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Adolescents' Psychological Well-Being and Perceived Parental Involvement: Implications for Parental Involvement in Middle Schools

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Abstract

Adolescence is a critical period of development. Previous research suggests parent involvement in school directly impacts student success. However, different types of parental involvement and the efforts of middle school personnel to educate parents about these effective practices have received scant attention in the literature. The level and type of parental involvement, as perceived by adolescents, is correlated with adolescent psychological well-being. Perceived parental involvement positively or negatively affects adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially self-esteem, self-evaluation, and peer relationships. Parenting style greatly influences children's development as well. The authoritative/democratic parenting style influences middle school children, leading to positive developmental outcomes, positive adolescent self-evaluations, higher levels of adolescent self-esteem and adjustment, while also positively influencing levels of intrinsic motivation for learning. This article reviews research related to (a) adolescents' perceptions of parental involvement, (b) the parenting style related to higher levels of psychological well-being, and (c) the impact of assorted parenting styles on adolescent psychological well-being. It concludes with implications for middle school systems, middle school counselors, families, parents, and community members.

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period of development. Adolescents are continuously changing mentally, physically, and psychologically (Santrock, 2004). They are learning more about the 'real world' and trying to strive for both independence from parents and inclusion in social groups (Santrock & Yussen, 1984). Adolescents want to be perceived as adults with capable decision-making skills, but also want to remain members of a large peer group. Additionally, these young people desire support and structure from their parents, though they project an indifferent demeanor and challenge the supportive measures of

their parents. Whether parents are involved in and support their adolescents' school life can directly affect their personal and social development as well as their academic success (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Jeynes, 2007).

Previous research has shown parent involvement in school directly impacts student success (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Jeynes, 2007; Sirvani, 2007; Whitmore & Norton-Meier, 2008). However, types of involvement and efforts to educate parents about the most effective types of involvement during the middle school years have received scant attention in the literature. This article focuses on adolescents and their psychological well-being. Specifically, two research questions were used as guides for the study. First, do adolescents who have a higher level of perceived parental involvement have a higher level of psychological well-being? Second, which parenting style is related to higher levels of psychological well-being? The purpose of the article is to discuss possible applications of the answers to these questions to increase parental involvement in middle schools by developing home and school relationships. Answers to these questions are also used to frame productive middle school parent programming and education efforts.

The Adolescent-Parent Relationship and Psychological Well-Being

The relationship between perceived parental involvement and adolescent psychological well-being is based on two realities. The first reality, the home environment, is the initial social arena in which adolescents have remained more consistently under the influence and supervision of their parents. Later, these individuals begin to seek an alternate reality, separating from parents and seeking inclusion with peers during adolescence (Bossard & Boll, 1966; Santrock & Yussen, 1984). Adolescents begin building their own self-concept through observing the reactions directed toward them by vital individuals in their lives (Gibson & Jefferson, 2006). Personal experiences that evolve from the parent-adolescent relationship are the initial source that sets in motion the cycle of how adolescents will self-evaluate and interact with others. In other words, the type of relationship they experience with their parents is thought to foreshadow their attitudes toward themselves and the quality of relationships they will have with their peers (Gecas, 1971; Wilkinson, 2004).

Psychological well-being refers to how individuals self-evaluate and their ability to fulfill certain aspects of their lives, such as relationships, support, and work (Amato, 1994; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Knoester, 2003; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Wilkinson, 2004). For adolescents, psychological distress can result in the possession of many negative personal thoughts and emotions. Diong and associates (2005) suggested that psychological distress is associated with anger and stress. Furthermore, psychological distress was also positively correlated with physical illnesses (such as the cold and flu) and other problematic symptoms. People experiencing distress ignored or avoided stressful situations and also avoided possible sources of support when these stressful situations occurred (Diong et al.; Diong & Bishop, 1999; Houston & Vavak, 1991). Therefore, psychological distress not only affects an individual's psychological health, but also his or her physical health and behavior patterns.

Young adults with low psychological well-being may encounter lower levels of happiness, satisfaction, and self-esteem, while experiencing high levels of distress (Amato, 1994). Similarly, adolescents who possess low psychological well-being or psychological distress may also exhibit characteristics of low levels of happiness and self-efficacy, along with high levels of depression (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). Furthermore, these adolescents may view social problems as being more serious than other youth (Wilkinson, 2004). In summary, adolescents with low psychological well-being tend to form less than desirable self-evaluations, which significantly affect their happiness and satisfaction.

Although extensive research has been conducted related to the effects of parental involvement and adolescents' well-being, further exploration is necessary to discover the correlation between adolescents' psychological well-being and perceived parental involvement and parenting styles. This article will determine how perceived parental involvement and parenting styles affect adolescent psychological well-being. Furthermore, the article will emphasize how schools can use this knowledge to benefit adolescent students by using the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Model for School Counseling Programs (2005).

Attachment and the Adolescent-Parent Relationship

Adolescence is viewed as the most traumatic or challenging period of time within the parent-child relationship (Santrock & Yussen, 1984). Adolescence is the stage of life when people experience continuous

change—mentally, physically, and psychologically (Santrock, 2004). Parent involvement remains critical to the adolescent-parent relationship, because the level of involvement signals to youth their importance to the parents (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Furthermore, when parents give forth effort to increase their knowledge of adolescents' behaviors, interests, and activities, it emphasizes parental caring and supports the adolescent-parent relationship (Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Actions, however, are not the only aspect of the adolescent-parent relationship that demonstrate parental affection. The emotional context in which parents act also greatly influences parents' impact on their adolescents (Steinberg, 2001). Adolescents' level of confidence in relationships and level of security are greatly affected by any instability present in parent-child relationships. This insecurity can be due to parent emotional unavailability or other behaviors expressed through parenting styles or negative life events.

On the other hand, parents are not the only important influence during adolescence. Adolescents expand their social realm by intensifying the significance of the relationships they possess with their peers (Santrock & Yussen, 1984). Sullivan (1953), who was noted as being the "most influential theorist to discuss the importance of adolescent friendships," argued that emotional well-being is built upon stable attachments, contented friendships, acceptance among peers, affection, and intimate closeness (as cited in Santrock, 2004, p. 414). Indeed, as individuals develop, there is an increase in the significance of peer approval in relation to self-worth (Harter, 1999). However, throughout adolescence the relationship between parental approval and self-worth remains constant.

Research Conducted on Effects of Parental Involvement

Throughout the last 40 years, many studies have been conducted to explore parental involvement and the effect it has on psychological well-being (Amato, 1994; Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Buri, Kirchner, & Walsh, 1987; Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Farrell & Barnes, 1993; Gecas, 1971; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Gibson & Jefferson, 2006; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Steinberg, 2001; Wilkinson, 2004). Gecas' study of 620 16- to 17-year-olds suggested that parental support was, in fact, affiliated with adolescent self-evaluation, with an increase of perceived parental support improving the adolescents' self-evaluations; the study also noted the possible need for exploration into other self-evaluation reference points such as self-satisfaction and happiness. Further, Amato and Ochiltree's study investigated structural family resources (i.e., family income, parent's occupational status, parent's education, and other resources embedded in the family environment) and family process resources (i.e., parent's aspirations and expectations; the amount of help, interest, and attention given; and other ongoing and dynamic resources) to determine their assistance with reading ability, self-esteem, everyday skills, and social competence of participants ranging from children to adolescents. This study of 195 primary school-aged participants and 207 secondary school-aged participants noted that reading ability, everyday skills, and social competence were all related to both structural and process resources in staggering degrees, while self-esteem was more closely related to process resources. In addition, family structure resources were found to be more significant to the secondary school-aged participants. Specific to adolescents, self-esteem was found to have positive correlation with adolescents talking with their fathers, perceiving their fathers to be interested in their lives, and frequency of family activities. On the other hand, negative correlation in regard to occurrences of yelling and screaming among family members was also noted.

In addition, Gecas and Schwalbe's (1986) study explored the correlation between parents' perceptions of their parental involvement and adolescents' perceptions of their parents' involvement. Effects of these viewpoints in regard to adolescents' identification of self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem were also investigated. This follow-up study noted no similarities between how the parents viewed their involvement and how the adolescents viewed their parents' involvement. Likewise, the adolescents' identifications of self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem were more closely associated with their thoughts pertaining to their parents' involvement rather than to their parents' assumptions of the degree of their parental involvement. Gecas and Schwalbe recognized that the data obtained during this study allowed for speculation and not causality due to the survey format used.

A later study conducted by Buri and colleagues (1987) explored how parental nurturance may affect young adults' levels of self-esteem far greater than parental self-esteem, marital satisfaction between parents, and family size. This study included 81 participants attending a northern Midwest college, specifically described as being white, Catholic, middle class,

ethnically diverse, and children of married parents, with an average age of 19.2 years. Findings suggested the relationship between parental nurturance and the adolescents' self-esteem was significantly related. The results from this study may not be externalized to other populations due to the specific characteristics of the group studied.

In 1993, Farrell and Barnes' study explored the effects of cohesion and adaptability in relation to the optimal functioning of both whole families and independent family members. A sample of 699 families located in a large northeastern city was analyzed, with the most powerful results from this study being a consistent linear relationship among the variables of cohesion and functionality of the family members. More specifically, a cohesive family possesses greater individual member functionality, appropriate parent-child communication, significant marital agreement, and applicable adolescent children behavioral outcomes. However, the study represented only the population of a large northeastern metropolitan area, leaving out all other populations.

That year, Roberts and Bengtson (1993) also conducted a longitudinal study to determine how quality of the parent-child relationship affects the young adults psychologically. Completing the study were 293 parent-child pairs, with the child being a 14-year-old adolescent. The results noted that parent-child affection did affect the levels of filial self-esteem during periods of late adolescence and early adulthood. On the other hand, the researchers also reported that individuals in possession of adult roles such as jobs, marriage partners and children, were less affected by their personal parent-child relationship in regard to their levels of self-esteem and psychological well-being. The study supported that affection established early in the parent-child relationship remained a psychological benefit even after the children reached adulthood. Roberts and Bengtson, however, were unable to incorporate "direct measures of identity salience" in their study; thus, only indefinite inferences can be made (p. 274).

In his longitudinal study, Amato (1994) argued that the degree of attachment possessed independently in both father-child and mother-child relationships were positively related to the grown children's psychological well-being. This national study of 471 young adult participants discovered that closeness to mothers and fathers correlated positively with offspring happiness and life satisfaction while also significantly contributing to increased offspring self-esteem and lower levels of offspring distress. Interestingly, in cases of divorce, the correlation between closeness to father and life satisfaction was significantly weaker. Amato ended his study noting that a lack of studies related to the father-child relationship reveals a need for more research in the area of lifelong paternal contributions to the well-being of children.

Dekovic and Meeus's (1997) study explored adolescent-parent and adolescent-peer relationships. This study of 508 families, composed of adolescents aged 12 to 18, found the level of self-concept possessed by adolescents, along with the degree of parental support they received, was related to the ability of the adolescent to obtain healthy peer relationships. Further, adolescents who were found to have a more fulfilling relationship with parents had healthier relationships with peers. Parents who built fulfilling relationships with their adolescents were more knowledgeable about their adolescents' activities and veered away from the use of love withdrawal as a method of discipline. Yet, Dekovic and Meeus' use of the cross-sectional methodology resulted in an inability to determine causality.

Steinberg (2001) conducted a literature review to answer two questions: *Is adolescence a time of parent-child conflict,* and *How do variations in the parent-child relationship affect the developing adolescent?* The findings noted that day-to-day conflicts over what psychologists considered normal issues were not relevant to adolescents but did cause worry for parents. Furthermore, parents' actions were found to be important even when children reached adolescence, with the authoritative parenting style being related to the developmental outcomes of self-reliance, achievement motivation, pro-social behavior, self-control, cheerfulness, and social confidence. Steinberg noted that this information is not beneficial unless parents are educated about the findings.

Flouri and Buchanan (2003) determined that parental involvement notably affected adolescents' levels of psychological well-being based on their study of 2,722 British adolescents whose ages ranged from 14 to 18. More specifically, they noted the psychological well-being concept of happiness was positively related to self-efficacy and age while being negatively related to feelings of depression. However, limitations were noted in the areas of single-item proxies, clustering, and the cross-sectional nature of the study (Flouri & Buchanan). Dmitrieva and associates' (2004) study of 201 United States adolescents, 502 Chinese

adolescents, 497 Korean adolescents, and 495 Czech Republic adolescents showed that perceived parental involvement and parent-adolescent conflict influenced negative life events. Further, poorer quality of parent-adolescent relationships was found to influence levels of adolescent depressed mood. Consequently, the family-related life events and adolescent problem behaviors were influenced by lower levels of perceived parental involvement, higher levels of parent-adolescent conflict, and perceived parental restrictions of adolescent misconduct. In conclusion, the coherent theme that parents' behaviors do affect how adolescents evaluate themselves and how they deal with life events was clearly illustrated. The cross-sectional nature of the study, dependence on adolescent self-reports, and use of restricted samples, were weaknesses of the study (Dmitrieva et al.).

Wilkinson (2004) analyzed and conducted three studies consisting of high school-aged participants to identify the correlation between adolescents' psychological health and parental attachment, peer attachment, and self-esteem. The first study included 1,998 Norwegian participants, with the second study including 358 Australian participants, and the third study including 345 Australian participants. The result indicated self-esteem was a determinate of how influential peer and parental attachment were in regards to adolescent psychological health. The adolescents' level of self-esteem determined how impactful peer and parental relationships were in determining their psychological health. Furthermore, the results showed that parent-adolescent relationships influenced the peer relationships that formed later. However, these studies were also cross-sectional in nature, and Wilkinson noted that longitudinal data would be a useful addition to the research.

Doyle and Markiewicz's (2005) study of 175 adolescents suggested that parenting does affect adolescents' ability to adjust. Greater levels of psychological control were found to increase adolescents' ability to internalize problems. Further, parental warmth was found to foretell an increase in adolescents' self-esteem while also foreshadowing a decrease in adolescents' ability to externalize problems. Doyle and Markiewicz noted that the sample size and number of measured items used were limited, and the use of self-reporting also weakened the study.

Gibson and Jefferson (2006) investigated whether the self-concept of adolescents was affected by their relationships with family, peers, mentors, and community groups. This study of 78 middle school-aged participants and their parents involved in a GEAR UP program (Gaining Early Awareness of Readiness for Undergraduate programs) supported the hypothesis that as perceived parental involvement increases so does the adolescents' self-concept. In addition, the increased use of growth-fostering relationships also improved adolescents' self-concept. Gibson and Jefferson noted that sample size, self-reporting, number of measured items, and the specificity of the population were possible limitations.

To review, previous research supports the hypothesis that high levels of perceived parental involvement do positively affect adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially in the areas of self-esteem and self-evaluation (Amato, 1994; Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Buri et al., 1987; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gecas, 1971; Gibson & Jefferson, 2006; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993). Furthermore, studies by Dekovic and Meeus (1997) and Wilkinson (2004) support the argument a relationship exists between perceived parental involvement, levels of self-esteem at adolescence, and peer relationships. Dmitrieva and associates (2004) proposed that even the frequency of negative familial life events affected perceived parental involvement and parent-adolescent conflict. Finally, Gecas and Schwalbe (1986) found that although parents and adolescents do not agree in their views of parental involvement, adolescents use their perceptions of parental involvement to judge personal levels of self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles are defined as the behaviors, attitudes, and values parents use to determine how they interact with their children (Mussen, 1983). The three parenting styles presented here are the authoritarian/autocratic, the authoritative/democratic, and the permissive/laissez-faire. These parenting styles were first introduced during a study conducted by Baumrind (1966). Each style demonstrates a particular relationship that occurs between the parents and children at a specific point in time. Relationships initiated during childhood affect how adolescents view their parents' availability and form relationships with others. (Baumrind 2005; Chan & Chan, 2005; Santrock, 1990). The diversity of parenting styles is further explained by the characteristics of each style. Therefore, this section of the article includes extensive definitions of each parenting style and the research related to each to analyze which parenting style may be the most effective for positively impacting adolescent psychological well-being.

Authoritarian/Autocratic Parenting Style
Chan and Chan (2005), Mussen (1983), Santrock (1990, 2004) described the authoritarian parenting style as confining and punishing. Parents demand adolescents comply with their rules while also demanding adolescents meet their standards for work and effort in whatever they do. Parents using this parenting style enforce strict boundaries and restraints on the adolescent and submit to only a minute amount of compromise. Parents who use this technique are the "bosses" and intend to have complete control over their adolescents' behaviors and activities (Mussen; Santrock 1990, 2004). This parent-adolescent relationship is described as one of giving and taking of commands with little other communication present. Adolescent behaviors associated with this parenting style are "anxiety and social comparison, failure to initiate activity, and ineffective social interaction" (Santrock, 1990, p. 214). Further, these children are notably "unhappy, fearful, anxious about comparing themselves with others, fail to initiate activity, and have weak communication skills" (Santrock, 2004, p. 277).

Authoritative/Democratic Parenting Style
Steinberg (2001) described the authoritative/democratic parenting style in this way: "Parents are warm and involved, but firm and consistent in establishing and enforcing guidelines, limits, and developmentally appropriate expectations" (p. 7). Santrock (1990, 2004) further described authoritative/democratic parenting as a style that advocates independence while still maintaining boundaries and structure over actions. This support of independence or autonomy allows for "a sense of self-efficacy, agency, and individuation that enable persons to be self-determining" (Baumrind, 2005, p. 67). Parents using this technique allow compromise and are noted as being the most flexible in their regulation of behaviors. Regulation of behaviors is completed through explanation rather than enforcing stern punishment (Baumrind; Chan & Chan, 2005). The authoritative/democratic parent also uses communication styles that create a nurturing environment for their adolescents, while parents exhibit pleasure and support to them (Mussen, 1983; Santrock). These parents openly show deep caring for their children and determination to know their whereabouts and the events occurring in their lives. This parenting style also supports parental participation and emphasizes setting behavioral boundaries while allowing psychological exploration (Baumrind; Mussen; Santrock). Children of parents who exercise the authoritative/democratic parenting style are notably "often cheerful, self-controlled, self-reliant, achievement-oriented, maintain friendly relations with peers, cooperate with adults, and cope well with stress" (Santrock, 2004, p. 277).

Permissive/Laissez-Faire Parenting Style
Parents who use the permissive parenting style establish miniscule amounts of control and are unavailable to aid their children throughout decision-making processes (Chan & Chan, 2005). Santrock (1990) divided the permissive/laissez-faire parenting style into two separate techniques; the permissive indifferent parenting style and the permissive indulgent parenting style. Parents who use the permissive indifferent parenting style do not participate in their adolescents' lives (Santrock, 2004). They are thought to be heedless and impassive. Adolescent behaviors associated with this parenting style are non-existence of self-control, social incompetence, inability to handle independence, possession of low self-esteem, immaturity, and possible alienation from the family (Mussen, 1983; Santrock, 2004). The behavioral patterns of truancy and delinquency are also evident (Santrock, 2004).

On the other hand, parents who use the permissive indulgent parenting style require nothing; they completely accept and submit to their adolescents (Santrock, 1990, 2004). Santrock explained that parents who use this parenting style are very involved in their adolescents' lives but also encourage freedom in behaviors and actions. Consequently, adolescents develop behaviors such as a disregard for rules and the expectation that anything and everything is allowed (Santrock, 1990). Further, this parenting style leads to a lack of respect and an inability to control personal behaviors; these children or adolescents may be "domineering, egocentric, non-compliant, and have difficulties in peer relation" (Santrock, 2004, p. 277).

Research Conducted on Parenting Styles
Research related to the different parenting styles often focuses on the authoritative pattern, with Baumrind being noted as one of the leading researchers on the topic (Baumrind, 1996, 2005; Mussen, 1983; Santrock, 1990; Santrock, 2004). Steinberg's (2001) description of the authoritative/democratic parenting style was also mentioned often throughout the research. In addition, Steinberg noted the actions of parents were considered significant both during adolescence and after adolescence. More specifically, he indicated the authoritative parenting style was

related to the positive developmental outcomes of "self-reliance, achievement motivation, pro-social behavior, self-control, cheerfulness, and social confidence" (p. 13). However, Steinberg did note that obtaining this information is not enough. Parents need to be educated about findings related to normal adolescent development and competent parenting during adolescence along with familial changes that are occurring during this time period.

Further, Gecas (1971) found that parental behaviors of support were positively related to adolescents' self-evaluations. Buri and colleagues (1987) discovered that parental nurturance associated with the authoritative parenting style is related significantly to adolescents' self-esteem. Furthermore, Doyle and Markiewicz (2005) noted that parenting does affect adolescents' ability to adjust, with parental warmth being an aspect of the authoritative parenting style and an indicator of adolescent self-esteem. Each study found statistically significant results, but also had limitations; Gecas noted a need for exploration of additional self-evaluation reference points such as self-satisfaction and happiness. Buri and colleagues noted results were not representative of a mass population due to the specific characteristics of the group studied. Additionally, Doyle and Markiewicz noted their sample size and the number of measured items used were limitations, with adolescent self-reporting also a weakness of the study.

Additional authoritative parenting research (Baumrind, 1966) noted that higher levels of parental warmth and behavioral control were directly correlated with levels of adjustment for children of varied ages. Moreover, a study conducted by Baumrind in 1991 found that youth raised in an authoritative parenting style environment were more competent and capable of adjusting (Baumrind, 2005). Finally, a study conducted by Ginsburg and Bronstein (1993) discovered the authoritative parenting style was correlated to children's levels of intrinsic motivation for learning. However, no causal inferences can be made with Ginsburg and Bronstein's study due to the correlational nature of the study.

To review, the authoritarian/autocratic, the authoritative/democratic, and the permissive/laissez-faire parenting styles were discussed in great detail with the positive impact of the authoritative/democratic parenting style being evident. The authoritative/democratic parenting style was noted for being influential during and after adolescence. Furthermore, this parenting style was also found to be related to positive developmental outcomes, positive adolescent self-evaluations, higher levels of adolescent self-esteem, and adjustment, along with higher levels of intrinsic motivation for learning (Baumrind, 1966, 2005; Buri et al., 1987; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Gecas, 1971; Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993; Steinberg, 2001). It is important to note that the manner in which these parenting styles are expressed in various cultures has not been reviewed here and should be a focus of future research.

Limitations

The majority of the studies reviewed and presented used self-reported data procedures (Dmitrieva et al., 2004; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005). Self-reporting is an issue due to the unavoidable connection between parents and adolescents; the possibility exists that this relationship causes alteration of answers, making them unreliable. Second, the number of measurement sources used to determine relationships in the studies conducted by Doyle and Markiewicz and Gibson and Jefferson (2006), were noted as insufficient; the more measurements used to determine a relationship, the more accurate the results will be (Gibson & Jefferson). The third weakness was the inability of previous research to determine causality of an event or relationship due to the cross-sectional nature of some studies (Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Dmitrieva et al., 2004; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Wilkinson, 2004). This limitation refers to the inability to determine whether a concept or relationship caused another concept or relationship to occur. For instance, does a negative adolescent-parent relationship cause an adolescent to possess psychological distress or does the adolescent's psychological distress cause a negative adolescent-parent relationship to occur?

Fourth, sample sizes of studies such as those conducted by Buri and colleagues (1987), Doyle and Markiewicz (2005), and Farrell and Barnes (1993) were noted as being minute and, therefore, not sizeable enough to create statistically significant results. Finally, studies such as those conducted by Dmitrieva and associates (2004), Gecas (1971), Gibson and Jefferson (2006), and Roberts and Bengtson (1993) noted limited samples that were not representative of all adolescents, resulting in overrepresentation of white, middle-class families (Steinberg, 2001). Especially within studies of parenting styles, a focus on replicating studies across various diverse cultures would be beneficial. However, one of the strengths of the research addressing parental involvement is that studies were implemented in various environments in the United States, Norway, Korea, the Czech Republic, and Britain.

Finally, a dearth of studies exists connecting parenting styles directly with increases in academic achievement. It is important to continue research into parent impacts on social, emotional, and educational development of students. Connecting these areas with academic achievement would enable education stakeholders to create targeted and informed interventions with families to impact achievement.

Implications for Middle Schools

Obviously, adolescents' relationship with their parents impacts multiple areas of their development. How can middle schools apply insights into positive communication styles, parenting styles, and student perceptions of parental involvement to improving family involvement at school and promote the creation of strong home and school bonds? Recent research has shown that parental involvement in schools can positively impact achievement in mathematics (Sirvani, 2007), and literacy (Whitmore & Norton-Meier, 2008) and that parental involvement in middle school can positively impact future high school graduation (Englund, Egeland, & Collins, 2008). Combining the academic consequences with the personal and social influences detailed above illustrates the importance of perceived parental involvement in adolescent development (see Table 1).

Table 1
Role and Impact of Selected Education Stakeholders

Education Stakeholder	Role	Possible Impact
Administrators	a) Create school-based parent nights, such as educational service nights and community events. b) Model appropriate communication skills in student assistance teams; Individual Education Programs; and other school-based interactions with teachers, parents, and students. c) Create other various opportunities at traditional and non-traditional times for parents to become involved in school activities.	a) Highlight healthy parent-adolescent relationships. b) Educate parents about the relationship between perceived parental involvement, levels of self-esteem at adolescence, and peer relationships. c) Parental involvement in schools can positively impact achievement in mathematics and literacy. Parental involvement in middle school can positively impact future high school graduation.
Teachers	a) Model appropriate communication skills, illustrate important information, and support adolescents' growth through curriculum guidance meetings with parents and students. b) Require parents to sign paperwork at school to create interactions between parents, teachers, and students.	a) Highlight healthy parent-adolescent relationships. b) Parental involvement in schools can positively impact achievement in mathematics, in literacy. Parental involvement in middle school can positively impact future high school graduation.
School Counselors	a) Create and provide professional development that would allow administration, faculty and staff, parents and community members to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to support adolescents to fulfill their emotional, physical, and psychological needs and reach academic goals. b) Create parent discussion groups. c) Lead parent education nights. 1) Send parenting information home. 2) Provide educational opportunities at a variety of times for parents working non-traditional work hours to attend.	a) Assist students in identifying changing family roles, and enhance adolescents' use of effective communication. b) Assist students in setting and achieving academic goals; balancing school and life experiences; and receiving support from faculty, staff, family and peers when dealing with negative life situations. c) Educate parents about the relationship between perceived parental involvement, levels of self-esteem at adolescence, and peer relationships.

Note: Table illustrates the possible impact administrators, teachers, and school counselors can have by creating participatory opportunities and educational opportunities for parents in middle schools.

It seems a logical first step would be efforts to educate parents about the impact their involvement has on both the academic and personal development of their adolescents. Schools should shift their focus from asking for parental involvement to providing school-based educational sessions that educate parents about the personal, social, and educational benefits for students that occur as a result of parental involvement and using the authoritative/democratic parenting style. Some parents may simply need to be educated about how their interest in their adolescents' behaviors, interests, and activities emphasizes parental caring and impacts adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, especially in the areas of self-esteem and self-evaluation (Amato, 1994; Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Buri et al., 1987; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gecas, 1971; Gibson & Jefferson, 2006; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). School counselors can coordinate parent nights to implement such educational experiences. The school administration can also take steps to incorporate parents and families in the life of the school. Teachers can work to create opportunities within their classroom for parent volunteers. In addition, teachers can collaborate with both school counselors and administrators to support the parent education nights, the parent groups, and other educational experiences. In their meetings with parents, teachers can use language that models appropriate and healthy communication styles, especially when students are present and when interacting with students.

Administration can implement registration nights and ensure teachers send paperwork home with students after planning sessions to be returned with a parent's signature, first steps toward creating home-school partnerships. Requiring parent involvement in the curriculum planning process would create an additional environment in which parents and students can communicate, problem solve, empathize, and plan together. Parent-teacher-administration discussion groups and inservices can be used to provide education stakeholders with the information and tools they need to assist adolescents with communication of their emotional, physical, and psychological needs as well as their academic goals.

Further, stakeholders can learn about the different styles that are used to discipline adolescent students in their home environments, implications of these styles, and strategies to mediate the effects of the adolescent behaviors associated with each parenting style. Educational stakeholders can also learn and model behaviors to demonstrate caring and support. Understanding the impact of parenting styles, perceptions of parent-child relationships, and divorce gives administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community members deeper insight into adolescents' perceptions of life events. Therefore, implementing parent nights and parent discussion groups enhances parental involvement and also emphasizes the value adolescents place on their relationships with their parents. Community members can also be included through an "adopt an adolescent" program, increasing the opportunity to bond with a caring adult for students at-risk due to family circumstances. After-school programs emphasizing parent involvement should also be considered. Many of the programs and ideas suggested above could be implemented by the middle school counselor.

Implications for Middle School Counselors

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model for school counseling programs emphasizes the need for all education stakeholders to become active in student welfare; students, parents, faculty and staff, administrators, and community members are all considered important education stakeholders (ASCA, 2005). Collaboration between these individuals allows for multifaceted resources and interventions that support every student in achieving academic success. Middle school counselors coordinate and lead collaboration and teamwork within the school and community environments. Middle school counselors are valuable resources to school stakeholders, as they provide developmentally appropriate services, comprehensive interventions and programs, and create links between all individuals involved in students' education (ASCA), whether these individuals are in the school, home, or community.

Obviously, adolescents' relationships with their parents impacts multiple areas of their development. Therefore, interventions from the four delivery systems in the ASCA model need to be included in a school's comprehensive school counseling program. A comprehensive school counseling program attempts to reach and support all students using multiple resources while also focusing on the promotion of a healthy parent-adolescent relationship (ASCA, 2005). This article illustrated many areas in the school and home life in which middle school counselors could intervene to positively impact parent-adolescent relationships and adolescent self-perceptions.

Guidance curriculum can be used when working with adolescents to help coordinate important resources inside and outside the school and teach students coping strategies for dealing with stress, conflict, and peer pressure that may result from their parental relationships. Students can learn about the effects their relationships with their parents may have on them, both positive and negative. Further, students can practice and learn communication skills to use in different situations with their parents, thus increasing the amount of communication and involvement parents demonstrate. Students can also learn how to better identify signs of parental involvement as well as behaviors parents exhibit that are meant to be supportive. Guidance curriculum allows entire classrooms of students to be taught valuable information and to practice and model new skills (ASCA, 2005).

Individual student planning can be used when students need assistance in setting and achieving academic goals and balancing school and life experiences. This type of one-on-one planning with counselors provides students with the educational support to meet academic goals (ASCA, 2005). Middle school counselors can also invite parents to participate in the planning process, which creates additional opportunities for communication and collaboration. Hopefully, these activities would create common goals and language parents and students could use to strengthen their relationship.

Responsive services such as independent and group counseling interventions can be used when students need support from faculty, staff, family, and peers to deal with situations such as divorce or changing family roles (ASCA, 2005). Individual counseling provides students with a role model and a confidante that may not be present in their home lives. This research report emphasizes the need for guidance and support by an adult figure. In this case, the school counselor may be that individual who can work with the student to increase communication at home. Group counseling also promotes the use of effective communication by allowing the adolescents to learn how to identify problems and determine causes and consequences of their actions in a group—much like a family environment (ASCA).

Additionally, system support forums such as discussion groups and inservices can be used to provide education stakeholders with the information and tools they need to assist adolescents with communication of their emotional, physical, and psychological needs as well as their academic goals. Further, stakeholders can learn about the different styles that are used to discipline adolescent students in their home environments, implications of these styles, and strategies to mediate the effects of the adolescent behaviors associated with each parenting style. Education stakeholders can also learn and model behaviors to demonstrate caring and support. Understanding the impact of parenting styles and perceptions of parent-child relationships gives administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community members deeper insight into adolescents' perceptions of life events. Therefore, implementing parent nights and parent discussion groups enhances parental involvement and also emphasizes the value adolescents place on their relationships with their parents. Other sensitive topics such as divorce can also be discussed to increase knowledge and change home and school practices. Community members can also be included through an "adopt an adolescent" program increasing the opportunity to bond with a caring adult for students at-risk due to family circumstances.

Middle school counselors can use information from this article to create interventions in the school, community, and home that meet numerous ASCA National Standards. These standards can be met through interventions within the guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support delivery systems. Standards related to supporting parent-student relationships include:

- A:B1.4 – Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers
- A:C1.1 – Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time, and family life
- PS:A1.1 – Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
- PS:A1.2 – Identify values, attitudes and beliefs
- PS:A1.11 – Identify and discuss changing personal and social roles
- PS:A1.12 – Identify and recognize changing family roles
- PS:A2.5 – Recognize and respect differences in various family configurations
- PS:A2.6 – Use effective communication skills
- PS:A2.7 – Know that communication involves speaking, listening and nonverbal behavior
- PS:C1.10 – Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict
- PS:C1.11 – Learn coping skills for managing life events

Recommendations for Future Research

Weaknesses in past research emphasize the need to gather and analyze research that encompasses all periods of time (Jones & Kottler, 2006). Future research, using other methodologies beyond self-reporting, would intensify results and create a stronger methodological foundation from which to examine the adolescent-parent relationship's effects on psychological well-being (Dmitrieva et al., 2004; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005). In addition, some previous research used collaborative measures, weakening the implications of the research, since causality could not be supported (Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Dmitrieva et al., Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Wilkinson, 2004). Small sample size is also an area of weakness in the research; a larger sample size allows for generalities to be determined (Buri et al., 1987; Doyle & Markiewicz; Farrell & Barnes, 1993). Future research should attempt to address these methodological weaknesses.

Future research could also examine the roles of parents and if or when one parent is more influential than the other. This information would expand counselors' understanding of the effects of parent-adolescent relationships, leading to more specific interventions (Amato, 1994; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Distinctions between families of different ethnicities and cultures are important areas to explore in future research (Dekovic & Meeus, 1997). Research examining parental effects in multiple ethnic and cultural facets would enable school counselors to add multiculturally-sensitive interventions to their current comprehensive counseling program. In addition, evidence-based research assists school counselors in creating interventions that include administration, faculty, and staff in intervention processes while educating them about the effects parental relationships have in their students' lives. Furthermore, systematic research confirming the relationship between increased self-esteem and improved school performance would further emphasize the need to focus on parental involvement when working with adolescents in the school environment (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989).

Finally, further research could examine the role of school administration in the implementation and organization of parent education nights addressing the parenting styles and parental involvement issues. Because school districts and schools are organized and led by administrators, such as superintendents and principals, it is vital that administrators understand and support mental health education and parent education, which can be delivered through parent nights, inservices, after-school programs, and other community-based activities. Research addressing the role of administration should not limit leadership roles to organizational leadership but rather emphasize the continuity of leadership through every level of program development.

Conclusion

Perceived parental involvement positively or negatively affects adolescents' sense of psychological well-being, notably in regard to self-esteem and self-evaluation, peer relationships, and frequency of negative familial life events (Amato, 1994; Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Buri et al., 1987; Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Dmitrieva et al, 2004; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Gecas, 1971; Gibson & Jefferson, 2006; Roberts & Bengtson, 1993; Wilkinson, 2004). Adolescents determine personal self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-esteem based on perceptions gained from parental involvement. As a result, it can be implied that perceived parental involvement is essential to an adolescent's psychological well-being (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Therefore, it is worth noting the authoritative/democratic parenting style is associated with greater psychological well-being. The authoritative/democratic parenting style influences children during and after adolescence in the areas of adolescent development, self-evaluation, self-esteem and adjustment, as well as intrinsic motivation to learn in a positive manner (Baumrind, 1966, 2005; Buri et al.; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Gecas; Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993; Steinberg, 2001).

Middle schools should focus on parent education inservices to share the impact of parenting styles and perceived parental involvement on student personal, social, and academic achievement. Middle school counselors can use the information from this article to improve student welfare and support student achievement. Emphasizing the collaborative approach to addressing these issues is vital for any program to succeed. School administration, faculty, and support personnel all need to work together to create and implement parent education activities. School counselors can serve in leadership roles, since they have been trained in collaboration skills. School counselors can also implement other programs to meet parent education needs and meet the national standards of the ASCA (2005).

School counselors can use individual planning, guidance curriculum, individual and group counseling, as well as system support delivery systems to increase support for students demonstrating at-risk behaviors (ASCA, 2005). The negative and positive effects of parenting styles and perceived parental involvement permeate students' identities and can result in positive or negative issues for students. School counseling interventions can assist students in identifying changing family roles, and enhance adolescents' use of effective communication. Creating a safe environment in which parents and students can positively interact is an intervention school counselors can easily create. Creating common environments for adolescents and their parents can be accomplished through the use of paperwork requiring parental signatures, parent discussion groups, and parent inservices. Inservices would also allow administrators, faculty and staff, parents and community members to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to support adolescents in meeting their emotional, physical, and psychological needs and reaching academic goals (ASCA, 2005; Santrock, 2004).

School counselors, teachers, administrators, and school staff can also model appropriate communication skills, illustrate important information, and support adolescents' growth through curriculum guidance, individual counseling, and group counseling. These modeling behaviors should be emphasized by administrators and should be highlighted during any school hosted parent activity. These strategies could focus on illustrating and promoting the benefits of adolescents' overcoming negative parent-adolescent relationships, or taking full advantage of healthy parent-adolescent relationships. Middle schools should focus on highlighting healthy parent-adolescent relationships through parent nights, educational service nights, and community events. These healthy relationships can also be highlighted through collaborative processes such as student assistance teams, Individual Education Programs, and other school counseling activities and events. Overlapping school counseling services to address student connections between school systems, families, parents, and community members through a comprehensive school counseling program enables schools to develop primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions benefiting adolescents, assisting them in overcoming educational barriers and supporting healthy development in a familiar and encouraging environment (ASCA, 2005; Jennings, Pearson, & Harris, 2000; Taylor & Adelman, 2002).

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