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The effects of maternal parenting style and religious commitment on self-regulation, academic achievement, and risk behavior among African-American parochial college students[☆]

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Abstract

This study explored relations between religiosity, both parent and student, and maternal parenting style and student academic self-regulation, academic achievement, and risk behavior among African-American youth attending a parochial college. Eighty-five students completed self-report survey measures of religiosity, self-regulation, academic achievement, and risk behavior. Participants also completed youth report measures of parental religiosity and perceived maternal parenting style. Correlational analyses show authoritative parenting to be associated with high levels of academic performance and study skills. Additional correlations revealed that highly religious students tend to perform well academically, study better, and engage in fewer risk behaviors than youth less committed to religion. Although no direct relations were observed between parenting style and student religiosity, maternal parenting style was found to moderate relations between parental and student religiosity. Findings are discussed in terms of their relevance to the population studied. © 2008 The Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Self-regulation; Risk behavior; College; Religiosity; African-American; Religion; Parenting style

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Self-regulation during the adolescent years has been construed in a variety of ways. In general, self-regulation during adolescence involves the ability of the youth to function as an autonomous individual (Patock-Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001). A key feature of autonomy is the ability to make appropriate decisions. A self-regulated individual sets attainable goals and takes appropriate actions to achieve these goals, utilizing their resources while remaining aware of their limitations (Miller & Byrnes, 2001). These individuals show control over their psychological processes and the ability to adapt to their environment. Two domains of adolescents' lives that have often been examined through the lenses of self-regulation theory are academic achievement and risk behavior.

Academic self-regulation can be defined as self-regulated learning; that is, the motivational and behavioral processes allowing individuals to activate and sustain cognitions, behaviors, and emotions in a systematic way toward the attainment of their own learning goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). Rohrkemper (1989) referred to self-regulated learning as a process of adaptation, such that the self-regulated learner is one who takes charge of his/her own behaviors and emotions to facilitate the act of learning (Byrnes, Miller, & Reynolds, 1999; Rohrkemper, 1989). The self-regulated learner is also an individual who understands the motives and strategies that are necessary for learning to occur (Boekaerts, 1996; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994; Wolters, 1998). For example, when faced with difficult academic challenges, self-regulated learners understand when and how to use strategies that increase persistence and performance while other, less self-regulated students tend to give up (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). The self-regulated learner purposefully uses metacognitive strategies that incorporate self-monitoring and evaluative components that allow for self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction (Zimmerman, 1989). The self-regulated learner is one who is intrinsically motivated and feels able to succeed (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994).

In terms of risk behavior in the area of drug use, self-report data have shown that individuals who lack self-regulation tend to use drugs more often than individuals who are highly self-regulated (Novak & Clayton, 2001; Wills, DuHamel, & Vaccaro, 1995). Data collected via the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ, Aubrey, Brown, & Miller, 1994; Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski, 1999) have shown that individuals who have difficulties with self-regulation also show impairment in the ability to control consumption of legal drugs, such as alcohol (Patock-Peckham et al., 2001). In addition, individuals who are daily users of drugs are more likely to decrease this use if they are highly self-regulated (Novak & Clayton, 2001).

One of the salient and often studied predictors of self-regulation (and academic success and drug use, as well) is parenting style. The relationship between parenting styles and developmental outcomes in children and adolescents has long been the subject of interest to researchers. A number of parenting characteristics have been found to be related to developmental outcomes in children (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). Diana Baumrind's parenting style typology is based on two specific parenting characteristics, parental warmth and parental control, yielding four distinct styles when examined in two-dimensional space (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritative parenting is characterized by the presence of clear parameters for children's behavior with reasonable and rational negotiation within set boundaries. Authoritative parents tend to use strict sanctions only when necessary, encourage autonomy and independence, and are consistently responsive and warm. In contrast, authoritarian parents

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