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Parenting Practices Among Two-Parent, African American Families of Preteen Children

Ryan O'Neal Drakes
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Ryan O'Neal Drakes

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Parenting Practices Among Two-Parent, African American Families of Preteen Children

by

Ryan O'Neal Drakes

MA, Long Island University/Brooklyn Campus, 2006

BA, Medgar Evers College, City University of New York, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

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Abstract

Positive parenting promotes children's proper cognitive and personality development and supports high academic performance and achievement. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. This study was based on Baumrind's model of parenting behaviors. Survey and correlation methods were used to gather data from a convenience sample of 103 2-parent, African American families with preteens (aged 9-11 years) from different income neighborhoods in a Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. Logistic and linear regression analyses were conducted. According to study findings, social support (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) significantly predicted positive parenting practices (quality of the parent/child relationship, parental monitoring, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices). When the independent contributions of each of the social support variables were examined in the regression analyses, only perceived functional support from friends and family on parental monitoring and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices was statistically significant. Implications for positive social change include a need to educate 2-parent, African American couples on the importance of maintaining positive relationships among themselves and with social support networks and the role that coparenting support and functional support from friends and family has on positive parenting.

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Dedication

This manuscript is first dedicated to my late grandmother, Ernesta Drakes. Her unwavering hard work in the sugar cane plantations of Barbados under the extremely hot sun for very little pay, and immigrating to America at the tender age of 55, seeking and achieving the American dream, set the Drakes family's foundation for appreciating hard work, pursuing dreams, and developing an impeccably resolute spirit.

This manuscript is also dedicated to the memory of the late Betty James. Mother James was a mother, grandmother and friend who exemplified strength and resolve throughout the challenges of her life. She believed and demonstrated to others that the precious gifts of life were God and Jesus Christ, honesty, humility, humor, and humanitarianism. Mother James' legacy of love and compassion for others will forever live on.

Finally, this manuscript is dedicated to the memory of my good friend, the late Beverly Brandt. Although Beverly is no longer here physically, our friendship and love for each other is eternal.

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I would like to thank my girlfriend, Tanisha James, for her love and for being that solid rock in my life. She has been my eyes in helping me construct this manuscript.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem	2
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions and Hypotheses	9
Research Question 1	9
Research Question 2	10
Research Question 3	10
Theoretical Foundation	11
Nature of the Study	13
Definitions of Key Terms	14
Assumptions.....	19
Scope and Delimitations	20
Limitations	21
Significance of Study.....	21
Summary.....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	24
Introduction.....	24

Positive Versus Negative Parenting Practices	26
Social Support.....	32
Sources of Social Support for Parents	33
Stressors and Social Support for Parenting in Two-Parent Families.....	35
Social Support for Parenting in Diverse Income Families.....	37
Research on Social Support, Positive Parenting Behaviors, and Parenting	
Outcomes	39
Social Support and Parenting Behaviors in Low-Income, African	
American Families	41
Social Support, Cultural Context, and African American Parents.....	43
Social Support, Positive Parenting, and African American Populations	43
Implications for Future Research.....	46
Summary of Chapter 2	46
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	49
Introduction.....	49
Research Design and Approach	49
Setting and Sample	50
Instrumentation	52
Data Collection	55
Research Questions and Hypotheses	58
Data Analysis	60
Data Assumptions.....	63

Protection of Human Participants	63
Summary	64
Chapter 4: Results	66
Introduction	66
Results of Data Collection	67
Sample Characteristics	69
Descriptive Statistics	72
Hypothesis 1	83
Hypothesis 2	86
Hypothesis 3	90
Summary	94
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	97
Introduction	97
Summary of the Study Findings	98
Summary of Exploratory Findings	101
Interpretation of Findings	101
Hypothesis 1	101
Hypothesis 2	103
Hypothesis 3	104
Methodological Implications	105
Theoretical Implications	105
Practical Implications	106

Limitations of the Study.....	106
Recommendations for Further Research.....	107
Conclusion	108
References.....	110
Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire.....	140

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency Table for Nominal Variables	70
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Age of Parents, Number of Children, Parents' Average Social Support, and Positive Parenting Scale Scores.....	73
Table 3. Correlations Between Mothers' and Fathers' Scores on the Study Variables....	77
Table 4. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for Mothers and Fathers	78
Table 5. Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Mothers' Responses	80
Table 6. Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Fathers' Responses..	81
Table 7. Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Averages of Mothers' and Fathers' Responses.....	82
Table 8. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Short Form of the IBQ..	85
Table 9. Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting parents' average Monitoring and Control Scale Score.....	89
Table 10. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis Predicting parents' average Laxness subscale Score.....	93

List of Figures

Figure 1. Histogram for parents' short form IBQ score.....75

Figure 2. Histogram for parents' monitoring and control scale score76

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Positive parenting practices play a role in the development of young children with regard to children's proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement (Baumrind, 1978; Spera, 2005). Positive parenting behaviors involve the nurturance of a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, the monitoring of children's activities, and consistency in discipline and rule enforcement (Kotchik, 1999). Positive parenting also involves the nurturance of authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, and parenting responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1991; Spera, 2005). Social support to parents influences the extent to which parents are able to consistently follow positive parenting behaviors (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, & Ungar, 2005). However, scholars haven't examined the social support and parenting practices in single-parent families; there was a lack of research on the relationship between social support for two-parent, African American families of preteens and the extent to which they employed positive parenting practices. Therefore, it was important to investigate whether there was a statistical relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens because they can face stressors with regard to conflicts over disciplinary practices with children and economic instability brought about by joblessness by one spouse or partner, or by both parents, which can compromise the exchange of immediate social support resources in shared child care and parenting practices (Ahrons, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011;

Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg, Brown, & Kan, 2012). The results of this study may have implications for positive social change by providing information on the types of service and intervention programs intended to serve two-parent, African American families.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate whether social support (quality of coparenting emotional support and perceive tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support from friends and family) was associated with positive parenting practices (parent/child relationship quality, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of disciplinary practices) among two-parent, African American families of preteens. I examined the statistical significance of social support variables as predictors of positive parenting behavior.

The first chapter provides an introduction and overview of this study. I identify the background of the problem, the research problem to be studied, the purpose of the study, and the research questions and hypotheses. I also explain the theoretical foundation for this study, defined key terms, the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the significance of this study.

Background of the Problem

Positive parenting practices play a role in a child's life and influence the life trajectory of the child. Positive parenting practices are associated with children's proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement among both unicultural and cross-cultural examinations (Baumrind, 1972, 1978, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Dornbusch,

Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Durkin, 1995; Kotchik, 1999; Spera, 2005; Steinberg et al., 1992). Some African American families, especially in among low-income households, residing in crime-impoverished communities use the same modes of positive parenting practices (i.e., a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, consistency in discipline and rule enforcement, authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, and parenting responsiveness and demandingness) as do parents from affluent neighborhoods (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Riley et al., 2009; Ugarriza, 2006; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Other African American families use positive parenting practices that include firm disciplinary actions in combination with high levels of warmth, affection, support, and open communication, which were linked to the protection of children from the adverse effects of residing in crime-impoverished communities and systemic racial discrimination (Koblinsky, Kuvalanka, & Randolph, 2006; Kotchick, Dorsey, & Heller, 2005; Robinson & Werblow, 2012; Spera, 2005), as well as linked to children's proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement (Murray et al., 2010; Ronzio & Mitchell, 2010; Spera, 2005).

Negative parenting practices that include authoritarian parenting practices (ie., the use of firm rules and expectations, demandingness with little to no responsiveness, a lack of warmth or encouragement, the use of physical punishments without an explanation, and nonnegotiable choices or decisions for children) are associated with children's poor cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment problems, and low

levels of academic performance and achievement among both uncultural and cross-cultural samples (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Mitchell, Lewin, Horn, Valentine, Sanders-Phillips, & Joseph, 2010; Spera, 2005; Tompson et al., 2010; Turney, 2011). Many African American families, especially in among low-income households, were found to employ more authoritarian parenting practices with children than any other racial and ethnic parenting groups to safeguard young children from the harmful effects of residing in crime-impooverished communities and systemic racial discrimination (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Taylor, Casten, & Flickinger, 1993; Taylor, Seaton, & Dominguez, 2008). Authoritarian parenting practices were also linked to African American children's poor cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment problems, and low academic performance and achievement (Sohr-Preston & Scaramella, 2006; Spera, 2005; Turney, 2011).

Social support was found to mitigate many stressors in parenthood, including raising children alone (as a single parent), being unemployed, and residing in crime-impooverished communities (Ertel, Rich-Edwards, & Koenen, 2011; Halgunseth, Ispa, Csizmadia, & Thornburg, 2005; Mapp, 2006). Social support was also found to be important for parents needing help with daily parenting activities; raising children with behavioral, physical, emotional, or psychological problems; coping with a physical or psychological illness; and/or enduring coparenting conflict, partner or spousal discord, or the prospect of matrimonial separation or divorce (Abrams, Dornig, & Curran, 2009; Armstrong et al., 2005; Boyd, Zayas, & McKee, 2006; Jackson, Preston, & Thomas, 2013). Social support was found to be associated with a reduction of maternal depression

and improvement in psychological and parenting functioning and wellbeing among low-income, single, African American mothers (Kotchik, Dorsey, & Heller, 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008). To cope with the challenges and demands of parenthood, parents needed social support resources from social support networks. African American families, especially in among low-income households, struggle with obtaining adequate child care and emotional, informational, and instrumental modes of social support due to a lack of consistent positive social support networks (Balaji et al., 2007; Ghazarian & Roche, 2010; Middlemiss, 2003; Woody & Woody, 2007).

Two-parent families can be susceptible to stressors that can compromise the availability of immediate social support. Parenting and economic conflict was associated with diminished availability of immediate social support among two-parent couples (Ahrons, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg et al., 2012). Sources of social support for two-parent families (ie., nonresident or resident fathers of children) or coparenting partners (ie., grandmothers of children, extended family members, friends, and church members) were valuable to two-parent families because they help them cope with high-crime communities; assist with daily parenting activities with children; and aide in raising children with behavioral, physical, emotional, or psychological problems. They also help couples in which one parent was coping with a physical or a psychological illness, or where they were experiencing coparenting conflict, marital discord, or the prospect of separation or divorce by providing child care, emotional, informational, instrumental, religious, and metaphysical modes of social support (Brody et al., 1994; Choi & Pyun, 2013; Don &

Mickelson, 2012; Gallagher, Phillips, Oliver, & Carroll, 2008; Jackson et al., 2013; Mickelson, Claffey, & Williams, 2006; Riina & McHale, 2012; Siklos & Kerns, 2006). The exchange of social support between couples, and attainment of social support from friends and family members, was associated with less parenting and psychological stress and improved parenting and psychological functioning and wellbeing among two-parent, African American families. A positive marital relationship was also associated with the immediate exchange of social support resources in the way of childcare and other parenting practices and marital homogeneity and satisfaction among two-parent, African American couples (Riina & McHale, 2012).

Social support is a psychosocial factor for the use of positive parenting practices among parents from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Among working, middle class, two-parent, European American and African American families, social support was found to be associated with the use of positive parenting practices with preteens and/or adolescents (Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987a; Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987b; Brody et al., 1994; Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1992; Brody, Stoneman, McCoy, & Forehand, 1992; Riina & McHale, 2012; Simons, Lorenz, & Conger, 1993; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983).

Social support is critical for parents with preteens because child development prior to adolescence progresses through formative and vulnerable stages of development (Bandura, 1982; Bowlby, 1969; Spera, 2005). Preteens are dependent upon parents for the configuration, nurturance, and coaching of adjustment skills in cognitive and personality development (Bandura, 1982; Bowlby, 1969; Spera, 2005). Parenting styles

may differ culturally between African American parents and other racial and ethnic parenting groups (Boykin, 1986; Garcia-Cull et al., 1996; Spera, 2005; Stevenson et al., 1990; Taylor, 2010). Although there were studies done primarily with mothers of preteens and older children on maternal social support and positive parenting practices of different racial and ethnic maternal groups (Dixon, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Lee, Lee, & August, 2011; Silk, Sessa, Sheffield-Morris, Steinberg, & Avenevoli, 2004), there was a lack of research on the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. There was a need for research on the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices in two-parent, African American families with preteens.

Statement of the Problem

Positive parenting practices are important for proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement among children (Baumrind, 1978; Brody & Flor, 1998; Estrada et al., 1987; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Murray et al., 2001; Patterson et al., 1992; Spera, 2005; Supplee et al., 2004). Parenting practices among African American families are of particular importance, because by the time children of this population reach the fourth grade, they were found to lag behind their middle class, European American fourth grade student counterparts by 20 points on the National Center for Education Statistics (NAEP, 2009) math and reading tests, which corresponded to a difference of two grade levels.

Among predominantly European American populations, social support was shown to be a key factor in the implementation of positive parenting practices

(Armstrong et al., 2005; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). African American families, especially in among low-income households, face challenges in regard to obtaining adequate child care and emotional, informational, and instrumental social support resources due to a lack of consistent positive social support networks (Balaji et al., 2007; Ghazarian & Roche, 2010; Middlemiss, 2003; Woody & Woody, 2007). Social support was found to be associated with positive parenting practices among low-income, single, African American mothers with preteens and/or adolescents (Choi & Pyun, 2013; Dorsey, 2003; Green, Furrer, & McAllister, 2007; Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor et al. 1993; Taylor & Roberts, 1995). Moreover, there may be cultural differences in the types of parenting practices that parents in this group employ (Boykin, 1986; Garcia-Cull et al., 1996; Spera, 2005; Stevenson et al., 1990; Taylor, 2010).

Parenting practices of two-parent, African American families of preteens were of particular interest because this group can encounter challenges concerning differences over disciplinary practices with children and financial problems occurring because of joblessness by one or both parents, causing the decrease in the exchange of immediate social support resources in shared childcare and parenting practices (Ahrons, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg et al., 2012). There was a gap in the literature in regard to the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices for two-parent, African American families of preteens. It was not known how social support was linked to positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteen children. The results of this

study may have implications for positive social change in regards to the types of service and intervention programs intended to serve two-parent, African American families.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Positive parenting was examined in three constructs: the quality of the parent/child relationship, parental monitoring, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices. Two dimensions of social support was examined: quality of coparenting relationship support and perceived functional support from friends and family. Study participants completed two measures of social support: the Co-parenting Support Subscale of the Co-parenting Relationship Scale (CRS; Feinberg et al., 2012) and the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). The participants also completed three measures of positive parenting practices: the short form of the Interaction Behavior Questionnaire (IBQ; Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979); the Monitoring and Control (MC) scale (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992) and the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and the quality of the parent/child relationship?

H₀₁: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with the quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ.

H₁₁: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ.

Research Question 2: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and parental monitoring of children's activities?

H₀₂: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale.

H₁₂: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale.

Research Question 3: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and consistency of parental disciplinary practices?

H₀₃: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

*H*₁₃: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

Theoretical Foundation

In studying social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens, I used Baumrind's (1991) models of parenting demandingness and responsiveness to explain normal parenting behaviors and strategies employed, either independently or cohesively, to achieve the socialization goals of parenting. Demandingness or control refers to parental efforts to instill children with family and societal cultural norms by implementing and reinforcing behavioral rules and values by establishing developmentally appropriate expectations and providing disciplinary structure to enforce those expectations. Responsiveness or warmth refers to parental efforts to encourage and endorse the development of children's individuality and self-resolute behaviors by being attentive to their emotional wellbeing, individual needs, and interests (Baumrind, 1991).

Scholars have used Baumrind's (1991) theoretical models of parental demandingness and responsiveness as frameworks in several studies (Kotchick et al., 2005; Riina & McHale, 2012) to offer a model of how social support influences positive parenting behaviors among African American families of preteens and/or adolescents. High levels of social support from friends, family, nonresident or resident fathers of children, or coparenting partners mitigated and protected low-income single and working

middle class, two-parent, African American families from the effects of psychosocial stressors. These parents were able to use demandingness and responsiveness to nurture in their preteens the proper development of cognitive, personal, and psychosocial functioning; acceptable socialization skills of acculturation and assimilation of family and societal standards, appropriate identity formation; and high levels of self-reliance (Kotchick et al., 2005; Riina & McHale, 2012).

Many psychosocial stressors compromise positive parenting practices. African American mothers, especially in among low-income households, were found to be at a higher risk for symptoms of maternal depression, which was associated with unemployment, lack of higher academic achievement, being a single parent, and being a victim of domestic violence (Brook, Rubenstone, Zhang, Brook, & Rosenberg, 2011; Goodman et al., 2011; Gress-Smith, Luecken, Lemery-Chalfant, & Howe, 2011; Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, & Stanard, 2008; Zhang & Anderson, 2010). High levels of psychosocial stressors were found to be associated with negative parenting practices among low-income, African American mothers (Crockett, Zlotnick, Davis, Payne, & Washington, 2007; Hutto, Kim-Godwin, Pollard, & Kemppainen, 2011; Luke et al., 2009). High levels of psychosocial stressors and negative parenting practices were also linked to low levels of social support among low-income, African American mothers (Goosby, 2007; Hwa-Froelich, Cook, & Flick, 2008; O'Hara, 2009; Shook, Jones, Forehand, Dorsey, & Brody, 2010). Moreover, high levels of psychosocial stressors, negative parenting practices, and low-levels of social support among low-income, African American mothers were found to be associated with poor cognitive and

personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment problems, and low-levels of academic performance and achievement among children (Brotman et al., 2011; Haxton & Harknett, 2009; Koblinsky et al., 2006; Lewin et al., 2011; Otsuki et al., 2009; Reyes et al., 2011; Senturk, Abas, Berksun, & Stewart, 2011).

Social support is one psychosocial factor that mitigates the effects of psychosocial stressors of parenting. Access to social support was found to be associated with a reduction in symptoms of maternal depression, the improvement in psychological functioning and wellbeing, and the use of positive parenting practices among low-income, urban, African American mothers (Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008). Access to social support, the improvement in psychological functioning and wellbeing, and the use of positive parenting practices among low-income, urban, African American mothers were found to be associated with an improvement in cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment, and academic performance and achievement among children (Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008).

Nature of the Study

To investigate the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteen children, I used a quantitative correlational research design. A correlational research design was applicable because I wished to conclude whether a statistical relationship existed between social support and a positive parenting, which was measured at the same time point (Creswell, 2003). A survey method was used to gather data from respondents in this study because it was based upon self-administered questionnaires to gather data describing how social

support influenced positive parenting practices in subject families (Creswell, 2003). Data were gathered from a convenience sample of a minimum ($n=84$) two-parent, African American subjects, ages 18 to 40, with preteens ages 9 to 11, residing in different income neighborhoods throughout the Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. A correlational data analysis procedure (i.e., multiple regression analysis) was used to examine the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices. The behavioral response variables were three measures of positive parenting practices: (a) the quality of the parent/child relationship, as measured by the short form of the IBQ; (b) parental monitoring, as measured by the MC scale (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg et al., 1992); and (c) consistency of parents' disciplinary practices, as measured by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale (Arnold et al., 1993). The explanatory variables were two measures of social support: the CRS to measure coparenting relationship support and the Social Provisions Scale, a measure of functional social support (tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support from friends and family). There were three research questions, one for each positive parenting variable. Each positive parenting variable was examined separately in relation to the social support variables.

Definitions of Key Terms

A warm and supportive parent-child relationship: A warm and supportive parent-child relationship was characterized as positive communication, affection, and physical interactions during nonacademic and academic activities among parents and children (Kotchik, 1999).

Authoritarian parenting: Parents' use of firm rules and expectations, demandingness with no responsiveness, the lack of warmth or encouragement, the use of physical punishments without an explanation, and nonnegotiable choices or decisions for children (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Spera, 2005).

Authoritative parenting: Parents being warm and open to children by providing children with love and support of their present and future academic and employment endeavors and by having high expectations for children's success through positive bidirectional communication, explanation of behaviors, and the teaching and the reinforcement of self-reliance (Baumrind, 1978).

Childcare support: The help parents receive from social support networks to aid them in the daily nurturance and care of a child (Kotchick et al., 2005; Power, Jackson, Weaver, & Carter, 2011).

Cohabitation parenting: Parents who are in a long-term, romantic relationship that emulates a marital relationship and lives together and shares the parenting duties of raising a child or children (Klausli & Owen, 2009).

Consistency in discipline and rule enforcement: Parents conforming to a steady pattern of rules and routines that stimulate understanding and conformity in children by parents using consistent disciplinary methods and actions if rules are broken (Kotchik, 1999; Spera, 2005).

Coparenting: Parents who are not in a marital, cohabitation or a romantic relationship, but share daily parenting responsibilities of raising a child or children (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009).

Emotional support: Empathy, concern, affection, love, trust, acceptance, intimacy, encouragement, or caring that parents receive from social support networks to help them cope with the challenges and demands of parenting (Armstrong et al., 2005; House, 1981; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012; Shook et al., 2010).

Informal social support: Nongovernmental sources of support, such as friends, family, church members, neighbors, nonresident or resident fathers of children, or coparenting partners (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009).

Informational support: The provision of advice, guidance, suggestions, and/or useful information parents receive from social support networks on how to cope with the challenges and demands of parenting (Brotman et al., 2011; House, 1981; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Instrumental support: Monetary funds and material resources provided to parents from social support networks to offset the cost of everyday expenses (Haxton & Harknett, 2009; House, 1981; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008).

Maternal depression: Negative thoughts that will impact mothers' feelings of their parental ability and their satisfaction of the maternal responsibility; the resulting negative thoughts and perceptions can produce an unsupportive and/or inappropriate physically aggressive form of parenting that can negatively affect the way in which they interact with and care for their children (Cornish et al., 2006; Witt et al., 2011).

Parental monitoring: Parents monitoring the completion of children's homework activities and their progress in school and overseeing the nature of their friendships and activities with friends (Kotchik, 1999).

Parenting demandingness: Parents' ability to incorporate children into family and societal cultural norms and practices by implementing and reinforcing group rules and values for behavior, placing developmentally appropriate expectations on children, and providing them with structure (Baumrind, 1991).

Parenting involvement: Parents assisting children with homework and providing them with extracurricular activities, such as reading, frequently attending parent/teacher meetings, and/or volunteering at the school that their children attend (Grusec, 1997; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ryan & Adams, 1995; Scaringello, 2002; Scott-Jones, 1995; Spera, 2005).

Parenting responsiveness: Parents' ability to encourage and endorse the development of children's individuality and self-resolute behaviors by conscientiously attending to the emotional wellbeing, individual needs, and interests of children (Baumrind, 1991).

Parenting support: Child care and emotional, informational, and instrumental modes of support mothers, fathers, and/or coparenting partners share with each other (Choi & Pyun, 2013; Jackson et al., 2013; Riina & McHale, 2012).

Poor parenting practices: Any combination of the following: parents using unsuitable emotional reasoning to guide punitive and neglectful parenting discipline with children, parents having inappropriate and/or little to no communication with their

children, parents having little to no physical interaction with children, and parents having little to no participation in children's academic and nonacademic activities (Baumrind, 1991; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005).

Positive parenting practices: Any combination of the following: a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, consistency in discipline and rule enforcement, authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, parenting responsiveness, and parent demandingness (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Grusec, 1997; Kotchik, 1999; Kotchik et al., 2005; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ryan & Adams, 1995; Scaringello, 2002; Scott-Jones, 1995; Spera, 2005).

Religious and metaphysical support: Spiritual guidance and support parents receive from church members to cope with the challenges and demands of parenting (Odom & Vernon-Feagans, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008; Watlington & Murphy, 2006).

Single parent families: A mother or father who does not reside with a spouse or romantic partner and has most or all of the daily parenting responsibilities of raising a child or children alone (Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008).

Social messages of positive parenting practices: The messages parents convey to children that nurture developmental life skills, abilities and attitudes, family and societal values customs, and aims by using proper parenting behaviors, actions, and communication (Grusec, 1997; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Spera, 2005).

Social support (functional social support): Child care, emotional and informational, instrumental, and religious and metaphysical modes of social support (Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008).

Social support networks (sources of social support or structural social support): Friends, family, church members, neighbors, nonresident or resident fathers of children, or coparenting partners who provide functional social support (Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Two-parent families: Married, cohabitating parents, or coparenting partners who shares all of the daily parenting responsibilities of raising a child or children (Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012).

Assumptions

The focus of the study on two-parent families was based upon an assumption that parenting dynamics may differ in two-parent families versus single parent families. Single-mothers were likely to be raising children with the father being absent from the child's life. Couples share parenting responsibilities. If conflict arises between partners, one or both parents could experience increased stress and/or feelings of diminished support from the other partner.

In this study, it was assumed that each two-parent, African American family dyad with preteens responded honestly to all survey questions as they related to levels of social support and positive parenting practices. False outcomes were a result of erroneous responses. The measures used in this study had satisfactory validity and reliability and

accurately assessed levels of social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American family participants as they had done in past studies.

Scope and Delimitations

The study included two-parent families in which the parents were married or cohabiting between the ages of 18 and older, with at least one preteen child between the ages of 9 and 11. Study participants were not included if they were single parents, if their primary language was not English, if neither they or their partner were of African American descent, or they did not have a child who was 9- to 11-years-old. Inclusion of two-parent families only was motivated by a gap in the research on two-parent families and because single parents versus two-parent couples may differ in regard to perceived social support and parenting stressors. These exclusions were made because one parent who was not of African-American descent may have different parenting values based upon his or her racial and ethnic background (Boykin, 1986; Garcia-Cull et al., 1996; Spera, 2005; Stevenson et al., 1990; Taylor, 2010). These exclusions were also made because adolescents, infants, or toddlers require different parenting behaviors than preteens from parents (Bandura, 1982; Bowlby, 1969; Spera, 2005). Two-parent subject participants with preteens came from public elementary schools and churches that were located in neighborhoods throughout a Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. Finally, the results of the study may not be generalizable to other racial and ethnic parenting groups, as the sample was limited to African American families.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this study. First, the data were obtained from participants using self-report questionnaires and were not independently cross-validated. The levels of social support resources were reported by two-parent, African American family dyads; the parent's self-reported responses were not independently verified by social support network providers. Similarly, parents' self-reported responses about their positive parenting practices were not verified by observation of their childrearing or by incorporating data from preteens or extended family members of the participants. Thus, there were limitations concerning the construct validity of the measurements. Second, I used a convenience sample rather than a random selection of subject parents. Therefore, the generalizability of the results to other samples may be limited due to potential bias in the sampling method. Third, this study was a correlational study; therefore, caution was needed in interpreting correlation in terms of causation. To address this limitation, all study results made predictions, rather than a causation link, about the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens.

Significance of Study

The study contributed to the psychological literature by investigating social support as it related to positive parenting practices. I examined how various levels of social support impacted positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens as opposed to how various levels of social support impacted positive parenting practices among low-income, single, African American

parents of preteens and/or adolescents. Therefore, I determined whether high or low levels of social support were linked to positive and negative parenting practices. The answer to this inquiry was important for both service providers and theorists in that it could provide a focus for positive social change. If, for example, the results revealed that two-parent African-American families with low-levels of social support demonstrated poorer parenting patterns than two-parent African-American families with high levels of social support, the types of service and intervention programs intended to serve these families can be targeted toward providing the skills necessary to obtain higher levels of social support. If, on the other hand, the level of social support was not significantly related to parenting styles, then interventions may be more appropriately focused on parenting training that emphasizes more positive approaches within the family structure instead of the larger community.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I reviewed psychosocial research on how positive parenting practices influenced children's cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment, and academic performance and achievement. Additionally, low-levels of social support negatively impacted mothers' psychological functioning, wellbeing, and parenting practices. Access to social support strengthened mothers' psychological functioning, wellbeing, and parenting practices and improved children's cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment, and academic performance and achievement.

I explored if levels of social support influenced positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens from different economic backgrounds.

Chapter 2 begins with information on the importance of positive parenting practices. I evaluate the influence of social support on positive parenting behaviors. In Chapter 3, I focus on the methodology of the study; the discussion includes the research design and approach, setting and sample of the study, data collection and analysis procedures, and procedures for protecting participants' rights. In Chapter 4, I focus on the results of this study. Finally, in Chapter 5, I focus on the summary, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Positive parenting practices play a role in the development of young children. They are important for proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement among children (Baumrind, 1978; Brody & Flor, 1998; Estrada et al., 1987; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Murray et al., 2001; Patterson et al., 1992; Spera, 2005; Supplee et al., 2004). Parenting practices of African Americans are important to examine because children of this population are struggling at the fourth-grade-level to pass the NAEP math and reading tests. African American children were 20 points behind middle-class, European American students on the NAEP (2000, 2011) math and reading tests, which translated to a difference of two grade levels. Social support was demonstrated to be a significant influence on the use of positive parenting practices (Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008). Due to undependable social support networks, African American families, especially in among low-income households, have difficulties receiving adequate childcare and emotional, informational, and instrumental modes of social support resources (Balaji et al., 2007; Ghazarian & Roche, 2010; Middlemiss, 2003; Woody & Woody, 2007). Additionally, cultural differences may exist as to the types of parenting practices that African American families use (Boykin, 1986; Garcia-Cull et al., 1996; Spera, 2005; Stevenson et al., 1990; Taylor, 2010). Parenting practices of African American were of importance to study because of the stressors they encounter concerning the struggles over disciplinary practices involving children and economic difficulties

occurring as a result of unemployment of one or both spouses or partners (Ahrons, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg et al., 2012).

In this chapter, I identify previous research findings regarding how positive versus negative parenting practices impacts the socialization of children. I also identify previous research findings on how the core tenets of positive parenting practices help parents achieve the socialization goals of parenting and the role that positive parenting practices plays in the development and socialization of children. Additionally, I discuss how social support influences positive parenting behaviors of parents in general and African American parents in particular. Finally, I point out a gap in the literature on the relationship between social support for two-parent, African American families of preteens and the extent to which those households employ positive parenting practices.

I explored empirical literature in the Walden University library. I searched for sources published from 1993 through 2013 in the following databases: ERIC, PsycInfo, and ProQuest databases. Keywords included the following terms: *negative parenting*, *positive parenting*, *academic achievement*, *maternal social support*, *social support*, *parenting behaviors*, *positive parenting practices*, and *African Americans*. The simultaneous use of all of the listed search terms did not yield any studies on social support and positive parenting practices among two parent, African American families of preteens. A similar search was conducted using the above-referenced databases using the search terms: *parenting styles*, *parenting practices*, *adolescence*, *socioeconomic status*, *academic achievement*, *social support*, *parenting*, and *positive parenting practices*.

Positive Versus Negative Parenting Practices

The purpose of parenting is to instill in children socialization goals, such as family and societal values and customs, aims, abilities, and attitudes (Grusec, 1997; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Spera, 2005). The term positive parenting refers to a set of parenting behaviors that are more effective with regard to the socialization goals of parenting (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Grusec, 1997; Kotchik, 1999; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ryan & Adams, 1995; Scaringello, 2002; Scott-Jones, 1995; Spera, 2005). Positive parenting behaviors involve the nurturance of a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, the monitoring of children's activities, and consistency in discipline and rule enforcement (Kotchik, 1999). Positive parenting also involves the nurturance of authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, and parenting responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Grusec, 1997; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ryan & Adams, 1995; Scaringello, 2002; Scott-Jones, 1995; Spera, 2005).

Positive parenting is measured in many ways, including the Parenting Scale (Arnold et al., 1993), the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984), the Marriage Scale (Huston, McHale, & Crouter, 1986), the Parent-Child Activities Scale (Love et al., 2002), the MC Scale (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg et al., 1992), the revised version of the Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI; Power, 1991), the short form of the IBQ (Prinz et al., 1979), and the Revised Short Form of the Child's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1977).

Positive parenting practices were found to be associated with proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic achievement among children (Augustine & Crosnoe, 2010; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Kohen, Leventhal, Dahinten, & McIntosh, 2008; Kotchick et al., 2005; Miller, Loeber, & Hipwell, 2009; Murray et al., 2010; Pomerantz et al., 2005; Slykerman, Thompson, Pryor, & Becrofta et al., 2005; Spera, 2005). Children who receive positive parenting displayed high levels of self-reliance, self-esteem and problem-solving skills, as well as low levels of social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and behavior problems (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Kotchick et al., 2005; Pomerantz et al., 2005). These children also display highly effective coping skills, increasing their ability to withstand various family, social, and environmental stressors, such as parental discord, separation, divorce, illness, and/or residing in communities marked by extreme poverty and high crime rates (Kohen et al., 2008; Miller et al., 2009; Slykerman et al., 2005).

The impact of positive parenting goes beyond psycho-emotional functioning. Children who are parented with positive strategies display better language acquisition, reading, writing, and mathematical skills, as well as a high aptitude for learning and high academic achievement (Augustine & Crosnoe, 2010; Murray et al., 2010; Spera, 2005). These children attain proper developmental, psychological, social, and academic skills throughout all stages of development (Augustine & Crosnoe, 2010; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Kohen et al., 2008; Kotchick et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2009; Murray et al., 2010; Pomerantz et al., 2005; Slykerman et al., 2005; Spera, 2005).

Negative parenting practices, on the other hand, have many adverse effects on the acquisition of important life skills by children. Negative parenting practices refer to a set of parenting behaviors deemed as authoritarian parenting. Authoritarian parenting practices involve firm rules and expectations, demandingness with no responsiveness, a lack of warmth or encouragement, the use of physical punishments without an explanation, and nonnegotiable choices or decisions for children (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Spera, 2005). They are associated with poor cognitive and personality functioning, socioemotional adjustment problems, and low levels of academic achievement (Bugental & Happaney, 2004; Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Eamon & Zuehl, 2001; Elgar, McGrath, Waschbusch, Stewart, & Curtis, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011; Sohr-Preston & Scaramella, 2006; Tompson et al., 2010; Turney, 2011). Children who receive negative parenting display low levels of self-reliance and self-esteem and inapt problem-solving skills. They display high levels of social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and aberrant conduct problems (Eamon & Zuehl, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011). Their poor coping skills make it difficult to withstand various family, social, and environmental stressors, such as parental discord, separation, divorce, illness, and exposure to antisocial activities due to residing in impoverished and high-crime communities (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Elgar et al., 2004; Sohr-Preston & Scaramella, 2006). Moreover, negatively parented children display poor language acquisition; problems in reading, writing, and mathematics; a lower aptitude for learning; and low levels of academic performance and achievement (Bugental & Happaney, 2004; Tompson et al., 2010; Turney, 2011). These children attain poor developmental,

psychological, social, and academic skills throughout all stages of development (Bugental & Happaney, 2004; Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002; Eamon & Zuehl, 2001; Elgar et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011; Sohr-Preston & Scaramella, 2006; Tompson et al., 2010; Turney, 2011).

Positive parenting practices are important to examine in relation to preteen children because preteens are at a vulnerable, formative, and dependent stage of life development. They look to parents to nurture in them life skills appropriate to the preteen stage of development, which parents impart using the socialization messages of positive parenting practices. By successfully observing, modeling, and imitating these socialization messages, preteens acquire proper developmental skills of cognitive and personality and psychosocial functioning (Bandura, 1982; Bowlby, 1973; Spera, 2005). They then use these skills to convey back to their parents the acceptable socialization skills of acculturation and assimilation to family and societal standards and practices (Grusec, 1997; Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Spera, 2005).

In past studies on positive parenting practices, researchers focused primarily on parents from affluent backgrounds without including data from parents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds or those residing in high-crime communities (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Grusec, 1997; Ladd & Pettit, 2002; Leung, Lau, & Lam, 1998; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Ryan & Adams, 1995; Scaringello, 2002; Scott-Jones, 1995; Steinberg et al., 1992). In more recent studies on positive parenting practices, researchers included data from these marginalized populations and found that the parents in these

communities used the same kinds of positive parenting practices (i.e., a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, consistency in discipline and rule enforcement, authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, and parenting responsiveness and demandingness) as did parents from affluent backgrounds (Dixon et al., 2008; Lewin et al., 2011a; Riley et al., 2009; Spera, 2005). Among children from different racial and ethnic marginalized backgrounds residing in impoverished communities with high crime rates, positive parenting practices were found to be associated with proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement (Murray et al., 2010; Riley et al., 2009; Seaton & Taylor, 2003; Senturk et al., 2011; Schmidt, Wiemann, Rickert, & Smith, 2006; Spera, 2005; Ugarriza, 2006; Wigfield et al., 2006). The children who receive positive parenting display high levels of self-reliance, self-esteem, and proper problem-solving skills and low levels of social withdrawal, anxiety, and depression, with fewer behavior problems (Riley et al., 2009; Ugarriza, 2006; Wigfield et al., 2006). They also display high levels of coping skills to withstand various family, social, and environmental stressors, such as parental discord, separation, divorce, illness, systemic racial discrimination, and the negative effects of participating in antisocial activities brought about by residing in crime-impoverished communities (Seaton & Taylor, 2003; Senturk et al., 2011; Schmidt et al., 2006). Moreover, those raised with positive parenting practices display proper language acquisition; proper reading, writing, and mathematical skills; and a high aptitude for learning and high academic achievement (Murray et al., 2010; Riley et al., 2009; Spera, 2005). These

children attain proper developmental, psychological, social, and academic skills throughout all stages of development (Murray et al., 2010; Riley et al., 2009; Seaton & Taylor, 2003; Senturk et al., 2011; Schmidt et al., 2006; Spera, 2005; Ugarriza, 2006; Wigfield et al., 2006).

Among African American children, especially in among low-income households residing in impoverished communities with high crime rates, the protective parenting of firm disciplinary actions (in combination with high levels of warmth, affection, support, and open communication) was found to be associated with proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement (Ammerman et al., 2009; Koblinsky et al., 2006; Kotchick et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2010; Robinson & Werblow, 2012; Ronzio & Mitchell, 2010; Silk et al., 2004; Spera, 2005; Utsey et al., 2008; Woody & Woody, 2007; Zhang & Anderson, 2010). The children raised with this approach display high levels of self-reliance, self-esteem, and proper problem-solving skills and display low levels of social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and fewer behavior problems (Ammerman et al., 2009; Kotchick et al., 2005; Woody & Woody, 2007; Zhang & Anderson, 2010). They also display proper coping skills to withstand family, social, and environmental stressors, such as systemic racial discrimination, extreme poverty, separation from or no physical and emotional relationship with fathers, and succumbing to antisocial activities brought about by residing within impoverished communities with high crime rates (Ronzio & Mitchell, 2010; Silk et al., 2004; Taylor, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). Moreover, the combination of firm disciplinary actions with high levels of warmth, affection, support, and open

communication lead to proper language acquisition, reading, writing, and mathematical skills; a high aptitude for learning; and high academic achievement (Koblinsky et al., 2006; Murray et al., 2010; Robinson & Werblow, 2012; Spera, 2005). Despite residing in impoverished communities with high crime rates, these African American children, especially in among low-income households, grow to attain proper developmental and psychological, social, and academic skills throughout all stages of development (Ammerman et al., 2009; Koblinsky et al., 2006; Kotchick et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2010; Robinson & Werblow, 2012; Ronzio & Mitchell, 2010; Silk et al., 2004; Spera, 2005; Utsey et al., 2008; Woody & Woody, 2007; Zhang & Anderson, 2010).

Social Support

Parents face many challenges that require social support, including raising children alone (as a single parent), being unemployed, and residing in crime-impoverished communities (Ertel et al., 2011; Halgunseth et al., 2005; Mapp, 2006; Pachter, Auinger, Palmer, & Weitzman, 2006; Riley et al., 2009; Ronzio & Mitchell, 2010; Zhang & Anderson, 2010; Zittel-Palamara et al., 2008). Social support is also important for those needing help with daily parenting activities; raising children with behavioral, physical, emotional, or psychological problems; coping with a physical or psychological illness; and/or enduring coparenting conflict, partner or spousal discord, or the prospect of matrimonial separation or divorce (Abrams et al., 2009; Armstrong et al., 2005; Boyd et al., 2006; Brody et al., 1994; Choi & Pyun, 2013; Cornish et al., 2006; Dietz et al., 2007; Dixon et al., 2008; Don & Mickelson, 2012; Dorsey, Forehand, & Brody, 2007; Feldman, Dunkel-Schetter, Sandman, & Wadhwa, 2000; Gallagher et al.,

2008; Jackson et al., 2013; Kozhimannil, Trinacty, Busch, Huskamp, & Adams, 2011; Mickelson et al., 2006; Riina & McHale, 2012; Siklos & Kerns, 2006; Witt et al., 2011). Because of these parenting challenges, parents need social support resources from social support networks to cope with the challenges and demands of parenting.

Sources of Social Support for Parents

The term social support, or functional support, was used in the literature to refer to resources that were found to be effective with regard to parenting behavior (Kotchik et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008) including child care and emotional, informational, instrumental, religious, and metaphysical modes of social support (Armstrong et al., 2005; Brotman et al., 2011; Haxton & Harknett, 2009; House, 1981; Kotchik et al., 2005; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012; Odom & Vernon-Feagans, 2010; Power et al., 2011; Shook et al., 2010; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008; Utsey et al., 2008; Watlington & Murphy, 2006). The sources of social support (structural social support or social support networks) refer to a group of people who provide social support resources to parents with regard to parenting behaviors (Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). Sources of social support include friends, family, church members, neighbors, nonresident or resident fathers of children, or coparenting partners (Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren, 2005; Leahy-Warren & McCarthy, 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). In the case of two-parent families, sources of social support (ie., nonresident or resident fathers of children, coparenting partners, grandmothers of

children, extended family members, friends, and church members) are valuable to two-parent families because they help them cope with high-crime communities; assist with daily parenting activities with children; and aide in raising children with behavioral, physical, emotional, or psychological problems. They also help couples in which one parent is coping with a physical or a psychological illness, or where they experience coparenting conflict, marital discord, or the prospect of separation or divorce by providing child care, emotional, informational, instrumental, religious, and metaphysical modes of social support (Brody et al., 1994; Choi & Pyun, 2013; Don & Mickelson, 2012; Gallagher et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2013; Mickelson et al., 2006; Riina & McHale, 2012; Siklos & Kerns, 2006).

The provision of child care and emotional, informational, instrumental, religious, and metaphysical social support resources from consistent positive social support networks was found to be associated with a reduction in psychosocial and parental distress and an improvement in psychological and parental functioning and wellbeing among two-parent families (Beam et al., 2011; Bernier, Bélanger, Bordeleau, & Carrier, 2013; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Riina & McHale, 2012). These resources were found to significantly decrease the effects of psychosocial stressors (ie., depression, poverty, marital, partner, coparenting conflict or divorce, and parental illness); ease the tension of residing within violent neighborhoods; and improve psychological performance, physical wellbeing, and the sustainability and conservation of marital, partner, or coparenting homogeneity (Beam et al., 2011; Bernier et al., 2013; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Riina & McHale, 2012). They were also shown to significantly

decrease the effects of negative parenting practices, such as inadequate disciplinary actions with children, poor parent/child relationship, poor communication with children, and/or poor participation in children's academic and nonacademic activities among two parent families (Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Riina & McHale, 2012).

The absence of these social support resources, however, have adverse effects on two-parent families. The lack of such resources was found to be associated with symptoms of depression among two-parent families (Beam et al., 2011; Bernier et al., 2013; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Riina & McHale, 2012). Among two-parent, African American families, especially in among low-income households, symptoms of depression were not only found in fathers, but were found to be more prevalent in mothers where social support resources and consistent positive networks were absent (Brody et al., 1994; Choi & Pyun, 2013; Gavin et al., 2005; Gaynes et al., 2005; Huang, Wong, Ronzio, & Yu, 2007; Riina & McHale, 2012).

Stressors and Social Support for Parenting in Two-Parent Families

Among two-parent couples, social support is more immediately available. A positive marital or partner relationship was found to be associated with the availability of immediate social support (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Feinberg et al., 2012; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009). Couples with positive relationships had fewer mistrust issues and more homogeneity with each other, which allowed the exchange of immediate social support in shared child care and parenting practices (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009). Positive partnerships also allowed two-parent couples to praise each other's parenting practices,

provide emotional and instrumental support to each other during times of parenting crises, and acknowledge each other's parenting accomplishments (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; Belsky et al., 1996; Feinberg et al., 2012).

There is the potential for conflict between two-parent couples that compromise the availability of immediate social support. Parenting and economic conflict was found to be associated with diminished availability of immediate social support among two-parent couples (Ahrns, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg et al., 2012). A marital or partner conflict among two parent couples ensues because one spouse or partner disagrees with the other's parenting practices, particularly disciplinary practices, where one parent becomes the disciplinarian and the other becomes the comforter to whom children turn, placing these spouses or partners at odds with each other and reducing parenting homogeneity and satisfaction (Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011). Two-parent couples also experience conflict because of increased financial stress brought about by joblessness by one spouse or partner, or by both parents, reducing the maintenance of household bills, such as the payment of a mortgage or rent, the purchase of food, and other household and family necessities (Ahrns, 1979, 1981; Feinberg et al., 2012). These conflicts incite mistrust and more heterogeneity among these couples, reducing the exchange of immediate social support in shared child care and parenting practices and resulting in the discontinuance and/or criticism of parenting practices, the withdrawal of emotional and instrumental support during times of parenting crises, and the disapproval

of parenting actions (Ahrns, 1979, 1981; Balaji et al., 2007; Beam et al., 2011; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Feinberg et al., 2012).

Social Support for Parenting in Diverse Income Families

Among couples with preteen children from different economic backgrounds, social support was found to be associated with positive parenting practices (Beam et al., 2011; Bernier et al., 2013; Brody et al., 1994; Choi & Pyun, 2013; Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Don & Mickelson, 2012; Jackson et al., 2013). Economically diverse couples who received emotional and instrumental modes of social support from each other, and from friends and extended family members, reported being warm and responsive to the needs of preteens, as well as having an open communication and positive physical interactions with their preteens (Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Don & Mickelson, 2012). They also reported having a positive emotional temperament with frequent use of positive disciplinary practices with their preteens (Beam et al., 2011; Brody et al., 1994). They further reported having more satisfaction with parenting, a more positive relationship with their children, and more positive involvement in the children's nonacademic and academic activities (Bernier et al., 2013; Choi & Pyun, 2013). Moreover, the couples who received positive parenting guidance and child care support from each other, as well as from friends and extended family members, reported having high parenting skills with their preteens because they observed, modeled, and imitated proper parenting behaviors of each other and social support networks (Jackson et al., 2013).

Emotional, informational, and material modes of social support were found to be associated with proper parenting behaviors and attitudes among parents (Andresen, 1989) and with proper cognitive and personality functioning, healthy socioemotional adjustment, and high academic performance and achievement among preteens from different economic backgrounds (Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005; McConnell, Breikreuz, & Savage, 2011; McConnell, Mayes, & Llewellyn, 2008; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008; Tendulkar, Koenen, Dunn, Buka, & Subramanian, 2012; Woody & Woody, 2007). Preteens from different economic backgrounds display high levels of self-reliance and self-esteem and proper problem-solving skills, as well as display low levels of social withdrawal and anxiety, low levels of depression and generalize anxiety, and fewer behavior problems due to the influence of social support on positive parenting practices (Jackson et al., 2013; Tendulkar et al., 2012; Woody & Woody, 2007). They also display proper coping skills to withstand various family, social, and environmental stressors, such as parenting discord, separation, divorce, or illness and residing in poverty and crime-impooverished communities due to the influence of social support on positive parenting practices (Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Kotchick et al., 2005; McConnell et al., 2008). Moreover, preteens from different economic backgrounds display proper language acquisition and reading, writing, and mathematical skills, as well as high aptitude for learning and high academic performance and achievement due to the influence of social support on positive parenting practices (McConnell et al., 2011; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008). These preteens attain proper developmental and psychological, social, and academic skills throughout various stages

of development due to the influence of social support on positive parenting practices (Desjardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005; McConnell et al., 2011; McConnell et al., 2008; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008; Tendulkar et al., 2012; Woody & Woody, 2007).

Social support, as it is related to parenting, is measured in many ways. The SSC consists of friend and neighbor support subscales that measures the perceived availability of emotional and instrumental support from friends and neighbors (Belle, 1982), whereas tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support subscales of the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987) measure the perceived availability of functional support from friends and family. The CRS (Feinberg et al., 2012) measures perceive emotional support exchange between spouses or partners.

Research on Social Support, Positive Parenting Behaviors, and Parenting Outcomes

A large body of research exists on the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices. Andresen (1989) explored the effects of social support in relation to behaviors and attitudes of parents. Andresen found that emotional, informational, and material modes of social support were associated with proper behaviors and attitudes among parents. Social support was found to be associated with positive parenting practices among two-parent families (Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987a; Brody, Stoneman, & Burke, 1987b; Brody et al., 1994; Brody, Stoneman, & McCoy, 1992; Brody, Stoneman, McCoy, & Forehand, 1992; Riina & McHale, 2012; Simons et al., 1993; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983).

Brody et al. (1987a) studied the effects of maternal behavior in relation to sibling relationships and indicated that mothers whose behavior showed favoritism of one child over the other were associated with higher levels of conflict between siblings. Brody et al. (1987b) studied the effects of sibling behavior in relation to marital adjustment and found that proper behavior among young siblings was associated with fewer marital problems, whereas proper behavior of older siblings was associated with mothers' marital adjustment. Brody et al. (1994) studied the effects of family financial resources, parenting psychological functioning, parenting relationship, and coparenting support in relation to academic competency and socioemotional adjustment of adolescents and found that steady financial resources, low levels of depression, high levels of coparenting support, and fewer conflicts among parents were associated with low levels of depression, fewer behavioral problems, and proper self-regulation among adolescents. Brody et al. (1992a) studied the effects of a longitudinal design of parenting behaviors in relation to sibling relationships and found that positive parenting behaviors, particularly from fathers, were associated with better sibling relationships. Brody et al. (1992b) studied the effects of parents' perception of family functioning and parents' ability to resolve sibling problems in relations to sibling conflict and indicated that equal treatment of children by fathers, family harmony during family discussions concerning sibling problems, and parents' perception of positive family cohesion were associated with fewer sibling conflicts.

Riina and McHale (2012) studied the effects of stage of adolescence, sociocultural stressors, economic resources, and religious and metaphysical support in relation to

parenting satisfaction middle-class, two-parent, African American families with adolescents. Riina and McHale indicated that religious and metaphysical support was associated with parenting satisfaction of adolescents among both mothers and fathers. Simons et al. (1993) studied the effects of spousal support in relationship to parenting behaviors in two-parent, European American families with adolescents. Financial stress, social network support, and spousal support were self-reported by parents (Simons et al., 1993). Spousal support was more important for parents than social network support, and it predicted fewer depressive symptoms among parents and positive parenting behaviors with adolescents (Simons et al., 1993).

Weinraub and Wolf (1983) investigated the effects of social support, psychosocial stressors, and coping abilities in relation to mother-child interaction among European American mothers with preteens. Weinraub and Wolf indicated that married mothers had fewer psychosocial stressors, more emotional and parenting support, better coping abilities, and satisfaction with social networks than single mothers. Spouses were associated with better mother-child interaction (Weinraub & Wolf, 1983).

Social Support and Parenting Behaviors in Low-Income, African American Families

Social support was found to be associated with positive parenting practices among low-income, African American families (O'Callaghan, Borkowski, Whitman, Maxwell, & Keogh, 1999; Silk et al., 2004; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2008; Woody & Woody, 2007). O'Callaghan et al. (1999) studied the effects of prenatal maternal readiness, personal adjustment, intelligence, and social support in relation to parenting among low-income, teen mothers. Emotional and instrumental maternal social support was not

associated with the subjects' use of positive parenting practices (O'Callaghan et al., 1999). Silk et al. (2004) studied the effects of children's neighborhoods in relation to hostile parenting and behavioral and psychological problems of children. Children's and mothers' perceptions of neighborhood involvement and cohesion was linked with the mothers' lower use of hostile parenting practices and more use of positive parenting practices (Silk et al., 2004).

Taylor (2010) studied the effects of kinship social support in relation to adolescents' behavior problems among African American mothers of adolescents. Taylor (2010) indicated that a positive relationship with and social support from family predicted a positive association with improve communication between mothers and children and fewer behavioral problems among adolescents (Taylor, 2010). Taylor et al. (2008) studied the effects of kinship social support in relation to psychological functioning and family relations among low-income, African American mothers of adolescents. Taylor et al. (2008) indicated that family social and emotional support was positively associated with maternal optimism. Poor relations with family members were positively associated with depression among mothers (Taylor et al., 2008). Advice and counseling and social and emotional support from family members were positively linked to proper family routine (Taylor et al., 2008). Poor relations with family members were positively associated with parent/adolescent communication problems (Taylor et al., 2008). Maternal optimism was positively associated with family routine, which also had a strong effect on the association with social and emotional support from family members (Taylor et al., 2008). Woody and Woody (2007) studied the effects of social support in relation to

parenting satisfaction and parenting success among low-income, African American single mothers with children 4 years or older. Social support from friends and family was associated with high levels of parent satisfaction and high levels of parent success among mothers (Woody & Woody, 2007).

Social Support, Cultural Context, and African American Parents

Social support resources from social support networks varies between different racial and ethnic parenting groups. African American parents, for example, were found to receive the greatest social support from extended family networks, such as the children's grandparents, aunts, and uncles, then any other racial and ethnic parenting groups. In the African American culture, which was rooted in African traditions dating back before antebellum slavery, receiving child care, emotional, and material support from extended families outside the immediate family was as a feature of family life (Balaji et al., 2007; Haxton & Harknett, 2009; Mowbray et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor et al., 2008). Receiving such support from their extended families helped African American parents protect young children against the effects of residing in crime-impoverished communities and systemic racial discrimination (Garcia-Coll et al., 1996; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor et al., 2008).

Social Support, Positive Parenting, and African American Populations

Several scholars have found a relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African American mothers in general, and in particular, among low-income, urban, African American mothers. There were seven studies on the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African

American populations (Choi & Pyun, 2013; Dorsey, 2003; Green et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor & Roberts, 1995). Out of the seven studies, five of these studies had a longitudinal design, and two studies had a cross-sectional design. One study had a population of mostly single mothers and one single father; six studies included only single mothers. Three studies had populations of only preteens; two included both preteens and adolescents, and two studied populations of only adolescents. There were no studies on how social support influenced positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens.

Choi and Pyun (2013) studied the effects of instrumental support from extended family members and nonresident fathers in relations to parenting practices, parental stress of mothers, and children's behavioral and cognitive development among a population of mostly low-income, African-American single mothers with young children. Choi and Pyun found that instrumental support from extended family members and nonresident fathers was associated with mothers' use of positive parenting practices, proper cognitive development, and fewer behavioral problems among children.

Dorsey (2003) studied the effects of coparenting conflict, maternal psychological distress, and maternal social support in relation to parenting behaviors among low-income, African American, single mothers with children. Dorsey suggested that social support moderated the direct relationship between coparenting conflict and parenting.

Green et al. (2007) researched the effects of attachment style and social support in relation to parenting behaviors among low-income, single, African American mothers (and one father) with children. Green et al. indicated that access to social support and a

secure attachment style with social support networks were related to positive parenting practices and a positive mother/child relationship.

Jackson et al. (2013) examined the effect of social support in relation to parenting practices and child behavioral problems among low-income, single, African American mothers with children. Jackson et al. found that instrumental support from extended family members and nonresident fathers were associated with mothers' use of positive parenting practices and fewer behavioral problems among preschoolers.

Kotchick et al. (2005) investigated the effects of social support from friends and family in relation to parenting practices among low-income, African American, single mothers of children. Kotchick et al. revealed that social support from family and friends predicted a positive link with positive parenting practices among mothers.

Taylor et al. (1993) explored the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African American adolescents ages 13 to 17. Sixty percent of adolescents resided in poverty. Taylor et al. showed that social support from family members predicted that a positive association with authoritative parenting practices was more prevalent among single-parent households than two-parent households.

Taylor and Roberts (1995) examined social support and maternal and adolescent wellbeing in relation to maternal parenting among low-income, African American, single mothers or female legal guardians of adolescents. Taylor and Roberts showed that social support from family members predicted a positive association with positive parenting practices among mothers and proper psychological functioning among adolescents.

All seven quantitative studies investigated the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African American, single-parent populations of either preteens or adolescents. Scholars found that social support might be more significant for parenting functioning among single-parent families, but there were no comparable published studies concerning how social support influenced positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens.

Implications for Future Research

Single-parent families and two-parent families both needed social support. The relationship between social support and parenting functioning may be anticipated to be the same for two-parent families as it was for single-parent families. In studying the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices, it was beneficial to use measures that depended on self-report questionnaire data from preteen two parent African American families from different economic backgrounds.

Summary of Chapter 2

The purpose of positive parenting is to instill in children socialization goals including family and societal values and customs, aims, abilities, and attitudes. Positive parenting practices include a warm and supportive parent-child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, consistency in discipline and rule enforcement, authoritative parenting, parenting involvement, and parenting responsiveness and demandingness to instill these socialization attributes in children. Positive parenting promotes in children a variety of proper developmental skills in the areas of cognitive, personality and psychosocial functioning, as well as acceptable socialization skills of

acculturation and assimilation to family and to societal standards and practices, and high academic performance and achievement. These practices are important for preteens because these children are at a vulnerable, formative, and dependent stage of life development, in which they acquire socialization skills through observing, modeling, and imitating the socialization messages of positive parenting practices of their parents. Moreover, the socialization messages of positive parenting practices are a systemic practice among parents from different racial and ethnic and economic backgrounds.

In this chapter, prior research into the relationship of social support parenting behaviors was reviewed. Social support in this context included child care, emotional, informational, instrumental, and religious and metaphysical modes of social support. These modes of social support resources came from friends, family, church members, and nonresident or resident fathers or coparenting partners to help parents cope with the challenges and demands of being a single parent; residing in dangerous communities; needing help with daily parenting activities with children; raising children with behavioral, physical, emotional, or psychological problems; or coping with a physical or psychological illness and/or enduring coparenting conflict, partner or matrimonial discord, or the prospect of separation or divorce. Although social support significantly reduced psychological and parenting stress among parents, the absence of it significantly impaired psychological functioning. Moreover, social support influenced positive parenting practices among parents in general and among low-income, single, and working-middle-class, two-parent, African American families with preteens and/or

adolescents. However, data were lacking on how social support influenced positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens.

In Chapter 3, the methodology of the study is outlined. The discussion includes the research design and approach, setting and sample of the study, data collection and analysis procedures, and procedures for protecting participants' rights.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether social support influenced positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. The overarching research question in this research was as follows: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and positive parenting practices? In this chapter, I describe the research design, locality, sample size, instrumentation, data assumptions, data analysis, protection of human participants, and a summary of Chapter 3.

Research Design and Approach

A quantitative research design was used in this study. This design was applicable because I aimed to determine whether a statistical relationship existed between an explanatory variable (social support) and a behavioral response variable (positive parenting; Creswell, 2003). The survey method was also used based upon self-administered questionnaires to gather data on how social support influenced positive parenting practices in subject families (Creswell, 2003). This was consistent with other studies examining similar concepts pertaining to the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African American parents of preteens and/or adolescents (Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005). A multiple regression analysis was used for the data analysis to determine if a statistically-significant relationship existed between the independent variable (coparenting support or functional social support from friends and family) and the dependent variable (positive parenting

practices) among two-parent, African American families of preteens (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004).

Setting and Sample

The participants for this study included a sample of 84 two-parent, African American family dyads with one or more preteen children (ages 9-11 years), from neighborhoods in a Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. The research took place at churches and public elementary schools throughout the designated geographical area. I used this sample because of the difficulty of forming a sample by random selection, which would necessitate first identifying all members of the population of interest, then selecting a random sample (Creswell, 2003). Inclusion criteria of study participants included two-parent families of African American descent, ages 18 and older, whose primary language was English, with different income levels and at least one preteen child between the ages 9 and 11. Exclusion criteria of study participants included single parents whose primary language was not English or where at least one parent was not of African American descent, or no child was 9 to 11-years-old.

The sample size for this study was calculated by using four parameters. The first parameter was the power of the test. In this study, the power of the test was selected to 80% to reject false null hypotheses (Rossi, 1990). A power of 80% enabled the statistical analyses to provide valid conclusions concerning the total population. This also provided 80% strength in terms of assessing the validity of the statistical tests that was used (Rossi, 1990). The second parameter for determining sample size was effect size. Due to the large volume of correlational studies on the relationship between social support and

parenting, I selected an effect size based on a meta-analysis study by Andresen (1989) who used 66 studies to conduct six meta-analyses to determine whether significant statistical relationships existed between emotional, informational, and material modes of social support and the behaviors and attitudes of mothers. Andresen found that significant statistical relationships existed between emotional, informational, and material modes of social support and behaviors and attitudes of mothers with an average effect size of approximately $r=0.30$. I used these parameters to determine the strength of the relationship social support had on positive parenting practices among two parent, African American families of preteens. The third parameter for determining sample size was the level of significance. Prior to conducting the correlational analysis for this study, the level of significance was selected to be 5% because this provided a 95% confidence level that the conclusions drawn from the correlational analysis was true (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). The fourth parameter for determining sample size was the type of statistical analysis conducted. In this study, a linear regression analysis was used to conduct the statistical analysis due to the inclusion of two predictor variables (e.g., coparenting support and functional social support from friends and family).

Based on the four parameters, the sample size was calculated through G*power considering 80% power, an average effect size of $f^2 = 0.30$, level of significance set at 5%, using linear regression analyses, and two predictor variables; I determined that the optimum minimal sample size was 84 two-parent, African American family dyads. It was important for me to select more than 84 two parent, African American family dyads to achieve 80% power for the statistical tests, because if fewer than 84 two-parent, African

American family dyads were sampled, the strength of the analysis would have decreased, resulting in a decrease of the validity and the generalizability of the results from the statistical tests (Rossi, 1990).

Instrumentation

In this study, the instrumentation was grounded on two critical constructs, social support and positive parenting practices. The constructs of social support were used in this study to evaluate perceived access to social support among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Two constructs of social support were assessed: quality of coparenting relationship support and perceived functional support from friends and family.

Quality of coparenting relationship support was assessed using the Coparenting Support Subscale of the Coparenting Relationship Scale, a self-administered, 6-item questionnaire that assessed participants' responses to sample items such as "My partner asks my opinion on issues related to parenting" and "My partner tells me I am doing a good job or otherwise lets me know I am being a good parent." Responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not true of us*) to 6 (*very true of us*; Feinberg et al., 2012). To score the Coparenting Support Subscale, the mean of the items was calculated. Cronbach's alpha for the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS had good internal consistency, with an alpha of .89. The Coparenting Support Subscale was strongly correlated with the complete CRS for both men and women, with correlations ranging from .15 to .84 (Feinberg et al., 2012). The CRS was used in a variety of empirical

studies examining quality of coparenting relationship support among two-parent family populations (Feinberg, 2003; Feinberg et al., 2012).

Perceived functional social support from friends and family was assessed using the Social Provisions Scale, a self-administered, 24-item questionnaire that consisted of 6 subscales that tapped several dimensions of participants' perceived functional social support (e.g., tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support). Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from one (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) to statements such as "There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it" (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). All 24 of the items of the Social Provisions Scale were averaged to create a total perceived social support score ($\alpha = .89$; Cutrona & Russell, 1987). The 6 subscales of the Social Provisions Scale were significantly correlated with each other ($r(129) = .32-.78$); therefore, the total scale score was used for the analysis. The Social Provisions Scale was used in a variety of empirical studies examining the relationship between functional social support and positive parenting practices among low income, African American mothers (Green et al., 2007).

In this study, the constructs of positive parenting practices were used to evaluate positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Three constructs of positive parenting practices were assessed: the quality of the parent/child relationship, parental monitoring, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices.

The quality of the parent/child relationship was assessed using 14 items from the short form of the IBQ, a self-administered questionnaire in which participants rated

statements as true or false. Sample statements included, "You enjoy spending time with your child" and "You think you and your child get along well together" (Prinz et al., 1979). The IBQ short form yielded satisfactory internal consistency and discriminant validity (Prinz et al., 1979; Robin & Weiss, 1980). A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that 14 of the 20 items loaded on a single construct at .40 or above (Kotchik et al., 2005); as a result, only these 14 items were included in the measure for the present data analysis. An alpha coefficient of .85 was generated for the 14 items (Kotchik et al., 2005). Responses were summed, and scores could range from 0 to 14, with higher scores indicating healthy parent/child relationship. The IBQ short form was used in a variety of empirical studies exploring the quality of parent/child relationship among low-income, urban, African American mothers (Dorsey, 2003; Kotchik, 1999; Kotchik et al., 2005).

Parental monitoring was assessed using The Monitoring and Control Scale (MCS), a self-administered, 17-item questionnaire that was rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from one (*never*) to 4 (*always*). The MCS assesses participants' understanding of how much they know about different elements of their children's lives and how much authority or control they try to have over their children's lives (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg et al., 1992). A CFA indicated for all 17 items loaded at .40 and above, resulting in an alpha coefficient of .91 (Kotchick, 1999; Kotchick et al., 2005). A total score was obtained by summing all responses, and scores could range from 17 to 68, with higher scores indicating higher levels of parenting monitoring. The MCS was used in a variety of empirical studies exploring maternal monitoring of children's activities

among low-income, urban, African American mothers (Dorsey, 2003; Kotchick, 1999; Kotchick et al., 2005).

Consistency of parents' disciplinary practices was assessed using the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale. The Laxness Subscale was a self-administered, 11-item questionnaire that assesses participants' consistent disciplinary practices. Participants rated their own behavior by responding on a 7-point scale to pairs of opposite statements such as, "If my child gets upset, I back down and give in / I stick to what I said" and "When my child does something I don't like, I do something about it every time it happens/I often let it go"; Arnold et al., 1993). Responses to the 11 items were added together and then averaged to compute the score for the Laxness Subscale, after reverse scoring items 19, 20, 26, and 30 on the Parenting Scale. The subscale yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83. Low scores on the Laxness Subscale denoted consistent disciplinary practices; higher scores indicated parental laxness (Arnold et al., 1993). The Laxness Subscale was used in a variety of empirical studies exploring consistent disciplinary practices among low income, urban, African American mothers (Dorsey, 2003; Kotchik, 1999; Kotchik et al., 2005).

Data Collection

I used quantitative methods to gather demographic and responsive data from five survey measures. Recruitment of two-parent, African American families of preteens took place at churches and at public elementary schools throughout a Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. Prior to data collection, I contacted principals from public elementary schools to obtain approval and to schedule a date and time for

data collection. I also contacted religious leaders from churches to obtain approval and to schedule a date and time for data collection.

On the day of data collection at recruitment sites, I set up a table before and after church services, during a parent-teacher conference at public elementary schools, with a sign inviting the participation of preteen two-parent, African American families in a study about social support and positive parenting. Flyers (Appendix C) were also distributed at churches and at public elementary schools to invite the participation of prospective family participants who met the criteria for this study. After prospective family participants were provided with a research flyer, and before they were provided the invitation notice of participation (Appendix A), they were asked about their family composition to determine if they met the eligibility criteria for this study (e.g., two-parent, African American families with one or more preteens between the ages of 9 and 11). If the prospective family participants were found to not qualify for this study, they were told they were found ineligible for this study, because one or both parents were not of African American descent, and/or children were over or under the age range. I thanked them for their willingness to participate in this study. Two-parent, African American family couples, or one parent who was present without the other parent, who met the eligibility criteria for this study and who were willing to participate in this study, were provided an invitation notice of participation at the table following the distribution of the flyer at recruitment sites. The invitations informed prospective family participants about the nature of the study; a date, time, and location for data collection; and instructions on how survey packets were to be completed and returned to me (e.g., 1. Complete a survey

packet and return it at that time to me; or 2. Take a survey packet home, fill it out, place it in a prestamped/ self-addressed envelope provided in the survey packet, and drop it in a mailbox). These alternative methods of data collection were provided to reduce the rate of nonresponse to the survey.

Research participants were provided a survey packet that included an 8 ½ x 11” brown envelope, a prestamped/self-addressed envelope, an informed consent application, a demographic questionnaire, two measures of social support (e.g., the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale of and the Social Provisions Scale) and three measures of positive parenting practices (e.g., the IBQ short form, the MCS, and the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale). Family dyads (mothers and fathers) were instructed to read the informed consent form and to complete a single demographic questionnaire contained in the survey packet together. Each family dyad (mothers and fathers) were instructed to complete separate measures of social support and separate measures of positive parenting practices that were also contained in survey packets. All forms in survey packets contained a numeric survey packet identifier (e.g., 001). The numeric identifiers on survey packets were used to preserve the anonymity of the family participants.

Family participants who chose to take a survey packet home and return it by mail to me were reminded to return survey packets as soon as possible before they departed the table that was set up at recruitment sites. Family participants who took survey packets home, and who failed to return them by mail to me, were classified in the study as the number of packets not returned.

Prior to completing the surveys contained in the packets, the family participants were asked to read the informed consent agreement form. An informed consent agreement form was used to request research participants' permission to participate in a study. Included in the informed consent agreement form was the background of the study, procedures on what research participants were completing in the survey packet, the voluntary nature of the study, the risk and benefits of being in the study, payment agreement, privacy statement, contacts and questions, and statement of consent. On the informed consent form, I provided a telephone number and an e-mail address if research participants had any questions regarding this study. To preserve full anonymity and privacy, participants who agreed to participate in this study gave consent by completing and returning all measures contained in the survey packets to me. However, family participants were notified by me that they can withdraw from the study at any time. If one parent in a family dyad decided to withdraw from this study at any time, the exclusion of one parent in a family dyad resulted in the exclusion of the other.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and parent/child relationship quality?

*H*₀1: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with parent/child relationship quality, as assessed by the IBQ short form.

*H*₁₁: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with parent/child relationship quality, as assessed by the IBQ Short Form.

Research Question 2: Among two-parent, African- merican families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and parental monitoring of children's activities?

*H*₀₂: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MCS.

*H*₁₂: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MCS.

Research Question 3: Among two parent, African American families of preteens, was there an association between the levels of social support and consistency of disciplinary practices of parents?

*H*₀₃: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

*H*₁₃: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

Data Analysis

In this correlational study, I explored the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Multiple regression analysis was used to address the three research questions and the three hypotheses. This statistical procedure was appropriate for the analysis of two sets of variables (e.g., explanatory variables that were distributed continuously and one behavioral response variable that was distributed continuously; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). In this study, there was two explanatory variables: (a) the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale and (b) functional social support (tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support from friends and family), as measured by the Social Provisions Scale. The three research questions were investigated through separate regression analyses; in each analysis, the behavioral response variable corresponded to the parenting variable that was the focus of each research question: (a) parent/child relationship quality, as assessed by the IBQ short form, for Research Question 1; (b) parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MCS, for Research Question 2; and (c) consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale, for Research Question 3. For all explanatory and behavioral response variables, data from the two parents were tabulated separately

and then averaged together because responses from parents in the same family may be highly correlated with each other. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 for Windows was used for the data analyses.

One of the advantages of multiple regression was that it permitted evaluation of the relative contribution of each explanatory variable in conjunction with the influence of other explanatory variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). It was important to analyze the influence of the two social support variables in conjunction with each other because the two variables may be correlated with each other. The results of the analysis provided information regarding the interrelationship of several variables. Moreover, the strength of each independent variable (the predictor variable) was calculated to determine how one variable clearly explained the changes within the dependent variable. Three regression analyses were performed to examine whether a relationship existed between social support and positive parenting practices.

The characteristics of study participants were presented using descriptive statistics for demographic variables and independent and dependent variables. Responses from male and female parents were tabulated separately and then averaged together. All of the categorical variables (i.e., all demographic variables excluding the ages of parents and children) were reported as summary statistics in the form of percentages and frequencies. The continuous variables (age of parents and children, the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale, the Social Provisions Scale, the IBQ Short Form, the MCS, and the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale) were reported in the form of means and standard deviations.

The results of the multiple regression analyses were presented as follows. The significance level was set at $p < .05$ for the three regression analyses. The strength of the relationship between the two social support variables with each parenting variable was examined in terms of the overall fit of the regression model, as indicated by the proportion of variance in parenting practices accounted for by the social support variables. To avoid overestimation by R -squared, the adjusted R -squared was reported as a measure of the proportion of the behavioral response variable variance that can be accounted for by the explanatory variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). The F statistic and its p -value was reported with regard to the statistical significance of the regression model fit (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). If the p -value for the overall fit of the regression model was $< .05$, then the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the two social support variables were significant predictors of the positive parenting. If the overall fit of the regression model was significant, the multiple regression equation for each analysis was constructed using standardized regression coefficients (β). These coefficients indicated the independent contribution of each social support variable while controlling for the influence of other social support (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). The accompanying p -values for each standardized regression coefficients were used to examine the statistical significance of each social support variable as an independent predictor of positive parenting behavior. The square of semipartial correlation coefficients was reported and interpreted as the amount of variance in entitlement that was uniquely associated with each of the predictor variables (Taq, 2004).

Data Assumptions

Methods of quantitative analyses, particularly parametric procedures such as linear regression analysis, depend on assumptions regarding the data to be used for analysis (Creswell, 2003). In the case of multiple linear regression analyses, these assumptions include linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality. The assumption of linearity suggests that the relationship between the independent variable that sits on the y axis and the dependent variable that sits on the x axis followed a straight line (Pedhazur, 1982). The assumption of homoscedasticity suggests that the variance around the regression line was equal for all values of the independent variables (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The assumption of normality refers to the statistical distribution of the residual errors of a multiple regression model. Nonnormality may be an issue when the error distribution was skewed or when a few large outliers were present.

In this study, both the dependent and independent variables were tested for these data assumptions. In the event that significant outliers were detected based upon studentized residuals, the analysis was performed with the outlying observations deleted. Should the plots of the data indicate strong skewness or they reveal a nonlinear relationship between variables or substantial heteroscedasticity, then a data transformation such as taking logarithms or square roots were applied.

Protection of Human Participants

The institutional review board (IRB) from Walden University governed the approval of data collection methods prior to conducting and collecting research data. Upon approval from the IRB, I invited two-parent, African American family dyads to

participate in this study. Recruitment subsequently began. The potential subjects were told that participation in this study was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. I obtained informed consent by family participants completing all survey measures contained in survey packets. The data were handled solely by me and kept in a locked file cabinet.

Summary

In Chapter 3, the methodological procedures were conceptualized and expounded upon. The purpose of this correlational study was to determine to what degree a relationship existed between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. A minimum sample of 84 was needed for such family units from diverse income neighborhoods in a metropolitan area of the Northeastern region of the United States. The basis of this study centered on studies exploring the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among African American parents of preteens and/or adolescents (e.g., Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005). The data were collected from churches and public elementary schools using a demographic questionnaire, which included two measures of social support (i.e., the Coparenting Relationship Scale and the Social Provisions Scale) and three measures of positive parenting practices (i.e., the Short Form of the IBQ, the MCS, and the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale). The data were analyzed using three multiple regression analyses to determine whether a significant statistical relationship existed between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent,

African American families of preteens using the Pearson-product moment coefficient (r) to determine the degree of the relationship.

The results of this study are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative research design was to investigate the statistical relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Family participants completed three measures of positive parenting practices: (a) quality of the parent/child relationship measured by the 14-item questionnaire of the short form of the IBQ (Prinz et al., 1979), (b) parental monitoring of children's activities measured by the 17-item questionnaire of the MCS (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg et al., 1992), and (c) consistency of parents' disciplinary practices measured by the Laxness subscale of the parenting scale (Arnold et al., 1993). The participants also completed two measures of social support: (a) quality of coparenting relationship support measured by the 6-item questionnaire of the Coparenting Support Subscale of the Coparenting Relationship Scale (Feinberg et al., 2012) and (b) perceived functional social support from friends and family measured by the 24-item questionnaire of the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). There were three research questions that guided this study: (a) Do the levels of social support predict the quality of the parent/child relationship among two-parent, African American families of preteens; (b) Do the levels of social support predict parental monitoring of children's activities among two-parent, African American families of preteens; and (c) Do the levels of social support predict consistency of parents' disciplinary practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens?

This chapter starts with an overview of how I collected and screened the data, followed by the sample demographics and descriptive statistics for each of the predictor variables and the outcome variables. Next, I present the correlation coefficients and the results of the regression analysis used to examine the three research questions. Because two of the dependent variables showed strong deviations from the normal distribution, the first two research questions were examined using logistic regression, rather than linear regression as stated in the data analysis plan in Chapter 3. The third research question was examined using linear regression, as originally planned. The regression analyses were based upon averaging together the responses of the mothers and fathers. I further evaluated data from the mothers and fathers separately in a set of exploratory analyses. I end the chapter with a summary of the results and a transition into Chapter 5.

Results of Data Collection

Recruitment of potential two-parent, African American family dyads with preteens took place at a charter elementary school and at a church in the Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. Instead of recruiting study participants from public elementary schools as I proposed in Chapter 3, the study participants were recruited from a charter elementary school because principals I contacted were not interested in having their public elementary school participate as a recruitment site. Prior to data collection, I contacted an administrator at a new recruitment site, a charter elementary school, to set up a date and time for data collection. This new recruitment site was approved by my dissertation committee and the Walden IRB. My original recruitment plan in Chapter 3 was for me to contact principals from public elementary

schools, prior to data collection, to set up a date and time for recruiting potential family participants. Recruitment from the church went as I planned in Chapter 3.

The time for data collection between the church and the charter school was about 3 months for recruiting potential two-parent, African American family participants following approval to collect data from Walden University's IRB. Before recruitment began, I posted flyers at the church on January 27, 2017, and at the charter school, on February 2nd, 2017. Flyers posted at the church requested potential two-parent, African American family participants meet for data collection at Wednesday night prayer or at Sunday regular morning church services, and flyers posted at the charter school requested potential two-parent, African American family participants meet for data collection at a parent/teacher conference or at a math and reading night for parents and students. Data collection began at the church on February 1st, 2017 and ended on March 29th, 2017. Meanwhile, data collection began at the charter school on February 16th, 2017, and ended on April 6, 2017. During the days of data collection, both administrators at each recruitment site provided me with a room with several desks and chairs to conduct the study.

Between the church and the charter school, I distributed 120 survey packets to potential study recruits, and I received back 103 completed survey packets from recruited two parent, African American family dyads, yielding a response rate of 86%. The survey packets returned were checked for missing responses to items. There were no incomplete measures among the survey packets returned. The sample size of 103 surpassed the target sample size of 84 necessary for 80% statistical power for the analyses of the research

questions. The larger sample size was used to increase statistical power, as 80% statistical power is considered the lowest adequate level (Rossi, 1990).

Sample Characteristics

The data were screened for outliers using Cook's distances. A Cook's distance greater than 1.0 would indicate influential observations that could bias the results of the regression analyses. For each regression, I calculated Cook's distance, and all Cook's distances were less than 1. There were no missing responses, and no responses were excluded in the study's data set due to outliers. Therefore 103 two-parent, African American family participants with preteens between the ages of 9 and 11 retained to test the three hypotheses for this study.

The demographic information of the 103 family participants is summarized in Table 1 and Table 2. Most parents indicated that they were cohabitating (57.3%) rather than married. Regarding number of children, the lowest number of children was one and the highest number of children was two, with an average number of children was 1.14 ($SD = 0.34$).

Table 1

Frequency Table for Nominal Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	Percentage of Sample
Children between ages 9-11		
One child between ages 9-11	89	86.4%
Gender of child		
Male	40	38.8%
Female	49	47.6%
Age of child		
9 years	26	25.2%
10 years	28	27.2%
11 years	35	34.0%
Two children between ages 9-11	14	13.6%
Gender of child		
Two males	6	5.8%
Two females	4	3.9%
One male, one female	4	3.9%
Age of children		
9 & 10 years	1	1.0%
9 & 11 years	5	4.9%
10 & 11 years	3	2.9%
Both aged 9 years	2	1.9%
Both aged 10 years	1	1.0%
Both aged 11 years	2	1.9%
Marital status		
Cohabiting	59	57.3%
Married	44	42.7%
Mother education		
College graduate	25	24.3%
GED	15	14.6%
High school	18	17.5%

Some college	18	17.5%
Post graduate degree	16	15.5%
Post graduate studies	11	10.7%
Father education		
College graduate	17	16.5%
GED	17	16.5%
High school	19	18.4%
Some college	22	21.4%
Post graduate degree	20	19.4%
Post graduate studies	8	7.8%
Mother's income		
\$10,000-\$30,000	26	25.2%
\$31,000-\$50,000	31	30.1%
\$51,000-\$70,000	23	22.3%
\$71,000-\$100,000	23	22.3%
Father's income		
\$10,000-\$30,000	25	24.3%
\$31,000-\$50,000	32	31.1%
\$51,000-\$70,000	20	19.4%
\$71,000-\$100,000	25	24.3%
Invalid response	1	1.0%

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 reports descriptive statistics for the continuous study variables, including ages of mothers and fathers, the two social support constructs (quality of coparenting relationship support and perceived functional support from friends and family), and the three response variables of positive parenting (the quality of the parent/child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Age of Parents, Number of Children, Parents' Average Social Support, and Positive Parenting Scale Scores

Variable	Possible Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Mother age	-	21.00	51.00	36.98	7.18	0.21	-0.80
Father age	-	24.00	58.00	41.82	7.61	0.13	-0.57
Coparenting support subscale score*	0-6	2.67	6.00	5.73	0.68	-2.89	7.87
Social provisions scale score	24-96	72.00	96.00	93.27	5.69	-2.22	3.98
Short Form IBQ scale score*	1-14	1.00	14.00	12.77	1.36	-6.89	56.92
Monitoring and control scale score*	17-68	37.00	68.00	64.67	7.42	-2.28	3.99
Laxness subscale score*	1-8	1.00	4.55	2.74	0.64	0.08	1.05

Note. Based on average scores for mothers and fathers on the same scale.

Regarding parents' age, the lowest mother's age was 21, and the highest mother's age was 51, with the average age of mothers was 36.98 ($SD = 7.18$); the lowest father's age was 24, and the highest father's age was 58, with the average age of fathers at 41.82 ($SD = 7.61$). Regarding parents' average laxness score, low scores indicated low laxness; therefore, positive parenting and high scores indicated high laxness and inconsistent disciplinary parenting.

Skewness and kurtosis for all the continuous variables are presented in Table 2. When the skewness is greater than or equal to 2 or less than or equal to -2, then the variable is asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The skewness value for parents' average coparenting support subscale score indicated that this variable was negatively skewed (-2.89; Table 2), and the kurtosis value for parents' average coparenting support subscale score indicated that this variable was leptokurtic, meaning that there were more observations near the center of the distribution than normal (7.87; Table 2). The skewness value for parents' average social provisions scale score indicated that this variable was negatively skewed (-2.22; Table 2), and the kurtosis value for parents' average social provisions scale score indicated that this variable was leptokurtic, meaning that there were more observations near the center of the distribution than normal (3.98; Table 2). The skewness value for parents' short form IBQ score indicated that this variable was negatively skewed (-6.89; Table 2), and the kurtosis value for parents' short form IBQ score indicated that this variable was leptokurtic, meaning that there were more

observations near the center of the distribution than normal (56.92; Table 2). The histogram displayed in Figure 1 shows the strong deviation of parents' short form IBQ score from a normal distribution. The skewness value for parents' monitoring and control scale score indicated that this variable was negatively skewed (-2.28; Table 2), and the kurtosis value for parents' average monitoring and control scale score indicated that this variable was leptokurtic, meaning that there were more observations near the center of the distribution than normal (3.99; Table 3). The histogram displayed in Figure 2 shows the strong deviation of parents' monitoring and control scale score from a normal distribution.

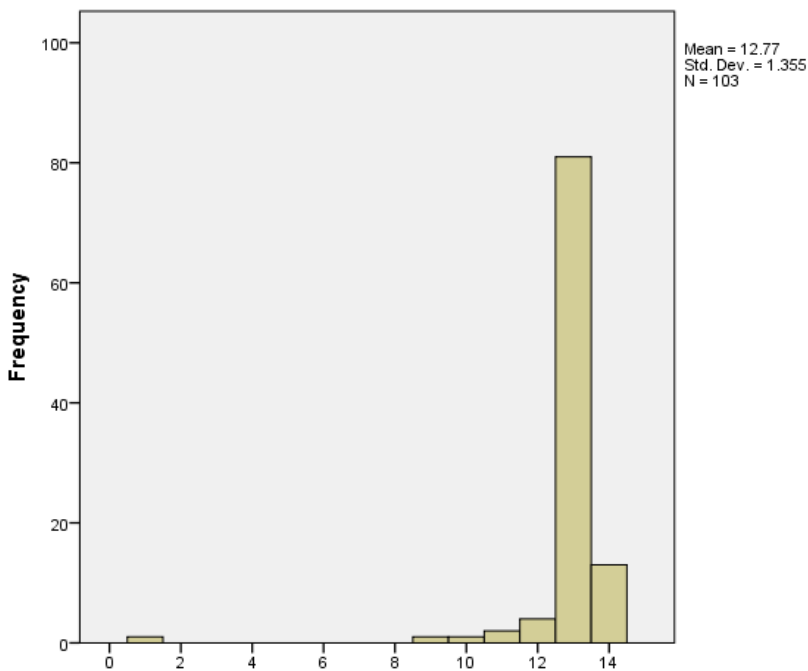


Figure 1. Histogram for parents' short form IBQ score.

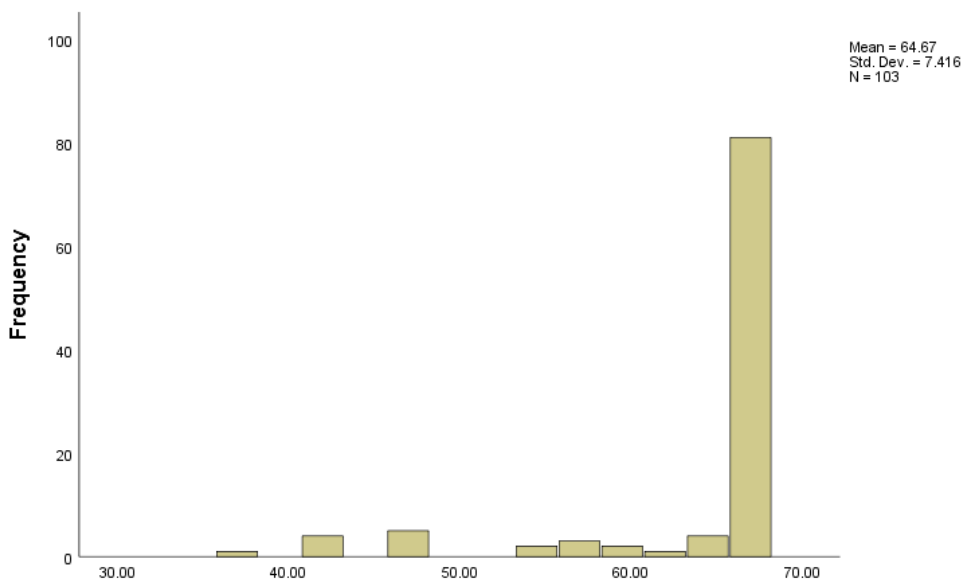


Figure 2. Histogram for parents' monitoring and control scale score.

Inspection of the histograms further confirmed that some of the study variables were not normally distributed (See Figures 1 and 2). The possible range of IBQ scores was from 1 to 14; yet, 84.5% of the scores were 13.0 or higher. On parents' average monitoring and control scale, 73.8% of scores at the maximum possible score of 68.

Table 3 reports statistics based on averaging together scores for mothers and fathers in the same dyad, and Table 4 reports means and standard deviations for mothers' and fathers' scores separately. Table 4 also shows the correlations between mothers' and fathers' scores on the same scales.

Table 3

Correlations Between Mothers' and Fathers' Scores on the Study Variables

Variable	Mother's scores		Father's scores		Correlation.
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Coparenting support subscale	5.65	0.92	5.81	0.58	.61
Social provisions scale score	93.39	5.90	93.16	6.84	.59
Short Form IBQ scale	12.79	1.49	12.75	1.41	.75
Monitoring and control scale	64.69	7.80	64.64	7.75	.82
Laxness subscale	2.72	0.69	2.76	0.75	.56

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for Mothers and Fathers

Variable	Mother	Father
Coparenting support score	.96	.97
2. Social provision score	.96	.97
3. Short form IBQ score	.80	.77
4. Monitoring and control score	.95	.96
5. Laxness score	.76	.68

Note. $N = 103$

A Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for each of the independent and dependent variables (Table 4). Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .68 to .97.

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between each pair of variables. Tables 5 and 6 show the correlations among the variables based on data for the mothers and fathers respectively. Table 7 shows the correlations among the variables based on data for the mothers and fathers averaged together. The correlations between the social support variables and the positive parenting variables were statistically significant for all three sets of data (Tables 5-7). As shown in Table 7, parents' average coparenting support score was positively correlated with parents' average social provisions score ($r = .69$), parents' average short form IBQ scale score ($r = .44$), and parents' average monitoring and control score ($r = .39$). Parents' average social provisions score was positively

correlated with parents' average short form IBQ scale score ($r = .35$) and parents' average monitoring and control score ($r = .55$). Lastly, parents' average laxness score was negatively correlated with parents' average coparenting support score ($r = -.26$), parents' average social provisions score ($r = -.36$), and parents' average monitoring and control score ($r = -.19$). Low scores on the Laxness of Parenting scale indicated low laxness and positive parenting. This explained why the Laxness scale was negatively correlated with scores on the other scales. Similar results were obtained for correlations between variables based on the mothers' responses and based on the fathers' responses.

Table 5

Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Mothers' Responses

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Mother's coparenting support subscale score	-				
2. Mother's social provisions scale score	.74**	-			
3. Mother's short form IBQ scale score	.51**	.44**	-		
4. Mother's monitoring and control scale score	.37**	.48**	.40**	-	
5. Mother's laxness subscale score	-.21*	-.34**	-.04	-.19*	-

Note. $N = 103$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Fathers' Responses

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Father's coparenting support subscale score	-				
2. Father's social provisions scale score	.53**	-			
3. Father's short form IBQ scale score	.31**	.24*	-		
4. Father's monitoring and control scale score	.35**	.58**	.26**	-	
5. Father's laxness subscale score	-.39*	-.43**	.06	-.22**	-

Note. N = 103. * p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 7

Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables Based on Averages of Mothers' and Fathers' Responses

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parents' average coparenting support subscale score	-				
2. Parents average social provisions scale score	.69**	-			
3. Parents' average short form IBQ scale score	.44**	.35**	-		
4. Parents' average monitoring and control scale score	.39**	.55**	.35**	-	
5. Parents' average laxness subscale score	-.26**	-.36**	.04	-.19*	-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 1

A regression analysis was conducted to assess whether social support (quality of coparenting relationship support or perceived functional support from friends and family) significantly predicted quality of the parent/child relationship. Null hypothesis (H^0) suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Co-parenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was not significantly associated with quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ. Alternative hypothesis (H^1) suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, was significantly associated with quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ. This analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis:

H_01 . Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Co-parenting Support subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is not significantly associated with the quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ.

H_{a1} . Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Co-parenting Support subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is significantly associated with the quality of parent/child relationships, as assessed by the short form of the IBQ.

The data for the independent and dependent variables were based upon averaging together the responses of the mothers and fathers. The data analysis plan formulated prior

to data collection stated that the hypothesis would be tested by linear regression analysis. For linear regression, an underlying statistical assumption is that the dependent variable is approximately normally distributed. However as noted above, the sample data for the IBQ strongly deviated from a normal distribution. Whereas the possible range of scores was from 1 to 14, 84.5% of the scores were 13.0 or higher. Because the normality assumption was strongly violated, I performed a logistic regression analysis, based on dichotomizing the dependent variable at the median value of 13.0. Data for the dependent variable were recoded as 1.0 if the parents' average score was 13.0 or higher, and as 0.0 otherwise. The independent variables in the logistic regression analysis were parents' average scores for the Co-parenting Support subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale.

The results of the logistic regression model were statistically significant ($\chi^2(2)=9.908, p=.007$), indicating parents' average coparenting support score and parents' average social provisions score explained a significant proportion of variation in parents' average Short Form of the IBQ score. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. However, neither the Co-parenting Support subscale of the CRS nor the Social Provisions Scale were statistically significant as predictors in the logistic regression model, indicating that neither variable uniquely accounted for variation in IBQ scores. Table 8 summarizes the results of the logistic regression model.

Table 8

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting Short Form of the IBQ

Independent variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Chi- Square	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Coparenting support subscale score	.514	.457	1.672	1.265	1	.261
Social provisions score	.076	.055	1.079	1.904	1	.168
Intercept	-8.195	3.867		4.492	1	.034

The data used in the regression analyses reported were based upon averaging together the responses of the mothers and fathers. However, averaging together the mothers' and fathers' responses might potentially obscure or diminish relationships among variables that were unique to either the mothers or fathers. For each of the study hypotheses, I further examined relationships among variables for mothers and fathers separately in a set of exploratory analyses, based upon applying the same statistical methods as used for the main analyses. These analyses are exploratory in the sense that the data analysis plan in Chapter 3 only specified examining relationships among variables based upon averaging together the responses of the mothers and fathers.

For Hypothesis 1, the results of the logistic regression analyses for the responses from the mothers and fathers separately differed from the above results based on averaging together responses from each parental dyad. The logistic regression model was statistically significant for the data from the mothers, indicating that the two social support measures (coparenting support and social provisions scores) were jointly significant as predictors of the quality of parent/child relationships as measured by IBQ scores. In the data from the mothers, only the social provisions score was significant as a predictor of IBQ scores. In the data from the fathers, the social support variables were not significant as predictors of IBQ scores, either separately or in combination. However as shown above in Tables 5 and 6, the two SSCs were both significantly correlated with IBQ scores in the responses for the both the mothers and for the fathers.

Hypothesis 2

Logistic regression analysis was conducted to assess whether social support (quality of coparenting relationship support or perceived functional support from friends and family) significantly predicted parental monitoring of children's activities. The analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis:

H₀2. Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is not significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale.

H_a2. Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions

Scale, is significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale.

Numerical values for the independent and dependent variables in the regression analyses were calculated by averaging together the scores for both parents. Null hypothesis suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is not significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale. Alternative hypothesis suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is significantly associated with parental monitoring of children's activities, as assessed by the MC Scale. The data analysis plan formulated prior to data collection stated that the hypothesis would be tested by linear regression analysis. However, as noted above, the sample data for the monitoring and control scores strongly deviated from a normal distribution, with 73.8% of scores at the maximum possible score of 68. Because the normality assumption was strongly violated, I performed a logistic regression analysis, based on dichotomizing the dependent variable. Data for the dependent variable were recoded as 1.0 if the parents' average score was 68.0, and as 0.0 otherwise. The independent variables in the logistic regression analysis were parents' average scores for the Co-parenting Support subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale.

As shown in Table 9, the results of the logistic regression model were significant, indicating that the two social support variables together accounted for a substantial

proportion of variance in parental monitoring ($\chi^2(2)=35.410, p<.001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The Social Provisions Scale, indicating perceived functional support from friends and family, significantly predicted parental monitoring of children's activities, $\chi^2(1)= 8.54, p = .003$. The logistic regression coefficient for social provisions scale score was $B = 0.201$, indicating that the parents' social provisions scale scores positively predict parents' scores on the monitoring and control scale scores, after accounting for the effect of coparenting relationship support. The coparenting subscale, indicating quality of coparenting relationship support, was not a significant predictor of parental monitoring of children's activities, ($\chi^2(1)= 3.54, p = .06$), indicating that coparenting relationship support did not uniquely account for a significant amount of variance in parental monitoring, after the effect of functional support from friends and family was accounted for. Table 9 summarizes the results of the logistic regression model.

Table 9

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting parents' average Monitoring and Control Scale Score

Independent variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Coparenting support subscale score	1.120	0.595	3.066	3.544	1	.060
Social provisions score	0.201	0.069	1.222	8.541	1	.003
Intercept	-24.013	6.192		15.041	1	<.001

For Hypothesis 2, the results of logistic regression analysis for the responses from the fathers separately were similar from the above results based on averaging together responses from each parental dyad. For the fathers, the logistic regression model was statistically significant for the data from the fathers ($\chi^2(2)=31.763, p<.001$), indicating that the two social support measures (coparenting support and social provisions scores) were jointly significant as predictors of fathers' parental monitoring and control behaviors as measured by MC scores. Also, the social provisions scores were a

significant predictor of MC scores ($p < .001$), whereas coparenting support was not a significant predictor ($p = .56$).

In the logistic regression analysis of the mothers' responses, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were significant as predictors of mothers' parental monitoring and control behaviors ($p = .023$ for coparenting support, $p = .005$ for social provisions scores). For the mothers, the logistic regression model was statistically significant for the data from the fathers ($\chi^2(2) = 40.552, p < .001$). As shown above, the two SSCs were both significantly correlated with parental monitoring and control behaviors in the responses for the both the mothers and for the fathers.

Hypothesis 3

The third and final regression analysis was conducted to assess whether social support (quality of coparenting relationship support or perceived functional support from friends and family) significantly predicted consistency in parents' disciplinary practices. The analysis was conducted to test the null hypothesis:

H₀₃: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is not significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

H_{a3}: Among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale.

Numerical values for the independent and dependent variables in the regression analysis were calculated by averaging together the scores for both parents. The assumptions for linear regression of linearity, homoscedasticity, lack of multicollinearity, and normality were tested for this regression. The residuals versus predicted values plot did not reveal any curvilinear trends, so the assumption of linearity was met. All VIF values were less than 10, so multicollinearity was not a problem. Examination of a Q-Q scatterplot revealed that the residuals did not deviate from the normal distribution, so the assumption of normality was met. Therefore, linear regression was used to examine the third hypothesis.

The null hypothesis suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Coparenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is not significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale. The alternative hypothesis suggested that among two-parent, African American families of preteens, social support, as determined by the Co-parenting Support Subscale of the CRS and the Social Provisions Scale, is significantly associated with consistency of disciplinary practices of parents, as assessed by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale. As shown in Table 10, the results of the linear regression model were significant ($F(2, 100) = 7.48, p = .001$); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result indicated that the two social support variables together accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in consistency in parents' disciplinary practices. The adjusted *R*-squared value indicated that approximately 11% of the variance in parents' average

laxness subscale score was explainable by parents' average coparenting support subscale score and parents' average social provisions scale score. The Social Provisions Scale, indicating perceived functional support from friends and family, significantly predicted consistency in parents' disciplinary practices, $B = -0.04$, $t(100) = -2.69$, $p = .008$. The semipartial correlation for the social provisions scales score was $-.25$; the square of the semipartial correlation ($.06$) showed that social provisions scale scores were uniquely associated with 6% of the variance in parents' average laxness subscale scores. The standardized regression coefficient for social provisions scale score was $-.35$, indicating that social provisions scale scores negatively predicted parents' average laxness subscale scores, which means that lower scores indicate low laxness, and therefore, positive parenting. Specifically, it was predicted that as social provisions scale scores increase by one standard deviation, parents' average laxness subscale scores will decrease by $.35$ standard deviations. A standardized regression coefficient of $-.35$ constitutes a medium effect size, according to the guidelines outlined by Cohen (1992).

The coparenting support subscale, indicating the quality of coparenting relationship support, was not a significant predictor of consistency in parents' disciplinary practices, $B = -0.02$, $t(100) = -0.13$, $p = .893$, indicating that coparenting relationship support did not uniquely account for a significant amount of variance in consistency in parents' disciplinary practices, after the effect of functional support from friends and family was accounted for. Table 10 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 10

Summary of Linear Regression Analysis Predicting parents' average Laxness subscale

Score

Model Term	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Semipartial correlation	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i> -value	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
Coparenti ng support subscale score	-0.02	0.12	-.02		-.01	-0.13	.893	1.93
Social provisions scale score	-0.04	0.01	-.35		-.25	-2.69	.008	1.93
Constant	6.47	1.00				6.45	< .001	

Note: $R^2 = .13$, $R^2_{adj} = .11$, $F(2, 100) = 7.48$, $p = .001$.

For Hypothesis 3, the results of multiple regression analysis for the responses from the fathers separately were different from the above results based on averaging together responses from each parental dyad. In the regression analysis predicting fathers' laxness of parenting, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were significant predictors. On the other hand, in the analyses of laxness of parenting, regarding the mothers' scores, the results were similar to the averages of mothers and fathers scores. In the regression analysis predicting mothers' laxness of parenting, only social provisions scores was a significant predictor.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative research design was to investigate whether or not a statistically significant relationship existed between the levels of social support (quality of coparenting relationship support and perceived functional support from friends and family) and positive parenting practices (the quality of the parent/child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices) among 103 two-parent, African American families with preteens between the ages of 9 and 11. Two separate logistic regression analyses were conducted to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. The results indicated that null Hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected. Specifically, the logistic regression analyses indicated that the two social support variables (perceived functional support from friends and family and quality of coparenting relationship support), together predicted quality of parent/child relationships and parental monitoring of children's activities among two-parent, African American families with preteens. There were significant correlations between each of the social

support variables and the scales assessing quality of parent/child relationships and parental monitoring of children's activities; these correlations were in the medium range, based on Cohen's (1992) criteria for interpreting the magnitude of correlations. Because the social support variables were highly correlated ($r = 0.69$), when both support scales were entered together as predictor variables in the regression analyses, only perceived functional support from friends and family accounted for unique variance in the parenting variable (parental monitoring of children's activities). A multiple regression analysis was conducted to test Hypothesis 3. The results indicated that null Hypothesis 3 was rejected. Specifically, the multiple regression analysis indicated that the two social support variables (perceived functional support from friends and family and quality of coparenting relationship support), together predicted consistency of parents' disciplinary practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens. There were significant correlations between each of the social support variables and the scale assessing consistency of parents' disciplinary practices; this correlation was in the medium range, based on Cohen's (1992) criteria for interpreting the magnitude of correlations. Because the social support variables were highly correlated ($r = 0.69$), when both support scales were entered together as predictor variables in the regression analysis, only perceived functional support from friends and family accounted for unique variance in the parenting variable (consistency of parents' disciplinary practices).

The main analyses of the study hypotheses examined relationships between the study variables based on responses of mothers and fathers averaged together. In addition, exploratory analyses were performed to examine the hypothesized relationships, based on

separate analyses for the mothers' and fathers' responses. These analyses yielded similar results to the main analyses. However, in the regression analysis predicting fathers' laxness of parenting, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were significant predictors. Another difference in the results was that, in the data from the mothers, the social provisions score was significant as an individual predictor of IBQ scores. In the data from the fathers, the social support variables were not significant as predictors of IBQ scores, either separately or in combination. Finally, in the regression analysis predicting mothers' parental monitoring and control behaviors, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were individually significant predictors.

In Chapter 5, I will provide an interpretation of the findings, recommendations for future research, implications for social change, and recommendations for action.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the statistical relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families of preteens. Although there had been studies done primarily with mothers of preteens and older children on maternal social support and positive parenting practices of different racial and ethnic maternal groups (Dixon et al., 2008; Lee, Lee, & August, 2011; Silk et al., 2004), it was not previously known how social support was linked to positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteen children, and it was also unknown to what extent social support is linked to positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteen children.

To investigate the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices among two-parent, African American families with preteen children, I used a quantitative correlational research design. A correlational research design was applicable because I wished to determine whether a statistical relationship existed between social support and a positive parenting, which was measured at the same time point (Creswell, 2003). A survey method was used to gather data from respondents in this study because it is based upon self-administer questionnaires to gather data describing how social support influences positive parenting practices in subject families (Creswell, 2003).

Data were gathered from a convenience sample of 103 two-parent, African American subjects, ages 18 to 40, with preteens, ages 9 to 11, residing in different

income neighborhoods throughout the Northeastern metropolitan region of the United States. The behavioral response variables were three measures of positive parenting practices: (a) the quality of the parent/child relationship, as measured by the short form of the IBQ; (b) parental monitoring, as measured by the MC scale (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Steinberg et al., 1992); and (c) consistency of parents' disciplinary practices, as measured by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale (Arnold et al., 1993). The explanatory variables were two measures of social support: (a) the CRS Coparenting Support Subscale to measure coparenting relationship support; and (b) the Social Provisions Scale, a measure of functional social support (tangible, emotional, advice or appraisal, and esteem support from friends and family). There were three research questions, one for each positive parenting variable. I predicted that the two SSCs would be positively related to quality of the parent-child relationship and to parental monitoring, and negatively related to laxness of parenting. A correlational data analysis procedure (i.e., logistic and linear regression analyses) was used to examine the relationship between social support and positive parenting practices. Each positive parenting variable was examined separately in relation to the social support variables.

Summary of the Study Findings

The study findings were consistent with the research predictions; all three null hypotheses were rejected. The logistic regression analyses for Research Questions 1 and 2 indicated that the two social support variables (perceived functional support from friends and family and quality of coparenting relationship support) predicted quality of parent/child relationships and parental monitoring of children's activities among two-

parent, African American families with preteens. There were significant correlations between each of the social support variables and the scales assessing quality of parent/child relationships and parental monitoring of children's activities; these correlations were in the medium range, based on Cohen's (1992) criteria for interpreting the magnitude of correlations. However, because the social support variables were highly correlated ($r= 0.69$) when both support scales were entered together as predictor variables in the regression analyses, only perceived functional support from friends and family accounted for unique variance in the parenting variable (parental monitoring of children's activities). Perceived functional support from friends and family was more strongly correlated with parental monitoring of children's activities than coparenting support among two-parent, African American families with preteens. In the multiple regression analysis for Research Question 3, the two social support variables (perceived functional support from friends and family and quality of coparenting relationship support) predicted consistency of parents' disciplinary practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens, as measured by the Laxness Subscale of the Parenting Scale. There were significant negative correlations between each of the social support variables and the scale assessing laxness of parents' disciplinary practices; this correlation was in the medium range, based on Cohen's (1992) criteria for interpreting the magnitude of correlations. Because the social support variables were highly correlated ($r= 0.69$) when both support scales were entered together as predictor variables in the regression analyses, only perceived functional support from friends and family accounted for unique variance in the parenting variable (consistency of parents' disciplinary

practices). Perceived functional support from friends and family was more strongly correlated with consistency of parents' disciplinary practices than coparenting support among two-parent, African American families with preteens.

Both SSCs (support from friends and family and coparenting relationship support) were significantly correlated with the parenting measures in the direction anticipated prior to data collection. However, prior to completing the statistical analyses for this present study, I anticipated that coparenting support would be correlated more strongly with positive parenting practices (than would support from friends and family). I made this assumption based on previous scholars who found an association between a positive marital or partner relationship and availability of immediate social support among two-parent couples (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Belsky et al., 1996; Feinberg et al., 2012; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009). Couples with positive relationships had fewer mistrust issues and more homogeneity with each other, which allowed for the exchange of immediate social support in shared child care and parenting practices (Armstrong et al., 2005; Balaji et al., 2007; Leahy-Warren et al., 2009). Positive partnerships also have previously been found to allow two-parent couples to praise each other's parenting practices, provide emotional and instrumental support to each other during times of parenting crises, and acknowledge each other's parenting accomplishments (Abidin & Brunner, 1995; Belsky et al., 1996; Feinberg et al., 2012). However, contrary to my initial expectation, I found that support from friends and family was a stronger predictor of positive parenting practices than was coparenting relationship support.

Summary of Exploratory Findings

I examined relationships between the study variables based on responses of mothers and fathers averaged together. In addition, exploratory analyses were performed to examine the hypothesized relationships, based on separate analyses for the mothers' and fathers' responses. These analyses yielded similar results to the main analyses. However, in the regression analysis predicting fathers' laxness of parenting, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were significant predictors. Another difference in the results was that, in the data from the mothers, the social provisions score was significant as an individual predictor of IBQ scores. In the data from the fathers, the social support variables were not significant as predictors of IBQ scores, either separately or in combination. Finally, in the regression analysis predicting mothers' parental monitoring and control behaviors, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were individually significant predictors.

Interpretation of Findings

Hypothesis 1

I found that for two-parent, African American couples with preteens, the two social support variables (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) predicted a statistical relationship with quality of parent/child relationships. However, neither of the two social support variables (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) showed a strong individual or joint correlation with quality of parent/child relationships. My findings were consistent with other studies on social support and positive parenting with two-parent families.

Brody, Stoneman, Flor, McCrary, Hastings, and Conyers (1994) found that steady financial resources, low levels of depression, high levels of coparenting support, and fewer conflicts among rural, two-parent, African American married couples were associated with the positive parenting behaviors of harmony, engagement, communication, and warmth, as well as low levels of depression, fewer behavioral problems, and proper self-regulation among adolescents. High coparenting support and the positive parenting behaviors of affection, warmth, praise, good comicality, and models or aids children with a task, particularly from fathers, was associated with better sibling relationships among two-parent, European American married couples with same gender children (Brody et al., 1992a/b). Florsheim et al. (2012) studied the effectiveness of the Young Parenthood Program (YPP) and found that adolescent fathers who completed YPP were more likely to remain parentally involved, show the positive parenting behavior of nurturance (e.g., reading, playing, cuddling, etc.) with newborns, and have a healthy coparenting relationship with mothers than adolescent fathers in the control group; the positive parenting functioning of fathers were mediated by mothers' improvement in interpersonal skill development (Florsheim et al., 2012). Coparenting support from cohabiting step-fathers was associated with the positive parenting behavior of acceptance with adolescents from a population of 121 low-income, urban, African American cohabiting stepfamilies (Forehand, Parent, Golub, & Reid, 2016). Spousal support was more important than social network support and predicted fewer depressive symptoms among parents and the positive parenting behaviors of warmth/support, parental involvement, and positive reinforcement with adolescents from two-parent,

European American, married couples (Simons et al., 1993). Weinraub and Wolf (1983) found that spousal support among two-parent, European American married couples was associated with better mother-child interaction.

My findings were also consistent with previous studies that found a relationship between perceived functional support from friends and family and quality of parent/child relationships among low-income, African American single mothers with preschoolers, preteens, and/or adolescents (Choi & Pyun (2013; Dorsey, 2003; Green et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2013; Kotchick et al., 2005; Silk et al., 2004; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor & Roberts, 1995; Taylor et al., 2008; Woody & Woody, 2007). However, my findings contrasted with a study that found no association between emotional and instrumental maternal social support and quality of parent/child relationships among low-income teen mothers (O'Callaghan et al., 1999).

Hypothesis 2

I found that for two-parent, African American couples with preteens, the two social support variables (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) predicted a statistical relationship with parental monitoring of children's activities. Perceived functional support from friends and family showed a stronger correlation with parental monitoring of children's activities than coparenting support. My findings were consistent with previous studies that found a relationship between perceived functional support from friends and family and parental monitoring of children's activities among low-income, African American single mothers with preschoolers, preteens, and/or adolescents (Dorsey, 2003; Kotchick et al., 2005; Silk et

al., 2004; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor & Roberts, 1995). My findings were also consistent with Forehand, Parent, Golub, and Reid (2016) found that coparenting support from cohabiting step-fathers was associated with parental monitoring of adolescents' activities from a population of 121 low-income urban, African American cohabiting stepfamilies.

Hypothesis 3

I found that for two-parent, African American couples with preteens, the two social support variables (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) predicted a statistical relationship with laxness of parents' disciplinary practices. Perceived functional support from friends and family showed a stronger positive correlation with consistency of parents' disciplinary practices than coparenting support. My findings were consistent with previous studies that found a relationship between perceived functional support from friends and family and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices among low-income, African American, single mothers with preschoolers, preteens, and/or adolescents (Choi & Pyun (2013; Dorsey, 2003; Kotchick et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 1993; Taylor & Roberts, 1995).

My findings were also consistent with other studies that explored social support and positive parenting with two-parent families. High coparenting support and the positive parenting behavior of control, particularly from fathers, was associated with better sibling relationships among two-parent, European American married couples with same gender children (Brody et al., 1992a/b). Forehand et al. (2016) found that

coparenting support from cohabiting step-fathers was associated with the positive parenting behavior of firm control with adolescents from 121 low-income urban, African American cohabiting stepfamilies.

Methodological Implications

I found that the distribution of the data had a restricted range for several of the variables. For example, the possible range of IBQ scores was from 1 to 14; yet, 84.5% of parents' average IBQ scores were 13.0 or higher. On parents' average monitoring and control scale, 73.8% of scores were at the maximum possible score of 68. Because the normality assumption was strongly violated for parents' average IBQ and parents' average monitoring and control scores, I performed two separate logistic regression analyses, based on dichotomizing the dependent variables. Data for parents' average IBQ scores were recoded as 1.0 if the parents' average score was 13.0 or higher, and as 0.0 otherwise; data for parents' average monitoring and control scores were recoded as 1.0 if the parents' average score was 68.0, and as 0.0 otherwise. The strong deviation from a normal distribution may have weakened the correlations between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, future research should either use different instruments or select participants so that the lower end of each scale is more represented in the study sample.

Theoretical Implications

In relationship to Baumrind's (1991) models of parenting demandingness and responsiveness, I found that parenting techniques and social support have an impact on positive parenting practices of preteens. The results of this study determined that both

coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family predicted a statistical relationship with two-parent, African American couples' use of quality of parent/child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices with preteens. Therefore, based on the premise of Baumrind's models of parenting demandingness and responsiveness, I provided confirmation that the theory is applicable to the population of two-parent, African American couples with preteens.

Practical Implications

The results from this study highlighted the need for all types of service and intervention programs to recognize that social support (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) predicted a statistical relationship with quality of parent/child relationships; parental monitoring of children's activities; and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices among two-parent, African American families with preteens. Because of my findings, service and intervention programs intended to serve two-parent, African American couples need to focus on intervention strategies that emphasize the importance of maintaining positive, healthy, relationships among themselves and with social support network providers and discuss the role that social support resources from coparenting support and from social support networks have on the practice of positive parenting.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations in this study. Concerning the construct validity of the measurements, parents' self-reported responses about perceived functional support

from friends and family were not independently verified by social support network providers, nor were parents' self-reported responses about their use of positive parenting practices verified by observation of their child-rearing, or by incorporating data from preteens or extended family members of the participants. Similarly, I used a convenience sample rather than a random selection of subject parents. Therefore, the generalizability of the results to other samples may be limited due to potential bias in the sampling method. Lastly, this study was a correlational study; therefore, caution was needed in interpreting correlation in terms of causation.

Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the distribution of the data having a restricted range for several of the variables, which was a result of a strong deviation from a normal distribution, the correlations may have been weakened between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, future research should either use different instruments or select participants so that the lower end of each scale is more represented in the study sample (see methodological implication for review). I did not include other variables that could have a strong influence on social support and two-parent, African American couples' use of positive parenting practices with preteens. Therefore, future research should include a measure of attachment styles to determine the level of intimacy between two-parent, African American couples and social support networks. This study had limitations regarding construct validity of the measurements. Therefore, future research should examine responses from social support networks about the type (s) of social support resources they realistically provide to two-parent, African American couples. Future

research should also examine responses from preteens about the type (s) of parenting practices used by parents.

Another issue that further research should examine concerns the relative importance of support from the spouse versus support from family and friends as influences on positive parenting practices. In the present study, both were significantly correlated with positive parenting behaviors, but only support from family and friends was significant when both kinds of social support were entered as predictors in the regression models. Future studies could examine whether the relative importance of the two kinds of social support is moderated by racial or socioeconomic factors, by including two-parent couples from diverse racial and ethnic and economic backgrounds in the study sample. Finally, this study was limited due to the use of a convenience sample and a correlational design. Therefore, future research should examine an intervention program, where two-parent couples from diverse racial and ethnic and economic backgrounds will be provided counseling on the efficacy of social support and the use of positive parenting practices with preteens. An intervention study would compare those two-parent couples who receive or do not receive counseling regarding the efficacy of social support on the use of positive parenting practices with preteens.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 presented a summary of the preceding chapter in this study, the summary of the results and conclusions, implication of results, and recommendations for future research. The emphasis of this study was to provide quantitative evidence regarding the relationship between social support (e.g., coparenting support and

perceived functional support from friends and family) and positive parenting practices (e.g., quality of parent/child relationships, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices) among a population of 103 two-parent, African American families with preteens. Results from this quantitative correlational study provided evidence that both coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family predicted a statistical relationship with two-parent, African American couples' use of quality of parent/child relationship, parental monitoring of children's activities, and consistency of parents' disciplinary practices with preteens. Results from exploratory analyses based on separate analyses for the mothers' and fathers' responses yielded similar results to the main analyses. However, in the regression analysis predicting fathers' laxness of parenting, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were significant predictors. Another difference in the results was that, in the data from the mothers, the social provisions score was significant as an individual predictor of IBQ scores. In the data from the fathers, the social support variables were not significant as predictors of IBQ scores, either separately or in combination. Finally, in the regression analysis predicting mothers' parental monitoring and control behaviors, both coparenting support and social provisions scores were individually significant predictors. It should be noted from the results of this study that social support (coparenting support and perceived functional support from friends and family) had a strong influence on two-parent, African American couples' use of positive parenting practices with preteens.

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Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is the mother's age? _____
2. What is the father's age? _____
3. How many children (ages 9 to 11) do you have? ____ (Female) ____ (male)
4. What is the Age (s) of your child (or children)? (If there is more than one child under the same gender, please separate ages with a comma) _____ (female)
_____ (male)
5. Parents' marital Status:
 - a. Married
 - b. Not married (cohabiting)
 - c. Not married (not cohabiting)
 - d. Separated
 - e. Divorced
6. Mother's highest level of education:
 - a. GED
 - b. High school
 - c. Some college
 - d. College graduate
 - e. Post graduate studies
 - f. Post graduate degree
7. Father's Highest level of education:
 - a. GED

- b. High school
- c. Some college
- d. College graduate
- e. Post graduate studies
- f. Post graduate degree

8. Mother's annual income:

- a. 10,000-30,000
- b. 31,000-50,000
- c. 51,000-70,000
- d. 71-000-100,000

9. Father's Annual income:

- a. 10,000-30,000
- b. 31,000-50,000
- c. 51,000-70,000

71-000-100,000