PARENTING STYLE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GIFTEDNESS IN HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

by

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(Under the Direction of C. Thomas Holmes)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if authoritative parenting style was statistically significant among gifted juniors and seniors as opposed to non-gifted juniors and seniors. The researcher surveyed juniors and seniors at the select sample high school using the Parental Authority Questionnaire by Buri (1991). Three different types of parenting styles were theorized by Baumrind (1968): authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. The results of an independent t-test and test of proportionality revealed that none of the three parenting styles showed a relationship to whether a child was determined as gifted.

INDEX WORDS: Parenting Style; Gifted

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DEDICATION

This is for Scott and Kate, my life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every parent hopes their child will receive high accolades for their academic and social achievements. As a child leaves infancy, parents face the task of molding a well-adjusted member of society. Why is it that some children seem smarter and more well adjusted than others? What can parents do to help their children achieve their goals? Parents serve as interpreters for children about the world and their child's abilities (Hall, Kelly, Hansen, & Gutwein, 1996). It has been established that parental involvement is important to children's academic achievement. The way a child is treated in their home can affect the child's engagement in school, (Lindle, 1992; Steinberg, 1996a) and in turn, reflect their success and academic achievement (Dornbusch, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Lindle, 1992).

Parental involvement has even been written into recent legislation. In the Educate America Act, Goal 8 indicated by the year 2000, every school will promote parental involvement in the academic growth of children (cited in Adams, 2003). Goals 2000 set the tone for many state mandates, including Georgia.

Georgia's House Bill 1187 required school councils with parents as members by 2003. The councils shall be comprised of teachers, parents, community business leaders, and the principal. The council's function is to make recommendations to the local boards of education by having input on a large realm of topics ranging from budgets to the hiring of the principal (cited in Advancing Education, 2001).

The styles in which children are raised affect their academic abilities (Steinberg, 1996). These styles encompass some basic ideas on discipline, relationship building, and expectations. Oftentimes, styles are learned from one's own parents. Parents use one or a combination of different parenting styles. Whichever the case, each parent wants to examine each style to see if it helps lead their children to develop into healthy, autonomous, productive, and responsive citizens who can develop their own close relationships. Three parenting styles have been identified. They are permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative (Baumrind, 1968). Many other studies examine parenting styles, but the focus will be on Baumrind's three styles.

Indulgent or permissive parents accept and affirm their children's impulses, desires, and actions. The child is consulted about decisions of family rules. There are few demands for household responsibilities and behaviors. The child is allowed to regulate his or her own activities, and the children are not encouraged to obey external standards. The parent tries to use reason, not power to accomplish their wishes. Children raised with this type of parenting style tend to exhibit poor performance in school, drug and alcohol use, and overall misbehavior (Baumrind, 1968).

. Authoritarian parents try to shape and to control behaviors of their children by absolute authority. The parent stresses obedience, punishment, and non-negotiation. These parents instill respect for authority, respect for work, and respect for traditional structure. This parent's word is final, regardless of the child's own beliefs. These children function well in school and are not likely to engage in antisocial behaviors; however, they are anxious, withdrawn, and have unhappy dispositions. There are sometimes hostile and exhibit feelings of defeat (Baumrind, 1968).

Authoritative parenting style is the most favorable style. This is the most difficult of the three because it combines the tasks of developing and maintaining close, warm relationships, while at the same time, establishing structure and guidelines that are enforceable when necessary. Studies have associated this style with children exhibiting self-confidence, persistence, social competence, academic success, and psychosocial development (Bloir, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

Academic success is more important in today's world than ever before. The scrutiny of educational programs and their accountability is at an all time high. National and State programs are being monitored by parents and the media, so children may receive the best education possible. In accordance with the "No Child Left Behind Act," all students must receive their appropriate education. This includes students who are labeled gifted. Why is it that some students are labeled gifted and some are not? What makes these students successful in their academic careers? The style in which parents raise their children is a determining factor (Steinberg, 1996).

It is important to determine if a specific parenting style is prevalent among gifted students. Investigating each style will aid parents in preparing their children for academic success in school and possible enrichment through gifted programs. In doing so, society, as a whole, will benefit from better-educated students.

Definition of Terms

This section includes definitions of the terms important to the study. The specific terminology used in this paper has been employed according to the following operational definitions.

Gifted- For this study, students who are labeled gifted qualify with three out of four categories in this school system: mental ability, achievement, motivation, and creativity. For mental ability, a composite or appropriate component score at or above the 96th percentile on a nationally normed mental ability test is used. Achievement is based upon a composite or total reading or total math score at or above the 90th percentile on a nationally normed standardized achievement test. Motivation is measured by a numerical score at or above the 90th percentile on the Renzulli Motivation Assessment. For students transferring out of state, a GPA of or above 3.5 in core subjects from the previous two years is used. Creativity is measured with an index score at or above 90th percentile on the total battery of the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking.

Permissive Parenting Style- Permissive parents accept and affirm their children's impulses, desires, and actions. Few demands are placed on the children for responsibilities. The parent is viewed as a friend to the child and not someone responsible for shaping the child's behavior. This parent allows the child to regulate their own activities and behavior and does not encourage him or her to obey defined standards.

Authoritarian Parenting Style- Authoritarian parents direct the child's activities but in a controlling way. This parent values obedience, favors punishment as a gain to behavior, and sets absolute standards for conduct. This parent instills respect for authority, respect for work, and respect for a traditional society. Children having negotiations is unacceptable, and the parent's word is law.

Authoritative Parenting Style- Authoritative parents direct their children in a rational, democratic way. They encourage give and take, and share reasoning behind their own decisions. This parent value autonomy and disciplined conformity. Children of authoritative parents are

free to have their own individual interests, but they are also expected to set standards and obey rules and regulations.

Uninvolved/Rejecting Parenting Style- Uninvolved or rejecting parenting is low on love and limits. This style is thought of as uncaring and does not meet the needs of the child. There is a lack of emotional involvement and supervision of children. Parents are uninvolved in the child's life.

Research Question

There is one research question that provided the direction for this study. Does authoritative parenting, as opposed to authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, affect giftedness in children that can be measured in juniors and seniors at a particular school?

Significance of the Study

The current study was undertaken to determine if a certain parenting style affects the determination of a child being eligible for gifted services. The sample high school in metro Atlanta has an unusually high percentage of gifted students (31%). If the researcher could determine the parenting style used with this population of students, other parents may benefit from emulating this style. As a leader of a school, this information could help test scores and increase parental awareness. Decisions could be made to help with community relations and possibly offer parenting classes based upon this parenting style.

Limitations

1. The population of this study was limited to juniors and seniors at a metro Atlanta area high school enrolled in select English classes.
2. The findings of this study can be generalized only to the populations being studied.

3. The students who were surveyed were from select English classes only, so it may not reflect all juniors and seniors.

Background Information

The sample County School had an average gifted percentage of 31%. The high schools in the system rate as follows: High School A was 16%, High School B was 25%, High School C was 16%, School D was 20%, and the sample high school was 31%. All students met the same criteria for receiving gifted services. This study was conducted to see why the sample high school had a higher rate of giftedness. Specifically, students rated the style of their mother to see if this is a determining factor.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the study. Sections included are the statement of the problem, definition of terms, research question, significance of the study, limitations of the study, background information, and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature relating to parenting styles and gifted education as it related to determining giftedness. The literature begins with a history of parenting styles and an overview of three different parenting styles. The chapter continues with the history of gifted education, the characteristics of a gifted child, the criteria of a gifted child in Georgia, and the implementation procedure to declare a child eligible for gifted services in sample selected.

Chapter 3 describes in detail the methods and procedures for conducting the study. Sections include the problem of the study, research hypotheses, the setting and sample of the study, dependent and independent variables, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis of data.

Chapter 4 is a report of the results and findings from the data analyses. The results are presented in table format and then summarized. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the analyzed data, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It has been established that student success and academic achievement are related to parental involvement. According to Steinberg (1996), the way a child is generally treated in their home (or in the parenting style of a child's parents) can affect the child's engagement in school. Parents affect a child's cognitive and social competence and, in turn, academic achievement, through their behaviors involved in parenting (Dornbusch, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). Most researchers who note specific parenting styles rely on Baumrind's parenting style theory (1968). The three parenting styles she has explained are authoritative, authoritarian, and indulgent (permissive). Baumrind categorizes parenting style into these three groups with their position on two levels: parental responsiveness (warmth) and parental demandingness or control (Baumrind, 1991). A third type has been added but not originally included in Baumrind's theory. Uninvolved parenting includes neglectful parents, but "normal" parenting can fall within this range (cited in Darling, 1999; Dekovic & Gerris, 1992: Glasgow, et al, 1997; Leung & Kwan, 1998; Maccoby & Martin, 1993).

History of Parental Involvement

Toffler (1980) presented the history of parent involvement that occurred in three major waves. The first wave was the Agrarian Age. The second was the age of efficiency, industrial revolution, and progressive education. The third wave was the Age of Collaboration.

The Agrarian Age of parental involvement was to produce educated citizens who mainly worshipped a Protestant God (Button & Provenzo, 1989). Schools were private, for those who could afford outside education. Otherwise, children were educated at home. The legislation of

the Massachusetts Act of 1647 mandated the teaching of reading in all towns of 100 or more citizens (Toffler, 1980). During this period, complete control was exhibited by parents. Usually young women were the teachers of the community. In these cases, they were lesser paid than former male teachers (DeMoss, 1998).

The beginning of the 1700s gave rise to the second wave in the New England area. Toffler (1980) depicted this wave with community support. The taxpayers determined salaries of teachers, the school calendar, and conflicts between students and teachers (Button & Provenzo, 1989). The parents also determined the curriculum. The Bible was the most common text. Schools were extensions of the community's parenting, but education was not seen as vitally important (DeMoss, 1998; Lightfoot, 1978).

The first compulsory attendance law was passed in 1852. More children started to attend schools, thus increasing the need for schools. Church supported schools were still the majority in communities. The single school system developed, the United States Public Education System (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

The importance of education grew during the second wave. Teachers were expected to possess credentials. The Great Depression looked at the cost of education. Student achievement began to drive curricula of the time (cited in Adams, 2003).

The third wave of parental involvement, the Age of Collaboration, brought about the first lawsuit with Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas. Segregation ended in 1954 and the focus turned to parent and community involvement. (Toffler, 1980).

A Nation at Risk was published in 1983 along with the Age of Accountability in education (Carr, 1996). Carr suggested these two reports collaborated into the home-school-community partnerships.

Theories Influencing Parental Involvement

There are several theories and perspectives that have influenced parental involvement. Some mentioned are the ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Comer & Hayes, 1991; Henry, 1996), separation theory (Powell, 1991), and overlapping spheres perspective (Lindle, 1992).

The ecological theory views school and family as embedded. Parents are seen as the natural link to the community and any action taken in one will affect the entire system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This perspective fits Toffler's first wave of philosophy.

Separation theory states that family, school, and community have separate responsibilities in the development of children. Teachers are seen as experts, and parents are seen as non-experts (Powell, 1991). Separation theorists viewed schools as being objective and parents subjective. Lightfoot (1978) referred to this separation as the Worlds Apart Theory.

According to Epstein, (1987), the Overlapping Spheres Theory, family and school overlap depending on time, age, and grade level (Force A); experience/philosophy of family (Force B); and experience or philosophy of school (Force C). In 1992, Epstein added a third sphere, community, to the theory. The overlapping spheres perspective fits the third wave of philosophy.

History of Parenting Styles

Parenting styles were documented back to the early part of this century. During this time, the consensus for rearing children was "spare the rod, spoil the child". Parents did not worry about hurting their child's self esteem, and the family did not revolve around the children and unconditional love. Discipline was administered in the form of corporal punishment, often with a belt or other weapon. Kisses and declarations of love were displayed rarely (Harris, n.d.).

Following the horrors of WWII, parents began to listen to “experts” and let children think for themselves (Dinwiddie, n.d.). In the 1950s and 1960s, parents used a “hands-off” approach and allowed children to learn from the consequences of their actions. Misbehavior was ignored. This type of permissive style was used when one consistent adult was available to guide this self-discovery. In today’s fast paced environment, children are exposed to many adults throughout the day. This type of approach could be confusing with so many authority figures. Without clear defined limits, children can feel insecure and make poor decisions that would impair others.

Baumrind (1968) has defined parenting style as a combination of the three styles rather than one, linear topography. In addition to differing techniques on responsiveness and demandingness, the styles also differ by a third dimension: psychological control. Psychological control “refers to control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child” (Barber, 1996, p. 3296) through the use such techniques as guilt induction, withdrawal of love, or shaming.

Parenting Styles

Rejecting/uninvolved parenting style

Parents who are low in responsiveness and demandingness are considered uninvolved (Darling, 1999). This type of style is more prevalent among mothers than fathers (Gross, 1989). The mother doesn’t usually want to see the child upset and goes out of her way to appease the child. It is generally thought of as uncaring and inadequate to meet the needs of children. Lack of emotional involvement and supervision of children is prevalent. These adolescents become dependent on others, are submissive toward others, and can become dependent and submissive of others. This home encompasses little or no discipline, and there are no rules. In order to avoid conflict, the child is indulged to maintain a state of bliss. The parent is afraid that if conflict

arises, they will lose the child's love. These children are not trained with social skills and lack security and self-confidence (Caruso, n.d.). These households seem to function well because they cannot set guidelines, or because they do not pursue interests that involve places and persons outside the family (Way & Rossman, 1996). This makes it more difficult for children to develop self-knowledge and differentiate their own career goals from their parents' goals.

Permissive parenting style

Permissive parents "are more responsive than they are demanding. They are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation and avoid confrontation" (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Permissive parenting can be further broken into four categories: confused, compensatory, conditional, and indifferent (O'Connor, 2000).

General confused permissiveness is the most common type of permissive parenting. These parents feel as though they can be a friend to their child. They tend to comply with all requests made by the child (O'Connor).

Compensatory permissiveness is a style exhibited by parents who grew up in poverty or feel their own parents were too strict. They want their child to have the freedom and material goods they did not have in their own childhood. They are allies to their children (O'Connor).

Conditional permissiveness gives in to the child's whims on the condition they satisfy certain parental demands, which are not always explicit. Material goods and freedom are given for behavior that reflects well on the family. Children are seen as miniature adults (O'Connor).

Indifferent permissiveness is a style exhibited by parents who are too involved in other interests in order to take an active part in the child's life. They are given material goods and freedom for not making too many demands on their time. There may be too many problems in

the family's life such as illness, poverty, drug dependence, and self-absorption for the parent to take an interest in their child (O'Connor).

According to O'Connor, the problem with this type of parenting attitude is that it is most likely to backfire. The teen sees his privileges and material goods as rights rather than privileges. When a parent says "No" to a request, the teen often overreacts. The teen gets into trouble and sees the parent as trying to unfairly control his/her life. The parents now see their authority at risk. The parents then try to regain control by denying a privilege, and the adolescent sees this as a power struggle and feels his or her self-esteem is on the line. The teen will fight back with behavior the parent cannot control such as friends, sexual behavior, or substance abuse. Parents are suddenly confronted with the fact their power is viewed by the teen as non-existent.

Permissive style parents repeatedly try to cajole their children into behaving without any reinforcement. The behavioral guidelines for this style are hazy, and in some cases, absent (Frazier, 2000). The focus is on trying to appease their children whenever they are unhappy. This pacifying may bring an immediate smile, but there are no long-term effects. The child learns that self-control is not necessary and authority and respect are not paid any attention. These children will turn to peer groups to see standards of behavior and oftentimes the group's standards are deviant. These groups of children find themselves opposing authority figures at school, with law enforcement, and with other parents.

Just as behavioral guidelines are ambiguous in permissive parenting, so too are the roles of parent and child. In other parenting styles, the roles are clearly defined, but permissive parents see themselves as the child's friend, not an authority figure. The parent can also become so involved with their child's life, that they live their lives somewhat vicariously through the children. The result of the relationship is inappropriate closeness. The child can be susceptible to

feelings of emotional distress and depression. The over indulged child, with strong feelings of entitlement, cannot negotiate the normal give and take of healthy relationships (Frazier, 2000).

Frazier stated (2000) that permissive parents do not encourage enabling or constraining behaviors. The children are very often immature and display regressive behaviors, or they engage in adult like behaviors that are not carried out with adult responsibilities. Consequently, the children who are involved in adult activities such as sexuality and drinking are active long before they are equipped to handle the situations emotionally and responsibly.

Generally, there are low levels of conflict between parents and children of the permissive style. Many times, the parents are uninvolved or absent. These children gravitate toward their peer groups as they become estranged from their parents and look for substitute families. These adolescents exhibit very little independence and autonomy. While other types of parenting are considered the best, permissive parenting is considered to be the most harmful. These children are more prone to misbehavior, lower school performance, and drug and alcohol abuse (Steinberg, 1996).

Authoritarian parenting style

The authoritarian style of parenting emphasizes obedience, respect for authority, work tradition, and order over compromise, with verbal exchanges being discouraged (Dornbusch et al. 1987). This style focuses on controlling behavior to meet the expectations of the parents. These parents are “highly demanding and directive, but not responsive. They are obedience and status oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation” (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). These parents provide well-ordered and structured environments with clearly stated rules. They can be divided into two groups: nonauthoritarian-directive, who is directive but not intrusive in their use or power, and authoritarian directive, who are highly intrusive.

Authoritarian parents fear conflict in the home, but it is prevalent. The highly structured environment teaches children to obey in order to avoid pain or punishment (Caruso, n.d.). Parents return love only on conditions of keeping rules. Without an authority figure to set boundaries, the children from these homes tend to break rules and get into trouble in the absence of an authority figure to set boundaries for them. The forceful discipline in these homes demands prompt obedience. These parents are less likely to use gentle methods of persuasion, such as affection, praise, and rewards for their children (Baumrind, 1971). Consequently, these parents model more aggressive means of conflict resolution and are lax in modeling affectionate, nurturant behaviors with their children.

The relationships among these families are seen as "pseudo-close" (Frazier, 2000). This is due the fact the children are in fear of displeasing the parent rather than growing and developing. This parenting style does not recognize the child's process of individuation or the growing need of independence. Children reared from these homes are often anxious and have high levels of depression. They may tend to have problems with impulsiveness, especially when their parent is not supervising. Children from authoritarian parenting can lead to the formation of poor psychosocial skills (Radziszewska, Richardson, Dent, & Flay, 1996).

The behaviors encouraged with authoritarian households are called constraining behaviors. The parents try to control rather than encourage autonomous thinkers. The reaction to self-thought is prohibitive and negative, and often quite punitive (Frazier, 2000). Valuable lessons for the future are not learned, only instructions for the present, which are closely monitored.

Excessive control in these homes breeds rebellion. Conflict does occur even if it is not overt. The conflict may come from acting out in school, fighting with other children, or

becoming involved in deviant behaviors. At the other end of the spectrum, these children can be perfectionists and focused on achievement at the expense of necessary, emotional growth. In either case, individuation necessary for becoming an autonomous adult is hindered. These children may grow up to be less reliant, socially poised, and persistent. During difficult times, they feel they cannot depend on their parents (Steinberg, 1996).

Authoritative parenting style

Permissive parenting was determined to be the most detrimental style, whereas, authoritative parenting is seen as the most beneficial style (Gross, 1989). An authoritative parent is broadly defined as "one who exercises warmth and firmness towards the child, and who also reacts rationally to the needs of the child" (Steinberg, 1996, p. 125). These parents set rules, routines, and abide by them. They also allow questions and compromises made by the adolescent. Attention is given to the adolescent, but not overly indulging (Gross, 1989). In a study of adolescents, Dornbusch et al. (1987) found that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were negatively associated with higher grades, whereas the authoritative parenting style was positively associated with higher grades. In a study of minority students, Boveja (1998) found adolescents who perceived their parents to be authoritative engaged in more effective learning and studying habits.

Authoritative parents provide their child with warmth, attention, and autonomy. They encourage their child to be independent and individualistic. They encourage discussion and explanations with family decisions. This fosters a child's decision making by not bribing or punishing, and corrects a child's misbehavior by talking about alternatives to encourage the child not to misbehave. Authoritative parents make it clear that they expect responsible behavior from their children, and they are available to support the child as needed (Glasgow, et al., 1997).

The disciplinary methods used by these parents are both demanding and responsive.

> They monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. The methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be socially responsible, self-regulated and cooperative. (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62)

Authoritative parenting is effective in shaping a child's cognition. The children reared with this style are competent, responsible, and independent (Pike, 1996). The role parents play in a child's life influence their development. Each person's cognitive development is affected by the parenting style his or her parent experienced (Critzer, 1996). Research has indicated that parental responsiveness and demandingness make independent contributions to the academic well being of adolescents. Even having one authoritative parent in the home appears to be powerful enough to overcome the shortcomings of a nonauthoritative parent (Fletcher & Steinberg, 1999).

Children from authoritative homes can face challenges with confidence and control both in and out of school. They feel confident they control their future, not their teachers, genes or good luck (Steinberg, 1996). Students whom come from homes with other parenting styles attribute success and failures to conditions over which they have little control, like ability and luck. Family systems intertwine with other systems such as gender, race, and class. Poverty and lack of opportunity can dampen any environment; however, Blustein (1997) shows how close family connections and strong role models can confront these barriers.

The parent-child relationship in authoritative homes is characterized by warmth, friendliness, and mutual respect. Even in the face of conflict, the relationship is close (Frazier, 2000). Authority is still maintained, but the parents have a sense of empathy and understanding.

The parents with this style encourage “enabling” behaviors, such as tolerance and abstract thinking. They try to promote a growing sense of autonomy.

There is an overall low level of conflict in authoritative homes. This is true even when adolescents are at the height of their “rebellious” stage. The teens seek advice from their parents rather than feeling they should rebel. The hallmark of this approach is a mutual trust.

History of Gifted Education

Gifted education can be traced as far back as Plato, who identified the gifted and provided specialized instruction in metaphysics, science, philosophy, and military leadership (Colangelo & Davis, 1997). During the Renaissance, creative prodigies in art, architecture, and literature were supported by the government and private donors (Davis & Rimm, 1994).

Although primary education became compulsory in the United States, secondary and postsecondary education was based, not only upon academic talents, but the ability to pay for such services (Newland, 1976). Eventually in 1868, the St. Louis Public Schools established a promotion plan for bright students to complete six years of school in only four years (Piirto, 1999). Other states followed suit with programs initiated in Woburn, Massachusetts in 1884, Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1886, and Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1891 (Colangelo & Davis, 1997).

Beginning in 1901, Worchester, Massachusetts developed the first private school for gifted children in grades 7-9 (Piirto, 1999). By 1920, approximately two-thirds of all major cities in the United States had some type of educational program for bright students.

A measurement device was invented in 1904. Binet was requested to devise some sort of scale that would predict if youngsters would succeed or fail in the city schools of Paris. He developed the IQ (Intelligence Quotient), a single score. This test was to predict how well

students might do in school, not how well one may succeed in life (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented n.d.).

In 1916, Terman contributed to gifted education significantly. First, he modified the Binet test, which then became knows as the Stanford/Binet IQ Test. In 1920, he began a study of 1,500 gifted children. These people were, and still are, the most studied group of gifted individuals in the world (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

Hollingsworth of Columbia University published *Gifted Children: Their Nature and Nurture*, one of the very first textbooks for gifted education in 1926. Wallas defined the "Creative Process" as a four-step procedure that same year (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

In 1947, professionals and parents formed interest groups such as the American Association for the Gifted. In 1953, the National Association for the gifted was founded. In 1959, the Association for the Gifted began under the umbrella of The Council for Exceptional Children (Colangelo & Davis, 1997).

The year of 1957 was a turning point for mathematics and science programs. The launching of the Russian satellite, Sputnik, led to criticizing American education and the lack of recognition for the needs of gifted children. This resulted in the National Defense Education Act in 1958 (Piirto, 1999).

In the 1960s, many breakthroughs were formulated. Guilford coined the term "divergent thinking" to explain the mental capabilities of the gifted. Bloom had created his "taxonomy," and MacKinnon, in conjunction with architects, conducted left and right brain research. During 1962-1966, Torrance created the Torrance Tests of Creativity. In 1963, Osborn and Parnes coined the term "brainstorming" to describe thinking of the gifted. They are responsible for the formal

process knows as Creative Problem Solving (CPS). In 1963, Barron, compiled a list of traits of creative people known as the Barron-Welsh Art Scale (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

In 1969, amendments were enacted to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to survey the status of education for the gifted. This report noted the deterioration of gifted education and raised public awareness regarding the needs of the gifted and talented. This significant report is known as The Marland Report (Delisle, 1999).

In 1974, the first legislative action for the gifted was introduced in the sum of $2.56 million of federal money. This figure was used for the 2.6 million gifted and talented children in the United States. This legislation also created the National Office of the Gifted. This same year The National State Leadership Training Institute in Ventura County, California was introduced for educating the gifted (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

During the 1980s and 1990s, research continued. Davis and Rimm published Education of the Gifted and Talented. Rimm was also recognized for her work with the underachieving gifted. Renzulli formulated the Enrichment Triad Model, and Gardner devised the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

In the 1990s, the United States Office for Gifted and Talented offered grants totaling over $5 million a year. Javits, a New York Senator, lobbied for the gifted education cause, and these monies are known as the Javits Grants. Also during this time, The National Research Center for Gifted and Talented established four sites throughout the United States: Yale University, University of Connecticut, University of Georgia, and the University of Virginia (New Hampshire Gifted & Talented, n.d.).

Characteristics of Gifted Students

Children who are labeled “gifted” tend to share common characteristics. Georgia has defined a gifted student as, “a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability (ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her own abilities.” (GA DOE, 2003). Giftedness and talented are often used interchangeably; however there are differences. Gagne (1991) differentiates between the two by defining giftedness as above-average competence in human ability, and talented as above-average performance in a particular field. Although all students are individuals in their own right, behaviors exhibited by gifted students tend to have commonalities.

Often, the earliest identification of a gifted child takes place through observation of the their behavior. Even though observation is subjective, it is generally accurate and less intrusive than other methods. Certainly objective measures must be used, but observation is the first step in determining giftedness (Newland, 1976).

ERIC Clearninghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children (1985) cites three types of characteristics of gifted children: General behavioral, learning, and creative characteristics. Gifted children show these characteristics as differences among their age-mates (cited in Identifying the Gifted, n.d.).

Children who are gifted tend to show some of the same general behavior characteristics. Many of these children learn to read early, with better comprehension, before entering school. They tend to read quickly, intensely, and have large vocabularies. Gifted children commonly learn basic skills better and more quickly. They can grasp abstractions and draw inferences with nonverbal clues. They can work independently at an early age while concentrating for longer

periods of time. They often have boundless energy, which may sometimes lead to the misdiagnosis of hyperactivity. Gifted children relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children or adults rather than their peers. They like to learn new things and are highly inquisitive. They exhibit intrinsic motivation to learn or explore and very often have an "I'd rather do it myself" attitude (cited in Identifying the Gifted, n.d.).

Gifted children are natural learners who show many extrinsic characteristics. They have keen powers of observation and have an eye for important details. Reading a great deal on their own, preferring books or material written for older children is typical. They take great pleasure in intellectual activity. Gifted students readily see cause-effect relationships. They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative, while being quick to spot inconsistencies. Underlying principles are grasped easily. They quickly perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies. They often attack complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing systematically (cited in Identifying the Gifted, n.d.).

Gifted children's creative abilities often set them apart from their age-mates. They may do so in the following ways: They are fluent, flexible thinkers with different alternatives and approaches to problem solving. They are original thinkers who seek new, unusual, or unconventional information. They can see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts. They are elaborate thinkers who can produce new steps, ideas, responses or other embellishments. They are willing to entertain complexity. They are good guessers who can also construct "what if" questions. They are often aware of their own impulsiveness and irrationality while showing sensitivity for others. They are extremely curious about objects, ideas, situations, or events. They often display intellectual playfulness and like to fantasize and imagine. They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers in expressing opinions and ideas, and they often

disagree with others' statements. They are sensitive to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic values (cited in Identifying the Gifted, n.d.).

Gifted students excel in certain academic areas and also socially. In moderate levels of ability, "being intellectually gifted is clearly an asset in terms of psychosocial adjustment in most situations," (Janos & Robinson, 1985, p. 181). Like any adolescent, gifted students worry about their peer relationships. Kline & Short (1991a, 1991b) found that gifted girls and boys scored very high on a self-report of relationship with peers. Girls reported that relationships were more important as they developed in school-age years, and boys valued their relationships as they grew older.

Certain factors assist gifted students in their social relationships. VanTassel-Baska, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Kulieke (1994) report that students of higher socioeconomic status reported higher levels of support from friends, classmates, parents, and teachers than those of lower socioeconomic status. In order for the highly gifted to cope with social acceptance, Swiatek (1995) found three strategies to help students deal with social consequences. The strategies were denial of giftedness, popularity/conformity, and peer acceptance. Students with extremely high intellectual gifts are most concerned with living up to others' expectations, and deny their giftedness more often. These students have talents in the verbal areas and feel "different" than mathematically gifted students because their talent is more visible.

In summary, gifted students tend to have better psychosocial adjustment than other students. They feel they are at least as popular. Their self concepts are at or above normal levels on personality measures, and they tend to be more motivated with positive attributions for success and failure; however, they may have more trouble coping when they do encounter failure (Ford, 1993).

Georgia Criteria for Gifted Students

The state of Georgia has set forth regulations that dictate the referral process for gifted students from its school districts. Georgia tests students in four categories: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation. Once a student has been assessed in all four categories, there are two ways eligibility can be established. The two ways are the psychometric approach and the multiple-criteria approach (GA DOE, 2003)

In order for a student to qualify on the basis of mental and achievement only, the mental ability test score must be a composite score. This score must be in the 99th percentile for K-2 students, and in the 96th percentile of students in grades 3-12. These students must also score, in one of the achievement standards, with 90th percentile total reading, 90th percentile total math, 90th percentile total achievement test battery, or superior product/performance assessment. Both scores are need to qualify and may not use mental ability tests alone.

The second option is the multiple-criteria approach. The student may qualify in any three of the four categories, with one being a nationally normed standardized test. Component scores (nonverbal ability), as well as full-scale scores may be used in the area of mental ability. The assessment options are met through a variety of measures.

Students can be referred for possible gifted placement in a variety of ways. The classroom teacher, parents, or any other responsible person who has knowledge of the student's intellectual functioning may submit the student for further consideration. There is also an automatic referral procedure. Each local board of education establishes a system-wide norm-referenced test result that enables automatic consideration. Local districts establish a decision-making process, which allows staff members to consider all information collected in order to

determine if it is appropriate to proceed with further assessment using the automatic criteria system.

Curriculum for gifted students in grades K-12 is determined by the local boards of education. The approved delivery is set forth by the state, but the exact nature is decided at the local level.

There is no reciprocal eligibility from state to state. Each state provides its own guidelines for establishing eligibility for the gifted program. If the testing requirements of another state match Georgia's, then no further testing is needed. Those scores may be applicable. If differing scales are used, then additional testing may be needed.

Determination of Giftedness

The high school used in the sample used four assessments to meet the Georgia eligibility requirements. For ability, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is used because it gives four sub-scores, only one of which is needed to qualify (96^{th} percentile). The achievement instrument is the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT9), although any nationally normed instrument that meets the state guidelines may be administered. A score at or above the 90^{th} percentile in Total Reading, Total Math, or the Composite is required to qualify in this area. The Renzulli Motivation Checklist is used to determine the area of motivation. A score at or above 90^{th} percentile is required. For students transferring from another school system, a grade point average of 3.5 or higher is required for core academics for the preceding two years. The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Figural) is used to assess the area of creativity. A Creativity Index score must be at or above the 90^{th} percentile. The sample county will take into consideration outside data, but the county will generate its own scores (FCBOE, 2003)

Students are automatically referred when their scores on the standardized tests are at the listed qualifying level: 96th percentile in mental ability or a composite of 90th percentile or a combination of Total Reading and Total Math with one at or above 90th percentile and the other at or above 70th percentile. Teachers, parents, peers, oneself may refer a student by completing the Observation Log. Test scores are valid for two years in the review process. In accordance with state law, no private test results are accepted, although the scores may be used for recommendation purposes.

All students who transfer from accredited public schools within the state will be admitted to enrichment programs. Out-of-state transfer students will need to be assessed under current state guidelines. Test scores of out-of-state students will be accepted only if the following three conditions are met. Standardized tests meet Georgia's requirements for acceptable instruments. Scores are no more than two years old, and scores were obtained through testing from an accredited school system.

In order for students to remain in the gifted program, they must maintain an average of 85 percent in all gifted and non-gifted core classes. Students who fail to meet this requirement will be placed on probation for one semester. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal from the program. Reentry into the program is determined by re-qualification after one academic year.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for determining parenting style was developed by Buri, Professor of Psychology, at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The author recommends using the survey with juniors and seniors in high school, and not younger, because the consistency of responses drops considerably with sophomores and freshmen (Buri, 1991).

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of measuring Baumrind's (1971) permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles. The survey contains 30 items and yields parenting style by the child about the mother and father.

In developing the scale, initially 48 questionnaire items were constructed on descriptions of permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative prototypes by Baumrind (1971). The items were designed to be from the point of view by the child. Twenty-one professionals working in psychology, education, sociology, and social work were presented the 48 items. They were also given verbatim descriptions of the three parenting style prototypes. Accordingly, they judged each item to its accuracy in characterizing the prototypes. If more than 95% of the judges (20 out of 21) agreed the item represented one of the three prototypes then it was included in the final pool of questions.

Of the initial 48 items, 36 met criterion. There was 100% agreement by the judges on two-thirds of the items. The agreement among the judges ultimately reflected the constructs of Baumrind's parenting styles, and the content validity of the questionnaire is good.

From the pool of 36, ten permissive, ten authoritarian, and ten authoritative items were chosen. Two forms were constructed: one to evaluate authority by the mother and one by the father. The responses are made on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Thus, the PAQ (parental authority questionnaire) yields six scores from each participant: mother's permissiveness, mother's authoritarianism, mother's authoritativeness, father's permissiveness, father's authoritarianism, and father's authoritativeness.

Reliability was tested by test-retest method with a group of students from an introductory psychology class. The following reliabilities were noted: (N=61, mean age = 19.2) .81 for mother's permissiveness, .86 for mother's authoritatrianism, .78 for mother's authoritativenss,

.77 for father's permissiveness, .85 for father's authoritarianism , and .92 for father's authoritativeness (Buri, 1991).

Internal consistency reliability was conducted on 185 students in an introductory psychology class. The following Cronbach alpha values were obtained for the six scales: .75 for mother's permissiveness, .85 for mother's authoritarianism, .82 for mother's authoritativeness, .74 for father's permissiveness, .87 for father's authoritarianism, and .85 for father's authoritativenss. Both test-retest and Cronbach alpha are highly respectable.

Discriminant related validity was used with 127 introductory psychology students. The hypothesized divergence in the PAQ scores was reported. Mother's authoritarianism was inversely related to mother's permissiveness (r = .-38, p< .0005) and mother's authoritativeness (r = .48, p. <.0005). Similar results for father responses inversely related father's authoritarianism to father's permissivensss (r = .-50, p. <.0005) and father's authoritativeness (r=.-48, p.<.0005). Also mother's permissivensss was not significantly related to mother's authoritativensss (r = .07, p>.10), and father's permissiveness was not significantly correlated to father's authoritativenssss (r = .12, p>.10), (Buri, 1991).

> Buri stated: The PAQ is useful for assessing permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritativeness by both mothers and fathers. It is appropriate for older adolescents and young adults. Given the fact that parental authority has been cited as one of the principle variables of parent-child interaction, the potential of the PAQ as a research tool in the investigation of individuals correlates of parent permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritativeness is noteworthy. (p. 118)

Conclusion

In conclusion, gifted education programs continue to grow and be revised. Each entity has its own definition for giftedness and the criteria for qualification. Budgeted monies are sometimes the determining factor for the range of gifted education services in each state. Arguments have been made that gifted students have the same rights to enhanced education as

special education students do to remedial or specialized education. Giftedness will continue to be a controversial program as long as budget cuts are put into place.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH AND DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The study was undertaken to determine if a particular parenting style is associated with one's child qualifying for gifted services. Data were collected and analyzed to determine if one particular parenting style was dominant in comparison to the others.

This chapter presents the specific steps that were taken to collect and analyze the hypothesis data. These include the following: a restatement of the problem, the research hypothesis, a description of the sample of the study, a discussion of the independent and dependent variables, an explanation of the instrumentation, and an explanation of the data collection procedures.

Restatement of the Problem

Academic success is more important in today's world than ever before. The scrutiny of educational programs and their accountability is at an all time high. National and State programs are being monitored by parents and the media, so children may receive the best education possible. In accordance with the "No Child Left Behind Act", all students must receive their appropriate education. This includes students who are labeled gifted. Why is it that some students are labeled gifted and some are not? What makes these students successful in their academic careers? The style in which parents raise their children is a determining factor.

It is important to determine if a specific parenting style is prevalent among gifted students. Investigating each style will aid parents in preparing their children for academic

success in school and possible enrichment through gifted programs. In doing so, society, as a whole, will benefit from better-educated students.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed to address the question raised in the statement of the problem concerning parenting style and gifted eligibility. Two hypotheses were formulated to investigate this issue.

H1: Parents of gifted students will have a statistically greater mean score on the authoritative scale of the Parental Authority Questionnaire than the mean score of permissive and authoritative parenting scales.

H2: A greater proportion among gifted students than non-gifted students will be represented with authoritative parenting style.

Setting for the Study

The setting of the study is a high school in the metropolitan Atlanta area. It is one of five high schools in the system. Advanced placement English classes containing gifted and non-gifted juniors and seniors will be used.

Sample for the Study

The sample for the study consisted of juniors and seniors enrolled in select English classes. Every student is required to take four years of English in Georgia; however, not all juniors and seniors will be in these teachers' classes.

The student population at the sample high school was 1780. There are 412 seniors, 441 juniors, 509 sophomores, and 418 freshmen. Only select juniors and seniors participated in the survey. The total of juniors and seniors was 853.

In the junior and senior classes, there were 418 females and 435 males totaling 853. This constituted 23% and 24% of the school population. The racial breakdown was as follows for the junior and senior classes: There were 24 Asian or Pacific Island (2.8%), 46 black students (5.3%), 16 Hispanic (less 1.8%), 12 multi-racial (1.4%), and 755 Caucasian (89%).

There were 153 students who receive special education services at the school, and 552 students who received gifted services. Juniors constituted 142 of the students, and seniors made up 122 of gifted students.

The total school population that was eligible for free lunches is 2.5%. Less than 1% were eligible for reduced lunches.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), the county's median household income in 2001 was $71,227.00. Persons below the poverty level were 2.6%. The median value of an owner occupied housing unit was $171,500.00. Population growth was steadily increasing with 95,542 residents in 2001 and 91,263 residents in 2000, increasing by 4.7%.

Between 1996 and 2000, the school system reported a dropout rate of 2.5%. The statewide rate was 6.8%. Based upon the 2000 graduating class of the school system, 68% of students were eligible for HOPE Scholarship funds. In 2000, 79.9% of adults were registered to vote. Of those registered voters, 82.6% voted in the 2000 general election. Statewide in 2000, 64.1% of Georgians were eligible to vote. Of those, 69.6% voted in the general election (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2004).

Variables

The following variables were selected for this study. There is one independent variable (parenting style) and one dependent variable (gifted eligibility).

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was parenting style. Parenting style was documented by the survey completed by the students to determine the style used by their parents. The author of the survey suggested using juniors and seniors only. Students rated their parents according to parent behavior. The style of parenting was determined from the scale.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was gifted eligibility. Students are classified as eligible for gifted services by the criteria set forth from the state of Georgia and the sample school system. Students are determined to be eligible and served by receiving instruction from a certified teacher in Georgia.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this study is the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) by Buri (See Appendix A for permission letter) The instrument was developed in order to measure Baumrind's three parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative. The Parental Authority Questionnaire consists of 30 items and yields the parenting style the mother. The score will be derived from the appraisals of their son or daughter. Buri conducted reliability and validity measures for the test. It was established that the PAQ used as a research tool in the investigation of parenting style is noteworthy.

Data Collection

Parenting style was determined by two groups of students using the same instrument. Juniors and seniors in advanced placement English classes were administered the survey after a parent permission form was signed. Data were analyzed to see if one particular parenting style is prevalent among the gifted students as opposed to non-gifted students.

Data Analyses

The first hypothesis was tested using a test of proportionality to determine if gifted students had a higher rate of authoritative parenting style than non-gifted students. The second hypothesis was tested with an independent t-test to determine if the mean of gifted students was statistically higher than the mean of non-gifted students.

Summary

Chapter III has included a description of the research design and procedures for this study. This chapter included a restatement of the problem, research hypothesis, setting and sample of the study, dependent and independent variables, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Results obtained from the data will be analyzed in Chapter IV with a summary, conclusion, application of the findings, and recommendations for further study given in Chapter V.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSES

Summary of Table 1

Students were identified as gifted and non-gifted in junior and senior, advanced placement English classes. There were 51 juniors (27 gifted and 24 non-gifted) and 38 seniors (20gifted and 18 non-gifted). The data were gathered in May of 2004.

Table 1 represents the 51 juniors (27 gifted and 24 non-gifted). An independent t-test was performed to test the hypothesis that authoritative parenting style measured by the PAQ would be significantly higher among gifted than non-gifted students. The value was .67 (p=.50). The mean for authoritative parenting style in gifted juniors was 34.96 with a standard deviation of 8.43, and the mean for authoritative parenting style in non-gifted juniors as 33.50 with a standard deviation of 6.94. Since the t-test showed no statistical significance, the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups was accepted.

Summary of Table 2

Table 2 represents data from 38 seniors (20 gifted and 18 non-gifted) in an independent t-test. The t-test was performed to achieve the hypothesis that authoritative parenting style measured by the PAQ would be significantly higher among gifted than non-gifted students. The mean for senior, gifted, authoritative parenting style was 35.55 with a standard deviation of 6.91. The mean for non-gifted seniors was 36.11 with a standard deviation of 5.85. A t-score of .27 was reported with p = .56. Since the t-test showed no statistical significance, the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups was accepted.

Summary of Table 3

Table 3 represents a test with the total sample of 89 juniors and seniors with 47 gifted and 42 non-gifted. The t-test was performed to achieve the hypothesis that authoritative parenting style measured by the PAQ would be significantly higher among gifted than non-gifted students. The mean for gifted students was 35.21 with a standard deviation of 7.75 and a mean for non-gifted of 34.62 with a standard deviation of 6.55. The t-score was .39 with $p = .70$. Authoritative parenting style was not related to giftedness in any of the groups. Since the t-test showed no statistical significance, the null hypothesis of no difference between the two groups was accepted.

Summary of Table 4

Table 4 represents a test of proportionality performed on 27gifted juniors and 23 non-gifted juniors. A test of proportionality was performed to determine a z-score of -.57. It was determined not to be significant since the critical level at the .05 level was 1.96. The proportion of gifted students raised by authoritative parents was essentially the same as the proportion of gifted students raised by authoritarian and permissive parents.

Summary of Table 5

Table 5 represents a test of proportionality of seniors with 18 gifted and 18 non-gifted. A test of proportionality was performed to determine a z-score of –1.41. It was determined not to be significant since the critical level at the .05 level was 1.96. The proportion of gifted students raised by authoritative parents was essentially the same as the proportion of gifted students raised by authoritarian and permissive parents.

Summary of Table 6

Table 6 represents the total sample of 89 gifted and non-gifted students. A test of proportionality was performed to determine a z-score of –1.43. It was determined not to be significant since the critical level at the .05 level is 1.96. The proportion of gifted students raised by authoritative parents was essentially the same as the proportion of gifted students raised by authoritarian and permissive parents.

Table 1

Independent t-test for Gifted and Non-Gifted Juniors

	n	$\bar{X}$	(SD)	t	p
Gifted	27	34.96	8.43	.67	.50
Non-Gifted	24	33.50	6.941		

Table 2

Independent t-test for Gifted and Non-Gifted Seniors

	n	$\bar{X}$	(SD)	t	p
Gifted	20	35.55	6.91	.27	.56
Non-Gifted	18	36.11	5.85		

Table 3

Independent t-test of Gifted and Non-Gifted Juniors and Seniors

	n	$\bar{X}$	(SD)	t	p
Gifted	47	35.21	7.75	.39	.70
Non-Gifted	42	34.62	6.55		

Table 4

Test of Proportionality for parenting styles of Seniors

Group	P+A(n)	F(n)	z-score
Gifted Seniors	7	11	-1.41
Non Gifted Seniors	12	24	

Table 5

Test of Proportionality for parenting styles of Juniors

Group	P+A(n)	F(n)	z-score
Gifted Juniors	14	13	-.57
Non Gifted Juniors	11	12	

Table 6

Test of Proportionality for parenting styles of Juniors and Seniors

Group	P+A(n)	F(n)	z-score
Gifted Jrs. & Srs.	21	24	-1.43
Non Gifted Jrs. & Srs.	16	25	

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The data detailed in the previous chapter was gathered in May of 2004. The data were used to determine if authoritative parenting style was more significant than permissive and authoritarian parenting styles by using the PAQ among gifted and non-gifted high school juniors and seniors. This study used three parenting styles of permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative theorized by Baumrind. The researcher wanted to see if authoritative parenting style was significant among the gifted population, as opposed permissive and authoritarian parenting styles.

The research was designed to survey gifted and non-gifted, high school juniors and seniors at the sample high school. The data were analyzed to determine if authoritative parenting style was significant among the gifted juniors and seniors.

Some variables that were not considered when the data were analyzed were socio-economic status of the population, educational level of the parents, and ethnic backgrounds of the students.

The socio-economic status of the population could be a determining variable for the study. The total school population eligible for free lunches is 2.5%. Less than 1% are eligible for reduced lunches.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), the county's median household income in 2001 was $71,227.00. Persons below the poverty level were 2.6%. The median value of an

owner occupied housing unit was $171,500.00. Population growth was steadily increasing with 95,542 residents in 2001 and 91,263 residents in 2000, increasing by 4.7%.

Another variable not considered was the educational level of the parents. Students did not list the educational level of either parent in the survey. This variable could have an effect on the parenting style of students and the possible outcome of the data.

A third variable not considered was the ethnic background of the sample. In the junior and senior classes, there are 418 females and 435 males totaling 853. This constitutes 23% and 24% of the school population. The racial breakdown is as follows for the junior and senior classes: There are 24 Asian or Pacific Island (2.8%) There are 46 black students (5.3%), 16 Hispanic (less 1.8%), 12 multi-racial (1.4%), and 755 Caucasian (89%). Students did not list their ethnic background for the study. The sample was weighted heavily with Caucasian students with 89%. The outcome may be affected with a more diverse ethnicity.

Discussion

According to Steinberg (1996), the way a child is generally treated in their home can affect the child's engagement in school. Parents affect a child's cognitive and social competence and, in turn, academic achievement, through their behaviors involved in parenting (Dornbusch, et al., 1987). Three parenting styles theorized by Baumrind (1968) labeled parents as permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian. Permissive parenting was determined to be the most detrimental style, whereas, authoritative parenting was determined to be the most beneficial (Gross, 1989). Boveja (1998) found adolescents who perceived their parents to be authoritative engaged in more effective learning and study habits. Parents who exhibit authoritative parenting show involvement in their children's lives by maintaining close, warm relationships, while at the same

time, establishing structure and guidelines. These children tend to exhibit self-confidence, persistence, social competence, academic success, and psychosocial development (Bloir, 1997).

Research has shown the relationship between parent involvement and high academic success in their children. This researcher wanted to determine if authoritative parenting style, which utilizes high parent involvement, identified by Baumrind (1968) was related to gifted juniors and seniors. The results indicated parenting style was not significant among the gifted population as opposed to the non-gifted population. Other outside factors could have contributed to these results. The sample population had a very high socioeconomic status, which could have contributed to the success of the non-gifted students. All sample students were in high achieving, English classes, so results may have been different if remedial classes were used along with advanced placement classes. While it appears parent involvement is related to student success and high academic achievement in other research groups, this particular sample did not deem authoritative style as being as related to giftedness.

Recommendations for Future Study

According to the data, authoritative parenting style was not significant among gifted juniors and seniors. The sample involved the parenting style of the mother only. Future studies could survey the students on the parenting style of the father to determine if authoritative parenting style was significant among gifted students. The study could also be performed in two different locations with diverse socio-economic statuses. The overall affluence of the sample could be reason for the outcome.

Conclusion

All parents want their children to do well in school. It is true some students are more successful than others. Research has shown that parental involvement is very important to a

child's success. Some students are labeled gifted by qualifying for programs. The three parenting styles of permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian, theorized by Baumrind were identified by the researcher to see if one style was significant among the gifted population.

The juniors and seniors at the sample metro Atlanta high school were surveyed in May of 2004. The school has an extremely high percentage of gifted students (31%). Authoritative parenting style did not significantly relate to giftedness.

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Appendix A

Permission Letter from survey author, Dr. John Buri

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September 25, 2003

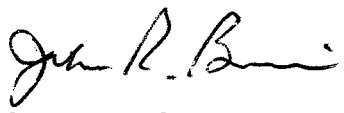
Ms. Wendy Ashmore
85 E. Main Street South
Hampton, Georgia 30228

Dear Wendy:

Thank you for your interest in the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). Please find enclosed copies of the PAQ that I have used in some of my research projects. Please feel free to use the PAQ for any not-for-profit purposes. I have also enclosed a couple reprints that may be useful to you --- scoring information and some normative data can be found in these articles. Based upon my experience with the PAQ, I would recommend that you not try to use the questionnaire with middle school students. I have been able to use it successfully with juniors and seniors in high school, but the consistency of responses dropped considerably with sophomores and freshmen in high school.

Hopefully you will find that the PAQ will be helpful to you. Good luck with your research project.

Sincerely,



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