THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTING STYLES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BLACK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

ELLORNAH MOTLADIRENG MEKGWE

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DEDICATION
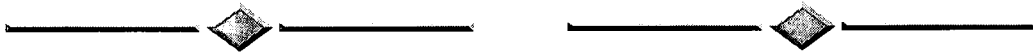
This work is dedicated to my late father Elliot Banji Modise, my dear mother Mpule, who after the death of my father never gave up but continue to struggle in order to get me educated, and to my loving children, Kgomotso, Tebogo and Keletso for their patience and understanding during the lengthy period of this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is increasing recognition within developmental, educational, and sociological theories that both school and home are important institutions that socialize and educate children. The family (parents in particular) has been described as playing a central role in the social and psychological development of children and adolescents (Baumrind, 1991a, 1991b; Jubber, 1990; Mboya, 1993). In the process of socialization, children internalize the reflected appraisals expressed towards themselves (Mboya, 1995). As a result, they come to respond to themselves and to develop self-perceptions similar to those expressed towards them by the significant others in their lives, most importantly their parents. In other words, they define and evaluate them in terms of how they perceive others to define and evaluate them. If children perceive their parents' behaviour towards them as expressing positive evaluation, such as being helpful, supportive, interested and a source of encouragement, they will evaluate themselves positively and this may lead to among other things higher academic achievement.

Both parents and teachers want the same thing for both their children and students - the best possible education. The achievement of this goal depends on many factors, among others, the impact of parenting styles, parental involvement in schooling, parental encouragement and motivation to succeed. Maqsud and Coleman (1993) pointed out that parents have a strong influence on the development of their children's achievement motivation. Children whose achievement, initiative, and competitiveness are reinforced by their parents are more likely to develop a high level of achievement motivation. Similarly, parental expectations and observational learning are important in the development of children's achievement motivation. The above authors are of the opinion that children who live away from their parents for substantial periods of time may have a lower level of achievement motivation. This study aligns itself with this opinion so that those children who

were staying in hostels (away from their parents) were excluded. Cherian (1994) confirms that through the absence of either parent, the child could receive less parental help, encouragement, and guidance conducive to school work, and this could lessen or nullify the effect of parental aspiration on the academic achievement of the children.

Child rearing is a complex matter influenced by numerous factors, among others, the personality and personality adjustment of the parents, the personality of the children and the ways in which they react to their parents, and the parent's view on childbearing.

The research of Baumrind is particularly pertinent because she attempted to link components of family interaction to cognitive competence. She postulates three family parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) that have consequences for the development of cognitive and social competence. These three family types differ in the values, behaviour and standards that children are expected to adopt; in the ways these values, behaviours, and standards are transmitted; and in parental expectation about the behaviour of children. Each type of parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) defines the parent-child relationship differently.

Almost infinite variations can be found in the way parents carry out their child-rearing functions. Some variations are related to the cultural setting in which the family live and other variations are related to economic resources that are available. Even within a fairly homogenous cultural group, differences can be found in parenting styles. Studies (Hoffman, 1975) have indicated that parents differ from one another in terms of two major dimensions; permissiveness - restrictiveness and warmth - hostility. Maccoby (1980) is of the opinion that the second dimension is not controversial, in the sense that few would doubt that children benefit from parental affection, although they may disagree about precisely what the benefits are and how they come about. The first dimension is much more controversial. For example, Baldwin (in Maccoby, 1980) concluded that parental restrictiveness is harmful to

children, while Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1973) sees positive outcomes for firm parental control.

The socio-political changes since 1994 have affected all spheres of life in South Africa including education. These changes may have impacted negatively on the quality of education and on the way parents rear their children. This has placed great challenges to both parents and teachers who strive to maintain discipline both at home and school and maintain a culture of learning in spite of poor and lack of discipline due to "democratic rights" that their children and students are demanding on a daily basis. However, a number of studies have suggested that parents differ from one another in terms of permissiveness - restructiveness and warmth - hostility.

Beyer (1995) pointed out that the academic performance of America's youth has recently become a cause of concern. The truth of the matter is that it is a world-wide concern, hence this study. It is generally recognized that scholastic achievement is dependent on scholastic aptitude. The present study investigates to what extent parenting style affects scholastic achievement after the effect of scholastic aptitude has been controlled for statistically.

CHAPTER 2

ADOLESCENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to understand what adolescence is, one has to look at this period of life within a broader developmental framework. Thom (1991) traces the term adolescence to its Latin verb *adolescere*, which means "to grow up" or "to grow to adulthood".

Adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and early adulthood, entered into at approximately 11 to 13 years of age and ending at 18 to 21 years of age. Since the age boundaries of adolescence are variable, it is better to demarcate the various developmental stages of adolescence on the basis of specific developmental characteristics rather than on age. Adolescence begins with the onset of rapid physical change, dramatic gains in height and weight, change in body contour, and development of secondary sex characteristics (e.g. enlargement of breasts, development of pubic hair and facial hair, deepening of the voice). It is a time for the development of the mind and body for an independent productive life in the adult world. The development of identity and abstract, logical thought also characterize adolescence. During this period more and more time is spent outside the family (Thom, 1991; Santrock, 1983).

According to Thom (1991) the end of adolescence is not indicated by clear characteristics as is the beginning. From a social point of view, adolescence ends when the individual begins to fulfil adult roles, such as following a career, marrying and starting a family. From a legal point of view, adolescence ends when the individual becomes eligible to vote. From a psychological point of view, adolescence ends when the individual is

reasonably certain of his/her identity and has developed his/her own value system.

By looking at the development of the person from birth to death, one can begin to understand how each period of development has its own challenges and frustrations and how it relates to other periods of development.

(a)   Infants and toddlers learn how to control behaviour in relation to the world of family and play.

(b)   The school-aged child adjusts to a new environment (the school) and to a new adult (the teacher) and socializes with peers.

(c)   The adolescent comes to terms with the self with regard to the world of work, career and social development.

(d)   The young adult continues to clarify vocational directions and lifestyle and begins intimate social or family relations.

(e)   The middle-aged adult consolidates self-development by generating activities that support and strengthen career and social relations.

(f)   And finally, the ageing adult who faces the prospect that life will be over and that death is inevitable.

Figure 2.1 depicts the world of the adolescent as a "no man's land" between childhood and adulthood: Childhood, as it precedes adolescence, and adulthood as it is affected by how effectively the person has mastered the developmental tasks of adolescence.

ADOLESCENCE

CHILDHOOD   ADULTHOOD
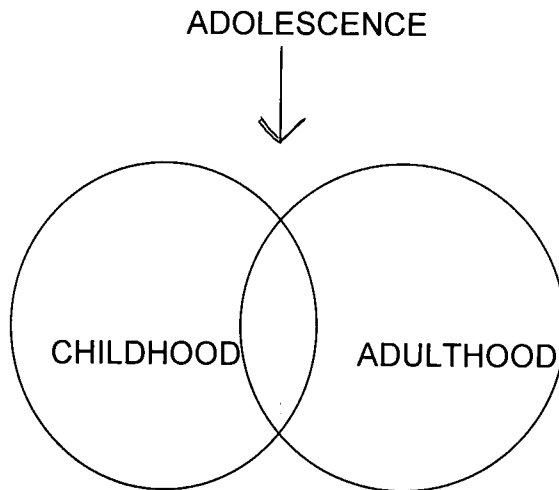
Figure 2.1   Adolescence is the bridge between childhood and adulthood. (Source : Schiamberg & Smith, 1982).

2.2   LIFE TASKS AND DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Adler was the one who came up with the notion of life tasks while Havighurst, the social scientist and educator, introduced the concept of developmental tasks (Manaster, 1977; 1989).

Manaster (1989) viewed developmental tasks as those demands placed on persons at one particular stage to foster satisfaction and accomplishment at the next stage, while life tasks are those areas of life that demand attention and effective coping at all times of life.

Adler divided all the problems of life into three parts, viz. the problems of behaviour toward others (society); problems of occupation (work) and problems of love (sex), and suggested that for each person to cope, he/she must attempt to find solutions to them. To extend Adler's work, the human community sets three tasks for every individual. They are work, which means contributing to the welfare of others; friendship, which embraces social relationships with comrades and relatives; and love, which is the most

intimate union between individuals. Although from early adolescence to old age, these tasks differ in importance for different individuals, all of these individuals' problems and all of their efforts are inevitably related to these life tasks.

Havighurst (1972) defined a developmental task as a task that arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, the successful achievement of which leads to happiness and success with later tasks, and the failed achievement of which leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later years.

Havighurst's developmental tasks provide the specific tasks that must be learned at each age stage in order to cope successfully with the life tasks. He presents developmental tasks appropriate at each stage, describes the nature of the task, and its biological, psychological and cultural basis. His developmental tasks may be seen, then, as the specific tasks at each age stage which aim at solving the life tasks.

2.3   DEMANDS OF ADOLESCENCE

It can be said that two broad demands are made on the individual during the period of adolescence. Firstly, the adolescent must make the transition from childhood to adulthood. According to Manaster (1989) it is not just a transition, but he/she must emerge at the end of adolescence prepared to be an adult. Secondly, and probably more pressing on a day-to-day basis for the individual adolescent, he/she must "make it", or succeed as an adolescent. In addition to these demands, an adolescent is confronted with two major developmental tasks, i.e. to establish independence from adults, and parents in particular; and to form an identity, to create an integrated self that harmoniously combines different elements of his or her personality.

2.4 ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE FROM PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS

Craig (1996) views becoming an adult as a gradual transformation which requires the ability to be simultaneously independent and interdependent. Parents want their children to feel affection for them while becoming independent adults. At the same time, they are also aware of the difficulties and pitfalls that confront the developing adolescent. Parents lack confidence that their adolescents can succeed without parental help. On the other hand, increased social skills learned through peer interaction and physical maturation cause the adolescent to want fewer controls and inhibitions from parents, but in so doing they often run into conflicts with parents and the adult world (Manaster, 1989; Thornburg, 1975). In terms of the prevailing view, adolescents use conflict and rebelliousness as a tool to achieve autonomy and independence from their parents. Conflict may result from the feeling that one is psychologically ready to assert oneself as a grown-up while one's parents deprive one from an attempt to enter or to contribute to adult society (Craig, 1996; Kaluger & Kaluger 1974). At best there is give-and-take, at worst rebellion and rejection, in the process of gaining and giving independence, depending on the parenting style (to be discussed in the next chapter) the parents practise.

2.5 IDENTITY FORMATION

According to Erikson (1968), the primary task that confronts the adolescent is the establishment of ego identity. Identity may be defined as the establishment and re-establishment of sameness with one's previous experiences and a conscious attempt to make the future a part of one's personal life span (Thornburg, 1975). Adolescents must contend with three major factors in identity striving. First, they must accommodate sexual maturation and its accompanying urges. Second, they must contend with physical growth. Third, they must actively seek some understanding of their

eventual functions as adults in society. Identify formation meets its crisis in adolescence.

Adolescence is a long period and therefore the above developmental tasks are accomplished over a long period of years. Adolescents are always working on them in one way or another. By their senior year in high school, they realise that adulthood is rapidly approaching. This provides them with the necessary motivation to prepare themselves for their new status. Should they be able to bridge the gap between what they were as children and what they are to become as adults, they would have mastered their tasks as adolescents.

In order to understand the life task of adolescents one has to look at other areas of developments, particularly cognitive development, as it has a relationship with scholastic achievement.

2.6   COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

According to cognitive theorists, cognition is defined as the ability to think and reason logically and to understand abstract principles (Craig, 1996). In essence, they are referring to the activity of knowing or the mental processes by which knowledge is acquired, elaborated, stored, retrieved, and used to solve problems (Craig, 1996; Fong & Resnick, 1980; Shaffer, 1993).

Cognitive development refers to the changes that occur in children's mental skills and abilities over time. The changes in thinking skills that occur during adolescence result in a more flexible and abstract view of the world and allow an adolescent to understand logical sequences of action and to anticipate consequences of behaviour. These skills lead to an ability to project action from the past and the present into the future. The school-aged child was somehow limited to the reality of either the present or the past. Adolescents, however, are able to anticipate the future due to their well-developed skills (Schiamberg & Smith, 1982). Piaget (in Craig, 1996) viewed human beings

as truly cognitive beings who are rational, active, alert and competent because they do not merely receive information, but they also process it. Each person is a thinker and creator of his or her reality. He or she does not simply respond to stimuli, but also attaches structure and meaning to stimuli.

2.7   PIAGET'S STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The process of cognition changes in various ways from the beginning of life to old age, and it develops, according to Piaget, in four discrete, quantitatively different stages (Fong & Resnick, 1980).

Since this research is concerned with adolescence, the three preceding stages will be mentioned in brief and the emphasis will be on the fourth stage, known as the period of formal operations.

2.7.1   Sensory motor stage : infancy

According to Piaget the first period of cognitive development ranges from birth to about two years, when infants use actions schemes - i.e. looking and grasping, etc. to learn about their world.

2.7.2   Preoperational stage : pre-school years

Piaget's second period of cognitive development ranges from about ages 2 to 7 years. It begins when children are able to use symbols such as language. Their thinking tends to be overly concrete, irreversible and egocentric, and classification is difficult for them.

2.7.3 Concrete operational stage : early school years

Piaget's third period of cognitive development ranges from ages 7 to 11 years. Children begin to think logically. At this stage they are able to classify things and deal with a hierarchy of classifications.

2.7.4 The formal operational stage : adolescence

The fourth and final period posited by Piaget's cognitive theory begins from about 12 years of age. This period is characterized by the ability to handle abstract concepts.

2.8 PIAGET'S THEORY OF FORMAL OPERATIONS

Piaget maintains that children begin to acquire formal operations at approximately 11 to 12 years of age, and complete the process by the age of 15. In his theory this process is universal and invariant. He sees adolescence as a time when youngsters acquire important new cognitive skills, which marks the transition to a qualitatively different period of development. During adolescence youngsters become much more mature in their reasoning and problem-solving capabilities. Piaget saw the new thinking skills of adolescents as the products of new kinds of mental transformation, which he labelled formal operations. Formal operations are principles of prepositional logic that adolescents discover for themselves and then use to solve problems and expand their understanding of the world. These operations allow adolescents to think more abstractly, more speculatively and systematically than before.

At this stage, the individual begins to feel confident in his or her intellectual abilities, because according to Craig (1996) there is an expansion in the capacity and style of thought that broadens the adolescents' awareness, imagination, judgement and insight. Like other aspects of human

development, in cognitive development there appears to be a maturational sequence common to all people.

Prior to this stage, adolescents have used the method of trial and error to reach their learning goals, but now they spend some of their time thinking of a solution. They are no longer merely concerned with what is at hand, but also what is potentially possible, which means that they think beyond the present (Craig, 1996; Kaluger & Kaluger, 1974; Kennedy, 1975).

2.9 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL OPERATIONS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Researchers have pointed out that tests of formal operations can be used to predict school success. Since performance on formal operational tasks is related to measures of intelligence and since measures of intelligence predict performance at school, it is not surprising that tests of formal operations can also be used to predict school success (Sroufe, Cooper & DeHart, 1992).

Since this study examines the effect of parenting styles on academic achievement, it also has to look at the role played by the school on the development of the child.

2.10 THE SCHOOL AS SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL MILIEU

Landman, Bodenstein, Van der Merwe, Smith and Windel (1990) refer to the school as an institution set up by the community where, through work and effort, the children are afforded the opportunity to constitute their world and eventually to control it.

The transfer from parental home to school is a great experience for children as they find themselves in a much greater exploration space. They have to orientate themselves in the world of the school. They come into contact with a bigger society which is strange to them. They have had no experience of a

daily independent association with unfamiliar people and the school has to prepare them for this and the future ahead of them.

Teachers may greatly influence whether their pupils' school experience will foster development or will simply increase difficulties and frustrations. The teachers' general attitudes and actions may appear to the child to be similar to those of their parents; hence they are often referred to as the child's second parents.

Since teachers are seen as substitutes of parents during the day, the role they play has an effect on pupils' lives. According to Schiamberg and Smith (1982), young children who were exposed to warmer, more encouraging teachers were found to be more involved in classroom activities. They further maintained that most children seem to do best under well-trained teachers who are authoritative but neither authoritarian nor permissive. The former, unlike the latter, encourages individual initiative, self-esteem and social responsibility. Unlike the permissive teacher, the authoritative teacher provides guidance, ultimate direction and set standards and goals.

2.11 ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL

Although many adolescents seem to value school mostly for the opportunities it provides for extra-curricular activities and for getting together with friends, the fact of the matter is that the school is actually the tool that society employs to civilize its young children in becoming productive, contributing members of society and to complete the process of socialization which had already begun at home (Kaluger & Kaluger, 1974; Manaster, 1977).

Adolescents often refer to school as their working place as this is where they spend six to seven hours daily, five days a week. By the senior year in high school, they begin to realise that adulthood is rapidly approaching and this provides them with the necessary motivation to prepare themselves for their new status and to preview future career choices. Fong and Resnick (1980)

argue that this does not apply to every adolescent as high achievers perceive the school as helping them to develop their talents, whereas the average and low achievers saw the school as preparing them for a vocation.

As schooling is perceived by the majority of adolescents as a way of broadening oneself and as an avenue for securing a better job and a better life, good academic achievement is generally a desired goal for both parents and their children.

Kennedy (1975) defined academic achievement in terms of achievement test scores and teacher-given grades and percentages in academic subjects. School success depends upon the ability of the student to perform the operations measured by the above-mentioned techniques. Achievement involves striving for excellence, in other words individuals perceive performance or competence in terms of standards of excellence.

Obviously, not everybody achieves this standard of excellence due to many variables. Craig (1996) pointed out that some adolescents may never develop true formal operational thinking because of either limited abilities or cultural limitations. The next section will look at certain aspects of the make-up of the adolescent that also influence scholastic achievement. Although other aspects of psycho-social development have been covered, it is necessary to highlight a few aspects that have a bearing on academic achievement, namely family life, maturation, self-concept, ability, experience, motivation, and gender.

CHAPTER 3

FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ADOLESCENTS

A hundred years ago people generally assumed that intellectual potential was fixed at birth : A child was destined by nature to be bright or dull regardless of the effects of his environment and training. Thinking on this point shifted during the early years of the twentieth century when Freud popularized the idea that early childhood experience was critical to an individual's later development (Hurlock, 1980; Prince, 1986).

All societies want children to develop the knowledge and abilities they will require as adults. White and White (1980) pointed out that an important way of achieving these aims is through education.   Whereas cognitive development is the natural development of the child's thought, education is a deliberate process aimed at fostering social changes in the child.

3.1   FAMILY LIFE

Although according to Bruwer (1973) academic achievement is determined or influenced by many factors such as age, sex, parental economic and educational level, the emphasis of this study is on the academic achievement of adolescents and some factors affecting it such as maturation, self concept, experience, motivation, ability, and particularly child-rearing practises which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Studies indicate that parents are the first educators of the child, and they still maintain an educative function throughout the child's upbringing (Edwards & Redfern, 1988; Havighurst & Levine, 1980; Hurlock, 1980). Hurlock (1980) further maintains that the child's home environment is very important for his or her development as it sets the stage for later school achievement. She goes

on to say that children learn language at home and spoken language gives them the foundation for better reading and writing.

Although parents of all classes realize the importance of education and schooling for children, Havighurst and Levine (1980) pointed out that different families create environments that influence children's intellectual growth and educational motivation in different ways. They stated that when one parent ignores his or her child's questions but another parent makes a point of reading to his or her child every day, two different environments are created. The first parent has created an environmental that operates against learning while the second one has promoted learning.

The kind of home in which the child grows up affects the behaviour, values and thinking of the child at school. This means that pupils' homes are a foundation of their school life.

The first instruction the child receives and his/her first acts of learning normally begin in the educational situation at home. In the family the child is offered sufficient instruction in a natural, spontaneous and informal manner to come to know this immediate life world. It is from the very family that the child first learns what is important and what is less important; what is good and what is bad (Engelbrecht, Yssel, Griessel & Verster, 1989; Kruger, Bisschoff, Venter & Verster, 1986; Landman et al., 1990). Home education simply implies escorting the child on the path to adulthood. Parental concern such as warning, advising and reprimanding indicates awareness of the value of giving responsibility to the not-yet-adult.

In the family the child generally feels safe and comfortable; he or she is for the most part treated lovingly and he or she is often the focus of attention. He or she is very familiar with family life and trusts his or her family members who provide love, affection and security. From this harmonious environment the child is sent to school.

Even though adolescents are more independent than primary school children and are less likely to look to their parents for direct help with schoolwork, more subtle home influences still affect how well they do in school. Children need constant encouragement from their parents and it is the basic responsibility of parents to encourage their children to learn, to offer support for the children's progress at school and also to supply them with the necessary facilities.

Papalia, Olds and Feldman (1989) are also of the opinion that encouragement is fundamental in education as it creates attitudes towards achievement. They report that students with best grades tend to be those whose parents were most involved in their lives. In addition to monitoring homework and grades, the most helpful parents appear to know what their children are doing outside the school. They talk with their children frequently and are available to them.

Parenting styles, an aspect of family life, is discussed in the next chapter.

3.2   MATURATION

Regardless of social class, sex or ethnic background, maturation plays an important role in the achievement of an individual. Physical maturation and mental readiness for achievement which in turn affect the degree of success in school are highly correlated (Kennedy, 1975). Researchers have shown that children who enter school being ready, matured in terms of physical structure, bone structure and body weight, with presumed underlying neurological development, have operated and functioned well during their pre-school period.

3.3   SELF-CONCEPT

Studies have shown that children who believe in themselves, in their worth as individuals, and in their ability to do what is expected of them, reach required levels of achievement more easily than those who don't believe in themselves, who expect to fail and spend their energies in resentment, anxiety, and hostility (Clarke-Steward & Koch, 1983; Kennedy, 1975). In brief, academic success is affected by a positive self-concept which is itself affected by attitude and socio-economic level (Kennedy, 1975).

Once a child is convinced he or she cannot learn in school, the task of educators become almost impossible. A negative self-concept is just as crippling and just as hard to overcome as any physical handicap. In fact, a negative self-image may be even more crippling, because it is often hidden from the view of the naive or untrained observer. Most children with low self-esteem act out by kicking the world around them, the very world which has told them that they are not valued, are not good, and are not going to be given a chance. Such attitudes often continues to have a crippling effect in adult life.

3.4   EXPERIENCE

Here experience refers to the exposure and opportunities mentioned above that are required to exercise certain attributes. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds have difficulty in their pre-school years because of their limited experience in the kinds of concepts and information involved in the subject matter, which in turn makes school and education a bewildering experience. The more the child's experience overlaps with the learning environment, the more easily achievement is enhanced.

3.5   MOTIVATION

One of the most popular explanations of student's failure is that they lack motivation. If the intrinsic motivation level of children is high, they appear to enjoy whatever they do in spite of not being given any external reward for the performance.

3.6   ABILITY

It is perfectly clear that students cannot achieve at any level without the necessary ability, but the necessary ability does not need to be as high as it is generally believed to be. It is possible for one student with a high I.Q. to fail his or her studies while another one with a low I.Q. gains good grades, provided that he or she possesses other attributes which enable effective study and provided that he or she has the opportunity to exercise those attributes. This is confirmed by Miller (1970) when he pointed out that students of low measured abilities sometimes complete their university studies while some of the most promising fall by the wayside.

One aspect of self that necessarily has a strong personal influence on achievement is intelligence. Manaster (1977, 1989) argued that, regardless of the influence of either heredity or environment, by the time an individual reaches puberty and adolescence, his or her measured intelligence is very stable and will change by little more than the amount expected from measurement error over the course of the remainder of his or her adolescent and adult years. One would expect that adolescents of very high or low measured ability would have correspondingly high or low achievement levels in high school in the great majority of cases. Studies suggest that for the high school level, ability and grades are correlated at about 0,60 (Kennedy, 1975). Miller (1970) pointed out that deprived home conditions have a more serious effect on school achievement as intellectual ability decreases. That is, when an adolescent has above-average intelligence, he/she is more likely to overcome a deprived environment. This argument leads one to believe that

the ability-achievement relationship would hold true to extremes of intellectual ability regardless of social class.

3.7   GENDER

Differences in I.Q. between the sexes have attracted research interest. Baumrind (in Yussen & Santrock, 1982) has distinguished between instrumental competence and incompetence. Boys, she says, are trained to become instrumentally competent, while girls learn how to become instrumentally incompetent. By instrumental competence, Baumrind means behaviour that is socially responsible and purposeful.   Instrumental incompetence is generally aimless behaviour. She supports her argument by pointing out that few women obtain jobs in science, and of those who do so, few achieve high positions. This is confirmed by Yussen and Santrock (1982) when they concluded that females have lower expectancies for success across many different tasks than males do, lower levels of aspiration, more anxiety about failure, and less willingness to risk failure.

On the contrary, Craig (1996) and Fontana (1995) indicated that girls tended to be more verbal and articulate than boys, and boys more proficient on mechanical reasoning and spatial relations than girls, with verbal differences becoming more marked in late childhood and early adolescence, and tending to decrease again in the late teens. However, this might not be the case for everyone as this indication is primarily a culturally induced one. For instance, cross cultural studies showed that in Western societies girls spend more time within the home than boys do, and are more concerned about paternal approval.

Any sex differences in the intellectual performance are largely and perhaps wholly accounted for by environmental factors. Negative experiences in the classroom and at home, combined with widely accepted stereotypes of males

and females, may do more to produce sex differences than actual brain physiology.

Jubber's (1990) study on the relationship between gender and school performance revealed no statistically significant relationship (p = 0,5797) between these variables. However, the data did show a very slight tendency for girls to be better performers, while the extremes of poor performance were dominated by boys. This might be linked, as it has sometimes been argued, to the greater problem young boys have in adjusting to school and the greater prevalence of language problems among them in comparison to girls. Unlike American findings in respect of gender differences in school performance, little is known about the relationship between gender and school performance among South African black students.

CHAPTER 4

CHILD REARING PRACTISES

The family is generally considered to be an important institution that has a strong impact on the development of children and adolescents (Baumrind, 1971, 1991a; Maccoby, 1980; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Mboya, 1993b; Mboya, 1995). Parents from different socio-economic backgrounds and cultural settings may hold different values in reference to aspects of parent-child relationships.

According to Horrocks (1954) homes display considerable variation from one to the other. Some homes appear to be particularly good places in which to rear children, while others range all the way from fairly good, good or indifferent to those effects. Vos (1991) pointed out that in practice a successful parenting style is one where a responsible parent leads, helps, supports and accompanies the child to self-actualization and ultimate adulthood.

Baumrind (1971) set out to discover relationships between different styles of child-rearing and the social competence of children. Her research combined lengthy interviews, standardized testing and home studies of 103 pre-school children from 95 families. She identified three categories of child-rearing styles and described typical behaviour patterns of the children raised according to each style (Baumrind, 1971, 1989, 1991a, 1991b).

These three family types differ in the values, behaviours and standards that children are expected to adopt; in the ways these values, behaviours, and standards are transmitted; and in parental expectations about the behaviour of children (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987). It should be noted that no parent fits a given category all the time - nobody is always permissive or always authoritarian.

These categories are simply dominant patterns that reliably distinguish parents from one another (Maccoby, 1980). These three types of parents can be described as authoritative, authoritarian and permissive.

4.1 AUTHORITATIVE PARENTING

Authoritative parenting, a style of child rearing first identified in Baumrind's (1967, 1978) seminal studies of the socialization of competence, is multifaceted. Maccoby and Martin (1983), Steinberg, Elmen and Mounts (1989) and Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch and Darling (1992) describe authoritative parenting as combining both high levels of parental responsiveness and high levels of parental demandingness.

Parents are older and more experienced than their children, and in many respects (but by no means all) know better than their children. In the authoritative style of parenting the greater parental power which underlies their authority is balanced by a greater parental responsibility. The parent has a responsibility to use this authority wisely, humanely and in the best interest of the child. The democratically-minded parent sees it as his/her task to guide the child to make the right decision. The parent sets broad limits, gives advice, encourages the child in what she/he believes to be the right direction, but as far as possible give the child freedom of choice (Vos, 1991).

Parents are effectively responsive in the sense of being loving, supportive, committed and cognitively responsive in the sense of providing a stimulating and challenging environment. Martini (1995) further explained that parental responsiveness correlates strongly with cognitive and language development and with school performance, probably because extensive contact affords children many models of adult functioning to copy, opportunities to practise new skills with "scaffolding" coaches nearby, and greater reinforcement for self-initiated efforts.

4.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHORITATIVE PARENTS

Baumrind (1989, 1991a, 1991b) pointed out that authoritative parents are demanding in that they guide their children's activities firmly and consistently, and tend to explain and model one set of abstract moral principles and require their children to internalize the rules and then voluntarily to follow them. In other words, they monitor and impart clear standards of their children's conduct, and expect their children to respect their norms.

McIntyre and Dusek (1995) viewed the high level of parental demandingness as demanding of age-appropriate behaviour. Such demands for behaving responsibly may teach children that events (or aspects of events) are to some degree controllable.

A major benefit of this type of parenting style is open communication that exists between parents and children (Baumrind, 1989; Dornbusch et al, 1987; Maccoby, 1980; Vos, 1991). As Maccoby described this pattern of child-rearing, children have a role in family decision making, with parents and children talking about matters both trivial and important. The children are allowed and encouraged to voice either their opinions or disagreements with their parents and the parents accept the obligation of explaining their actions and decisions whenever possible. Baumrind's authoritative parents also had a similar open communication style. The children from these open communication families tend to be competent, independent, cheerful, self-controlled and socially responsible (Baumrind, 1967, 1971).

Corporal punishment is the exception rather than the rule and is used discriminately so that children realise the seriousness of their misdemeanour (Vos, 1991). Parents explain to their children why specific behaviour is expected and why certain rules are made, believing that the child has the right to know what is expected of him/her and why. Punishment is always closely related to the wrong, and is always consistent.

In this kind of parenting the rights of both parents and children are recognised (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby, 1980; Vos, 1991).

Parents do not regard themselves as infallible or divinely inspired but also do not base decisions primarily on the child's desires (Baumrind, 1989; Maccoby, 1980).

Parents have a clear setting of rules and standards which is, however, compatible to changing circumstances if necessary. They furthermore have an expectation of mature behaviour from the child according to the clear set of rules and standards (Vos, 1991). Vos further stated that parents encourage their children's independence and individuality and exhibit personal warmth. The latter will be discussed more extensively at a later stage.

Maccoby (1992) pointed out that an authoritative parent assumes a deep and lasting obligation to behave in such a manner so as to promote the best interests of the child, even when this means setting aside certain self-interests. At the same time, the parent insists that the child shall progressively assume more responsibility for responding to the needs of other family members and promoting their interests as well as his or her own within the limits of his or her capabilities.

4.1.2 WARMTH IN PARENTING

Although almost all parents feel affection for their children, they vary in how openly or frequently their affection is expressed and in the degree to which affection is mixed with (or even outweighed by) feelings of rejection or hostility.

The emotional atmosphere is far more important for good upbringing than the physical care of children and the child-rearing policy and methods of the parents. Warmth in parenting refers to the emotional distance between parent and child. Plug, Meyer, Louw and Gouws (1986, p. 394) defined psychological warmth as "a spontaneous willingness to understand, accept and help another person without being possessive".

In warm upbringing there is a good I/You relationship and good communication between parent and child. The parents accept the children as they are, with all their failings and shortcomings. This provides safety and security for the children. They trust the parents and know that they can depend on these persons when they experience hardship or problems. The trust is mutual (the parents also take the child into their confidence). The parents are emotionally involved in the children's daily activities. They are fond of their children and concerned for their well-being. They provide much care and attention and is available for the children. The "warm" parents are involved with their children (time and effort), and stimulate their children in numerous ways, for example on an intellectual level such as helping with homework.

If "warm" parents punish the child, they do it in an appropriate manner and on reasonable grounds. Rewards and communication play an important role in the child's upbringing. The "warm" parents prefer to communicate love when their children have done something well, and disappointment when they have done something wrong.

Child-rearing practices cannot be separated from family life. Warmth is generally encountered in harmonious families where tension and conflict are limited or handled constructively. These are usually open families where the family members have good contact with the "outside world". The family forms a unit with strong we-feelings, goodwill and co-operation between members of the family. The parent fulfils his task of guidance and nurturing as well as possible, and an optimal family life is realized (Angenent, 1985).

Maccoby (1980) and Martini (1995) characterized a warm parent as one who is:

(i)   deeply committed to the child's welfare;

(ii)   responsive to the child's needs;

(iii)   willing to spend time (within limits) in joint enterprises of the child's choosing;

(iv)   ready to show enthusiasm about the child's accomplishments and acts of altruism; and

(v)   sensitive to the child's emotional states.

4.1.3 EFFECTS OF VARIATIONS IN PARENTAL WARMTH

Although parents, on the average, are quite warm and loving toward their children, they sometimes feel less loving. It has been noted that children's development is related to how affectionate and loving their parents are. Children who enjoy a warm upbringing, generally tend to display certain characteristics. Children who achieve success as they grow older come from homes where parental attitudes toward them were favourable and where a wholesome relationship existed between them and their parents. Such a relationship will produce happy, friendly children who are appealing to others, relatively free from anxiety, and who are constructive, interdependent members of the group (Hurlock, 1978).

Because children are accepted by their parents as individuals (also accepted emotionally), and because their needs are understood and acknowledged, they are assured that they are somebody with their own personalities. They thus have positive self-awareness and a positive self-concept. It is important that children learn to define themselves as independent individuals, and accept themselves with all their failures and shortcomings in order to have self-esteem.

Generally, children who are warmly brought up, develop into well-socialized, self-actualizing, emotionally stable extroverts with a high self-concept and a good-natured disposition which make them socially attractive. Their socially oriented personality, extroversion and self-acceptance predispose them to accept and have empathy with other people, and this significantly contributes to their pro-social development.

4.2　AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING

The authoritarian parenting style has until recent years been by far the most common (Hoffman, 1975; Vos, 1991). In many African homes authoritarian style is associated with the patriarchal family in which the father is both the dominant figure and disciplinarian. It is a strong unit in which all decisions are brought to the father and made by him. All activities are father-controlled and instant obedience is the chief virtue. Children are expected to obey their parents and elders without question and are always told what to do (Cherian, 1994; Vos, 1991).

Hoffman (1975) described the authoritarian parenting style as a dominant parenting style. According to him it is more common in the closed patriarchal type of family which is so strongly influenced by external factors. The closeness of the family means that the children literally grow up in social isolation. Nevertheless, they do learn to conform to what is expected from them and to adapt to the rules of society.

4.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHORITARIAN PARENTS

Parents who fit this classification are likely to attempt to shape, control, and evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of their children in accordance with an absolute set of standards.

Since parents are in the position of authority over their children, they emphasize obedience, respect for authority, work, tradition, and maintenance of order. Verbal give-and-take between parents and children is discouraged in the belief that children should accept their parents' word for what is right.

Parents are in charge, make all the decisions and issue all the orders. Children of authoritarian parents have little experience in choice and decision making. They have been educated not to think for themselves and to accept the decisions of higher authority. As a result, there is no questioning of the parents' authority and nothing is said or done to make the parent doubt the wisdom of his/her own judgement.

Baumrind's study described the authoritarian pattern as being high in demandedness on the part of the parents and low in parental responsiveness to the child (Baumrind, 1989; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Maccoby, 1980; Vos, 1991).

Cherian (1994) pointed out that corporal punishment continues to be a controversial topic both in education and academic psychology in the sense that the debate centres on the morality of its use and its effectiveness. Apart from being humiliating, severe punishment has many undesirable effects. Punishment is associated with aversive procedures. If a parent becomes too dependent on aversive techniques in the management of behaviour, then the child might begin to dislike his or her home. It may produce anger and revenge, or cultivate a rebellious antagonism towards the person meting out the punishment.

Vos (1991) saw the authoritarian style of education as only doing children a disservice, because it makes them neurotic, stunts their intelligence, and provides them with no experience in the most important skill of adjustment during adult life.

Vos further stated that not all authoritarian parenting is completely destructive or harmful. It can be successful if there is acceptance, caring and mutual respect in association with authority.

4.3 PERMISSIVE PARENTING

According to Dornbusch et al. (1987) the concept permissiveness may refer to parents who are essentially neglectful and uncaring, or it may refer to parenting that is caring and concerned but ideologically genuinely permissive. The former parenting style involves the abdication of parental responsibility. In the latter the parents are so afraid of imposing their own wishes on the child that they let the child do what he or she likes as far as possible.

Permissive parenting has to do with the laissez-faire attitude of the parent, where minimal control is exercised. Hoffman (1975) described this type of parenting as "Yoose" type of family, also called the boarding-house family, because the members of the family live away from home, all coming and going as they please. The family members all live their own lives and prefer to find their social relationships outside the family - with relatives, neighbours and friends.

4.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF PERMISSIVE PARENTS

According to Baumrind (1989), Dornbusch et al. (1987), Maccoby (1980) and Vos (1991), parents who fit this classification are more likely to:

*   attempt to behave in a nonpunitive, tolerating, accepting and positive way toward the child's impulses, desires, drives, actions and immature behaviour;

*   make few maturity demands and allow considerable self-regulation by the child;

*   attempt to change the child's behaviour through reasoning but do not use their authority when in conflict and tend to give in to the child's demands;

*   exercise little or no discipline and control in the belief that the children will learn from the consequences of their acts. Therefore the children are provided with no structure in terms of which to assess the rightness or wrongness of their behaviour. As a result they have to learn by bitter experience from the negative reactions of other people what kind of behaviour is acceptable and what is unacceptable in social situations;

*   take a passive role and grant a considerable degree of freedom for decisions by the child.

In her studies, Baumrind (1971, 1973) found the children of permissive parents to experience problems with regard to their socialization. However, if permissiveness remains within reasonable bounds, the consequences for the child's personality development may be positive.

CHAPTER 5

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The question arose as to whether parenting styles have any influence on the academic achievement of black high school students. The problem of poor academic achievement of students continues to generate great interest in both personal and political spheres. This concern affects all professionals in education as well as parents and parent representatives who have to aim at optimum learner achievement.

Not many South African studies have concentrated on the influence of parenting styles on black adolescent's academic achievement. This study intends to investigate whether adolescents' perception of their parents' behaviour towards their academic performance contributes anything additionally in the explanation of variance in high school performance to that explained by scholastic intelligence and gender.

The results of this study potentially may also assist the educator (teacher), educational authorities and planners to be sensitive in dealing with day to day poor performance of the school-going child who has been subjected to negative parenting styles.

Finally, this study's findings will also be useful to parents since it can make parents aware of the factors relating to the home, family and parent-child interaction which could make a difference to their children's academic success or failure. Knowledge of these aspects can help parents to improve their parenting styles and create stimulating educational environments.

CHAPTER 6

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In the previous three chapters literature on child-rearing practices and academic achievement have been reviewed and an hypothesis was developed concerning the relationship between parents' parenting style and their childrens' academic achievement with specific reference to adolescents. This chapter is concerned mainly with research methods and procedures to examine the latter hypothesis. Through this study an attempt is made to determine the relationship between adolescents' perception of their parents' behaviour and its influence on their academic achievement.

6.1 SAMPLE

Two hundred and forty Standard 9 Tswana-speaking pupils from four high schools in Thaba Nchu were randomly selected for participation in the study. A list of all standard nine pupils from each school was obtained. The aim was to select sixty pupils per school. Every 5th, 6th or 7th pupil (depending on the total number of students in that particular school) was selected. Two of these schools are boarding schools. Those children who were staying in the hostels were excluded. The area served by these high schools represents mostly poor and economically deprived working-class communities.

Hundred and five of the participants were boys and 135 were girls. Their ages range from 15 to 29 years with a mean age of 21 years.

6.2 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

6.2.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire was made up of two parts. Part 1, the biographical questionnaire, was compiled by the present researcher and was intended to determine the socio-economic and demographic variables of the pupils.

The second part, consisted of the 22 items of Mboya's (1993b) Perceived Parental Behaviour Inventory (PPBI). This inventory aimed at measuring three dimensions of students' perception of their parents' behaviour namely, (i) support, interest and encouragement, (ii) expectations and (iii) participation.

A perceived authoritative style may be associated with agree responses to items like "My parents care if I get good or bad marks in my schoolwork", "My parents encourage me to try my own ideas and be responsible for my actions", and "At home my parents praise me for trying even if I do not succeed".

All statements were worded positively using a 5-point scale in Likert format, anchored by "I agree very much" to "I disagree very much".

6.2.2 General Scholastic Aptitude test (GSAT)

According to Claassen, De Beer, Hugo and Meyer (1991) the GSAT resulted from a comprehensive revision of the then existing group intelligence tests published by the Institute for Psychological and Edumetric Research.

The General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT) is intended to measure scholastic intelligence. Its six sub-tests, with items presented in the form of words, numbers and figures, have Kuder-Richardson internal consistencies (reliability) ranging between 0,89 and 0,97. The test-retest reliability and parallel forms reliability coefficients are very similar and are described as quite satisfactory (Claassen et al., 1991). As evidence of the validity of this test intercorrelations of the subtests of between 0,68 to 0,83 on the GSAT as a power test and between 0,64 to 0,76 on the GSAT as a speed test, are cited. Verbal and nonverbal scores correlated from 0,73 to 0,83 with each other. Construct validity was also high with correlations from 0,73 to 0,86 for the power test with other intelligence tests and 0,69 to 0,81 for the speed test with other tests (Claassen et al., 1991). The GSAT consists of two parts: one yielding the verbal GSAT score (GSAT-V) and the other the nonverbal GSAT score (GSAT-N).

6.2.3 Academic achievement

The four participating schools were engaged in both half yearly and final examinations. All the participants wrote six subjects consisting of three languages and three others from their subject grouping, namely science, commerce and social sciences.

The marks that were obtained by the pupils during both the June 1996 and November 1996 examinations were aggregated and used as a criterion to represent academic achievement.

6.3   ADMINISTRATION

6.3.1 Questionnaires

In order to get permission and make the necessary arrangements, the researcher sent letters (of Appendix A) to principals of the four schools whereby she introduced herself and stated the aim of the study.

During the dates agreed upon, administration of the questionnaires was conducted by the researcher with the assistance of a guidance teacher. The instructions were read aloud by the researcher who assured the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. After the questionnaires had been completed, they were immediately collected by the researcher.

6.3.2 The GSAT

The test was administered by a psychology honours student from the UOFS. This student was an intern-psychometrist and was performing her internship under supervision of a registered psychologist.

6.4   GENDER

Gender was dummy coded by assigning a value of 0 to boys and a value of 1 to girls.

6.5   STATISTICAL ANALYSES

This section outlines the statistical method used to explore and analyse the data collected. The analyses of the data were done by means of SPSS Computer Software and the statistical significance level considered in the study was the 5% level.

The internal consistency of the Perceived Parental Behaviour Inventory was investigated by means of Cronbach's coefficient alpha. A regression analysis was performed as follows: Firstly, each pupils' GSAT Verbal and GSAT Non-verbal scores were deviated form their respective means to yield the variables DGSAT-V and DGSAT-N, respectively. Next, an hierarchical regression was performed in which the GSAT verbal and GSAT nonverbal deviation scores, gender, and the interactions between gender and the two GSAT deviation scores were specified to enter the multiple regression equation in this order with examination performance as the criterion. The squared multiple correlation obtained at this stage indicated the percentage of variance explained by the predictors already in the equation.

Finally, the score on the parental style questionnaire was entered into the regression equation to determine the percentage of criterion variance if any that it explained additionally to the other predictors.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports and discusses the statistical results obtained.

7.1   DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Preliminary data analysis was performed. The value of symbols, distribution of academic performance, sex and the means were provided.

Table 1 indicates value of symbols as set by the Department of Education and Culture. These symbols were used as an indication of the academic performance of the participants.

TABLE 1   VALUE OF SYMBOLS

SYMBOLS	PERCENTAGE
A	80 - 100 (Distinction)
B	70 - 79
C	60 - 69
D	50 - 59
E	40 - 49
F	39 and below

Next, the distribution of academic performance was analysed and the results are shown in table 2. This table indicates that about 45% of the students obtained an E symbol which is actually a marginal pass. From this table, it can be concluded that about 70% of the students obtained 49% and below, and out of that 70%, about 59% were girls. This is an indication that the academic performance of the majority of these students is low. None of the participants had obtained a distinction.

TABLE 2   DISTRIBUTION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

SYMBOLS	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL
	F	%	F	%	%
A	0	0.0	0	0	0
B	1	0.4	0	0	0.4
C	5	2.1	4	1.7	3.8
D	30	12.5	32	13.3	25.8
E	47	19.6	60	25	44.6
F	22	9.2	39	16.2	25.4
					n = 240

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the subtests of the scholastic intelligence test and of the measure of academic performance. The average academic performance was about 45%. It is also indicated that on average the students got about 8 points in each aptitude test.

TABLE 3   MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PREDICTORS
AND CRITERION

VARIABLE	MEAN	STD. DEV.
PPBI	37.2583	12.1338
GSAT 2	8.1967	3.8696
GSAT 6	9.1092	3.9175
GSAT 4	10.0756	4.2894
GSAT 1	8.3151	4.1468
GSAT 5	8.4913	2.3321
GSAT 3	8.6485	3.2620
GSAT-N	9.0625	3.4890
GSAF-V	8.3319	2.6775
PERF	45.4125	7.9560

A value of 0,92 was obtained for coefficient alpha for the 22 items of the
Perceived Parental Behaviour Inventory(PPBI).

7.2   REGRESSION ANALYSIS

This section presents the analyses undertaken to investigate the prediction of
academic performance in terms of scholastic intelligence and parenting
styles. The aim was to examine whether parenting style explains any variance
in academic performance additionally to scholastic intelligence and gender.

Firstly, the correlations between the academic performance and other
independent variables were investigated. Table 4 shows the correlation
matrix of these variables. There was a very low correlation of -0,099 between
parenting style and academic performance. Because low scores on the PPBI
are indicative of parental involvement, the negative sign actually represents a
(very poor) direct relationship between parental involvement and academic
performance.

TABLE 4   CORRELATIONS MATRIX OF VARIABLES

	PARENTING STYLE	ACADEMIC PERFOR-MANCE	GSAT-N	GSAT-V
Parenting Style	1.0000			
Academic Performance	-0.0988	1.0000		
GSAT-N	-0.1242	0.2671*	1.0000	
GSAT-V	-0.1409	0.3936*	0.5692*	1.0000

*   Significant at the 1% level.

In this study , academic achievement was predicted in terms of scholastic aptitude, gender and the interaction between scholastic aptitude and gender. Finally, it was checked whether parental style could add anything at all to the predictions (of academic performance) yielded by the preceding variables.

Table 5 shows the factors included in the regression model, coefficient estimates, standard errors, t-statistic, p-values (used to assess the associations between academic performance and the respective independent variables). Gender was not statistically significantly associated with academic performance.

Table 5 indicates that there was no statistically significantly association between parental styles and academic performance (p-value = 0.6102) after adjusting for scholastic intelligence test scores and gender. In other words, after the effect of scholastic aptitude has been taken into account, perceived parental style does not appear to contribute significantly to the prediction of academic performance at high school.

TABLE 5   REGRESSION EQUATION FOR PREDICTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF SCHOLASTIC INTELLIGENCE, GENDER AND PARENTAL STYLE

VARIABLE	B	SEB	BETA	T	SIGT
DGSAT-N	0.378123	0.109453	0.381942	3.455	0.0007
DGSAT-V	0.33416	0.083194	-0.043844	-0.402	0.6883
GENDER (GEN)	1.212070	0.962654	0.75391	1.259	0.2093
GEN x DGSAT-N	0.52989	0.145475	-0.039213	-0.364	0.7160
GEN x DGSAT-V	0.161635	0.112182	0.154192	1.441	0.1510
PARENTAL STYLE	0.020351	0.039867	0.31047	0.510	0.6102
CONSTANT	46.835283	1.634724		28.650	0.0000

The R-squared values that were obtained from the regression analyses in each model are given in Table 6. The amount of variation in academic performance explained by scholastic aptitude test scores is about 16%. Gender explains an additional 0,7%. Interaction terms between gender and both GSAT-V and GSAT-N jointly explain an additional variation of 0,9%. Finally, parental style additionally explains only about 0,1% of the variation in academic performance.

TABLE 6   PROPORTIONS OF VARIANCE EXPLAINED

VARIABLE	R^2	R^2 INCREASE
GSAT-V	0.155	-
GSAT-N	0.158	0.003
Gender	0.165	0.007
Gen * GSAT-V	0.174	0.009
Gen * GSAT-N	0.174	0.000
Parental Style	0.175	0.001

The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between verbal scholastic intelligence and academic performance. There is no association between parental style and academic performance after adjustment for scholastic aptitude and gender.

There is also an indication that academic performance of the participants was generally low with an average of about 45%.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Nothing in the life of a man or a woman is probably as important to themselves or to society as their parenthood. Parents, of course, are eager to have their children grow up, as these children are their parents' link to the future, and they are the people who are going to shape whatever brave new worlds are awaiting. Parents have an overriding responsibility to their children and to the world they are going to live in. The process of growing up is a complex one, as it has its own intrinsic energy. Children grow physically, intellectually and socially, despite anything that parents do. And indeed, these growth processes impose certain requirements and limitations on parents - on what child-rearing methods they can use and how effective these methods will be with children at different developmental levels. Nevertheless, parents' child-rearing practices do have an impact on their children's growth processes.

The literature survey on family influences on academic achievement has found a number of parenting characteristics, particularly authoritative parenting styles (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Dornbusch et al, 1987; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and parental involvement (Paulson, 1994), to be related positively to children's and adolescents' school achievement.

The far reaching effects of children's relationships with their families are apparent in many areas of their life. Their work in school and their attitude towards it are greatly influenced by these relationships. A wholesome family relationship leads to motivation to achieve while unwholesome relationships cause emotional tension, which may have a detrimental effect on the child's ability to learn.

Paulson (1994) pointed out that in addition to parenting style, parental involvement in children's achievement has been found to be related to achievement outcomes.

Although Dornbusch et al. (1987) confirmed a positive relationship between parenting style and academic achievement, the present study found a weak correlation of only about 0,099 between an involved parenting style and academic performance among adolescents. Unlike the studies of Baumrind, Dornbusch and others that had focused on pre-school children and children in elementary schools, the present study has extended its focus to adolescents (high school pupils). The needs of students change as they get older, but parental support, interest and encouragement, expectations and participation still may be the very important components of adolescents' achievement and more information is needed on which parenting styles are important at higher grade levels.

This study rejected the hypothesis that there is a relationship between parenting style and academic performance as it found that parenting style did not contribute anything additionally to the prediction of academic performance at high school. However, the findings of this study indicated that there is a positive relationship between verbal scholastic intelligence (GSAT-V) and academic performance.

Although this study rejected the hypothesis, the possibility that parenting styles (whether positive or negative) may have an impact on academic outcomes cannot be overlooked. In today's modern society the positive parenting style (depending on the adolescent's perception of their parents' behaviour) appears to be the most responsible and accepted. The parents have to keep pace with the rapidly changing society and have to adapt their parenting styles accordingly. Vos (1991) is of the opinion that if this does not happen, the outcome will be a poorly adjusted adult who might be rejected by society.

Although most of the studies seem to regard authoritative parenting style as the most suitable, positive and responsible, the truth of the matter is that not all authoritarian parenting is completely destructive or harmful. It can be successful if there is acceptance, caring and mutual respect in association with authority.

A possible explanation for the negative results obtained in this study is that peer pressure overtakes the influence of the parents on academic achievement as children reach adolescence (Sleek, 1998). An alternative explanation is that the questionnaire used was not sensitive to the kind of parenting style that correlated with academic achievement. It should also be remembered that this questionnaire assesses perceived parental style and not parental style itself.

Although all the participants in this study wrote both June and December examinations at their respective schools, both these exams were internal in the sense that examinations are usually run by the class teachers, who also set and mark the exam papers. The results of internal examinations are not always as reliable as external examinations as the teachers' assessment of the pupils may be too subjective. Uniform standards do not exist between schools; therefore there is no yardstick by which the work of different schools can be compared. On the other hand, if the examination results were reliable enough to show a correlation with scholastic aptitude, it should have been reliable enough to reveal a correlation with parental style.

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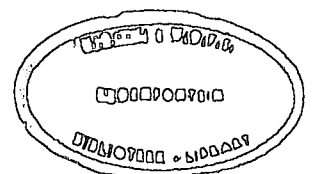
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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS

August 20, 1996

Reference: Dr I. Herbst
Telephone: (051) 401-2208

The Principal
Albert Moroka High School

Dear Sir

We humbly request your permission for Ms E.M. Mekgwe to conduct a research project at your school.

She is presently a registered M.Soc.Sc. student in the Psychology Department of the UOFS.

The subject of her research being *The influence of parenting styles on the academic performance of black high school students*.

We would like to involve 60 Std 10 pupils in the project. Should you be interested in the project, she will gladly come and discuss the details of the project with you at a time convenient to you.

Yours sincerely

_____
DR I. HERBST

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE TO BE COMPLETED BY
STD 9 PUPILS

INSTRUCTIONS

For office use only

* Please answer all questions as honestly and truthfully as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

* To retain confidentiality of the questionnaire, please remain anonymous i.e. do not write your name or the name of your school on this questionnaire.

* Please do not miss out any question/statement. Encircle only one answer to each question.

1	**-**	**3**

PART I: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1   Indicate your sex:

Male	1
Female	2

4

2   How old are you?
     Write your age in years in the squares.

5   -   6

3   Are you the: (Mark only one)

only	1
eldest	2
youngest	3
middle	4
or any other child in the family	5

7

4   Is (are your parents presently

     single   1
     married   2
     separated   3
     divorced   4   8

5   With whom do you live during school time?

     both parents   1
     single parent   2
     relatives   3
     friends   4
     on your own   5   9

6   How old is your father?

     35 yrs & below   1
     36 - 45   2
     46 - 55   3
     56 - 66   4
     66 & older   5
     I don't know   6   10

7   How old is your mother?

     35 yrs & below   1
     36 - 45   2
     46 - 55   3
     56 - 66   4
     66 & older   5
     I don't know   6   11

8   Highest Std passed by father:

     i   Std 5 and lower   1
     ii   Std 6 - Std 8   2
     iii   Std 9 - Std 10   3
     iv   Tertiary education   4
     v   I don't know   5   12

9   Highest Std passed by mother

    i   Std 5 and lower
    ii   Std 6 - Std 8
    iii   Std 9 - Std 10
    iv   Tertiary education
    v   I don't know

| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |
| 5 | 13 |

10   What type of job does your father do?

....

    (Make an {x} if you don't know)

14 - 15

11   What type of job does your mother do?

....

    (Make an {x} if you don't know)

16 - 17

12   How would you describe the neigbour-
        hood in which your home is situated?
        (During school time)

    Formal settlement
    Informal settlement

| 1 |
| 2 | 18 |

13   How many rooms are in your house?
        (mark only one)

01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10

19 - 20

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  PART II:  PERCEIVED PARENTAL    │
│           BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Mark only one

1   Most of the time my parents look at my schoolwork.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

21

2   My parents encourage me to stay at home and study.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

22

3   My parents believe that my education is very important.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

23

4   When I am doing my homework my parents do not allow other things to interfere with it.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

24

5   My parents are concerned about what I
     do.

     I agree very much | 1 |
     I agree | 2 |
     Not sure | 3 |
     I disagree | 4 |
     I disagree very much | 5 | 25

6   When I am at home my parents want to
     know about my schoolwork.

     I agree very much | 1 |
     I agree | 2 |
     Not sure | 3 |
     I disagree | 4 |
     I disagree very much | 5 | 26

7   My parents encourage me to complete
     my schoolwork.

     I agree very much | 1 |
     I agree | 2 |
     Not sure | 3 |
     I disagree | 4 |
     I disagree very much | 5 | 27

8   My parents discuss my progress in
     school with each other.

     I agree very much | 1 |
     I agree | 2 |
     Not sure | 3 |
     I disagree | 4 |
     I disagree very much | 5 | 28

9   My parents care if I get good or bad
     marks in my schoolwork.

     I agree very much | 1 |
     I agree | 2 |
     Not sure | 3 |
     I disagree | 4 |
     I disagree very much | 5 | 29

10 My parents are satisfied with my school
    reports.

    I agree very much | 1 |
    I agree | 2 |
    Not sure | 3 |
    I disagree | 4 |
    I disagree very much | 5 | 30

11 My parents make me feel confident in
    my schoolwork.

    I agree very much | 1 |
    I agree | 2 |
    Not sure | 3 |
    I disagree | 4 |
    I disagree very much | 5 | 31

12 My parents want me to work hard at
    school.

    I agree very much | 1 |
    I agree | 2 |
    Not sure | 3 |
    I disagree | 4 |
    I disagree very much | 5 | 32

13 My parents think that I can do well at
    school.

    I agree very much | 1 |
    I agree | 2 |
    Not sure | 3 |
    I disagree | 4 |
    I disagree very much | 5 | 33

14. My parents would like me to have good
    marks at school.

    I agree very much | 1 |
    I agree | 2 |
    Not sure | 3 |
    I disagree | 4 |
    I disagree very much | 5 | 34

15 My parents think that it is important for
me to go to school.

I agree very much | 1 |
I agree | 2 |
Not sure | 3 |
I disagree | 4 |
I disagree very much | 5 | **35**

16 When I leave school my parents will
want me to continue with my studies.

I agree very much | 1 |
I agree | 2 |
Not sure | 3 |
I disagree | 4 |
I disagree very much | 5 | **36**

17 My parents support me in the things I
do.

I agree very much | 1 |
I agree | 2 |
Not sure | 3 |
I disagree | 4 |
I disagree very much | 5 | **37**

18 My parents are concerned about my
future.

I agree very much | 1 |
I agree | 2 |
Not sure | 3 |
I disagree | 4 |
I disagree very much | 5 | **38**

19 My parents encourage me to use my
ideas.

I agree very much | 1 |
I agree | 2 |
Not sure | 3 |
I disagree | 4 |
I disagree very much | 5 | **39**

20   At home my parents praise me for trying, even if I do not succeed.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

40

21   My parents care about me.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

41

22   My parents encourage me to try my own ideas and be responsible for my actions.

I agree very much	1
I agree	2
Not sure	3
I disagree	4
I disagree very much	5

42

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

SUMMARY

Numerous studies have suggested that a number of domestic and familial variables are associated with school performance. High school students who described their parents as authoritative (in the sense that their parents are deeply committed to their welfare, are responsive to their needs including educational ones, are ready to show enthusiasm about their academic successes and accomplishments, and are willing to spend time (within limits) in joint enterprises of the child's needs) perform academically better and become more engaged in school than their counterparts from non-authoritative homes.

The present study intended to investigate whether adolescents' perception of their parents' behaviour towards their academic performance contributes anything additionally in the explanation of variance of high school performance to that explained by scholastic intelligence and gender. The General Scholastic Aptitude Test (GSAT) scores and class examination results of the pupils were obtained and these data with the information obtained from Mboya's Perceived Parental Behaviour Inventory (PPBI) questionnaire constituted the data base of this study. The sample included 240 adolescents (105 boys and 135 girls) from four black high schools in Thaba Nchu.

In the hierarchical (multiple) regression, the predictor variables were entered in the equation in the following order: Non-verbal General Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores (GSAT-N), Verbal General Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores (GSAT-V), Gender (Gen), Gen x GSAT-N, Gen x GSAT-V and parental style. There was a very low correlation of 0,099 between an involved parenting style and academic performance. The amount of variation in academic performance explained by scholastic aptitude test scores is about 16%. Gender explains an additional 0,7%. Interaction terms between gender and both GSAT-V and GSAT-N jointly explain an additional variation of 0,9% and

parental style explains only about 0,1% of the variation in academic performance.

The finding that parental style did not explain any appreciable variance in academic performance additionally to that explained by scholastic aptitude possibly may be due to the emergence of the role of peer pressure in adolescence.

OPSOMMING

Talryke studies het aangedui dat 'n aantal huislike en gesins-veranderlikes verband hou met skoolprestasie. Hoërskoolskoliere wat hul ouers as gesaghebbend beskryf (in die sin dat hul ouers sterk toegewy is aan hul welvaart, simpatiek staan teenoor hul behoeftes, insluitend opvoedkundige behoeftes, geredelik entoesiasties raak oor hul akademiese sukses, en gewillig is om [binne perke] tyd af te staan aan gesamentlike ondernemings wat met die kind se behoeftes in verband staan), presteer akademies beter en raak meer betrokke by die skool as hul eweknieë uit minder outoritêre huise.

Die doel van die huidige studie was om ondersoek in te stel na die vraag of, afgesien van die invloed van skolastiese intelligensie en geslag, adolessente se persepsie van hul ouers se gedrag en houding teenoor hul akademiese prestasie iets bykomend bydra tot variasie wat betref hoërskoolprestasie. Die uitslae van die Algemene Skolastiese Aanlegtoets sowel as van skooleksamens is verkry, en hierdie data, saam met die inligting wat deur middel van Mboya se PPBI-vraelys (waargenome-ouerstyl-vraelys) verkry is, het die databasis van hierdie studie gevorm. Die steekproef het 240 adolessente (105 seuns en 135 meisies) uit vier swart hoërskole in Thaba Nchu ingesluit.

In die hiërargiese (meervoudige) regressie, is die voorspellingsveranderlikes in die volgende volgorde in die vergelyking ingevoer: Nie-verbale Algemene Skolastiese Aanlegtoetstelling (ASAT-N-V). Verbale Algemene Skolastiese Aanlegtoetstelling (ASAT-V), Geslag (G), G x ASAT-N-V, G x ASAT-V en ouerstyl.

Daar was 'n baie lae korrelasie van 0,099 tussen ouerstyl en akademiese prestasie. Die persentasie variasie in akademiese prestasie wat na skolastiese aanlegtoetspuntetelling teruggevoer kan word, is ongeveer 16%. 'n Addisionele 0,7% hou verband met geslagverskille. Die wisselwerking tussen geslag en ASAT-V en ASAT-N-V gesamentlik is verantwoordelik vir 'n verdere 0,9% variasie en slegs 0,1% van die verskille in akademiese prestasie kan teruggevoer word na ouerstyl.

Die bevinding dat ouerstyl nie 'n verdere verduideliking vir verskille in akademiese prestasie, bykomend tot die invloed van skolastiese aanleg, bied nie, kan moontlik toegeskryf word aan die groter wordende rol van portuurgroepdruk tydens adolessensie.