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The Relationship Between Parenting Style and the Level of Emotional Intelligence in Preschool-Aged Children

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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Department of Psychology

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLE AND THE LEVEL OF
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

By Giselle Farrell

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Psychology

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**PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Giselle Farrell
on the Sixth day of May, 2015, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in both scholarship and
literary quality.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parenting style and the level of emotional intelligence in preschool-aged children. The sample consisted of eighty parent participants of preschool-aged children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. Participants completed the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) in order to assess their views on behaviors that parents typically demonstrate towards their children. Based on each participant's responses on the PSDQ they were determined to favor one of the following three parenting styles: *authoritarian*, *authoritative*, or *permissive*. Participants also completed the Children's Behavior Questionnaire- Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF) in an effort to assess three areas of temperament directly related to emotional intelligence in their preschool-aged children: *surgency*, *negative affect or temperament*, and *empathy*. The results indicated that there was one significant relationship found specifically between the authoritarian parenting style and preschool-aged children's degree of negative affect or negative temperament related to emotional intelligence. No other interactions were found between the remaining parenting styles and children's level of emotional intelligence.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
Key Terms.....	vii
List of Tables.....	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	10
Definition of Emotional Intelligence.....	10
Definition of Parenting Style.....	11
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature.....	14
Statement of the Problem.....	26
Purpose of the Study.....	27
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	29
Procedures and Measures.....	29
Target Population and Sample.....	31
Recruitment Method and Strategy.....	32
Chapter 4: Results.....	34
Research Design.....	34
Demographics.....	34
Research Question 1.....	37
Research Question 2.....	42
Research Question 3.....	47
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	49

Strengths and Limitations of the Study.....	55
Implications of the Study	56
Recommendations for Future Research	57
Conclusion	57
References	59
Appendices.....	69
Appendix A.....	69
Appendix B.....	70
Appendix C.....	72
Appendix D.....	76
Appendix E	81

Key Terms

Emotional Intelligence	The ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and connect emotions in relation to oneself and in relation to others
Child rearing	An additional term for parenting style
Parent	For the purposes of this study, a child's biological family of origin will be referred to as "parent," which include mother or father
Preschool aged child	For the purposes of this study, a child is referred to as preschool aged if he or she is between the ages of 3 and 6 years

List of Tables

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Table 1. | Participant Demographic Data |
| Table 2. | Means and SDs for Parenting Styles |
| Table 3. | Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Participant Race/Ethnicity |
| Table 4. | Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Age |
| Table 5. | Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Quality of Parent Relationship |
| Table 6. | Means and SDs for Areas of Temperament within Emotional Intelligence |
| Table 7. | Means and SDs for Areas of Child Temperament across Participant Race/Ethnicity |
| Table 8. | Means and SDs for Areas of Child's Temperament across Participant Age |
| Table 9. | Means and SDs for Child Temperament across Quality of Parent Relationship |
| Table 10. | Correlations between Parenting Style and Aspects of Emotional Intelligence |

Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, emotional intelligence in young children has emerged as a high profile construct within the field of Psychology (Goleman, 1998; Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2002; Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2007; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Supporters of emotional intelligence believe it is an idea that is unique to the areas of psychology related to personality and cognitive abilities, and has the potential to uncover significant findings regarding the origins of multiple phenomena associated with cognition, emotions, and feelings (Law, et al., 2004; Salovey & Sluyter, 1997; Schutte et al., 2001).

Definitions of Emotional Intelligence

As the concept of emotional intelligence grew in popularity throughout the field of psychology, so did the lack of agreement in regard to settling on a definition that wholly encompassed every aspect of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Some argued that emotional intelligence in children should be viewed as a general concept encompassing their emotional and mental capabilities. Although this argument appeared to be rather straightforward with regard to the areas of childhood development being affected, researchers, Salovey and Sluyter (1997) felt that by generalizing the term, the relationship between emotion and intelligence would be excluded. One definition employed by Goleman (1998) stated that emotional intelligence in children involves their ability to exercise self-control, zeal, persistence, and motivation. Mayer and Salovey (1997) took the concept a step further and constructed an abbreviated definition of emotional intelligence that they believed accurately included the areas of emotion and of intelligence in childhood development. They defined the term as a child's ability to perceive emotions, to access and demonstrate emotions, to understand emotions and the idea of emotional knowledge, and to regulate emotions in order to promote his or her emotional

and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Ciarrochi, Chan, and Caputi (2000), in reviewing the emotional intelligence literature, found that multiple definitions of the term continued to surface despite Mayer and Salovey's (1997) efforts to make it uniform and comprehensive; nonetheless, the variations proved to be complementary rather than contradictory to each other. Each new interpretation that surfaced, somehow, managed to address the same four distinct areas: *perception, regulation, understanding, and utilization* (Ciarrochi et al., 2000). Ultimately, a consensus could not be reached regarding a standard explanation of emotional intelligence; however, when combined, the individual descriptions contributed to a comprehensive definition that encompassed the aforementioned four areas. As such, emotional intelligence can therefore be defined as: *The ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and connect emotions to oneself and in relation to others* (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Schutte et al., 2001).

Research has determined that there are many factors that can contribute to the level and intensity of emotional intelligence in children, including but not limited to: peer interactions, environmental and family stressors, school, and style of parenting. The impact and effects of these influences have the potential to strengthen or weaken the level and progression not just of children's emotional growth, but also of their global development. Of the aforementioned influences, it is believed that *parenting style* has the most significant impact on the level of emotional intelligence in young children (Richberg & Fletcher, 2002).

Definition of Parenting Style

In 1971, Baumrind conducted research on parenting style, and subsequently defined it as *a pattern of child rearing that is the result of parents' reactions to their child or children* (Lau, Beilby, Byrnes, & Hennessey, 2012). Along with defining parenting style, he also went on to

distinguish between the three most common parenting styles or techniques: *Authoritative*, *Permissive*, and *Authoritarian*. In brief, the authoritative parenting style places limits and controls on children's behaviors; however, it allows for them to engage in extensive communication with their parents (Williams, 2013). Conversely, the permissive parenting style enforces very few rules or boundaries, allowing children to dictate their own life affairs, make their own choices, and out rightly refuse compliance with the choices of others, without regard for consequences (Baumrind, 1971; Akinsola, 2010). The authoritarian parenting style, also differing from that of the other styles, is characterized by the adoption of unusually high expectations of conformity and compliance with rules for children (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011).

Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence

Based on the significance of Baumrind's findings, Mayer and Cobb (2000) conducted research on the interactions between parenting style and emotional development in children, and determined that a parent's chosen pattern of child-rearing had the power to affect the manifestation and level of intensity of a child's abilities across four major areas of emotion: *Perception, understanding, integration, and management of emotions*. In turn, these aforementioned areas when conjoined significantly contributed to the overall development and furtherance of emotional intelligence in a child (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Schutte et al., 2001). Furthermore, Mayer and Cobb (2000) predicted, that based on an individual's specific style of parenting, he or she could potentially contribute to or hinder the lifetime success of a child well into adulthood (Berg, 2011).

In reviewing numerous studies conducted on parenting styles, including their benefits and implications, it quickly becomes evident that there are extensive amounts of research on the effects of parent-child relationships on a child's emotional development, as well as across various social contexts (i.e., economic disadvantage, family distress, marital relations); however, there is limited research that specifically addresses various parenting styles and their relationship to pre-school aged children's emotional intelligence. This study, therefore, will serve as the first to examine the topic.

Current Study

The current study sought to determine the associations between parenting style and the levels of emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children, specifically. Additionally, this study also sought to demonstrate to parents and parent educators, the power and importance of parenting practices on the overall development of young children. Just as environmental, social, and genetic factors affect aspects of development in children, there are also familial factors that can have an equally significant impact.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the first to investigate the subject of emotional intelligence, receiving recognition for originally coining the specialized term. They found that emotional intelligence was crucial in helping individuals, especially young children, to accomplish the following: monitoring their own feelings and emotions as well as that of others, differentiating among different displays of emotions, and utilizing information gathered through observation as a tool to guide future thinking and actions regarding emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). As more information about emotional intelligence were uncovered, researchers became increasingly intrigued and raised multiple questions regarding the concept as it pertained to children, including: the reason why some children accomplish certain tasks successfully; the reason why others, in spite of their natural talents, abilities and intelligence, experience continuous failure, and also the role of emotional intelligence in determining a child's success (Richburg & Fletcher, 2002). In an effort to address the aforementioned questions, ideas such as self-awareness, motivation, and sensitivity were explored as potential explanations.

Self-awareness. Self-awareness, known as one of the critical components of emotional intelligence, focuses on a child's recognition of a feeling as it occurred, independent of its display in response to success or failure. According to Goleman, (1998) self-awareness contributes to a child's ability to make conscious decisions regarding various life occurrences. He stated that every person, from the elderly to the preschool-aged child had a specialized ability to identify and monitor his or her own true feelings, which in turn increased the overall level of self-awareness and capability to monitor and control his or her own life (Goleman, 1998). Shapiro (1998) went a step further and conceptualized the development of self-awareness in childhood because it was considered to be the starting point for the demonstration of emotional

intelligence as a whole. He argued that a child's capacity not only to become aware of his or her own emotions, but also to be able to put those emotions into words, was an essential part of meeting basic needs. According to Shapiro (1998), when young children learn to identify and communicate what they feel, they develop important aspects of communication skills which are, in turn, vital for their gaining emotional control as they grow throughout life.

Motivation. The concept of motivation was offered as another explanation to address the concerns that were raised by researchers regarding emotional intelligence in children. Motivation, another critical component of emotional intelligence, refers to a child's ability to act upon a particular idea, notion, or goal (Richburg & Fletcher, 2002). This idea was considered especially important in children because motivation was responsible as the driving force for the behavior that they often demonstrated (Zirkel, 2000). According to Zirkel (2000), children analyze certain factors prior to exhibiting a behavior; these include: desire, gratification, affect, consequence, and sacrifice because these factors often determine their levels and degrees of motivation.

Sensitivity. Along with self-awareness and motivation, Richburg and Fletcher (2002) found that another aspect contributing to emotional intelligence is a child's ability to be sensitive to the emotions and needs of others. At a young age, having sensitivity contributes to the development of other beneficial skills, such as being able to socialize, having an empathic perspective, and demonstrating social competence (Richburg & Fletcher, 2002). Overall, emotional intelligence in children is demonstrated most effectively when there is an integration of the components of self-awareness, motivation, and sensitivity; all of these are critical to the concept, and their development is heavily influenced by parenting style during the early childhood stages (Richburg & Fletcher, 2002; Kafetsios, 2004). Richburg and Fletcher (2002)

shared the following example of a child who demonstrated the ability to recognize emotions appropriately and to show sensitivity toward others:

While playing a game of soccer on the playground, Margaret fell down and scraped her knee. As the game continued, no one stopped to help Margaret except Justin, who observed her from the other side of the playing field. While helping Margaret to her feet and escorting her to the nurse to have her knee examined, Justin complemented Margaret on her attempt to score a goal (p. 34).

Evidently, there are a variety of intrinsic factors that contribute to the level and intensity of emotional intelligence in children. Conversely, there are external factors that must also be considered when discussing children's emotional development because these are equally influential on children's emotional growth and development, namely, the style of parenting.

Parenting Styles

As a whole, the three parenting styles are multi-faceted and are often implemented in collaboration with each other. Although the authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles are defined as separate entities, often parents are found to implement one particular style, yet utilize aspects of the remaining two styles simultaneously (Perepletchikova & Kazdin, 2005).

Authoritative Parenting. Williams (2013) pointed out that authoritative parenting is generally all about balance. These parents firmly support developing a close-knit relationship with their children through the process of nurturing, and maintain high levels of expectations for them. In an authoritative household, the fair and age appropriate rules are plainly stated for the children (Williams, 2013). Often, the dialogue between children and their authoritative parents results in a promotion of parental responsiveness, encouragement of independence, social and

cognitive competency, and a greater sense of social responsibility. The parents are known to be good listeners and are open to hearing their children's points-of-view (Akinsola, 2010).

Authoritative parents often encourage their children to engage in verbal reasoning exchanges with them, and remain open to altering certain rules based on the validity of their children's arguments; yet, they are not easily manipulated (Baumrind, 1971; Akinsola, 2010). Ultimately, the children are always permitted to speak their minds in the authoritative household, but the final decisions lie in the hands of the parents because they believe that they know what is best for their children (Williams, 2013). Williams (2013) also mentioned that authoritative parents tend to think of themselves as personal role models for their children. They have a tendency to acknowledge their imperfections and will go so far as to apologize to their children if necessary.

According to Akinsola (2010), authoritative parents place great emphasis on the autonomy of their children within a structured family environment. They are known to use a variety of behavioral and monitoring techniques in order to maintain control of their children; techniques often include: knowing with whom their children associate, being aware of their location, and knowing the activities in which they engage (Akinsola, 2010). Individuals utilizing the authoritative parenting style provide their children with clarification about the reasons why they may make certain requests. Authoritative parents also tend to have high expectations of their children's behavior; these children are therefore known to demonstrate high levels of compliance not only to their parents, but also to all authority figures. When punishing their children, authoritative parents are more likely to explain their rationale for implementing the punishment, especially if the children have fallen short (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011).

Permissive Parenting. Permissive parents are characterized as having a warm disposition with their children, and make very few behavioral demands. The overarching goal of permissive parents is to avoid confrontational situations with their children as much as possible. Their philosophy is that when children are permitted to regulate their own behaviors, the children are in an ideal position to learn how to be independent (Williams, 2013). Permissive parents are considered to be intensely nurturing and accepting of their children, but not demanding (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). They aim to make their children the center of their lives, doing everything for them to the extent that the children never learn how to care for themselves independently (Williams, 2013).

Permissive parents want their children to like them; therefore, they are willing to go to extensive lengths to ensure that their children are able to do anything that they desire (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). These parents make efforts to become friends with their children, believing that doing so will strengthen the closeness of their relationship and rapport. Unfortunately, permissive parents who try to establish friendships with their children risk the possibility of their acting out inappropriately because they will see their parents as simply peers or equals (Williams, 2013).

To account for potential conflict and acts of defiance, permissive parents may, in turn, appease their children's every request and desire (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). These parents often rely upon techniques such as bribery and bartering with their children to encourage positive behaviors, rather than to establish boundaries and clear expectations (Williams, 2013). In the public eye, permissive parents are typically labeled as being lazy or neglectful of their children. Surprisingly enough, these very same parents often look upon themselves in the same manner, thereby reinforcing their own permissive parenting style to a greater degree (Williams, 2013).

Olowodunoye & Titus (2011) stated that permissive parents are very critical of their own parenting style because they do not want to give their children the impression that their actions are potentially being controlled.

Children raised in permissive parenting households have a tendency to face difficulty in various areas of emotional development. Their struggles often range from insecurity to difficulty managing their own behaviors (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011; Williams, 2013). Additionally, children in permissive parenting households are known to be very physically and emotionally dependent on others because they have not been given any direction or routines to follow as children in order that they might develop self-sufficiency; nor have they been given encouragement to learn how to cope with their emotions independently or the emotions of others around them (Williams, 2013). They have a difficult time accepting rejection and missed opportunities because their parents purposely shielded them from countless disappointments or emotional stressors as children. As adults, children of permissive parents attempt to navigate through life independently; however, they find it difficult to develop the necessary skills required to handle the emotional highs and lows of life (Williams, 2013).

Permissively raised children also struggle with the interpersonal aspects of their emotional development. Their overall inability to regulate their emotions causes them to appear immature and uncompromising, and thus it negatively affects friendships with others (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). Children of permissive parents typically remain close to their childhood homes; furthermore, they have also been found to have, among the closest of relationships as adults, relationships with their parents. By staying close to home, permissively raised children can easily run to their parents for emotional support to cope with every situation

that they experience, rather than handling the emotions on their own (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011).

Authoritarian Parenting. In general, authoritarian parents are highly demanding of their children, but display very little responsiveness to their emotional needs. Communication is typically directed from parent to child, with very little exchange occurring between parents and their children. Parents using this style expect stellar behavior from their children without clearly explaining what the details of those behaviors entail (Williams, 2013). The authoritarian parenting style is also based upon very rigid disciplinary rules; therefore, failure to comply with these rules often results in severe punishment for the children (Williams, 2013). For example, authoritarian parents are more likely to strike their children as a method of punishment for ill-behavior, rather than a correction using alternative measures of discipline (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011).

Authoritarian parenting as a whole discourages the exploration of children's independence, creativity, and intellectual abilities. These actions have been found to impact the self-esteem of children negatively, causing them to question their ability to live life on their own and take on certain leadership positions as adults (Williams, 2013). As a result of not being allowed to make decisions without parental input, children of authoritarian parenting demonstrate a difficult time with taking initiative because they are used to their parents controlling their daily affairs. Other children of authoritarian parents, however, may choose to do the complete opposite of everything they are told to do, in order to recapture their freedom and independence (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). Olowodunoye & Titus (2011) noted that these particular children grow to harbor a great deal of resentment toward their parents and generally have a sense of relief whenever their parents die because they no longer feel trapped or

controlled by them. In relationships, as adults they may struggle with communicating their feelings regarding what is troubling them, with the hopes of alleviating the situation (Williams, 2013). In their minds, it is easier and more comfortable for them to abstain from discussing or exploring emotions altogether, rather than attempting to address it.

Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, and Wilkinson (2007) added that an additional variation exists across each of the previously mentioned parenting styles because each of them can be characterized as being either of two parental elements: *Responsiveness*, and *demandingness*. Responsiveness, also known as care, refers to the intensity of warmth that is shared between a parent and child. In contrast, demandingness, also termed control, refers to the amount of disciplinary actions and standards of behavior that parents put into place when they are dealing with their children (Carlo et al., 2007).

Factors Associated with Parenting

According to Berg (2011) cultural practices and relationships are important factors to consider when discussing parenting style. In order to better understand the manner and method in which parents choose to raise their children, one must first examine the perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, belief systems, and relational experiences that they have been exposed to themselves.

Culture's Role in parenting style

Research has shown that the cultural practices and values that an individual is exposed to in childhood play a role in the particular parenting style and attitudes that he or she subscribes to as an adult. Specific cultural values such as: *Familism*, *machismo*, and *valuing children* have been found to be important contributors to parenting style (Ferrari, 2002; Berg, 2011).

Familism. Familism is a cultural characteristic that focuses on a parent's dependency and reliance upon others for assistance and support. Typically seen within the African-American and Hispanic cultures, familism places great emphasis on the unity of the family, admiration for the elderly, and caring for all members of the family (Zayas, 1992). Cuella, Arnold, and Gonzalez (1995) further described the term as a commitment to serve as an emotional support to family, with an emphasis on the whole family unit rather than on its individual members. Parents who are in full support of familism typically live in households which include the presence of extended family members to assist in caring for the children (Ferrari, 2002). Often, these extended family members not only provide care for the children, but also provide discipline and nurturing for them. Research suggests that parents who incorporate the beliefs of familism in their homes are less likely to use physical and verbal means to punish their children; they also demonstrate nurturing behaviors toward them because they are not the sole caretakers in the children's lives (Ferrari, 2002). Familism has also been linked to the manner in which parents view their children; those endorsing strong familism beliefs, though being weak in nurturing behaviors viewed their children as sources of emotional pleasure and comfort for the family (D'Antonio, Darwish, & McLean, 1993).

Machismo. Machismo is described as strict observance and adherence to defined sex roles, discrimination of sex, insensitive attitudes about women, demonstrating aggressive, domineering, authoritarian, unnurturing characteristics (Deyoung & Zigler, 1994). Commonly seen among Hispanic and Caribbean families, machismo behaviors are often demonstrated by the fathers in the home who are viewed as the authoritarian parents responsible for administering punishment to the children (Bird & Canino, 1982).

Punishment in the machismo belief system is viewed as an appropriate and instrumental way for parents to ensure that their children will always demonstrate proper behaviors (Figueroa-Torres & Pearson, 1979). Machismo has been traditionally associated with the paternal role; however, more recently these similar behaviors and characteristics have been found to be demonstrated by the maternal role model as well (Deyoung & Zigler, 1994). According to Deyoung and Zigler (1994), parents portraying the machismo attitude are likely to make use of physical and verbal punishment, are less likely to reason with their children, and demonstrate low levels of nurturing behaviors.

Valuing children. In certain cultures, children are valued for bringing families closer together, for inspiring joy, and also for their economic value. Research suggests that neglectful parenting is less likely to occur in a home when the parents like and appreciate their children and hold positive beliefs about them (D'Antonio, Darwish, & McLean, 1993). According to Ferrari (2002), parents who place a high value upon their children are found to be more tolerable of their misbehaviors. Additionally, parents are less likely to implement physical and verbal punishment as forms of discipline, and more likely to utilize reasoning and nurturance when they are satisfied both with their children and with the idea of parenting (Ferrari, 2002).

Marital and relationship stressors. Parents of young children who face a new relationship or a change in marital status can expect consequences; the effects of this experience can have a significant effect on how they raise their children thereafter (Katz & Gottman, 1997; Richberg & Fletcher, 2002). According to Katz and Gottman (1997), when parents are going through a new relationship, the dissolving of a marriage, or the breakup of a relationship, they have a tendency to allow the emotions or stress related to the experience to impact the dynamics of their parent-child relationship (Katz & Gottman, 1997). Parents experiencing relationship

issues or distress have been found to demonstrate the following behaviors during interactions with their child/children: more negativity, decreased levels of warmth, inconsistent discipline patterns, increased levels of rejection, withdrawal, and overall less responsiveness, in comparison with parents who are not dealing with a relationship breakup (Gottman & Katz, 1989; Fauber, Forehand, Thomas, & Wierson, 1990; Katz & Gottman, 1997). To sum up, evidence clearly indicates that there are associated linkages between marital and relationship stressors and their significant effects on parenting style.

Parenting Style and Emotional Intelligence

To date, Engels, Finkenauer, Meeus, and Deković (2001) have studied the relationship between parental attachment and the emotional adjustment of 12-18 year olds as this relates to their social skills and relational competence. The results of the study found that parental attachment was significantly related to social skill level; those children who demonstrated high levels of trust and communication with their parents had better social skill abilities. Furthermore, results showed that those children who were closely attached to their parents demonstrated increased levels of self-esteem and decreased levels of depression (Engels, et al., 2001).

Similar results were gathered when Alegre (2012) studied the emotional intelligence trait as it pertained to the amount of time mothers and children spent together participating in various cooperative activities. His research found that the duration and quality of time spent between mothers and their children positively influenced the children's' levels of emotional intelligence. Stack, Serbin, Enns, Ruttle, and Barrieau's (2010) assessed the long term effects of the relationship between parenting style and childrens' emotional outcomes in a longitudinal study. The results provided support for the importance of parenting style in the development of

competent emotional functioning or problematic emotional functioning in children as they grow older and across generations.

Betts, Gullone, and Allen (2009) also studied the relationship between the emotion regulation strategy of adolescents, parenting and temperament, with depressive symptomatology as a coexisting factor. The results of the study found that adolescents who were experiencing high levels of depressive symptomatology also had a tendency to suppress their demonstrations of emotions, and came from households where the parenting style consisted of low levels of care and nurturing, and high levels of overprotective behavior, all typical characteristics of the authoritarian parenting style (Betts, Gullone, & Allen, 2009). Anthony et al., (2005) investigated a similar relationship between parenting style and the social competency of preschool aged children, with parental stress as an additional factor. Similar to the aforementioned study, results confirmed that parents coping with high levels of stress (regardless of the triggers) also had a tendency to exhibit less positive parenting practices, which in turn, negatively affected the children's social competency (Anthony, et al., 2005).

According to Amirabadi (2011), studies in Developmental Psychology have found that the behaviors, values, and attitudes that young children not only develop, but also grow to consider appropriate and correct are heavily influenced by their parents, and their chosen styles of parenting. Of the three most commonly known parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive), evidence suggests that young children raised by parents implementing the authoritative parenting are better adjusted overall (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011; Williams, 2013). They possess the ability to problem solve, make sound decisions, and function successfully within a structured environment. Williams also added that children from authoritative parenting homes "rank higher in social competence and are seen to have higher

levels of self-esteem, maturity, and self control” (Williams, 2013, para. 13). Studies on authoritative parents reveal that their children are more likely to be successful academically, become better articulators of their emotions, display joyful dispositions, and demonstrate greater generosity with their peers (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011). On the contrary, authoritarian and permissive parenting studies reveal that children raised under these practices have been repeatedly associated with negative outcomes, including internalizing and externalizing problems, personality disorders, increased anxiety, decreased social behaviors, and lower emotional well-being (Johnson, Cohen, Chen, Kasen, & Brook, 2006; Knafo & Plomin, 2006; Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007).

Given the review of current literature on attachment, parenting styles, and emotional intelligence in children, research suggests that the secure attachment and care associated with the authoritative parenting style is positively related to the highest levels of emotional intelligence in children, in comparison with the remaining two parenting styles (Kafetsios, 2004). According to Kafetsios (2004), Children raised in authoritative parenting households are better able to understand and manage their own emotions, as well as demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem. As adolescents, children raised in authoritative households are also able, in turn, to show their parents warmth and respect as a result of their higher level of emotional intelligence.

Statement of the Problem

On the whole, literature continues to support a positive relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence in children; however, to date there is no research that has specifically focused on the preschool aged population. Given the importance of this critical time period in a child’s growth and development, it is necessary to investigate, specifically, the influence that parenting style has on the development of emotional intelligence in pre-school

aged children. Regardless of a parent's chosen style of parenting or the factors that contributed to that choice, developmental psychologists agree that it plays a significant role in children's overall development. For this reason, parenting style and its significant role in the emotional development of preschool aged children are the focus to this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to focus on the relationship between the three parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive) and the levels of emotional intelligence in preschool aged children. The results that are yielded will hopefully provide greater insight into the newly developing field of emotional intelligence in very young children. Additionally, it is the hope that the information provided in this research study will not only contribute to the field of psychology, but also be useful to parents and assist them when deciding upon the most effective style of parenting to implement with their preschool aged children.

Overall, research has proved that parenting style has a significant impact on various aspects of a child's global development, including his or her ability to socialize, manage behavior, regulate emotion, and achieve future academic success. Certainly, if parenting style affects a child's development across these aforementioned areas, the potential for an effect on emotional intelligence is also likely. Therefore, it is hypothesized that children, specifically between the ages of 3-6 years old, are most susceptible to these effects of parenting styles because they are in the most critical stages of their lives and parenting styles have the potential to affect the progression and level of their emotional intelligence development (Alegre, 2012, Amirabadi, 2011; Massari, 2011).

This study examined the relationship between parenting style, and the level of emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children. More specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

- a) How did parents rate their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, *Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)*?
- b) How did parents rate areas of temperament related to their pre-school aged children's level of emotional intelligence on the *Children's Behavior Questionnaire-Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF)*?
- c) What was the relationship between areas of temperament related to emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children, and parenting style?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Procedure and Measures

The study investigated the relationship between parenting style and the level of emotional intelligence in preschool aged children. The quantitative components used were the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995; see Appendix C), a self-report measure of parenting practices, and the Children's Behavior Questionnaire- Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF; Rothbart, Ahadi, Hershey, & Fisher, 2001; Putnam & Rothbart, 2006; see Appendix D), a parent report measure assessing the temperament (differences in emotional reactivity contributing to a child's overall personality) in children ages 3-8 years old. This particular research design was considered to be most appropriate because it quantitatively addressed the identified research questions and also explored the nature of a larger group of people.

Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). The PSDQ questionnaire was designed by researchers of Brigham Young University in order to assess the behaviors that parents demonstrated towards their children, as well as to offer a tool that would provide data consistent with Baumrind's (1970) historical research on parenting styles (Bell, 2011, p. 31). Locke and Prinz's (2001) review of over 55 parenting style assessments found the PSDQ to be both theoretically and psychometrically strong in its assessment of parenting styles and behaviors. The PSDQ is a 62-item self-reporting measure in which parents read a variety of statements that are typically used to describe parents, and then determine how much they agree or disagree that each statement describes "pretty good" parents. Each item on the questionnaire is rated on a Likert scale, with responses ranging from *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *unsure*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. Upon completion of each questionnaire, specific items are grouped

into various subfactors or dimensions that characterize three parenting styles: *authoritarian*, *authoritative*, and *permissive*. The different subfactors or dimensions used to characterize each of the three parenting styles are: authoritative parenting style, which includes warmth and involvement, reasoning/induction, democratic participation/autonomy granting, responsiveness; authoritarian parenting style which includes verbal hostility, corporal punishment, non-reasoning/punitive strategies, directiveness; permissive parenting style, which includes lack of follow-through, ignoring misbehavior, and lack of self-confidence. After each subfactor or dimension is varied to a mean score, they are then combined and their averages are computed to yield separate mean scores representative of each of the three parenting styles (Bell, 2011, p. 31). It is hypothesized that the greatest mean number yielded amongst the three parenting styles' scores best represents the specific parenting style implemented most frequently by that participant.

Children's Behavior Questionnaire-Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF). The CBQ-VSF caregiver report was created by Rothbart, et al., (2001) in an effort to assess areas of temperament directly related to emotional intelligence in children ages 3 to 8 years. For the intents and purposes of this particular instrument, temperament was defined as the individual differences in a child's emotional reactivity and self-regulation, influenced both by heredity and by environmental experiences (Rothbart & Derryberry, 1981). In Putnam and Rothbart's (2006) analysis of the assessment, using data from 1,189 participants, the CBQ-VF demonstrated both satisfactory internal consistency and criterion validity. Additionally, the assessment was found to exhibit longitudinal stability and cross-informant agreement, similar to that of the standard CBQ measure. The standard CBQ form is composed of 195 items measuring the following 15 scales related to temperament: Activity Level, Anger/Frustration, Approach/Positive

Anticipation, Attentional Control, Discomfort, Falling Reactivity/Soothability, Fear, High Intensity Pleasure, Impulsivity, Inhibitory Control, Low Intensity Pleasure, Perceptual Sensitivity, Sadness, Smiling and Laughter, and Shyness (Putnam & Rothbart, 2006). Due to the extended amount of time required to complete the standard CBQ form, the CBQ-VSF was created as a brief alternative to gather the same information included on the standard assessment, but in a quicker manner. The CBQ-VSF is composed of 36 items measuring the aforementioned 15 scales related to temperament; however, the items are placed under three groups each assessing a broad dimension of temperament: *Surgency* (an emotional element that is typically characterized as having high activity levels, positive emotions, impulsivity, sociability, and responsiveness), *Negative Affectivity* (the ability to experience negative emotions and a poor self-concept), and *Empathy* (the amount of matching or complementary reaction to the emotions of others) (Putnam and Rothbart, 2006). On the form, parents are instructed to rate their child on a 7-point Likert scale with responses ranging from *extremely untrue of your child, quite untrue, slightly untrue, neither true or untrue, slightly true, quite true, extremely true*, and *not applicable*. Based on parents' overall ratings regarding their children, the CBQ-VF then yields scaled scores regarding their temperament across the aforementioned dimensions, which ultimately gives insight into their overall levels of emotional intelligence (Putnam & Rothbart, 2006).

Target Population and Sample

The population of participants for this study consisted of 80 English speaking parents living throughout the state of New Jersey, who had a pre-school child between the ages of 3 to 6 years (in the case of parents with multiple children, only one child per household was involved).

Prior to participation in the study, subjects were required to meet the following additional criteria:

- 1) Must be the biological parent of a pre-school child, ages 3-6 years.
- 2) Must reside in the state of New Jersey.

Recruitment Method and Strategy

The researcher contacted the LOJ World Outreach Center in Paterson, New Jersey, where she was completing her doctoral internship, to assist her in recruiting samples for her study. After securing their cooperation (see Appendix E), the researcher submitted a packet, which included a parent invitation letter (Appendix A), demographic screener (see Appendix B), parenting style questionnaire (see Appendix C), and child temperament questionnaire (see Appendix D) for the study; the community center retains these for their records. Recruitment procedures were as follows: Parents were verbally recruited by the researcher upon entering the community center throughout the course of the day. The researcher approached and greeted each parent as he or she walked in, using the following statement, *“Hi, welcome to the LOJ World Outreach Center! Would you be interested in participating in a research study about parenting style and the emotions of young children?”* Parents who verbally agreed to participate in the study were then asked the following: *“Are you a parent of a pre-school aged child?”* If the response was “yes”, the parents were given a packet to complete; it contained the following: parent invitation letter, demographic screener, parenting style questionnaire, and child temperament questionnaire. If the response was “no”, the parents were informed that they were not eligible to participate in the study, and were thanked for their time. Parents found to be eligible were given a packet which included a parent invitation letter outlining the researcher’s contact information, confidentiality agreement, a brief description of the research study being

conducted, and affirmation that participation in the study is voluntary; it also included information about the decision to withdraw without penalty, the parenting style questionnaire, and the child temperament questionnaire. Parents who were able to participate in the study were given the option to complete the information included in the packet while visiting at the community center, or to take it home and bring it back to the researcher when completed. Overall, a total of 100 questionnaires were given to participants as part of the study; of the 100 questionnaires, 80% was returned and 20% remained outstanding. Upon receiving parents' questionnaires, reviews were conducted with each parent to ensure that all paperwork was completed, entirely, and to fill in any missing responses across questionnaires. Following the receipt of all questionnaires, analyses were completed based on parents' responses in order to examine the effects that parenting styles would have on their pre-school children's temperament, which ultimately reflects on their levels of emotional intelligence. Analyses were also completed to examine the influence that ethnicity, age, and marital status would have on parenting style.

Chapter 4: Results

Research Design

A quantitative correlation study research design was employed to examine the presence and strength of the relationship between parenting style, and the level of emotional intelligence in preschool age children. It was determined to be the most effective method to study these two variables; the results yielded from the experiment would be potentially useful in making generalizations regarding a larger population (Keele, n.d.).

Demographics

Table 1 outlines the descriptive information for the 80 parents who were included in this study. The participants consisted of 6 males and 74 females of whom 11.3 percent were between the ages of 18-25 years; 85 percent were between the ages of 26-49 years, and 3.8 percent were between the ages of 50-64 years. All 80 participants were also biological parents of at least one pre-school aged child between the ages of 3-6 years.

Of the participants, 22 (27.5%) were identified as Hispanic/Latino; 2 (2.5%) were White/Caucasian; 35 (43.8%) were Black/African-American, and 21 (26.3%) identified themselves as being of another race not specifically represented in the aforementioned categories. Additional race classifications described by participants included: Mixed Black and Hispanic, East Indian, African, Mixed Black and White, West Indian, and Mixed Black and American Indian. With regard to level of education, 2 (2.5%) of the participants had some high school education; 21 (26.3%) had graduated from high school; 27 (33.8%) had some college education; 14 (17.5%) had graduated from college, and 16 (20.0%) had graduate/professional level education. Of the 80 participants, 30 (37.5%) identified themselves as single, never

married; 13 (16.3%) were living with a significant other; 28 (35.0%) were married; 3 (3.8%) were separated; 5 (6.3%) were divorced, and 1 (1.3%) was widowed.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Data

Variable	N=80	%
Participant Gender		
Male	6	7.5
Female	74	92.5
Age		
18-25	9	11.3
26-49	68	85.0
50-64	3	3.8
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	22	27.5
White/Caucasian	2	2.5
Black/African-American	35	43.8
Other	21	26.3
Education		
Some High School	2	2.5
Graduated High School	21	26.3
Some College	27	33.8
Graduated College	14	17.5
Graduate/Professional School	16	20.0
Marital Status		
Single, Never Married	30	37.5
Living Together	13	16.3
Married	28	35.0
Separated	3	3.8
Divorced	5	6.3
Widowed	1	1.3

Research Question 1

How did parents rate their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, *Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)*?

To answer the first research question regarding participant ratings of their own parenting style and practices, the means and standard deviations of three styles of parenting (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) were computed (see Table 2). As shown in Table 2, the group means identified the *authoritative* parenting style as the most frequent or favored ($M= 4.38$), followed by *authoritarian* ($M= 2.45$), and then *permissive* ($M= 2.40$).

In order to determine the direction of the differences in parenting style across participant race/ethnicity, the means and standard deviations were computed across these populations (see Table 3). All groups identified Authoritative as their highest rated parenting style. A further review within each parenting style, however, revealed some differences. Hispanics/Latinos were found to rate highest on the *authoritative parenting style* ($M= 4.49$), versus Blacks/African-Americans, who rated highest on both the *authoritarian parenting style* ($M= 2.62$) and *permissive parenting style* ($M= 2.46$).

Similarly, parenting style across age groups was also computed and revealed Authoritative to be the most highly rated (see Table 4). Further review within parenting style found that participants rated highest on the authoritative style of parenting across all three age groups: 18-25 ($M= 4.23$), 26-49 ($M= 4.40$), and 50-64 ($M= 4.65$). Finally, differences in parenting style across quality of relationships were computed. Given the results shown in Table 5, it was found that much like age and race/ethnicity, participants rated the authoritative parenting style highest, regardless of the quality of their relationship. To gain another perspective, percentages were examined within each subgroup to determine differences in

parenting style across individual participants; however, results continued to show that the vast majority of participants favored the authoritative parenting style overall.

Table 2: Means and SDs for Parenting Styles

Parenting Style	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Authoritative	4.38	.37
Authoritarian	2.45	.65
Permissive	2.40	.34

Table 3: Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Participant Race/Ethnicity

Parenting Style	Race/Ethnicity	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Authoritative	Hispanic/Latino	4.49	.33	22
	White/Caucasian	3.73	.65	2
	Black/African-American	4.42	.30	35
	Other	4.30	.45	21
Authoritarian	Hispanic/Latino	2.18	.56	22
	White/Caucasian	2.13	.82	2
	Black/African-American	2.62	.72	35
	Other	2.47	.56	21
Permissive	Hispanic/Latino	2.40	.39	22
	White/Caucasian	2.20	.38	2
	Black/African-American	2.46	.35	35
	Other	2.36	.30	21

Table 4: Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Age

Parenting Style	Age	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Authoritative	18-25	4.23	.69	9
	26-49	4.40	.31	68
	50-64	4.65	.29	3
Authoritarian	18-25	2.09	.63	9
	26-49	2.51	.66	68
	50-64	2.12	.08	3
Permissive	18-25	2.40	.47	9
	26-49	2.41	.33	68
	50-64	2.33	.48	3

Table 5: Means and SDs for Parenting Styles across Quality of Parent Relationship

Parenting Style	Relationship Characterization	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Authoritative	No Answer	4.37	.44	29
	Excellent	4.53	.27	11
	Happy	4.28	.39	16
	Stable	4.35	.34	13
	Needs Work	4.31	.60	2
	Fair	4.58	.33	3
	Good	4.45	.06	3
	Ending	4.65	.05	3
Authoritarian	No Answer	2.58	.71	29
	Excellent	2.43	.81	11
	Happy	2.31	.59	16
	Stable	2.52	.44	13
	Needs Work	2.11	.47	2
	Fair	2.02	.67	3
	Good	2.48	.94	3
	Ending	2.11	.86	3
Permissive	No Answer	2.43	.42	29
	Excellent	2.39	.37	11
	Happy	2.45	.32	16
	Stable	2.36	.34	13
	Needs Work	2.33	.28	2
	Fair	2.31	.30	3
	Good	2.42	.10	3
	Ending	2.30	.24	3

Research Question 2

How did parents rate areas of temperament related to their pre-school aged children's level of emotional intelligence on the *Children's Behavior Questionnaire-Very Short Form (CBQ-VSF)*?

To answer the second research question regarding parents' ratings of their children's temperament on the CBQ-VSF, the means and standard deviations of three aspects of emotional intelligence (surgency or positive affect, negative affect, empathy) were computed (see Table 6). As shown in Table 6, participants rated their children highest in their ability to demonstrate empathy ($M= 4.96$), followed by degree of negative affect ($M= 3.94$), and then level of surgency ($M= 3.52$).

As in the previous question, three additional comparisons were examined. In order to determine the direction of the differences in child temperament across participant race/ethnicity, the means and standard deviations were computed (see Table 7). White/Caucasians were found to rate their children highest in their ability to demonstrate all three areas of temperament: surgency or a positive affect ($M= 3.71$), negative affect ($M= 4.21$), and empathy ($M= 5.36$). Hispanic/Latinos were found to rate their children lowest in their ability to demonstrate surgency or a positive affect ($M= 3.38$), and negative affect ($M= 3.80$). The review of child temperament across participant age groups found that participants in the 18-25 age group rated their children highest in their ability to demonstrate surgency or a positive affect ($M=3.61$; see Table 8). Participants in the 50-64 age group rated their children highest in their ability to demonstrate negative affect ($M= 4.66$), and those in the 26-49 age group rated their children highest in their ability to demonstrate empathy ($M= 4.99$). Finally, differences in child temperament across quality of participant relationship were computed. Given the results show in Table 9, it was

found that participants who characterized the quality of their relationship as *fair* were found to have children who had the greatest ability to demonstrate surgency or positive affect ($M= 3.97$). Participants who characterized their relationship as *happy* were found to have children who had the greatest ability to demonstrate negative affect ($M=4.23$), whereas those whose relationship was characterized as *good* had children with the greatest ability to demonstrate empathy ($M= 5.36$).

Table 6: Means and SDs for Areas of Temperament within Emotional Intelligence

Temperament	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Level of Surgency	3.52	.57
Degree of Negative Affect	3.94	.79
Level of Empathy	4.96	.66

Table 7: Means and SDs for Areas of Child Temperament across Participant Race/Ethnicity

Temperament	Race/Ethnicity	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Level of Surgency	Hispanic/Latino	3.38	.54	22
	White/Caucasian	3.71	.18	2
	Black/African-American	3.51	.60	35
	Other	3.68	.55	21
Negative Affect	Hispanic/Latino	3.80	.70	22
	White/Caucasian	4.21	.53	2
	Black/African-American	4.00	.87	35
	Other	3.98	.79	21
Level of Empathy	Hispanic/Latino	4.93	.64	22
	White/Caucasian	5.36	.10	2
	Black/African-American	5.06	.73	35
	Other	4.78	.55	21

Table 8: Means and SDs for Areas of Child's Temperament across Participant Age

Temperament	Age	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Level of Surgency	18-25	3.61	.49	9
	26-49	3.51	.60	68
	50-64	3.58	.25	3
Negative Affect	18-25	3.63	.62	9
	26-49	3.96	.81	68
	50-64	4.66	.46	3
Level of Empathy	18-25	4.89	.47	9
	26-49	4.99	.68	68
	50-64	4.55	.69	3

Table 9: Means and SDs for Child Temperament across Quality of Parent Relationship

Temperament	Relationship Characterization	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Level of Surgency	No Answer	3.66	.55	29
	Excellent	3.42	.72	11
	Happy	3.39	.44	16
	Stable	3.58	.26	13
	Needs Work	3.30	.53	2
	Fair	3.97	.76	3
	Good	3.14	1.37	3
	Ending	3.46	.18	3
Negative Affect	No Answer	3.81	.67	29
	Excellent	3.80	1.23	11
	Happy	4.23	.48	16
	Stable	4.22	.73	13
	Needs Work	3.50	.12	2
	Fair	4.11	.47	3
	Good	4.11	1.25	3
	Ending	2.42	.00	3
Level of Empathy	No Answer	4.86	.47	29
	Excellent	5.06	1.05	11
	Happy	5.05	.50	16
	Stable	4.85	.85	13
	Needs Work	4.82	.05	2
	Fair	5.00	.91	3
	Good	5.36	.87	3
	Ending	5.18	.35	3

Research Question 3

What was the relationship between the areas of temperament related to emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children, and parenting style?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between parenting style and areas of temperament within emotional intelligence in pre-school children. The results indicated a significant, positive correlation between the authoritarian parenting style and children's degree of negative affect, $r(78) = .334, p = .002$ (see Table 10). No other significant correlations between parenting style and emotional intelligence were noted amongst the remaining variables.

Table 10: Correlations between Parenting Style and Aspects of Emotional Intelligence

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Authoritarian	-					
2. Authoritative	-.176	-				
3. Permissive	.490**	.027	-			
4. Level of Surgency	-.084	-.107	-.172	-		
5. Negative Affect	.334**	-.054	-.031	-.023	-	
6. Level of Empathy	.107	.002	-.032	-.219	.204	-

** $p < .01$

Chapter 5: Discussion

The intent of this study was to examine the relationship between parenting style and the level of emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children. Based on the review of literature, it was hypothesized that children between the ages of 3-6 years would be most susceptible to the effects of parenting style because it has the potential to influence the progression and level of their emotional intelligence during this particular period of growth and development. In this study, the following three questions were posed:

- a) How did parents rate their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, *Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire* (PSDQ)?
- b) How did parents rate areas of temperament related to their pre-school aged children's level of emotional intelligence on the *Children's Behavior Questionnaire-Very Short Form* (CBQ-VSF)?
- c) What was the relationship between areas of temperament within emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children, and parenting style?

Additionally, this study represented an introductory attempt at exploring parenting style and emotional intelligence as it pertains specifically to the pre-school aged population.

Parenting Style and Ethnicity

The results from this study showed that the most frequent or most favored parenting style rated by participants was *authoritative*, followed by *authoritarian*, and then *permissive*. When looking specifically at the mean values within the authoritative parenting style, the Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino ethnicities were found to be higher than that of the remaining ethnic groups. This finding proved to be consistent with research studies stating

culture's influence on the parenting style and attitudes which individuals favor and to which they subscribe (Ferrari, 2002; Berg, 2011). According to Zayas (1992), cultural values such as familism are typically seen within the African-American and Hispanic cultures; in their homes, they are more likely to demonstrate nurturing, positive behaviors, and less physical and verbal means of punishment; these are characteristics of the authoritative parenting style. Furthermore, cultures who are in full support of familism typically live in households consisting of extended family members who help raise and care for the children in the home (Ferrari, 2002). As a result, there is a possibility that the Black/American and Hispanic/Latino participants in the study were likely to rate the authoritative parenting style higher because they were not solely responsible for caring, disciplining, and nurturing their children. It is also suspected that having extended family members in the home to support the process of child-rearing has caused some of the participants to have a more "balanced" parenting style, and more favorable view of parenting overall.

Parenting Style and Age

An examination of the means determined that the authoritarian parenting style was rated highest by the 50-64 age group, followed by the authoritative parenting style, also highly rated by the same group. These findings, although yielding statistical significance, must be interpreted with caution due to the overwhelmingly small sample size in the 50-64 age group; it consisted of only 3 participants. Given the small sample size, it would not be appropriate to draw conclusions about the larger population of this particular group. Interestingly, there were found to be no other statistically significant differences in parenting style ratings amongst the 18-25 and 26-49 age groups. This finding may again be due to the overall small sample size of the study of only 80 participants.

Parenting Style and Quality of Parent Relationship

In considering the relationship between parenting style and quality of parent relationship, the study showed no statistical significance between the two variables. This finding was congruent with the findings reported by Krishnakumar & Buehler (2000), who argued that relationships and marital stressors are important to consider when discussing parenting style; however, the reality is that it may account only for between 1% and 25% of the variance in parenting style and behaviors. In other words, the evaluation of the strength of the relationship between the quality of a relationship and parenting style can prove to be quite misleading because it does not consider other variables that can affect the direction and/or strength of the relationship. Other characteristics that may need to be taken into consideration include: the gender of the child, the child's developmental level, the family structure as a whole, the gender of the parent, the study's design, and analytical strategies (Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

Emotional Intelligence and Ethnicity

As previously mentioned, an analyses of the results determined that aspects of temperament related to children's emotional intelligence were rated highest by the White/Caucasian ethnicity. Although the mean values for each factor indicate that this particular subgroup believes their pre-school aged children possess the ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence overall without difficulty, there are some important considerations to keep in mind. First, in looking at the number of participants across each ethnic subgroup, it was determined that the White/Caucasian ethnicity group rated their children highest across emotional intelligence factors; however, their subgroup consisted of only 2 participants. On the other hand, the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity group consisted of 25 participants; the Black/African-American ethnicity group had 35 participants, and the Other ethnicity group had 21 participants. Second,

the researcher conducted her entire study at a community center in the heart of an inner city, where the majority of the population consisted of Hispanic/Latino and Black/African-American ethnicities. These two important factors are significant because they may account not only for the disparity in participant numbers across ethnic sub-groupings, but also may serve as a potential explanation about the reasons why the White/Caucasian ethnicity ratings were significantly higher for children's emotional intelligence. Perhaps if the study had been conducted in a setting where there was a more diverse ethnic population, inferences would have been easier to draw, based on the findings.

Emotional Intelligence and Age

In examining the results of the analyses between aspects of temperament related to emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children and parents' ages, various findings were uncovered. Outcomes indicated that participants in the 18-25 age group rated their pre-school aged children highest in their ability to demonstrate surgency or positive affect. Participants in the 50-64 age group rated their pre-school aged children highest in their ability to demonstrate negative affect, and those in the 26-49 age group rated their children highest in their ability to portray empathy. Similar to the explanation of results yielded within the ethnic subgroups, the differences in results as they pertains to age may not necessarily be due to true age differences; rather, they are results of the disparity in participant numbers for each age group. In looking at the number of participants, it was found that the 18-25 age group consisted of 9 participants; the 26-49 age group consisted of 68 participants, and the 50-64 age group was composed of only 3 participants. With such a disproportionate number of participants within each age group, it becomes challenging to make deductions regarding the reasons why one group rated their children's' temperaments higher, in comparison with another group. Perhaps if the researcher

had recruited participants in various pre-schools, the likelihood of having a more evenly dispersed age grouping would have been higher. On another note, having the age groupings broken down into a larger number of subcategories would have yielded results that, potentially, would have been easier to interpret. For example, rather than 18-25, 26-49, and 50-64 age groups, having them organized by 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60+ would have been more beneficial to the study's overarching goal.

Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Relationship

Children's temperament related to emotional intelligence was analyzed, along with quality of parent relationships to determine any significant findings. Upon reviewing the results it was determined that participants who described the quality of their relationship more positively (i.e., *fair, happy, excellent, etc.*) were also found to rate aspects of their children's temperaments, related to emotional intelligence as being higher than other relationship classifications. Conversely, participants who described the quality of their relationship less positively (i.e., *ending, needs work*) were also found to rate aspects of their children's temperament as being low. Such findings suggest that pre-school aged children who grow up in environments that are surrounded by positive adult interactions and relationships are better able to demonstrate various positive aspects of emotional intelligence, in comparison with those children who live in environments where their parents are not happy or are not in satisfactory relationships.

Parenting Style and Aspects of Emotional Intelligence

The results from the current study indicate that there was one significant relationship found specifically between the authoritarian parenting style and children's degree of negative affect or negative temperament. Given this interaction, it may be suggested that pre-school aged

children raised specifically in authoritarian households tend to experience and demonstrate more negative emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, and nervousness than those children raised in authoritative and permissive households. According to Williams (2013), children of authoritarian parents generally tend to display a limited range of emotions, or become emotionally inflexible because they are given very few opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings at home. Furthermore, and consistent with the literature, when they experience unfavorable situations, children from authoritarian homes may “shutdown,” become emotionally withdrawn, stoic, or quiet; these are telling signs of lower levels of emotional intelligence (Kafetsios, 2004).

Interestingly, no other relationship was found among the remaining parenting styles (authoritative, permissive) and children’s areas of temperament (surgency, empathy, negative affect) related to level of emotional intelligence. Such results may be due to various methodological factors that yielded a small sample size from a very specific location. Another potential explanation for the lack of relationship may also be due to the time of the day in which participants chose to complete the questionnaires that inquired about parenting style and their pre-school child’s behaviors. Throughout the study, the majority of participants were recruited in the late afternoon when they were coming into the community center to pick up their pre-school children from recreational activities. At that time, parents are more likely to be tired after their work day, and therefore less likely to be attentive and be cognizant of their own parenting views or the behaviors of their children, in order to rate them accurately on the questionnaires. Furthermore, in being away from their young children for most of the day, perhaps the separation contributed to parents rating aspects of their children’s temperaments more positively than if they had spent the entire day with them.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

One of the strengths of the study was the research design, more specifically the structure and method for gathering participants to respond to the questionnaires. The questionnaires were anonymous and did not require consent forms, all of which alleviated any potential participant anxiety associated with their identities being revealed and matched to their responses. Also, giving the participants the option of taking their questionnaires home to complete increased their levels of comfort and the likelihood to be more truthful and transparent in their responses. Finally, the agreement and commitment to the study by the community center, their granting of continual access to the sample, and their availability to the overall purpose of the study, ultimately facilitated the study's completion.

In considering the limitations of the study, there are a few factors to keep in mind. First, the study, though looking at parenting style, was confined only to parents who were raising pre-school aged children in a specific location. Second, due to the small sampling size of 80 participants as well as the previously mentioned sampling bias associated with the research study, the findings that were uncovered were not significant enough to draw conclusions about the overall relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, a small sampling size also meant that the findings could not be used as a representation that applied generally across ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, and age groups. Third, the parent and child questionnaires that were used in the research study depended solely on the parents' views of their own parenting styles as well as their views regarding aspects of their own children's temperaments and behaviors; consequently, the accuracy of the study could have been affected, based on each parent's degree of willingness and openness to report about their specific parenting behaviors, as well as their children's temperament and behaviors.

Implications of the Study

Given the results of this research study, it is evident that there remains a gap in research to support the relationship between parenting style and the levels of emotional intelligence in preschool aged children. Evidence has shown the positive outcomes associated with children raised by parents who implement the authoritative parenting style; however, research is yet to confirm the effects as it specific relates to the pre-school aged population (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2011; Williams, 2013). Another factor to consider from this study is the possibility that very few parents clearly fall into one parenting style category; most move across various parenting styles daily depending on their children's age, parent temperament, and context. As a result, the primary contribution of this particular research study is to bring attention to the fact that the behaviors, ideals, and attitudes that pre-school children develop and consider appropriate are heavily influenced by their parents and how the parents choose to rear their children. Thus, if parents can gain a greater understanding of how their own behavior and parenting styles can affect their pre-school children's future developmental outcomes, they will become more mindful of their actions and attitudes regarding parenting as they move on with their lives

Implications of this current study may also prove helpful to educators of parents to demonstrate how parenting practices directly affect early childhood development. For example, literature emphasized the fact that positive parenting practices encouraged socially appropriate behaviors in young children such as sharing attention, and social cooperation (Alegre, 2012). There is also a variety of research to suggest that inappropriate parenting practices contribute to child development issues later on into adolescence and adulthood. For example, Caspi's (2000) research confirmed such notions when it was found that 3-year-olds who were under controlled

and demonstrated a lack of parental involvement in their lives (e.g., permissive parenting style), eventually developed into impulsive, inconsistent, anti-social young adults.

On the whole, sharing the literature and the purpose associated with this study with parents will potentially help them to become more aware of their styles of parenting and how to make improvements that will ultimately prove to be beneficial to their young children.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations from this study include replication of the study, using the same methodology but in other locations and with more participants. For example, this study focused its efforts on parents of pre-school aged children at a community center in New Jersey. Perhaps the study can be duplicated and expanded to include parents in pre-schools in other community centers in New Jersey as well as in neighboring states such as New York and Pennsylvania. In doing so, the results of the study will then become more generalizable. More studies can also be conducted to evaluate the impact of additional factors that may affect parenting styles as it relates to raising pre-school children; these might include: religious affiliation, separation and divorce, country of origin, socio-economic status, and parental stress. Finally, using interviews and observations for future research as opposed to parent questionnaires and reporting alone may prove to be more useful in gaining insight into parent styles and practices with regard to pre-school children.

Conclusion

To date, research has been conducted on parenting styles, their benefits and their implications across various social contexts as these relates to older children. The literature has clearly demonstrated the effects that parental attachment and style of parenting have had on the emotional adjustment, social skills, and relational competence of children ages 12 and older

(Engels, et al., 2001). In this study, parenting styles and practices were studied in relation to the level of emotional intelligence of pre-school aged children, specifically. Participants in the study reported how much they agreed or disagreed regarding practices of “good parents,” and then reported on aspects of their pre-school children’s temperament specifically related to their overall levels of emotional intelligence. In analyzing the results of the participant responses, there was found to be only one significant interaction between the authoritarian parenting style and children’s degree of negative affect. Although no other relationships were found between the remaining parenting styles (authoritative, permissive) and children’s temperaments (empathy, degree of surgency) in this study, the aforementioned interaction certainly indicates that parenting practices have the potential to affect aspects of a child’s development very early in the child’s life. It is the hope that this research study will encourage other scholars to conduct studies analyzing the relationship between parenting style and emotional intelligence in pre-school aged children on a grander scale in order to sufficiently demonstrate its impact and significance.

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX A****PARENT INVITATION LETTER**

Dear Participant:

My name is Giselle Farrell, and I am a school psychologist and third year doctoral student at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. I am conducting a research study about parenting styles, and the emotional behaviors of preschool aged children. I would greatly appreciate the participation of you and your preschool child in helping to gather the data needed to complete this study.

As a participant in the study, I would like you to complete the attached three questionnaires. The first questionnaire asks basic background information about you and your child; the second one asks for your opinions regarding various parenting practices, and the third one asks for your opinions regarding your child's various behaviors. Please keep in mind that your participation in this research study is completely voluntary; therefore, if you decide to withdraw your consent and cease participation at any time, you are free to do so without penalty.

Each participant in the study will be identified by an ID number, so when the results of the study are gathered and shared with other researchers, you will not be identifiable in any of the written materials. Although there are no direct benefits to you, it is my hope that the results of the study will help to make parents more aware of how their parenting practices are important to child development outcomes. Finally, please be advised that there are no known risks associated with participating in this study. Although it is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, I have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

In the event that you are interested in participating in the study, please fill out the attached forms and return them to me in the main office of the outreach center at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions about this research or my findings, please do not hesitate to contact me via any of the options noted below. You may also contact my dissertation supervisor and study's Principal Investigator, Katy Tresco, PhD at 215-871-6630. If you have additional questions or concerns regarding the rights of research participants you may call the PCOM office of Research Compliance at 215-871-6783. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration!

Kindest Regards,

Giselle Farrell, MA, EdS
gisellefa@pcom.edu
c: (973)489-1487

APPENDIX B**Demographic Form**

The following questions below will help to determine your demographic characteristics.

Please select one answer from each question.

1. **Gender:** Male Female

2. **Age:** 18-25 26-49 50-64 65 & older

3. **What is your race/ethnicity?**
 - a. Asian or Pacific Islander
 - b. Hispanic/Latino
 - c. White/Caucasian
 - d. Black/African American
 - e. American Indian/Native American
 - f. Other_____

4. **What is the highest level of education that you have completed?**
 - a. Grade School (6th grade or less)
 - b. Some High School
 - c. Graduated High School
 - d. Some College
 - e. Graduated College
 - f. Graduate/Professional School

5. **Which of the following best describes your occupation?**
 - a. Student
 - b. Homemaker
 - c. Retired
 - d. Self-employed
 - e. Administrative
 - f. Sales/Marketing
 - g. Trade/Labor
 - h. Education
 - i. Manager
 - j. Medical
 - k. Other_____

6. **What is your present marital status?**
- a. Single, never married
 - b. Living together
 - c. Married
 - d. Separated
 - e. Divorced
 - f. Widowed
7. **How would you characterize your current relationship (if applicable):**
- a. Excellent
 - b. Happy
 - c. Stable
 - d. Struggling
 - e. Needs work
 - f. Fair
 - g. Good
 - h. Ending

The following questions below will help to determine demographic characteristics of your children. Please select one answer from each question.

1. **How many of your children living in your household are:**
- a. Less than 3 years old? _____ (please also indicate gender)
 - b. 3 through 5 years old? _____ (please also indicate gender)
 - c. 6 through 12 years old? _____ (please also indicate gender)
 - d. 13 through 17 years old? _____ (please also indicate gender)
2. **Have any of your children been diagnosed with a developmental disability, learning problem, or cognitive illness? YES NO**

If YES, please indicate their age(s) and gender(s):

<i>Good Parents:</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>unsure</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>strongly agree</i>
q. scold and criticize their child to make the child improve.	1	2	3	4	5
r. show patience with their child.	1	2	3	4	5
s. grab their child when the child is being disobedient.	1	2	3	4	5
t. state punishments to their child but don't actually do them.	1	2	3	4	5
u. respond promptly to their child's needs or feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
v. allow their child to contribute to making family rules.	1	2	3	4	5
w. argue with their child.	1	2	3	4	5
x. are confident about their parenting abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
y. explain to their child why rules should be obeyed.	1	2	3	4	5
z. know that their feelings are more important than their child's feelings	1	2	3	4	5
aa. tell their child that they appreciate what the child tries to do or accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
bb. punish their child by putting the child off somewhere alone with few explanations.	1	2	3	4	5
cc. encourage their child to talk about the consequences of their actions.	1	2	3	4	5
dd. are afraid that disciplining their child for misbehavior will cause the child to dislike them.	1	2	3	4	5
ee. consider their child's desires before asking them to do something.	1	2	3	4	5
ff. express strong anger toward their child.	1	2	3	4	5
gg. are aware of problems or concerns about their child at school.	1	2	3	4	5
hh. threaten their child with punishment more often than actually giving it.	1	2	3	4	5
ii. express affection to their child by hugging, kissing, and holding the child.	1	2	3	4	5

<i>Good Parents:</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>unsure</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>strongly agree</i>
jj. ignore their child's misbehavior.	1	2	3	4	5
kk. use physical punishment (spanking, grabbing, pushing, slapping) to discipline their child.	1	2	3	4	5
ll. carry out discipline immediately after their child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
mm. apologize to their child when make a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5
nn. tell their child what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
oo. give in to their child when the child causes a commotion about something; for example, in the grocery store or at someone's house.	1	2	3	4	5
pp. talk over their child's misbehavior with the child.	1	2	3	4	5
qq. slap their child when the child misbehaves.	1	2	3	4	5
rr. disagree with their child.	1	2	3	4	5
ss. allow their child to interrupt others.	1	2	3	4	5
tt. have warm and intimate times with their child.	1	2	3	4	5
uu. when two children are fighting, they discipline their child first and ask questions later.	1	2	3	4	5
vv. encourages their child to freely express himself (or herself) even when disagreeing with the parent.	1	2	3	4	5
ww. use rewards or treats or favors to get their child to obey.	1	2	3	4	5
xx. scold or criticize their child when the child's behavior doesn't meet the parent's expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
yy. encourage their child to express their own opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
zz. set strict well-established rules for their child	1	2	3	4	5
aaa. explain to their child how they feel about the child's good and bad behavior.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

(Rothbart et al., 2001)

Subject No. _____

Date of Child's Birth:

Today's Date _____

_____/_____/_____
Month Day Year

Sex of Child _____

Age of Child _____
Years monthsInstructions: Please read carefully before starting:

On the next pages you will see a set of statements that describe children's reactions to a number of situations. We would like you to tell us what your child's reaction is likely to be in those situations. There are of course no "correct" ways of reacting; children differ widely in their reactions, and it is these differences we are trying to learn about. Please read each statement and decide whether it is a "true" or "untrue" description of your child's reaction within the past six months. Use the following scale to indicate how well a statement describes your child:

- | Circle # | If the statement is: |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | extremely untrue of your child |
| 2 | quite untrue of your child |
| 3 | slightly untrue of your child |
| 4 | neither true nor false of your child |
| 5 | slightly true of your child |
| 6 | quite true of your child |
| 7 | extremely true of your child |

If you cannot answer one of the items because you have never seen the child in that situation, for example, if the statement is about the child's reaction to your singing and you have never sung to your child, then circle NA (not applicable).

Please be sure to circle a number or NA for every item.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
extremely untrue	quite untrue	slightly untrue	neither true nor untrue	slightly true	quite true	extremely true	not applicable

My child:

1. Seems always in a big hurry to get from one place to another.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
2. Gets quite frustrated when prevented from doing something s/he wants to do.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
3. Is sensitive to how others are feeling.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
4. Likes going down high slides or other adventurous activities.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
5. Is quite upset by a little cut or bruise.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
6. Seems upset when parents are in a bad mood.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
7. Often rushes into new situations.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
8. Tends to become sad if the family's plans don't work out.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
9. Seems upset when s/he sees a hurt animal.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
10. Seems to be at ease with almost any person.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
11. Is afraid of burglars or the "boogie man."
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
12. Becomes bothered when parents are upset.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
extremely untrue	quite untrue	slightly untrue	neither true nor untrue	slightly true	quite true	extremely true	not applicable

My child:

13. Prefers quiet activities to active games.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
14. When angry about something, s/he tends to stay upset for ten minutes or longer.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
15. Can tell at just a glance how others are feeling.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
16. Likes to go high and fast when pushed on a swing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
17. Seems to feel depressed when unable to accomplish some task.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
18. Becomes upset when s/he thinks someone else has been hurt.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
19. Takes a long time in approaching new situations.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
20. Hardly ever complains when ill with a cold.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
21. Is upset by stories in which the characters are hurt or die.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
22. Is sometimes shy even around people s/he has known a long time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
23. Is very difficult to soothe when s/he has become upset.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
24. Does not seem to be very upset when parents are in a bad mood.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

1 extremely untrue	2 quite untrue	3 slightly untrue	4 neither true nor untrue	5 slightly true	6 quite true	7 extremely true	NA not applicable
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My child:

25. Is full of energy, even in the evening.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
26. Is not afraid of the dark.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
27. Does not usually become distressed when other children are upset.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
28. Likes rough and rowdy games.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
29. Is not very upset at minor cuts or bruises.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
30. Is affected by people's facial expressions.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
31. Is slow and unhurried in deciding what to do next.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
32. Gets angry when s/he can't find something s/he wants to play with.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
33. Looks pleased when other people act happy.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
34. Sometimes turns away shyly from new acquaintances.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
35. Becomes upset when loved relatives or friends are getting ready to leave following a visit.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
extremely untrue	quite untrue	slightly untrue	neither true nor untrue	slightly true	quite true	extremely true	not applicable

My child:

36. Is not very sensitive to people's moods.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
37. Rarely cries or looks upset when watching a sad TV show.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA
38. Feels good when good things happen to characters on TV.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 NA

Please check back to make sure you have completed all items by marking a number or "NA".

Thank you very much for your help!

APPENDIX E

Site Cooperation Letter



LOJ WORLD OUTREACH CENTER

April 1, 2014

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Patricia Gaspard and I am a community member and supervisor at the LOJ World Outreach Center. Giselle Farrell has briefed me regarding her study on the relationship between the parenting style of divorced and separated parents, and the emotional knowledge of young children.

As such, I am writing this letter to inform you that she has the outreach center's full cooperation in helping her to conduct her research study. It is my hope that the results of her research will be helpful in making us more knowledgeable regarding how to help parents of young children who are facing difficult family stressors in our community.

Kindest Regards,


Patricia Gaspard