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The Effects of Parenting Styles on
Children's Eating Habits

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Abstract

This study examined whether parenting styles have an effect on children's eating habits using a sample of 263 participants (61 male, 202 female). Eating habits were measured using the Eating Attitudes Test (Garner & Garfinkel, 1979), Herman's Revised Restraint Scale (Herman & Polivy, 1975), and the Weight Locus of Control Scale (Saltzer, 1982). Perceived parenting styles were measured by obtaining both students' ratings and parents' self-ratings of parental control and responsiveness. Results were somewhat mixed. As has been found previously, women were more concerned with their weight, more likely to say they were overweight, and more likely to exhibit anorexic and bulimic behaviors than were men. In addition, analyses suggested that women who rated their fathers as low in responsiveness were somewhat more likely to display anorexic behaviors, be more obsessed with food, engage in more dieting behavior, have more weight fluctuations, and have an external orientation with regards to weight. Women who rated their mothers as low in responsiveness were more likely to be obsessed with food and have more weight fluctuations. Men who rated their mothers as high in control were more likely to be obsessed with food and have more weight fluctuations.

The Effects of Parenting Styles on Children's Eating Habits

It is by now well documented that females in our culture are more concerned than males about issues surrounding eating and body weight (Chaiken, Pliner, & Mori, 1987). Women also express a greater desire for thinness than do men (Harris, Waschull, & Walters, 1989). Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia are rare among men, while anorexia nervosa affects about 1% and bulimia 3% to 19% of young women (Larson, 1991). Chaiken, Pliner, and Mori (1987) reason that being thin and eating lightly are sex-appropriate behaviors for women in our culture, and thus women are socialized into their concern about weight and dieting.

Gender-role socialization is influenced primarily by the parents (Mischel, 1970). Learning theorists suggest that children are more rewarded by their parents for exhibiting behaviors appropriate to their gender role than for exhibiting behaviors appropriate to the opposite-gender role. Fagot and Hagan (1991) observed that fathers gave fewer positive reactions to boys engaging in female-typical toy play and more positive reactions to boys engaging in male-typical toy play. As a result, sex-appropriate behaviors take on greater value for the child and are exhibited with greater frequency. Studies have shown that eating less is perceived as more feminine (Chaiken, Pliner & Mori, 1987; Chaiken & Pliner, 1987). Therefore, even within the same family, parents may be more likely to reward daughters for

eating less than sons. In this respect eating behavior for girls may be constrained by parents. The presence of others may become a discriminative stimulus for the girl not to eat so as to be rewarded. This phenomenon suggests that girls place a high dependence on agents of external control (i.e., other people) when deciding whether or not to eat. This phenomenon also suggests that the internalization of the value of restraint in eating may be accompanied by the emergence of food as an especially prominent reinforcer for girls (Woody & Costanzo, 1981).

The influence that parents have on their children depends greatly upon their parenting style. Baumrind (1967) has identified two basic dimensions of parenting. One dimension relates to strategies parents use to control their children's behavior. On one end of this dimension are those parents who set very high standards for their children and consistently insist that these standards be met. At the other extreme are those parents who demand very little from their children and use few and indirect methods to control their children's behavior. Another dimension of parenting relates to how responsive parents are to their children's needs. On one end of this dimension are those parents who give a great deal of attention to their children and are highly responsive to their children's needs. At the other extreme are those parents who tend to give little attention to their children and are unresponsive to their

children's needs.

These dimensions of parenting can be combined in a fourfold typology of parenting styles developed by Maccoby and Martin (1983). Maccoby and Martin suggest that the relevant dimensions are accepting/responsive on one axis, and demanding-controlling on the other. Combinations of these two dimensions yield four types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved.

Authoritarian parents place strict limits on children's expression of needs. The parents establish all rules, often without previous discussion with the children. Authoritative parents, on the other hand, are both high in control and demands as well as high in responsiveness. These are the parents who expect a lot of their children, who use consistent discipline strategies, and who are responsive to, and warm and democratic with, their children. Permissive parents are very nurturant but place relatively few demands on their children, allowing their children to make many of their own decisions at a very early age. Uninvolved parents are basically detached from their children and their role as caregiver.

These parenting styles have been linked with various aspects of childrens' attitudes and behavior. Kandel (1990) found that punitive parents were more likely to report that their children are aggressive, have restraint problems, and are disobedient. Parents who were close to their children

reported that their children were well adjusted, did not have control problems, and were independent. Feldman and Wentzel (1990) also found that parental responsiveness was a significant, positive predictor of being liked by peers, whereas a high level of parental control was a significant predictor of visibility and recognition among peers.

Authoritative parenting is associated with the most consistent positive outcomes. Children in these families tend to be more mature, exhibit more independence, do better in school, have greater social confidence, and have higher self-esteem (Baumrind, 1967). Authoritarian parenting seems to produce more negative results in children, being correlated with passivity and dependence in girls and anger and defiance in boys (Baumrind, 1971). The permissive parenting style has been associated with passive, dependent, nonachieving behavior as well as immaturity among boys.

The present study will examine the relationship between parenting styles and childrens' eating patterns. The relationship between both mothers' and fathers' parenting styles will also be examined separately to see if they each affect their childrens' eating behavior differently. We hypothesize that parenting styles will covary with females' eating behavior because gender-role socialization includes norms for eating behavior in girls. No such relationship is expected for males. We predict that high parental control and low parental responsiveness will predict an external

orientation to weight, restrained eating and a higher susceptibility to eating disorders compared to the other parenting styles.

Method

Participants. Participants consisted of 263 college students (61 males, 202 females) enrolled in an introductory psychology class at Texas A&M University. The students voluntarily signed up to participate in the study, and received course credit for their participation.

Procedure. Upon arriving, the subjects were told that they would be completing a series of questionnaires regarding their parent's parenting styles and their own eating attitudes and habits. Informed consents were passed out, explained and signed.

The students were then given a packet of questionnaires. Included in the packet were demographic questions asking the students their sex, height, current weight, and also what they considered to be their ideal weight. Also contained in the packet were several eating inventories which included Herman's Revised Restraint Scale (Herman & Polivy, 1975), the Weight Locus of Control (WLOC) Scale (Saltzer, 1982), and the Eating Attitudes Test (Garner & Garfinkel, 1979). Herman's Revised Restraint Scale, consisting of ten multiple choice items, measures the "extent to which individuals exhibit behavioral and attitudinal concern about dieting and keeping their weight down" (Herman & Polivy, 1975, p. 668). The

WLOC, presented in a six-point Likert format, assesses beliefs about how one's weight is determined, varying from internal to external sources of control. The Eating Attitudes Test (EAT) is a summated rating scale that measures behaviors or feelings associated with eating, food, or weight.

Students were also asked to (1) rate on a seven-point scale the level of control of each of their parents, and (2) rate on a seven-point scale the level of responsiveness of each of their parents. Thus, the students' perceptions of both their mother's controllingness and responsiveness as well as their father's controllingness and responsiveness were assessed. A parent high in control was described as one who sets very high standards for his or her children and consistently insists that those standards be met. A parent low in control was described as one who demands very little from his or her children and uses few and indirect methods to control his or her children's behavior. A parent high in responsiveness was described as one who gives a great deal of attention to his or her children and are highly responsive to his or her children's needs. A parent low in responsiveness was described as one who tends to give little attention to his or her children and are unresponsive to his or her children's needs.

The students were then asked permission for a questionnaire similar to the one they had just filled out on

parenting styles to be sent out to their mothers and fathers. If the subjects agreed, the parenting questionnaire asking the parent to rate his or her level of parental control and responsiveness, along with a cover letter, an informed consent form, and a debriefing form were mailed directly to the parents to be returned in a self-addressed stamped envelope. The questionnaires were sent separately to mothers and fathers. Of the 148 questionnaires sent to fathers, 103 were sent back, and of the 166 questionnaires sent to mothers, 122 were sent back.

Subjects were then debriefed, given experimental credit, and dismissed.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The means and standard deviations of the physical characteristics for both male and female students are presented in Table 1. One-hundred sixty-four women said that they were overweight by an average of 11.02 pounds, while 25 men said they were overweight by an average of 8.44 pounds. Only 11 women said that they were underweight by an average of 2.93 pounds, while 28 men said they were underweight by an average of 11.36 pounds. Thus, perceptions of whether current weight was perceived by the student to be over, under or at their ideal weight differed significantly depending on sex, $\chi^2(2) = 62.153, p < .001$. Women were especially likely to say that they were overweight, and especially unlikely to say

that they were underweight.

Insert Table 1 about here.

Scores on Eating Scales

The means and standard deviations of the eating scales for males and females are presented in Table 2. A factor analysis of the 40 items on the EAT using a varimax rotation revealed that the items could be grouped together on 3 factors reflecting: (a) obsession with food (item numbers 6, 7, 14, 31 and 34), (b) dieting behavior (item numbers 9, 15, 22, 30 and 37), and (c) perceived pressure from others to gain weight (item numbers 12, 24 and 33). Separate factor analyses were done for both males and females and the same factors emerged for both. The ten items of Herman's Revised Restraint Scale were also divided into its two a priori subscales reflecting (a) concern for dieting (item numbers 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) and (b) weight fluctuations (item numbers 2, 3, 4 and 10). Coefficient alpha for the EAT and Restraint Scale were good, .85 and .78, respectively. Coefficient alpha for the WLOC scale was a somewhat low .54, not surprising given the brevity of the scale.

Insert Table 2 about here.

Sex differences on the scales were assessed using t-

tests. Significant differences were found for all the scales except the perceived pressure from others to gain weight factor of the EAT, the weight fluctuation sub-scale of the Restraint scale, and the WLOC scale. So women, on average, showed higher levels of anorexic behaviors as measured by the total score on the EAT. They were also significantly more obsessed with food and engaged in more dieting behaviors. Women were also more restrained in their eating habits and were more concerned about dieting.

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between the difference in current versus ideal weight and scores on the eating scales (see Table 3). For women, weight discrepancy correlated significantly with all of the eating scales, $p < .01$, except for the WLOC scale. Thus, women who felt that they were farther above their ideal weight showed more obsession with food, more dieting behaviors and perceived less pressure from others to gain weight. Similarly, they showed greater concern for dieting and greater weight fluctuations. For men, dieting behavior and perceived pressure from others to gain weight was marginally negatively correlated with weight discrepancy, $p < .10$. Scores on the Restraint scale and its sub-scales were significantly positively correlated with weight discrepancy for men, $p < .01$. For women, weight discrepancy correlated with all of the eating scales, $p < .01$, except for the WLOC scale.

Insert Table 3 about here.

Perceived Parenting Style

The means and standard deviations of the perceived parenting style scores from both students and parents are presented in Table 4. Parental control was rated from 1 = Controlling, Demanding to 7 = Low in control, Undemanding. Parental responsiveness was rated from 1 = Responsiveness, Child-centered to 7 = Unresponsive, Parent-centered. No significant sex differences in student ratings of parental control or responsiveness for either parent emerged.

Insert Table 4 about here.

Differences between mother and father parenting styles were assessed using t-tests. There was no significant difference between mother control and father control as perceived by the students, $t(258) = .79$. There was however, a significant difference for student ratings of perceived mother and father responsiveness, $t(258) = 8.51$, $p < .001$. Students consistently rated their mothers as more responsive than their fathers. Paired t-tests were used to assess this difference for parent perceived parenting styles. For the 91 students whose mothers and fathers both returned self-ratings of control and responsiveness, there was no significant

difference mother perceived control ($M=3.07$) and father perceived control ($M=3.26$), $t(90) = 1.45$. However, as was true in student ratings of parents, mothers rated themselves as significantly more responsive ($M=1.76$) than fathers ($M=2.33$), $t(90) = 4.50$, $p<.001$.

Overall, the means of student ratings of parental control and responsiveness were compared for those who said it was ok to send the parenting questionnaire to their parents versus those who said it was not ok, to investigate whether there were systematic differences in students who did not want their parents contacted relative to those who allowed us to contact their parents. The only significant difference was father responsiveness, $t(257) = 3.33$, $p<.01$. Students who perceived their fathers as less responsive were less likely to give permission for the parenting questionnaire to be sent to their fathers.

The correlations between student perceived parenting style and parent perceived parenting style are shown in Table 5. The results were somewhat surprising, showing a strong correlation between male student perceived mother responsiveness and mother perceived responsiveness ($r=.57$, $p<.01$). Virtually no other relationship between male student perceived parenting styles and parent perceived parenting styles emerged. Female student ratings of parenting style were moderately correlated with mother ratings of control ($r=-.28$, $p<.05$) and father ratings of responsiveness ($r=.35$,

$p < .01$). Females did not agree with their parents' self-ratings for mother's responsiveness or for father's level of control.

Insert Table 5 about here.

Correlations Between Weight Discrepancy and Parenting Styles

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between the difference in current versus ideal weight and perceived parenting styles (see Table 6). The only marginally significant correlation was between weight discrepancy for females and fathers' self-ratings of responsiveness ($r = .20$, $p < .10$). Fathers who rated themselves as less responsive were more likely to have daughters who had a bigger discrepancy between their current and ideal weight. Surprisingly, no other significant correlations were found between weight discrepancy and either student ratings of perceived parenting styles or parent self-ratings for either males or females.

Insert Table 6 about here.

Correlations Between Eating Scales and Parenting Styles

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between the eating scales and perceived parenting styles. Table 7 shows the relationships for the EAT and the three factors found in the scale - Obsession with food, Dieting behavior,

and perceived pressure from Others to gain weight. Results were mixed.

Insert Table 7 about here.

Student ratings of perceived mother responsiveness were marginally correlated with obsession with food for females ($r=.12$, $P<.10$) and perceived pressure from others to gain weight for men ($r=.22$, $p<.10$). Women who were obsessed with food and males who perceived higher pressure from others to gain weight were more likely to say that their mothers were less responsive. Student ratings of how controlling they perceived their mothers to be significantly correlated with obsession with food for men ($r=.35$, $p<.01$), such that men who said that their mothers were less controlling were more obsessed with food. Student ratings of father control did not significantly correlate with the scales, but women's ratings of their fathers' responsiveness were correlated with the EAT ($r=.17$, $p<.05$) and obsession with food ($r=.16$, $p<.10$). Women who rated their fathers low in responsiveness were also more likely to display anorexic behaviors, be obsessed with food, and engage in more dieting behaviors.

Mother self-ratings of control were marginally correlated with the EAT for women ($r=.17$, $p<.10$). Mothers who rated themselves as less controlling were more likely to have daughters who displayed more anorexic behaviors. Mother

self-ratings of responsiveness were significantly negatively correlated with female perceptions of pressure from others to gain weight ($r=-.28$, $p<.01$). Mothers who rated themselves as highly responsive were more likely to have daughters who perceived more pressure from others to gain weight.

Father ratings of perceived control were marginally correlated with male perceptions of pressure from others to gain weight ($r=.40$, $p<.10$), such that fathers who rated themselves as less controlling were more likely to have sons who perceived greater pressure from others to gain weight. Father ratings of perceived responsiveness were significantly negatively correlated with dieting behaviors for males ($r=-.49$, $p<.05$) and were marginally negatively related to pressure from others to gain weight for females ($r=-.18$, $p<.10$). Fathers who rated themselves as highly responsive were more likely to have sons who engaged in more dieting behaviors and daughters who perceived greater pressure from others to gain weight.

Table 8 gives the correlations between perceived parenting styles and the Revised Restraint Scale and its two sub-scales, Concern for dieting and Weight fluctuations. Again, results were mixed. Student ratings of perceived mother responsiveness were marginally correlated with weight fluctuations for females ($r=.13$, $p<.10$). Women who had greater weight fluctuations were more likely to say that their mothers were less responsive. Student ratings of

father control did not significantly correlate with the scales but ratings of father responsiveness were marginally correlated with weight fluctuations for females ($r=.12$, $p<.10$). Women who had greater weight fluctuations were more likely to say that their fathers were less responsive. Student ratings of perceived mother control were marginally correlated with weight fluctuations for males ($r=.23$, $p<.10$). Men who had greater weight fluctuations were more likely to say that their mothers were less controlling.

Insert Table 8 about here.

Mother self-ratings of control were significantly correlated with the Restraint Scale for women ($r=.17$, $p<.05$). Mothers who rated themselves as less controlling were more likely to have daughters who were restrained eaters. Mother self-ratings of responsiveness were marginally negatively correlated with weight fluctuations for men ($r=-.37$, $p<.10$). Mothers who rated themselves as highly responsive were more likely to have sons who had more weight fluctuations. No correlations emerged between father self-ratings of parenting styles and the scales for men and women.

Table 9 gives the correlations between perceived parenting style and the WLOC Scale. Results were again mixed. No correlations emerged between student ratings of

perceived mother control or responsiveness and the WLOC Scale. There was a significant correlation between student ratings of father responsiveness and the scale for women ($r=.17$, $p<.05$). Women who believed that their weight was determined by external factors were more likely to say that their fathers were less responsive.

Insert Table 9 about here.

No correlations emerged between mother ratings of control and the WLOC Scale. There was however, a marginal correlation between mother ratings of responsiveness and the WLOC Scale for women ($r=-.19$, $p<.10$). Mothers who rated themselves as highly responsive were more likely to have daughters who believed that their weight was determined by external factors.

No correlations emerged between father ratings of perceived parenting style and the WLOC Scale for men or women.

Differences in Parenting Styles Using Classifications

Cut-off scores suggested by the authors of the scales were used to divide the students into classifications for each scale. T-tests were used to test for significant differences in perceived parenting styles for the two groups. Using a cut-off score of 30 for the EAT, 28 students were classified as anorexic (1 male, 27 females), and 234 students

were classified as non-anorexic (60 males, 174 females). The only significant difference found between the two groups was for female student ratings of father responsiveness.

Anorexics rated their father's responsiveness as $M=3.23$ and non-anorexics had a mean of 2.56, $t(196) = 1.84$, $p<.10$.

Anorexic women rated their fathers lower in responsiveness than non-anorexic females.

Using a cut-off score of 14 for the Revised Restraint Scale, 113 students were classified as restrained (15 males, 98 females), and 149 students were classified as unrestrained (46 males, 103 females). No significant differences were found between the two groups for ratings of perceived parenting style.

Using a cut-off score of 14 for the WLOC Scale, 27 students were classified as externally-oriented (8 males, 19 females) and 235 students were classified as internally-oriented (53 males, 182 females). Again, no significant differences were found between the two group for ratings of perceived parenting style.

Discussion

Consistent with past research, women in this study were more concerned than men about weight and dieting. Women were much more likely to say they were overweight than men. Women were also more likely to display anorexic behaviors, and be more restrained in their eating than men.

Disappointingly, no correlations were found between

student perceived parenting styles and weight discrepancy. This finding may be due to the heterogeneity of the sample, which included normal individuals as well as possible anorexics, bulimics and obese individuals. Our results already support the hypothesis that anorexics tend to believe that they are overweight and engage in more dieting behavior. Herman and Polivy (1975) and Hibscher and Herman (1977) have suggested that the majority of obese individuals are chronic dieters and have a greater discrepancy between their current and ideal weight. In addition, Ruderman (1983) found that Restraint Scale scores were higher and more homogeneous in obese subjects than in normal-weight subjects. Therefore, obese individuals may score similarly to anorexics on the eating scales, but may differ from anorexics in their family history and parents' parenting styles. The heterogeneity of this sample may be overwhelming the relationships between eating behaviors and parenting styles for those who have or are close to having eating disorders.

Correlations between the eating scales and perceived parenting styles also were somewhat disappointing. The only parenting style that consistently emerged as a factor of eating behavior for women was their perceived rating of parent responsiveness. Women who rated their fathers as low in responsiveness were more likely to display more anorexic behaviors, be more obsessed with food, engage in more dieting behavior, have more weight fluctuations, and have an external

orientation with regards to weight. Women who rated their mothers as low in responsiveness were more likely to be obsessed with food, engage in more dieting behavior, have more weight fluctuations, and have an external orientation with regards to weight. Women who perceive that their parents, especially their fathers, give them little attention and are unresponsive to their needs, may find comfort in food, which may lead to obesity-prone behavior but also chronic dieting as predicted by Herman and Polivy (1975) and Hibscher and Herman (1977).

It is surprising that perceived parental control did not play a factor in predicting female eating behavior. Research tends to indicate that overprotection by parents leads to problems in children's development of autonomy. Autonomy seems to play a major factor in some formulations of eating disorders (Slade, 1982). The lack of parental control as a predictor of eating disorders may be a factor of the heterogeneity of the sample. Parents high in control may limit their child's eating habits, especially for females, while parents low in control may not. If the parents are also low in responsiveness, food may become a comfort for females, but only those who have parents low in control can indulge, leading to obesity-prone behavior. Females who have parents low in responsiveness cannot find comfort in food if their parents are high in control, therefore they lean to the opposite extreme and engage in anorexic behavior to gain

attention. Since the eating scales do not discriminate between anorexic and obesity-prone behaviors, those possibilities cannot be studied in the present sample.

One intriguing finding that was not predicted was the relatively low correlation between student and parent ratings of parenting style. There was a strong correlation between male student perceived mother responsiveness and mothers' self-ratings of responsiveness. And there was a moderate correlation between female student ratings of parenting style and mother ratings of control and also with father ratings of responsiveness. Of course, the fact that the ratings depend upon recall and perceived relationships must limit its objective validity and contribute to the low correlations. In a study of anorexics and bulimics, Waller et al. (1990) concluded that the sufferers themselves had the most realistic perceptions of their families' interactional styles.

This study raises interesting questions concerning parenting styles and their effect on eating attitudes and habits, and provides some evidence that females whose parents are less responsive are more likely to show evidence of eating disorders. Future studies comparing different groups are needed to distinguish between anorexics, bulimics, obesity-prone and normal weight subjects. Future studies should also not just look at parenting styles, but the interaction of parenting styles for both parents, for

instance, the effects of a controlling mother and a highly responsive father. In addition, more valid measures of determining parenting styles should be examined in order to combat problems inherent in retrospective report. Perhaps observations of family interaction studied longitudinally would provide more valid measures of parenting styles as well as provide information on the effect of different parenting styles on different age groups.

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Table 1

Physical Characteristics of Students

	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Height (in.)	69.95	24.47	61	65.03	26.32	202
Weight (lbs.)	163.28	2.72	61	127.98	2.64	202
Over ideal weight	8.44	4.30	25	11.02	9.30	164
Under ideal weight	11.36	9.34	28	6.18	2.93	11

Table 2

Student Mean Scores on the Eating Scales

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		<i>t</i> (261)
	M	SD	M	SD	
EAT	10.31	6.05	16.96	11.81	4.23*
Obsession with food	.16	.58	1.30	2.81	3.13*
Dieting behavior	1.15	2.30	3.83	4.01	4.98*
Perceived pressure from others to gain weight	.44	1.30	.58	1.41	.70
Restraint	9.84	5.33	13.56	5.71	4.53*
Concern for dieting	5.31	3.84	8.42	3.96	5.40*
Weight fluctuations	4.52	3.18	5.14	2.84	1.45
WLOC	9.46	3.49	9.06	3.24	.82

Note. $N_{\text{females}} = 202$, $N_{\text{males}} = 61$. * $p < .01$

Table 3

Correlation Between Weight Discrepancy and Eating Scales

	<u>Weight Discrepancy</u>	
	Male	Female
EAT	.09	.23**
Obsession with food	-.15	.25**
Dieting behavior	.24+	.34**
Perceived pressure from others to gain weight	-.22+	-.29**
Restraint	.59**	.49**
Concern for dieting	.43**	.49**
Weight fluctuations	.44**	.36**
WLOC	-.20	.12

**p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table 4

Means of Perceived Parenting Style

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Student Response</u>			
Mother control	3.40	1.42	262
Mother responsiveness	1.82	1.26	262
Father control	3.50	1.65	259
Father responsiveness	2.68	1.74	259
<u>Mother Response</u>			
Mother control	3.11	1.14	122
Mother responsiveness	1.75	.87	122
<u>Father Response</u>			
Father control	3.32	1.32	103
Father responsiveness	2.35	1.17	103

Note: On the controlling dimension, higher numbers indicate less controlling and on the responsiveness dimension, higher numbers indicate less responsiveness.

Table 5

Correlations Between Student Perceived Parenting Style and Parent Perceived Parenting Style

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Mother control	.01	.28*
Mother responsiveness	.57*	.17
Father control	.03	.07
Father responsiveness	.02	.35*

*p<.01

Table 6

Correlation Between Weight Discrepancy and Perceived Parenting Style

	<u>Weight Discrepancy</u>	
	Male	Female
<u>Student Response</u>		
Mother control	-.09	-.02
Mother responsiveness	-.05	.07
Father control	-.15	.00
Father responsiveness	.04	.09
<u>Mother Response</u>		
Mother control	.07	.05
Mother responsiveness	-.04	-.11
<u>Father Response</u>		
Father control	-.04	-.02
Father responsiveness	-.38	.20+

+p<.10

Table 7

Correlation Between EAT Scale and Perceived Parenting Style

	<u>EAT</u>		<u>Obsess</u>		<u>Dieting</u>		<u>Others</u>	
	Male	Female	Maie	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Student Response</u>								
Mother control	.11	.03	.35**	-.05	-.06	.00	.05	.02
Mother responsiveness	-.05	-.01	.02	.12+	-.15	-.03	.22+	-.05
Father control	-.08	.01	.19	.10	-.05	-.01	.01	.02
Father responsiveness	.04	.17*	.10	.16*	-.10	.13+	-.17	.06
<u>Mother Response</u>								
Mother control	.04	.17+	-.04	.09	.11	.15	-.03	-.02
Mother responsiveness	.09	-.11	.01	-.02	.02	-.09	.17	-.28**
<u>Father Response</u>								
Father control	.12	.06	-.29	.05	-.06	-.02	.40+	-.03
Father responsiveness	-.35	-.09	-.14	-.07	-.49*	-.07	.30	-.18+

**p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table 8

Correlation Between Restraint Scale and Perceived Parenting Style

	<u>Restraint</u>		<u>CD</u>		<u>WF</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Student Response</u>						
Mother control	.13	.00	-.01	.05	.23+	-.07
Mother responsiveness	.04	.07	-.03	.01	.09	.13+
Father control	-.09	-.04	-.07	-.05	-.07	.02
Father responsiveness	.13	.11	.09	.07	.11	.12+
<u>Mother Response</u>						
Mother control	.01	.17+	.21	.14	-.19	.16
Mother responsiveness	-.19	-.05	.12	-.08	-.37+	.01
<u>Father Response</u>						
Father control	-.29	.09	-.02	.01	-.34	.16
Father responsiveness	-.24	-.04	-.35	-.11	-.02	.05

+p<.10

Table 9

Correlation Between WLOC and Perceived Parenting Style

	WLOC	
	Male	Female
<u>Student Response</u>		
Mother control	.01	-.06
Mother responsiveness	-.06	.04
Father control	-.03	.03
Father responsiveness	-.14	.17*
<u>Mother Response</u>		
Mother control	.06	-.01
Mother responsiveness	-.01	-.19+
<u>Father Response</u>		
Father control	.15	.01
Father responsiveness	.00	.06

*p<.05, +p<.10

Appendix

Eating Attitudes Test

Please place an (X) under the column which applies best to each of the numbered statements.

A = Always
 V = Very often
 O = Often
 S = Sometimes
 R = Rarely
 N = Never

- | A | V | O | S | R | N | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 1. Like eating with other people. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 2. Prepare foods for others but do not eat what I cook. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 3. Become anxious prior to eating. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 4. Am terrified about being overweight. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 5. Avoid eating when I am hungry. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 6. Find myself preoccupied with food. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 7. Have gone on eating binges where I feel that I may not be able to stop. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 8. Cut my food into small pieces. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 9. Aware of the calorie content of foods that I eat. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 10. Particularly avoid foods with a high carbohydrate content (e.g. bread, potatoes, rice, etc.). |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 11. Feel bloated after meals. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 12. Feel that others would prefer if I ate more. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 13. Vomit after I have eaten. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 14. Feel extremely guilty after eating. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 15. Am preoccupied with a desire to be thinner. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 16. Exercise strenuously to burn off calories. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 17. Weigh myself several times a day. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 18. Like my clothes to fit tightly. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 19. Enjoy eating meat. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 20. Wake up early in the morning. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 21. Eat the same foods day after day. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 22. Think about burning up calories when I exercise. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 23. Have regular menstrual periods. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 24. Other people think that I am too thin. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 25. Am preoccupied with the thought of having fat on my body. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 26. Take longer than others to eat my meals. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 27. Enjoy eating at restaurants. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 28. Take laxatives. |

A = Always
 V = Very often
 O = Often
 S = Sometimes
 R = Rarely
 N = Never

- | A | V | O | S | R | N | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 29. Avoid foods with sugar in them. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 30. Eat diet foods. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 31. Feel that food controls my life. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 32. Display self control around food. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 33. Feel that others pressure me to eat. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 34. Give too much time and thought to food. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 35. Suffer from constipation. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 36. Feel uncomfortable after eating sweets. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 37. Engage in dieting behavior. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 38. Like my stomach to be empty. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 39. Enjoy trying new rich foods. |
| () | () | () | () | () | () | 40. Have the impulse to vomit after meals. |

Herman's Revised Restraint Scale

Please complete the blanks below.

Sex _____

Height _____

Weight _____

Please circle the answer that best corresponds to you.

1. How often are you dieting?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

2. What is the maximum amount of weight (in pounds) that you have ever lost within one month?

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20+

3. What is your maximum weight gain within a week?

0-1 1.1-2 2.1-3 3.1-5 5.1+

4. In a typical week, how much does your weight fluctuate?

0-1 1.1-2 2.1-3 3.1-5 5.1+

5. Would a weight fluctuation of 5 lbs. affect the way you live your life?

Not at all Slightly Moderately Very much

6. Do you eat sensibly in front of others and splurge alone?

Never Rarely Often Always

7. Do you give too much time and thought to food?

Never Rarely Often Always

8. Do you have feelings of guilt after overeating?

Never Rarely Often Always

9. How conscious are you of what you are eating?

Not at all Slightly Moderately Extremely

10. How many pounds over your desired weight were you at your maximum weight?

0-1 1-5 6-10 11-20 21+

11. What do you consider to be your "ideal" weight? _____

The Weight Locus of Control Scale

1. Whether I gain, lose, or maintain my weight is entirely up to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree

2. Being the right weight is largely a matter of good fortune.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree

3. No matter what I intend to do, if I gain or lose weight, or stay the same in the near future, it is just going to happen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree

4. If I eat properly and get enough exercise and rest, I can control my weight in the way I desire.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree

Parenting Questionnaire for Subjects

For the following questions, rate your parents on a scale of 1 to 7 by circling the appropriate number:

One dimension of parenting relates to strategies parents use to control their children's behavior. On one end of this dimension are those parents who set very high standards for their children and consistently insist that these standards be met. At the other extreme are those parents who demand very little from their children and use few and indirect methods to control their children's behavior.

As a parent to me, my mother was:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Controlling, Demanding						Low in Control, Undemanding

As a parent to me, my father was:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Controlling, Demanding						Low in Control, Undemanding

Another dimension of parenting relates to how responsive parents are to their children's needs. On one end of this dimension are those parents who give a great deal of attention to their children and are highly responsive to their children's needs. At the other extreme are those parents who tend to give little attention to their children and are unresponsive to their children's needs.

As a parent to me, my mother was:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Responsive, Child-centered						Unresponsive, Parent-centered

As a parent to me, my father was:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Responsive, Child-centered						Unresponsive, Parent-centered