significance
Father Education	.994	.73	.53
Mother Education	.976	2.69	.05
Parent Gender	.971	3.39	.02
Child Gender	.975	2.92	.03
Parent Gender x child Gender	.990	1.07	.37

Table 4

Univariate Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Parenting Styles

Variable	Sum of	DF	Mean Squares	\overline{F}	Sig
	Squares				
Father Education					
Authoritative	5.3	1	5.3	.16	.69
Authoritarian	.32	1	.32	.99	.32
Permissive	.14	1	.14	.29	.59
Mother Education					
Authoritative	.62	1	.62	1.8	.18
Authoritarian	2.5	1	2.5	7.7	.01
Permissive	7.9	1 .	7.9	.16	.69
Parent Gender					
Authoritative	.92	1	.92	2.7	.10
Authoritarian	.11	1	.11	.33	5.7
Permissive	2.0	1	2.0	4.1	.05
Child Gender					
Authoritative	1.9	1	1.9	5.6	.02
Authoritarian	.39	1	.39	1.2	.27
Permissive	1.3	1	1.3	.25	.62
Parent Gender x Child Gender					
Authoritative	.16	1	.16	.46	.50
Authoritarian	6.5	1	6.5	.02	.89

	Permissive	1.2	1	1.2	2.3	.13
Error						
	Authoritative	114.45	338	.34		
	Authoritarian	110.34	338	.33		
	Permissive	168.44	338	.50		
Total						
	Authoritative	5785.33	344			
	Authoritarian	1609.04	344			
	Permissive	2972.04	344			
					_	

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for Parenting Styles Used By Mothers and Fathers

Parenting Styles	М	SD	
Fathers (N=172)			
Authoritative	4.01	.62	
Authoritarian	2.07	.61	
Permissive	2.93	.67	
Mothers (N=172)			
Authoritative	4.11	.55	
Authoritarian	2.10	.55	
Permissive	2.77	.74	

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Parenting Styles Used with Boys and Girls

Parenting styles	Child Gender	М	SD
Authoritative			
	Girls	3.99	0.61
	Boys	4.14	0.55
Authoritarian			
	Girls	2.05	0.56
	Boys	2.13	0.61
Permissive			
	Girls	2.83	0.69
	Boys	2.87	0.74

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations by Maternal Education Level

	Autho	ritative	Author	itarian	Perm	issive
Maternal Education	M	SD	М	SD	М	SD
General Secondary Certificate or Less	4.02	.57	2.23	.60	2.88	.72
Intermediate Diploma	4.09	.59	2.04	.60	2.79	.71
Bachelor Degree	4.04	.63	1.93	.47	2.90	.68
Graduate Degree	4.41	.33	1.81	.52	2.76	.71
Total	4.06	.59	2.08	.58	2.85	.71

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, results will be summarized and interpreted. In addition, limitations, implications for further study, and conclusions will be presented. The aim of this study was to investigate the parenting styles used with preschool children in Jordan and to determine if there were differences in parenting styles as a function of: (a) parent gender, and (b) child gender. The study was undertaken in the city of Amman. Three hundred forty four parents (172 mothers and 172 fathers) of preschool children completed an adapted version of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) developed by Robinson et al., 1995.

Parenting Styles Commonly Used by Jordanian Parents of Preschoolers

The results revealed that the authoritative parenting style was the most frequently reported parenting style, followed by permissive and authoritarian parenting styles. This result is consistent with findings of recent studies that addressed parenting styles in Jordan, which showed that Jordanian parents could generally be described as authoritative (Al-Amir, 2004; Malhas and Abdouni, 1997). It contradicts Barakat's (1993) contention that Arab families are authoritarian. This result is not surprising given that both Jordanian fathers and mothers are highly educated. The Jordanian society is among the most educated Arab societies. As noted before, literacy rates in Jordan for both males and females are among the highest in the Arab region. More educated parents rely more often on authoritative parenting and less often on authoritarian parenting (Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992; Kwok, Sing, & Wai-Lim, 1998; Simons et al., 1991).

Studies comparing parenting practices in different Arab countries, however, are warranted. Another possible explanation is that, compared to other Arab countries, Jordan is characterized by active relations (social, educational, cultural, political, and economic) with western and other countries. Such relations may have influenced, in part, contemporary parenting styles. Additionally, the increasing interest in the last decade, in particular, in addressing the needs of young children and equipping Jordanian parents with the necessary parenting and child care knowledge and skills also may explain the results of this study.

Parenting Styles as a Function of Parent Gender

Significant differences between mothers and fathers were found on the permissive parenting style only; fathers reported themselves to engage in more permissive parenting styles than did mothers. This result is consistent with some previous studies that found differences in parenting styles used with preschoolers as a function of parent gender (Clausen, 1996; Cowan, Cowan & Kerig, 1993; Paulson & Sputa, 1996). However, it is inconsistent with previous investigations, which showed that mothers generally tend to use an authoritative style, while fathers tend to use an authoritarian style (Russel et al., 1998; Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003; Winsler, Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005). Similarly, it is inconsistent with information available on parenting practices in Jordan (Hawamdeh, 1991; UNICEF, 2003) indicating that Jordanian fathers are more authoritarian than mothers.

The finding that fathers rather than mothers were found to be more permissive may be explained in terms of Jordanian social standards. Childcare in Jordan remains largely the primary responsibility of mothers. Jordanian mothers are expected to closely monitor

their young children's needs and problems. This difficult task of daily care giving may explain why mothers were found to be less permissive than fathers. Jordanian fathers, on the other hand, are primarily involved in securing income to the family. Because they spend most of the time outside the home, they do not interact actively with their children or experience the difficulties associated with daily care giving. That may explain why fathers were found to be more permissive than mothers.

One explanation for the lack of expected differences in mothers' and fathers' use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles may be that parents tend to influence each other's styles (Winsler et al., 2005). Based on a family systems perspective, mothers' and fathers' parenting styles are conceptualized as being interdependent (Winsler et al., 2005). Perhaps when one parent is authoritarian the other parent finds that it is preferable on balance to have a somewhat permissive approach to parenting (Winsler et al., 2005). Additionally, given that disagreements about parenting continue to be one of the most common sources of marital discord (Winsler et al., 2005), parents may tend to agree on parenting practices to maintain satisfactory marital relations. Similarity in parenting styles used by both fathers and mothers in the home, however, is associated with positive child outcomes for children (Gable et al., 1994; Hoghughi & Long, 2004). Thus, although expected differences were not found, the apparent unity in parenting styles between mothers and fathers is likely to be positive for child outcomes.

Parenting Styles as a Function of Child Gender

Undoubtedly, finding that parents were more authoritative with boys than girls was surprising in light of the results of other Jordanian studies, which reported that parents were less authoritative with their sons than with their daughters, (Agha, 1989; Hammad,

1998; Hawamdeh, 1991; Al-Amir, 2004). This inconsistency in results may be attributed to the fact that the current study addressed preschoolers while previous studies addressed school-aged children or university students. It may also be explained in light of Jordanian social standards and traditions. These standards basically direct parents to control girls more than boys. Girls are exposed to more personal and social restrictions that are viewed as protection measures. For example, girls are expected to refrain from making relations with males, or leave the home alone, etc. Although this is important to Jordanian families when girls get older, parents begin to establish these standards of personal and social conduct in the early years. Girls are reminded that they need protection and directed to behave like "girls" (i.e., behaving non-aggressively, showing shyness, etc).

Boys, on the other hand, are given more freedom and independence. They are not exposed to strict measures of monitoring and judgment like girls. Boys rather than girls are also expected to take care of their parents when they get old. Moreover, in the Jordanian society, like in other Arab societies, boys are expected to hold the family name and preserve its continuity in the future. However, further investigations of this issue are warranted.

Although parenting styles are influenced by different variables, such as the quality of the marital relationship, parental stress, and child characteristics (Winsler et al., 2005), this study focused on parent and child gender. The reason for choosing these two variables was the large body of knowledge that stressed their major role in parents' decisions of what styles can be used with girls and boys. This study did not intend to examine the relation between family demographic variables and parenting styles. Rather, family information data was used for description purposes only. Since extensive research

evidence indicated that parent education is closely related to their parenting styles (Hammad, 1998) and that it can be viewed as a proxy for income (Dunst et al., 1994), only maternal and paternal education was treated as a covariate in this study. The results revealed that mothers with higher educational levels were found to be significantly less authoritarian than mothers with lower levels of education. This finding is consistent with previous results on parenting styles, which suggest that parents with more education are less likely to rely on authoritarian and permissive parenting (Coohalan et al., 2002; Kelley et al., 1992; Simons et al., 1991). It highlights the importance of knowledge and training on the development of a more positive parental style. Thus, future investigations addressing the effects of parental education on parenting styles are warranted.

Finally, Jordanian studies on parenting styles commonly used with children are very few, and studies related to parenting preschool children are nonexistent. All studies focused on investigating parenting styles as perceived by school-aged children or by university students. This study represents the first Jordanian study, which aimed at investigating the parenting styles that parents use with their preschool children using scientific research methods.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to point out the limitations of this study that should be avoided in future research. First, since the questionnaire used in this study involved parents' self-reports on the parenting styles they use, the validity of the data relied exclusively on the parents' willingness to provide accurate information about the actual behaviors they exhibited towards their preschool children. Although the use of such instruments to investigate parenting styles is well established in existing research literature (Winsler,

Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005), social desirability may have influenced the parents' reports of parenting style. In other words, parents may have responded in a way that reflects what they perceive as accepted or good parenting practices rather than what they actually use (Ramey, 2002; Shelton, Frick, & Wooton, 1996). The extent to which this may have happened remains unknown. Using other data-collection methods (e.g., parent interviews, objective behavioral observations) in future research would be helpful to support the results of the present study.

Second, although the sample size was sufficient for a study of this scope and for the number of independent variables, the relatively small number of participants in this study represented a threat to its external validity. As a result of the small sample size, the results cannot be generalized beyond parents of preschool children in the city of Amman. However, Amman represents a major metropolitan area and very different practices might be seen in the rural areas. Additionally, results of the present study represented only parents who send their children to kindergartens. The findings cannot be generalized to parents who do not send their children to kindergartens. Therefore, more studies involving larger and more representative samples of parents from various geographical areas in Jordan are needed to draw conclusions about parenting preschoolers in Jordan.

Third, no child outcome measure was investigated in the present study. Future research should investigate the associations between parenting style and specific developmental outcomes for the child, such as social competence, behavioral problems, and achievement. Fourth, using mother and father pairs may have limited the accuracy of the data. Parents may have influenced each other's styles of parenting. Finally, though the

'parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire' was modified by professionals in childhood education and English-Arabic language, still parents' responses depend on the extent to which they understood the items in the questionnaire and honestly rated them.

Conclusions

This study of parenting styles used with preschool aged children in Jordan provided data that is informative and beneficial. Realizing that the family is the basic unit where a child is reared and nurtured, the researcher thought it would be useful to understand the parenting styles that parents use while interacting with their children. What motivated this research most was that Jordanian studies on parenting styles commonly used with children are very few, and that studies related to parenting preschool children are nonexistent. This study represented the first Jordanian study that aimed at investigating the parenting styles that parents use with their preschool children using scientific research methods. It also investigated whether these styles differ as a function of parent and child gender. Using the PSDQ which measures parenting styles along the continuum of Baumrind's typologies of parenting and asking fathers to participate in this study directly rather than asking mothers to write on the behalf of their spouses or asking children to report on the styles used by their parents make this study different from others.

The current study is valuable for several reasons. One of which is that it contributed to the literature by addressing an important yet relatively neglected area of research. That is, the findings did suggest that both mothers' and fathers' parenting styles need attention in future research, as parenting style may vary as a function of parental gender and child gender. Second, parents were given the opportunity to report on the parenting styles they

use. Third, this study also provided additional psychometric data for the PSDQ for use in cross-cultural studies.

Finally, realizing the important effects of parenting styles on child's development in the early years, and knowing the serious lack of information about parenting preschoolers in Jordan, it is essential that further research be conducted. In fact, this study should be viewed as a first step toward better understanding of the parenting styles used with preschoolers within the Jordanian population.

Appendix (1)

The Parent Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)

- 1. I am responsive to my child's feelings and needs.
- 2. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child.
- 3. I take my child's desires into account before asking him/her to do something.
- 4. When my child asks why he/she has to conform, I state: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.
- 5. I explain to my child how I feel about the child's good and bad behavior.
- 6. I spank when my child is disobedient.
- 7. I encourage my child to talk about his/her troubles.
- 8. I find it difficult to discipline my child.
- 9. I encourage my child to freely express (himself)(herself) even when disagreeing with me.
- 10. I punish by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations.
- 11. I emphasize the reasons for rules.
- 12. I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset.
- 13. I yell or shout when my child misbehaves.
- 14. I give praise when my child is good.
- 15. I give into my child when the child causes a commotion about something.
- 16. I explode in anger towards my child.
- 17. I threaten my child with punishment more often than actually giving it.
- 18. I take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family.
- 19. I grab my child when being disobedient.
- 20. I state punishments to my child and do not actually do

- 21. I show respect for my child's opinions by encouraging my child to express them.
- 22. I allow my child to give input into family rules.
- 23. I scold and criticize to make my child improve.
- 24. I spoil my child.
- 25. I give my child reasons why rules should be obeyed.
- 26. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.
- 27. I have warm and intimate times together with my child.
- 28. I punish by putting my child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.
- 29. I help my child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.
- 30. I scold or criticize when my child's behavior doesn't meet my expectations.
- 31. I explain the consequences of the child's behavior.
- 32. I slap my child when the child misbehaves.

Appendix (2)

PARENTING STYLES & DIMENSIONS QUESTIONNAIRE (PSDQ) Scoring Key*

AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING STYLE (FACTOR 1*)

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 1 Connection Dimension (Warmth & Support)
- 7. .74 .70 .77 .70 Encourages child to talk about the child's troubles.
- 1. .68 .72 .78 .68 Responsive to child's feelings or needs
- 12. .67 .64 .73 .64 Gives comfort and understanding when child is upset.
- 14. .62 .65 .69 .62 Gives praise when child is good.
- 27. .54 .61 .65 .53 Has warm and intimate times together with child.

[To obtain a Connection Dimension score - mean the above 5 items]

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 2 Regulation Dimension (Reasoning/Induction)
- 25. .71 .72 .77 .66 Gives child reasons why rules should be obeyed.
- 29. .65 .67 .73 .70 Helps child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.
- 31. .68 .65 .74 .66 Explains the consequences of the child's behavior.
- 11. .67 .67 .75 .70 Emphasizes the reasons for rules.
- 5. .62 .74 .74 .72 Explains to child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.

[To obtain a Regulation Dimension score - mean the above 5 items]

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 3 Autonomy Granting Dimension (Democratic Participation)
- 21. .65 .69 .74 .66 Shows respect for child's opinions by encouraging child to express them.
- 9. .49 .56 .63 .50 Encourages child to freely express (him/herself) even when disagreeing with parents.
- 22. .45 .51 .56 .50 Allows child to give input into family rules.
- 3. .44 .50 .56 .50 Takes child's desires into account before asking the child to do something.
- 18. .43 .51 .54 .48 Takes into account child's preferences in making plans for the family.

[To obtain an Autonomy Granting Dimension score - mean the above 5 i

SEM = Structural Equation Modeling standard coefficients

M = Mother's Self Report F = Father's Self Report MS = Mother's Report on Spouse

FS = Father's Report on Spouse

*Alpha = .86; Sample = 1377

[To obtain an overall Authoritative Parenting Style score - mean all 15 items

AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING STYLE (FACTOR 2*)

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 1 Physical Coercion Dimension
- 2. .84 .78 .85 .79 Uses physical punishment as a way of disciplining our child.
- 6. .78 .74 .78 .74 Spanks when our child is disobedient.
- 32. .64 .59 .73 .66 Slaps child when the child misbehaves.
- 19. .52 .57 .55 .58 Grabs child when being disobedient.

[To obtain a Physical Coercion Dimension score - mean the above 4 items]

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 2 Verbal Hostility Dimension
- 16. .64 .57 .72 .63 Explodes in anger towards child.
- 13. .57 .63 .65 .67 Yells or shouts when child misbehaves.
- 23. .48 .45 .63 .51 Scolds and criticizes to make child improve.
- 30. .43 .45 .55 .48 Scolds and criticizes when child's behavior doesn't meet our expectations.

[To obtain a Verbal Hostility Dimension score - mean the above 4 items]

SEM Std. Coeff.

- M F MS FS Subfactor 3 Non-Reasoning/Punitive Dimension
- 10. .59 .55 .70 .60 Punishes by taking privileges away from child with little if any explanations.
- 26. .57 .63 .70 .67 Uses threats as punishment with little or no justification.
- 28. .52 .56 .59 .55 Punishes by putting child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.
- 4. .48 .52 .54 .50 When child asks why (he)(she) has to conform, states: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.

[To obtain a Non-Reasoning/Punitive Dimension score - mean the above 4 items]

SEM = Structural Equation Modeling standard coefficients M = Mother's Self Report

F = Father's Self Report MS = Mother's Report on Spouse FS = Father's Report on Spouse

Alpha = .82; Sample = 1377

[To obtain an overall Authoritarian Parenting Style score - mean all 12 items]

PERMISSIVE PARENTING STYLE (FACTOR 3*)

SEM Std. Coeff.

M F MS FS Indulgent Dimension

20. .71 .78 .68 .75 States punishments to child and does not actually do them.

17. .63 .58 .60 .59 Threatens child with punishment more often than actually giving it.

15. .53 .48 .64 .55 Gives into child when (he)(she) causes a commotion about something.

8. .42 .43 .41 .52 Finds it difficult to discipline child.

24. .39 .37 .46 .44 Spoils child.

SEM = Structural Equation Modeling standard coefficients

M = Mother's Self Report

F = Father's Self Report

MS = Mother's Report on Spouse

FS = Father's Report on Spouse

Alpha = .64; Sample = 1377

[To obtain an overall Permissive Parenting Style score - mean all 5 items]

*Robinson, C. C., Mandleco, B., Olsen, S. F., & Hart, C. H. (2001). The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSQD). In B. F. Perlmutter, J. Touliatos, & G. W. Holden (Eds.), Handbook of family measurement techniques: Vol. 3. Instruments & index (pp. 319 - 321). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Appendix (3)

Permission of Author

mail.msu.edu	alkhatee@msu.e	du		Message
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Appendix (4)

Cover Letter

Dear Parents:

My name is Amal Al-Khatib, and I am a Masters student in child development at Michigan State University, in the United States. I am conducting a study about how parents of preschoolers in Jordan raise their children. I am writing this letter to you to request your participation in this study. You, and all other participating parents, are very important for this study. Your participation is voluntary.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire on your family and a 32-item questionnaire on how you parent your preschooler. The questionnaires will take about 15-20 minutes.

In this packet you will find 1) a consent form stating your intent to participate; 2) the two questionnaires and; 3) a return envelop for these materials. Please answer questions and try to return the questionnaires, the consent form, and the family information to the school. You are kindly asked to drop the envelope in the white box marked "parent questionnaire" placed in the school secretary's office within two weeks.

The results of this study will be useful to parents and professionals working with children. They will be used for scientific purposes only. Please be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes and will be identifiable to the researcher only.

If you are interested, you may receive a summary of the results. Please check the appropriate box at the end of the questionnaire and provide me with your name and address.

If you have any questions about this study, contact Amal AL-Khatib (telephone: 06-5230159) at University Housing, Yajooz Street, Amman 11942, Jordan, or via email at amal_alkhateeb@hotmail.com or alkhatee@msu.edu. You may also contact my academic advisor at Michigan State University, Dr. Holly Brophy-Herb at hbrophy@msu.edu. Questions about this study and your rights as a participant may also be addressed to the chairperson of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Michigan State University, Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., 202 Olds Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA, (517) 355-2180, ucrihs@msu.edu. You do not have to give your name.

Appendix (5) Informed Parent Consent

If you would like to participate in this study, please complete this page and return it with your questionnaires to your child's school within two weeks. A collection box will be placed near the secretary's office at the school.

Yes, we w	ould like to participate	in this study about parenting practice	s in
Jordan.			
Mother's Name (P	rint):		<u></u>
Mother's Signature	ə:		
Father's Name:			
Father's Signature:	·		
Your family teleph	one number:	or email address:	
Your child's name:	:		
Date:			
Yes, plea	ase send us a copy of the	e study results	
No, we	do not wish to receive a	a copy of the results.	
Email address if yo	u wish to receive results	s via email:	
Mailing address if y	you wish to receive the 1	results via mail:	
For researcher: School/ Class ID:			

Appendix (6)

Directions for Parents

Dear Parents

This questionnaire is designed to measure how often you exhibit certain behaviors towards your preschool-aged child.

Please read each item on the questionnaire and think about *how often you* exhibit this behavior. Then, circle the number to the left of the item which best represents your behavior using the following scale:

1 = Never

2 = Once in Awhile

3 = About Half of the Time

4 = Very Often

5 = Always

I am sending you two copies of the questionnaire, because the mother and the father should complete it. Each of you should complete it independently. Please avoid seeing or discussing each other's responses.

A very important point to remember is that you are asked to respond to the parenting practices you actually use with your preschool-aged child. You are not asked to report the parenting practices you use with other children in the family either younger or older siblings, or your beliefs about parenting practices in general.

Appendix (7)

Family Information Form

Please respond to the following items by an (X)

Thomas respond to the following norms by an (11)
Parent Completing the Family information Form
Father Mother
Your Preschool-Aged Child's Gender
Male Female
Your Preschool-Aged Child's Birthday
Day Month Year
Your Preschool-Aged Child's Birth Order
First Second Third Fourth
Fifth or More
Educational Attainment of Father
General Secondary Certificate or Less
Intermediate Diploma
Bachelor Degree
Graduate Degree
Educational Attainment of Mother
General Secondary Certificate or Less
Intermediate Diploma
Bachelor Degree
Graduate Degree

Family Annual Income

- --- Less than 3600 Jordan Dinars
- --- 3600 8400 Jordan Dinars
- --- More Than 8400 Jordan Dinars

Father's Age

- --- Less Than 22 Years --- 30 39 Years
- --- 22 29 Years --- 40 Years and Above

Mother's Age

- --- Less Than 22 Years --- 30 39 Years
- --- 22 29 Years --- 40 Years and Above

Number of Children You Have

--- Less Than 4 ---- 4-6 ---- More Than 6

Appendix (8)

Letter to Dean of Educational Sciences The Hashemite University

Professor Majed Abu Jaber Dean- College of Educational Sciences Hashemite University P. O. Box 150459 Zarqa 13115, Jordan

Dear Professor Abu Jaber:

I expect to be in Amman in the last week of February 2005 to collect data for my master thesis. It is about parenting styles used by Jordanian fathers and mothers with preschool children. My sample will consist of parents of 160 children attending kindergartens to be drawn randomly from the five educational directorates in greater Amman area. I appreciate it very much if you write to the Ministry of Education to give me the permission to collect data and facilitate my task. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Amal J. Al-Khatib



Initial IRB Application Approval

March 10, 2005

To:

Holly E. Brophy-herb 3 Human Ecology

Msu

Re:

IRB # 05-153

Category: EXEMPT 1-2

Approval Date:

March 10, 2005

Expiration Date:

March 9, 2006

Title:

"PARENTING STYLES USED WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN JORDAN"

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your project has been approved**.

The committee has found that your research project is appropriate in design, protects the rights and welfare of human subjects, and meets the requirements of MSU's Federal Wide Assurance and the Federal Guidelines (45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR Part 50). The protection of human subjects in research is a partnership between the IRB and the investigators. We look forward to working with you as we both fulfill our responsibilities.

Renewals: UCRIHS approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. If you are continuing your project, you must submit an *Application for Renewal* application at least one month before expiration. If the project is completed, please submit an *Application for Permanent Closure*.

Revisions: UCRIHS must review any changes in the project, prior to initiation of the change. Please submit an *Application for Revision* to have your changes reviewed. If changes are made at the time of renewal, please include an *Application for Revision* with the renewal application.

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects, notify UCRIHS promptly. Forms are available to report these issues.

Please use the IRB number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with UCRIHS.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 517-355-2180 or via email at <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/journal.org/10.1007

Sincerely,

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS AND STANDARDS

University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

> Michigan State University 202 Olds Hall East Lansing, MI 48824

> > 517/355-2180 FAX: 517/432-4503

Web: www.humanresearch.msu.edu E-Mail: ucrihs@msu.edu Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D. UCRIHS Chair

C:

Amal AL-Khatib

917 Cherry Lane Apt A 48823Harrison Rd

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