RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND GENDER ROLE IDENTITY IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Summary.—The relationship between perceived parenting styles and gender role identity was examined in college students. 230 undergraduate students (48 men, 182 women; 18–23 years old) responded to the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI). The hypothesis was that parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive for both fathers and mothers) would be significantly associated with gender role identity (undiifferentiated, feminine, masculine, and androgynous) of college students, specifically whether authoritative parenting styles associated with androgyny. To account for differences in sex on gender role identity or parenting styles, sex was included as a factor. The pattern of the difference in identity groups was similar for males and females. There were significant differences in parenting styles between gender role groups. Maternal and paternal authoritativeness correlated with participants' femininity, and for both parents, the relationship was observed to be stronger in males than females; paternal authoritativeness was significantly associated with androgyny. Future research based on these results should investigate how the findings relate to children's psychological well-being and behavioral outcomes.

Identity formation is a dynamic process involving interaction between a person and the context in which that person lives (Erikson, 1968; Adams & Marshall, 1996; Kroger, 2000, 2004; Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Beyers & Goossens, 2008). Erikson (1968) stressed the important role the peer group plays in helping people shape their identities, and subsequent research has generally supported this premise, finding that identity formation is associated with the relationships people have with significant “others” as well as the contextual factors surrounding those relationships (Van Hoof, 1999; Beyers & Goossens, 2008). For example, as children develop through childhood and into adulthood, they are constantly exposed to factors that affect the formation of their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors while defining their identities. Such influences are first presented by families (Witt, 1997) and then reinforced in different situations and environments (Williams & Best, 1990), such as school and community. As a result, parenting
is critical and decisive in terms of identity development (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). Research has shown that when parents give their children autonomy, warmth, and encouragement, the children are more likely to experience healthy identity development (Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Sim & Chin, 2012).

One of the central features of identity is gender role identity (Kim, Euna, & Sung-Hee, 2013), and its development is a critical mission of the developing person (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Gender role identity is a set of behavioral and social norms that are generally seen as appropriate for different sexes in social relationships (Gale-Ross, Baird, & Towson, 2009). Children's earliest exposure to what it means to be male or female comes from parental influence, and these concepts generally remain consistent throughout one's lifetime (Williams & Best, 1990; Witt, 1997; Howard, 2000). Despite the presumed importance of parenting to gender role identity, little research has evaluated the association between these constructs.

**Gender Role Identity**

Whereas sex is often understood to mean the biological distinction between male and female, gender is considered the related social and psychological patterns of behavior and attitudes (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Sex is genetic, while gender is acquired. Gender role identity is formed through the process of perceiving and interpreting typical attitudes about gender during development. What people believe about the psychological qualities of males and females are called gender stereotypes (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; Berger & Krahe, 2013). The male gender stereotype is characterized by task-oriented tendencies like assertiveness, independence, ambition, and determination, which are considered ideals of masculinity. On the other hand, affection-oriented characteristics like kindness, nurturing, compassion, and gentleness characterize the female stereotype, or femininity. The stereotypes are descriptive and prescriptive; they reflect social and cultural beliefs stating what traits males and females are expected to acquire and display (Eagly, et al., 2000).

People are encouraged and facilitated by parents, schools, communities, and society to adhere to gender stereotypes. This process, which transpires throughout childhood and adulthood, is called gender socialization (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Ruble & Martin, 1998; Eagly, et al., 2000; Berger & Krahe, 2013). Gender is learned through interacting with others, who respond positively or negatively to behavior, while cognitive activities are associated with how people in the socializing environment define gender (Gale-Ross, et al., 2009; Wood & Eagly, 2012). Socialization is crucial in the establishment of gender role identity (Banerjee, 2005), or the extent to which people feel that they exhibit characteristics associated with traditional gender stereotypes (Bem, 1993). This sense of gender role iden-
ntity must typically then be fit into local cultural expectations. People develop a sense of whether a behavior is considered gender appropriate because social context directs their behavior into socially approved patterns (Banerjee, 2005). In addition, learned gender-role identity is internalized at an early age, remaining stable throughout the lifespan (Williams & Best, 1990; Witt, 1997; Howard, 2000). Understanding gender role identity can shape intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, which further solidify self-perception (Hepp, Spindler, & Milos, 2005). Gender role identity is a central element of self, personality, and social identity (Kim, Euna, & Sung-Hee, 2013) and plays a significant part in building self-image (Echabe, 2010; Berger & Krahe, 2013). It develops the basis of self-esteem and self-concept (Berger & Krahe, 2013; Kim, et al., 2013), and establishes awareness of being male or female (Spence & Buckner, 2000).

Pertaining to gender role identity, masculinity and femininity are believed to be independent dimensions rather than bipolar ends of a single continuum (Spence, 1993). Masculinity represents the extent to which one endorses characteristics like aggressiveness, ambition, and independence; on the other hand, femininity indicates compassion, sensitivity, and empathy (Bem, 1993; Eagly, et al., 2000; Banerjee, 2005). The core of stereotypical masculinity is agency or instrumentality, and the core of stereotypical femininity is expressiveness or communion (Woodhill & Samuels, 2003; Gale-Ross, et al., 2009), but it is possible for individuals to manifest both characteristics (Bem, 1993).

People who endorse both masculine and feminine characteristics simultaneously are referred to as psychologically androgynous, indicating a combination of social meanings and psychological temperaments (Bem, 1975; Huang, Zhu, Zheng, & Zhang, 2012). Androgyny has been considered as a gender role model since both masculine and feminine traits exist (Littlefield, 2003; Park, 2011). Androgynous people possess traits that allow them to express both instrumentality and expressivity, displaying a self-identity comprising the socially desirable attributes of both men and women (Echabe, 2010; Berger & Krahe, 2013; Kim, et al., 2013). Research indicates that androgynous people tend to be less rigid when fulfilling gender role responsibilities, engaging in whatever behavior seems most appropriate or effective while remaining sensitive to constraints of different situations. They have high-level flexibility performing cross-sex behavior and are less constrained by gender-role boundaries (Baumrind, 1982; Huang, et al., 2012), boosting self-esteem (Berger & Krahe, 2013). Androgyny has been found to correlate positively with psychological wellness and Bem (1974) has asserted that it “defines a human standard of psychological health” (Bem, 1974, p. 162). Bem later explained, it “appeared to provide a liberated and more
humane alternative to the traditional, sex-biased standards of mental health” (1981, p. 362). Androgynous people tend to have significantly better health practices, such as decreased alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and increased safety awareness (Shifren & Bauserman, 1996; Gale-Ross, et al., 2009). Also, they tend to show improved emotional, sensual, intellectual, and psychomotor skills compared to others whose orientations favor masculinity or femininity (Pines, 1998; Miller, Falk, & Huang, 2009).

While numerous studies have examined the factor of formation of gender role identity, such as biological basis (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972), same sex parent (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), socialization process (Ding & Littleton, 2005), and peer group (Shaffer, 2001), little attention has been devoted to the factors that may account for differences in gender role identity based on parenting styles. Because parents are an original source of children’s experience about gender role, as well as an ongoing influence throughout childhood, it would be expected that the characteristics of parenting should be related to gender role identity.

**Parenting Styles**

Darling and Steinberg (1993) defined parenting style as “a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviors are expressed” (p. 488). Accordingly, parents transmit their beliefs to children across a variety of contexts and settings. Baumrind (1971) first used “control” as a dimension to characterize three major types of parental authority: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. The different parenting styles are defined by the extent to which discipline, expectations, power, and emotional support are offered. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) added a second dimension, responsiveness, renaming Baumrind’s first dimension as “demandingness.” Demandingness refers to “claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys,” while responsiveness refers to actions which “foster individuality, self-regulation and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to the child’s special needs and demands” (Baumrind, 1999, p. 748).

Authoritative parents are characterized by both high responsiveness and demandingness. In this type of parenting practice, parents show nurturance, sensitivity, support, reasoning, consistency, and affection to their children. Simultaneously, they establish clear and reasonable discipline while promoting high expectations for behavior or performance. These parents are responsive to their children’s doubts and concerns, but they also assert their control when necessary (Baumrind, 1971, 1991). Research studies indicate that children raised by authoritative parents
tend to achieve the most positive outcomes (Simon & Conger, 2007). They are more autonomous, motivated, and self-reliant (Kim & Chung, 2003), as well as more psychologically mature, cognitively competent, and socially developed (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbush, 1991; Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009) when compared to children of authoritarian or permissive parents. In addition, authoritative parenting has been shown to foster children’s secure attachment (Karavasilis, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2003), positive well-being, and learning goals (Milevsky, Schlechter, Nett, & Keehn, 2008) and is consistently associated with positive educational, social, emotional, and cognitive developmental outcomes (Winsler, Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005).

Authoritarian parents demonstrate low responsiveness and high demandingness. They set strict and definite limits for their children’s conduct and establish rigid consequences. Authoritarian parents tend to use demands to discipline their children and only allow them minimal autonomy. They emphasize obedience and show low affection and emotional warmth in their parent-child relationships (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Baldwin, McIntyre, & Hardaway, 2007; Simon & Conger, 2007; Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Sim & Chin, 2012). This type of parenting style has been associated with children’s passiveness, rigidity, and compliance (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989; Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn, et al., 1991). Children of authoritarian parents are less likely to be involved in school misconduct and substance abuse (Strage & Brandt, 1999; Turner, et al., 2009). They do well with obedience to standards, but they have difficulties dealing with somatic distress or psychological issues (Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbush, 1994) and have relatively poor self-concept (Milevsky, et al., 2008).

Permissive parents are high on responsiveness but low on demandingness. They are affectionate but indulgent. They fail to define proper limits or practice appropriate control. They are not comfortable imposing restrictions over children, so they avoid and tolerate children’s misbehavior instead (Baumrind, 1991; Simon & Conger, 2007). Children of permissive parents exhibit characteristics such as low self-control, irresponsibility, low ego strength, and self-centered motivation associated with inattentive parenting (Steinberg, et al., 1989; Lamborn, et al., 1991; Berzonsky, 2004; Turner, et al., 2009). Consequently, children raised by permissive parents tend to have unsatisfactory academic competence and are more likely to be delinquent (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn, et al., 1991; Kim & Chung, 2003). Permissive parenting is potentially harmful because it fails to give children a sense of personal achievement (Milevsky, et al., 2008).

Finally, neglectful parents are low on both responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1971, 1991). These parents hold a cold and dis-
tant relationship with their children. Oftentimes they respond to their children’s needs with hostility and rejection (Kim & Chung, 2003; Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeek, & Gerris, 2009). Since this type of parenting has very limited involvement in children’s growth and development, its influence is not examined in the present study.

Gender Role Identity and Parenting Styles

People recognize, perceive, and act on their gender roles through social situations, and the cognitive processes reflect how the gender role identity is formed and shaped by environment (Daly, 1993; Banerjee, 2005). Hence, gender role identity is considered culturally and socially constructed (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 1999). Furthermore, according to the traditional psychological gender role identity, it ties masculine and feminine with the breadwinner role of men and the care-giver role of women, respectively (Woodhill & Samulem, 2003), the two fundamental characters in a family unit. Therefore, from the viewpoints above, it is presumed that the development of gender role identity stems from family context and is influenced by parenting (McHale, et al., 1999), the essential culture in a family. Little literature has studied the association between parenting styles and gender role identity, but some research studies have investigated the connection between parents’ androgyny and authoritative parenting style, which could be used to presume on the relationship between authoritative parenting style and children’s androgyny through the concept of modeling. Baumrind (1982) proposed that androgynous parents would be more likely to possess an authoritative parenting style than those who hold specifically masculine or feminine characteristics. Building on Baumrind’s proposal, we suggest that parents with an authoritative style appear to have important characteristics that could be considered and classified as an androgynous gender identity role. They would model these characteristics to their children, who would in turn be socialized in this family milieu and tend to develop similar characteristics. The presumption can be supported and explained by the perspective of modeling in social learning theory (Bandura, 1973). In line with social learning theory, children establish their gender role identities through modeling parents’ gender appropriate behavior (Daly, 1993; Eagly & Wood, 1999; Juni, Rahamim, & Brannon, 2001; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003), especially by observing and imitating parents of the same sex (Losh-Hesselbart, 1987; Juni, et al., 2001). Children perceive symbolic markers of gender role through watching what their parents perform in daily lives. In addition to behavior, parents’ attitudes are also critical attributes for children’s development of gender role identity (Williams, Radin, & Allegro, 1992). Children will have less traditional and more flexible gender role attitudes if their parents hold less rigid stereotyped gender roles.
Based on these theoretical notions, one would expect that an authoritative parenting style should be significantly associated with androgynous gender role identity in both male and female children. Compared to people identified as having other types of parenting styles, authoritative parents tend to be characterized as more expressive, accepting, responsive, and warm toward their children (Winsler, Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005; Baldwin, et al., 2007; Milevsky, et al., 2008). They tend to impose high demands and expect their children to be independent (Arditti, Godwin, & Scanzoni, 1991; Hinshaw, Zupan, Simmel, Nigg, & Melnick, 1997). Authoritative parents are more likely to raise children who are socially assertive, responsible, and generally competent (Baumrind, 1982), with positive psychological (McKinney & Renk, 2008) and intellectual (Simon & Conger, 2007) outcomes. These positive outcomes are typically considered as being androgynous traits (Bem, 1974; Shimonaka, Nakazato, Kawaai, & Shinichi, 1997; Stake, 1997; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). With incorporated masculine and feminine traits, androgynous individuals exhibit positive psychological, emotional, sensual, and intellectual outcomes (Miller, et al., 2009) and be more adaptable to situational challenge (Berger & Krahe, 2013). Accordingly, authoritative parents may be more likely to raise children who demonstrate positive psychological, emotional, and intellectual aspects, which are classified as androgynous traits.

Other researchers have suggested a connection between parental authoritativeness and college-aged children’s androgyny. Sabattini and Leafer (2004) stated that paternal authoritativeness is linked to non-traditional gender roles in the parents’ offspring. Slavkin and Stright (2000) proposed that parental warmth, a primary element of authoritativeness, is related to rearing androgynous children. These prior findings suggest there should be a link between an authoritative parenting style and androgyny in the children. Thus, although there is little specific evidence linking an authoritative parenting style to androgynous gender identity in children, Baumrind’s (1982) proposal and the above indirect relationships all suggest such a link may exist. Parents with an authoritative parenting style tend to have characteristics that overlap androgynous gender role identity and model those characteristics for their children, who in turn tend to develop the same attitudes and behaviors.

Most recent studies have combined maternal and paternal parenting styles as an integrated approach (Hoeve, Dubas, Gerris, van der Laan, & Smeenk, 2011; Kawabata, 2011; Meunier, 2012) or applied maternal parenting style as the dominant approach without considering the unique contribution of paternal parenting styles (Feldman, Eidelman, Rotenberg, 2004; Almas, Grusec, & Tackett, 2011; Power, 2013). Hence, divided parenting styles were measured and analyzed in the present study for the
purpose of exploring their potentially differential effect on gender role identity for male and female children.

Thus, in light of importance of recognizing the influence of parenting on forming gender role identity, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate the association between parenting styles and gender role identity. In addition, the second purpose was to look more closely at the nature of gender role identity across different parenting styles and to justify if there is a connection between authoritative parenting and their offspring’s androgynous gender role identity.

**Hypothesis 1.** Parenting style will be significantly associated with gender role identity.

**Hypothesis 2.** Ratings of parents’ authoritative parenting style will be significantly and positively associated with children’s androgynous gender role.

**Method**

**Participants**

The participants in the present study were 230 undergraduate students (182 women, 48 men) enrolled in a large undergraduate elective course taught at a university in the Midwestern United States. All of the participants were volunteers and were informed of their right to not participate in the study. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All participants used in these analyses were single and between the ages of 18 and 23 yr. ($M = 19.5$, $SD = 1.2$).

**Measures**

**Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ).**—Parenting style was assessed through the PAQ developed by Buri (1991). The PAQ score is based on Baumrind’s theory of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles and prototypes. The instrument consists of 30 questions, 10 items representing each of the three parenting styles. The student’s responses to each question are scored on five-point adjective rating scale anchored by 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree. The measurement was designed to examine the authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and permissiveness of the student’s parents. Two forms of this questionnaire were distributed to each of the participants: one form for evaluating maternal authority and the other for paternal authority. For each student, the PAQ measured six variables for parenting styles: three based on the respondents’ ratings for their mothers and three based on the respondents’ responses for their fathers. Each of the scores can range from 1 to 5.
The PAQ was selected because of its theoretical and psychometric appropriateness for studying the intended population. In the present study, the participants were asked to respond to each of the questions regarding their general perspectives of their perceived parental behavior. The PAQ is reported to have good content validity from professionals in the field, acceptable test-retest reliability (.77–.92), and internal consistency reliability (.74–.87) across the six variables (Buri, 1991). The PAQ also showed discriminant-related validity between the three parenting styles and criterion-related validity, as compared with a Parental Nurturance Scale.

The reliability coefficients from the current study that suggested adequate internal consistency reliability for the three PAQ subscales for both fathers and mothers: Cronbach’s \( \alpha \)s were .71 for Mother’s Authoritativeness, .77 for Father’s Authoritativeness, .80 for Mother’s Authoritarianism, .87 for Father’s Authoritarianism, .72 for Mother’s Permissiveness, and .79 for Father’s Permissiveness.

*Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI).*—According to Bem (1974), the BSRI measures the extent of gender-role stereotyping in the respondents’ self-concept. It assumes that internalized gender stereotypes are reflected in people’s behaviors. The inventory was used to assess masculinity and femininity by self-report. The items measure masculinity and femininity as two separate dimensions and combine for an androgyny score. The BSRI contains 60 items presenting characteristics assumed to represent cultural definitions of traits considered to be masculine (self-reliant, forceful, etc.), feminine (jealous, sympathetic, etc.), and gender-neutral. Participants were to evaluate how well each of the characteristics describes them on a seven-point adjective rating scale anchored by 1: Never or almost never true and 7: Always or almost always true.

According to Bem (1974), “masculinity equals the mean self-rating for all endorsed masculine items and femininity equals the mean self-rating for all endorsed femininity items” (p. 158). Masculinity scoring is calculated by summing up the scores given on the 20 masculinity items and dividing by the number 20. Likewise, the scoring on the femininity scale is the mean on the femininity scale. From the two scores, masculinity and femininity can be assessed.

Based on their masculinity and femininity scores, the participants were categorized into four different gender role types—masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated—as directed by the *Bem Sex-Role Inventory Manual* and sampler set (Bem, 1981). Using median-splits, if a participant’s masculinity and femininity scores were both higher than the respective medians, the student was assigned to the androgynous group. If a participant’s masculinity score was higher than the masculinity median but his or her femininity score was lower than the femininity medi-
an, the participant was assigned to the masculine group. If a participant’s masculinity score was lower than the masculinity median but his or her femininity score was higher than the femininity median, the participant was placed in the feminine group. If both of the masculinity and femininity scores were lower than the respective medians, the participant would be placed in the undifferentiated group.

Bem (1977) reported Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$ for the reliability of the measure along with high test-retest reliability. In the current study, the reliability coefficients suggested Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$ for the measure of femininity and Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$ for the measure of masculinity. These are similar to the values found by Bem (1975) in her original measure.

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were performed on the sample of 230 students, overall, and separated by sex (M/F), including their demographics (sex and age), masculinity and femininity scores, and breakdown of corresponding gender role groups (masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated). The six parenting style variables were also described for all students and separately by sex.

To test whether participant sex relates to their gender role identity, independent samples t tests were performed between men and women on mean masculinity and femininity scores. Cross-tabs with Pearson Chi-square tests were used to compare the distribution of males and females across the four gender identity groups.

The relationships between paternal and maternal parenting styles on gender roles were first analyzed using Pearson correlations between parenting styles and masculinity and femininity scores. To compare all four gender role groups (undifferentiated, feminine, masculine, and androgynous) on their maternal/paternal parenting styles, a MANOVA was performed on all six scores of the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Mother’s Authoritativeness, Father’s Authoritativeness, Mother’s Authoritarianism, Father’s Authoritarianism, Mother’s Permissiveness, and Father’s Permissiveness). To account for differences in sex on gender roles or parenting styles, sex was included as a factor in the MANOVA. The interaction between gender role groups and sex was considered, but not statistically significant, which means that the pattern of the difference in gender role groups is similar for men and women. Of particular interest in the MANOVA analysis would be addressing the question of the effect of Mother’s and Father’s Authoritativeness on the gender role category of androgyny.

**Results**

The sample used in this study consisted of 230 students (182 women, 48 men). Descriptive statistics for Masculinity and Femininity are re-
ported in Table 1. On Masculinity, men scored significantly higher than women ($d=1.03$); on Femininity, women scored significantly higher than men ($d=1.02$). The correlation between the Masculinity and Femininity scores was negative and statistically significant, but weak ($r=-.14$, $p<.05$, 95%CI = $-0.25, 0.01$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR BOTH SEXES ON MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
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<td>Femininity</td>
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<td>Masculinity Total</td>
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<td>Femininity Total</td>
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After creating the four gender role identity groups based on median splits in Masculinity and Femininity, 57 participants were identified as “Undifferentiated,” 62 as “Feminine,” 65 as “Masculine,” and 46 as “Androgynous.” The expected difference between men and women was also seen on the gender role identity groups (see Table 2), where there was a higher percentage of women in the Feminine group, and a higher percentage of men in the Masculine group, as expected [Pearson $\chi^2(3) = 41.4$, $p<.001$]. Women were slightly more represented than men in the Undifferentiated and Androgynous groups.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN BY GENDER ROLE GROUP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>Female</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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*Note.*—Count is number or percent within sex groups.

Descriptive statistics for parenting style variables are presented in Table 3, by sex and overall. The only significant differences between men and
women were for ratings on Authoritarianism. Comparisons using $t$ tests indicated that men rated their Mother’s and Father’s Authoritarianism significantly higher than women did. There was a significant difference on Mother’s Authoritarianism for men versus women ($t_{228} = 2.78, p = .006$) and on Father’s Authoritarianism for men versus women ($t_{228} = 2.0, p = .05$). However, comparisons for men’s and women’s ratings of Authoritativeness or Permissiveness indicated no significant differences.

Pearson correlations (see Table 4) indicated that maternal parenting style was significantly correlated with paternal parenting styles. Ratings of Mother’s Authoritarianism were significantly correlated with ratings of Father’s Authoritarianism, and similarly for Mother’s/Father’s Authoritativeness and Mother’s/Father’s Permissiveness.

Pearson correlations were used to test the relationships between Mother’s/Father’s parenting styles and the participants’ masculine and
feminine gender roles (see Table 5). Correlations were done separately for men and women to account for potential differences by sex. Mother’s and Father’s Authoritativeness were both correlated with participants’ Femininity score. Mother’s Authoritativeness was significantly correlated with participants’ Femininity scores for men and women, and Father’s Authoritativeness was also significantly correlated with participants’ Femininity scores for both sexes. For both parents, the relationship was observed to be stronger in men than women, but not significantly. However, there were no significant correlations between the two other dimensions of parenting style (Authoritarian, Permissiveness) and male or female participants’ Femininity. There also were no significant relationships between any parenting style and Masculinity.

To further test the relationship of parenting styles with gender role identity, means are reported for each parenting score by gender role group in Table 6. The MANOVA comparing the four gender groups, adjusted for sex, on the six parenting styles showed significant differences in parenting styles between gender role groups in the multivariate test ($F_{6,222} = 2.31$, $p < .04$, $\eta^2_p = .06$, Roy’s Largest Root). However, only one individual comparison was significant, where gender role groups showed significant differences on Father’s Authoritativeness (see Table 6).
### TABLE 6
Descriptive Statistics for Parenting Styles by Four Gender Role Groups as Defined by Bem (1981): Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, Undifferentiated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Undifferentiated</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
<th>Androgyny</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
<th>ω²</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mother</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritativeness</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissiveness</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritativeness</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissiveness</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Standardized effect size ω².
Post hoc comparisons of estimated marginal means from the MANOVA adjusting for sex (see Table 6) shows this effect is due to the androgyny group having the highest score on Father’s Authoritativeness compared to students in the undifferentiated group (Bonferroni $p = .03$), masculine group (Bonferroni $p = .03$), and feminine group ($ns$). This indicates that Father’s Authoritative parenting style was significantly associated with the participants’ Androgyny classification. The other three groups (Undifferentiated, Masculine, and Feminine) were not significantly associated with Father’s Authoritative parenting style.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study tested relationships between parenting style and gender role identity, and in particular the hypothesis that authoritative parenting style is significantly related to androgynous gender identity role in both male and female adult children. The interaction between gender identity groups and sex was considered, but not significant, which means that the pattern of the difference in identity groups is similar for men and women. Participants’ masculinity scores were negatively associated with femininity scores, but weakly. As expected, based on BSRI scores, a higher percentage of women were classified into the feminine group, and a higher percentage of men were classified into the masculine group. The distribution of participants’ gender role classifications was in accordance with general social norms, in which personality traits closely reflect social expectations for men and women (Echabe, 2010; Berger & Krahe, 2013; Kim, et al., 2013). In addition, men rated their parents’ authoritarianism significantly higher than women did. This result is consistent with the suggestion made by Kuhn and Laird (2011), that men expect more behavioral and psychological autonomy and less constraint than women, due to the stress given by gender role expectation and peer pressure of being independent (Fleming, 2005), and so perceive more authoritarianism from parental control. In contrast, it could be that parents tend to take on a more authoritarian role with sons than with daughters (Kuhn & Laird, 2011). Girls tend to be given more decision-making autonomy by parents in comparison to boys, which would be consistent with daughters perceiving parental style as being less authoritarian than sons would (Wray-Lake, Crouter, & McHale, 2010).

The results indicated that maternal parenting style is significantly correlated with paternal parenting style, that is, participants perceived that both parents treated their children somewhat similarly (Winsler, et al., 2005; Rinaldi & Howe, 2012). Some research studies have combined maternal and paternal parenting styles as an integrated approach (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Hickman, Bartholomae & McKenry, 2000; Milevsky, Schlechter, Klem, & Kehl, 2008; Hoeve, et al., 2011) because, in line with
family system perspective, paternal and maternal styles are conceptualized as being an interdependent unit, which makes a critical contribution to children’s functioning and development (Lindsey & Mize, 2001). However, some studies applied maternal parenting style as the dominant approach without considering the unique contribution of paternal parenting styles (Phares & Compas, 1992; Feldman, Eidelman, & Rotenberg, 2004; Almas, Grusec, & Tackett, 2011; Power, 2013). Hence, divided parenting styles have been measured and analyzed respectively in the present study for the purpose of exploring their effect on gender role identity in college-aged adults. In the present study, both mother’s and father’s authoritative-ness correlated with participants’ femininity scores for both sexes, but not their masculinity scores. For both parents, the relationship was stronger in men than women. This finding indicates an interesting association between parenting styles and children’s gender role identity, highlighting a moderate-sized, statistically significant connection between authoritiveness and femininity. Moreover, gender role groups reported significant differences in their fathers’ authoritativeness. Some research studies showed that increasing paternal influence and participation in child rearing is benefit to child development (Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Winsler, et al., 2005); more specifically, paternal involvement provides physical and social nourishment (Smith, 1980), promotes attachment quality (Lamb, 1981), and supports children’s personal identity and social adjustment (Starrels, 1994).

Based on the previous literature, it was assumed that gender role formation occurs through socialization, and androgynous traits could be a learning effect from modeling parental characteristics (Bandura, 1973; Baumrind, 1982; Losh-Hesselbart, 1987; Williams, et al., 1992; Daly, 1993; Eagly & Wood, 1999; Juni, et al., 2001; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003). Given the results of the present study, androgynous parents who exercise authoritative parenting styles may be more likely to raise androgynous children. Finally, the results indicate that no parenting style is related to masculinity in either the male or female students. A final question for future research is why femininity might be related to authoritative parenting style, but masculinity is not.

Limitations

All the measures were retrospective and reported by the students years after their actual experience. They do not necessarily represent what the parents’ behavior was during formative early and middle periods of childhood. The design is correlational and all measures made at one time, so no causal relationships can be interpreted. There were no independent ratings of any measure. The median split is a weak and inconsistent designation of groups, so statistical power is compromised. More theoretical
development is needed on the specific possible mechanisms by which parental style may affect gender role identity.

Despite these limitations, the present study contributes to the literature by addressing an important yet virtually uncharted area of research. That is, the findings propose that parenting styles are related to college children's gender role identities. More specifically, both mothers and fathers' authoritativeness are associated with femininity, participants in gender role identity groups show significant differences in their fathers' authoritativeness, and fathers' perceived authoritativeness is significantly associated with their college children's androgyny. In addition, the results indicate an important and long overlooked trend: paternal effects on gender role identity in their children. With increased paternal involvement in family and child development, fathers' parenting styles indeed need more attention in future research.

The present study excluded samples from single parent families due to the consistency of the participants' family patterns. However, the influences of parenting styles on their children's gender role identities may vary greatly between two-parent and single-parent families. Slavkin and Stright (2000) claimed that children with a single father tend to have more feminine gender role identity in comparison to children reared by a single mother; children raised in two-parent families are more likely have androgynous gender role identity. Therefore, family patterns should be considered in a later study.

In sum, the present study breaks new ground by investigating the relationship between perceived parenting styles and gender role identity in college children through both maternal and paternal parenting styles. Future research based on these results should investigate how the findings relate to children's psychological well being and behavioral outcomes.

REFERENCES


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