

MULTIPLE DETERMINANTS OF AFFLUENT PARENTS'
PERCEIVED PARENTAL COMPETENCE

by

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(Under the Direction of David W. Wright)

ABSTRACT

A noticeable gap exists regarding the lack of research on affluent parents, especially concerning what factors contribute to the perceived parental competence of affluent parents with adolescent and emerging adult children. Therefore, this study draws upon the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1988) to provide a conceptual understanding of the processes of development that occur through reciprocal interactions between affluent parents and their contexts. This conceptual understanding of processes was specifically examined through the determinants of parenting model (Belsky, 1984) using structural equation modeling with full-information maximum likelihood estimates. Affluent parents' family of origin supportive parenting, family of origin harsh parenting, personal well-being, social networks, and child characteristics were related to their perceived parental competence. Neither the parenting alliance nor hours worked for pay each week were related to perceived parental competence.

Additionally, neither the parenting alliance, social networks, nor work mediated the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence. Implications for future research and practice are offered.

INDEX WORDS: Parenting; Perceived Parental Competence; Affluence; Adolescence;
Emerging Adult

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	5
The Bioecological Theory	5
Determinants of Parenting Model	6
Connecting Research to the Determinants of Parenting Model.....	8
Personal Resources of Parents	9
Social Sources of Stress and Support	14
Child Characteristics	22
The Intersection of the Determinants of Parenting and Affluence.....	25
Summary of the Review of Literature	34
Filling the Gap: A Study of the Multiple Determinants of Affluent Parents'	
Perceived Parental Competence	37
3 DESIGN AND METHODS	43
Participants.....	43
Data Collection.....	46

Measures	46
4 RESULTS	52
Univariate Analyses.....	52
Bivariate Statistics	55
Multivariate Statistics: Path Analysis.....	58
Summary of Results	64
5 DISCUSSION.....	66
Exploration of Path Analysis Results.....	68
Strengths and Limitations	80
Implications.....	82
Conclusion	92
REFERENCES	93
APPENDICES	
A Adapted Parenting Sense of Competence Scale.....	115
B Adapted Family of Origin Supportive Parenting Scale	117
C Adapted Family of Origin Harsh Parenting Scale	118
D Flourishing Scale	119
E Parenting Alliance Inventory.....	120
F Adapted Perceived Social Network Support Scale.....	122
G Adapted Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire	123
H Missing Data.....	126

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Major Concepts	39
Table 2: Univariate Statistics for Variables in the Path Model	53
Table 3: Correlations for Variables in the Path Model	56

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: The Process of Determinants of Parenting model.....	7
Figure 2: Multiple Determinants of Affluent Parents' Perceived Parental Competence model ...	41
Figure 3: Results from the path analysis with standardized coefficients	60

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Belsky (1984) hypothesized that parents have the capacity to decenter, appraise, empathize, and adopt “a nurturant orientation” (p. 85) in relation to rearing their children. This was the basis for healthy parental competence. Parental competence, as defined in the determinants of parenting model, is conceptualized as the childrearing style that best enables the “developing person to acquire the capacities required for dealing effectively with the ecological niches that she or he will inhabit during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood” (Belsky, Robins, & Gamble, 1984, p. 251). In previous studies, the concept of parental competence has more broadly focused on both perceived competencies of parents as well as how competencies are displayed within parenting behaviors. Parental competence has been operationalized as parents’ perception of their level of skills and knowledge to be an effective parent and their level of personal value and comfort with parenting (e.g., Lang, Gartstein, Rodgers, & Lebeck, 2010; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Parenting activities and behaviors examined within the context of Belsky’s model have been operationalized as disciplining, helping, supervising and preparing/training a child (e.g., Bogenschneider, Small, & Tsay, 1997; Verhoeven, Junger, van Aken, Dekovic, & van Aken, 2007), and parents’ interaction with children, such as closeness and presence of conflict or empathy (e.g., Belsky, Crnic, & Woodworth, 1995; Meyers, Varkey, & Aguirre, 2002). Research built on this concept suggests that if parents draw from these competencies they will be sensitive, involved parents who are able to rear healthy, well-developed/adapted children (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006).

The classic research conducted by Diane Baumrind posits that parents' personal characteristics can facilitate healthy parental competence, which in turn influences childrearing. In her influential work, Baumrind (1968) identified two constructs that define the type of parenting necessary for healthy child development: warmth and control. These constructs have been modified so that warmth is sometimes studied as responsiveness (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, 2001) and control is sometimes studied as demandingness (Eamon & Mulder, 2005; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg, 2001). Parents who provide healthy levels of control with a warm environment (i.e., sensitive parenting) tend to parent in ways that are conducive to optimal child development, whereas parents who provide a controlling, low-warmth environment (i.e., insensitive parenting) tend to parent in ways that are potentially not conducive to optimal child development.

As a dynamic process, perceived parental competence is influenced by multiple factors, including social and contextual surroundings in the environment, which are continually changing throughout the life course (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Parents' beliefs are, in turn, enacted upon diversely in the practices of parenting (Belsky, 1984; Bornstein, 2005; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Potential predictors of parental competence that have been examined include personal characteristics, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics (Belsky, 1984). More specific constructs of these predictors—such as personality, coparenting (Belsky, Crnic, & Gable, 1995; Bogenschneider et al., 1997; van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven, 2002), marital harmony, conflict, or satisfaction (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Melby, 1990; Volling & Belsky, 1991), economic distress (Simons et al., 1990), work hours (Bogenschneider et al.,

1997), and neighborhoods (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006)—have all been found to have varying effects on perceived parental competence.

Although theories and frameworks have pointed out the importance and benefits of including contextual variables, much remains to be discovered about the relationship between the context of socio-economic factors and parenting. Many researchers have investigated the context of poverty in relation to parenting to examine how it is associated with impoverished families (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini, & Yalcinkaya, 2005). However, notably absent from research on parenting are affluent parents (Fouad & Brown, 2000; Kopleqicz, Gurian, & Williams, 2009; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a; Luthar & Sexton, 2004). This gap in literature suggests that previous researchers assumed either that the upper-class subculture was the same as the middle-class majority or that the resources available to this group make their lives unworthy of research (Luthar, 2003). This neglect of affluent individuals (defined as individuals within a high income bracket, with high material wealth, or upper/high-socioeconomic status by Luthar and colleagues (2004)) among researchers has also been attributed to the assumption that privilege breeds benevolence (Luthar & Sexton, 2004).

But some research suggests that the affluent can be a high-risk subpopulation in terms of psychological well-being and for internalizing and externalizing behavioral issues during adolescence (Grinker, 1978; Kopleqicz et al., 2009; Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a; Walker, 1982). In fact, affluent individuals are not immune from difficulties in life (Luthar & Becker, 2002; Pittman, 1985). Affluent individuals can encounter many of the disadvantages faced by others, with the exception of resources available to them (Luthar, 2003; Walker, 1982).

The gap created by the lack of affluent research will be addressed by this study. Its purpose is to understand several aspects of affluent parents. More specifically, the study will examine the relationship between specific determinants of parenting on perceived parental competence for affluent parents. It is grounded on several models and numerous studies, all of which are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Two common models used in studying parenting are the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and the determinants of parenting model (Belsky, 1984). This chapter will describe each of these and then present research findings of the variables within the determinants of parenting model.

The Bioecological Theory

The bioecological theory is the paradigm that undergirds the present review of literature. This theory positions researchers to study the process of development by examining the reciprocal relationship between people and their contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Through the bioecological theory, a broad approach is utilized to conceptualize families within their context-specific environment (Eamon & Mulder, 2005; Etz, 1997; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2002; Sameroff, Seifer, & Bartko, 1997). By using this theory to guide research, studies have broadly described the levels of influence that varying contexts, such as culture, socioeconomic status (SES), and community/neighborhoods, have on child development and parenting (Belsky, 1984; Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif, 2002; Hughes & Perry-Jenkins, 1996; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2002; Sameroff et al., 1997).

Kotchick and Forehand (2002) wrote that the bioecological study of parenting continues to be in a formative state where “understanding the processes by which these broader contextual variables affect parenting is an ongoing field of study” (p. 258). Consequently, there is still more

to uncover and understand. Since the bioecological theory is theoretically based both in aim and content (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000), a more specific conceptual model, such as the determinants of parenting model, is needed to operationalize the theory and make it more conducive to examining relationships between people and their environments.

Determinants of Parenting Model

Consistent with the bioecological theory, the determinants of parenting model provides the capacity to test bidirectional relationships between variables relevant to parenting (Belsky, 1984; Belsky et al., 1984). This model can be used in combination with the bioecological theory to more clearly examine the influence of a variety of factors on parenting. Inherent in the determinants of parenting model is the perspective that a reciprocal relationship exists between parents and their environments (see Figure 1) (Belsky et al., 1984). For example, just as parents are known to influence the development of their children (Baumrind, 1991; Steinberg, 2001), children (via their temperament or other characteristics) influence their parents, and as a result, the parenting children receive, specifically the level of parental involvement (Belsky et al., 1984; Goldberg, Clarke-Stewart, Rice, & Dellis, 2002; McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002).

Since parenting is subject to more than one or two isolated influences, this model identifies multiple variables working together to influence parenting. None functions exclusive of the other, although some are more influential than others, depending on the person and a determinant's level of intensity. It is this reciprocal interaction of determinants, along with the accumulation of stress and support within contexts, that determines parenting (Belsky, 1984).

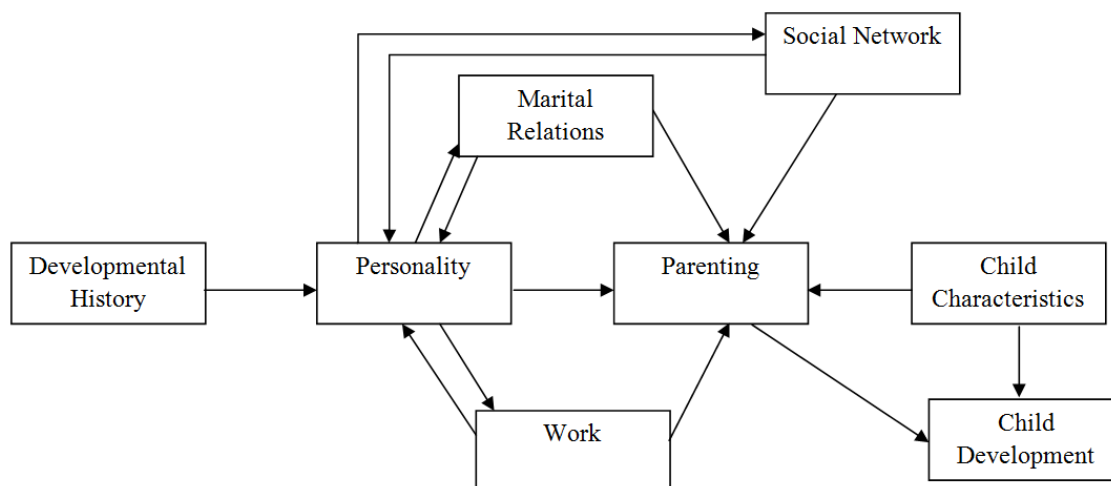


Figure 1. The Process of Determinants of Parenting model (Belsky, 1984).

In his original model, Belsky (1984) hypothesized that three determinants would influence parental competence: an individual's personal resources, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics. More specifically, personal resources were proposed to influence parental competence in terms of an individual's developmental history and personality. Social sources of stress and support were proposed to influence parental competence in terms of an individual's marital relations, work, and social network. Additionally, developmental history and social sources were proposed to directly influence a parent's personality, which in turn influences parental competence (Belsky, 1984; Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). Children's characteristics were also hypothesized to directly influence parental competence. Each of these three determinants will now be described.

The first determinant of parenting is personal resources, which includes a person's developmental history and psychological resources, such as personality (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). According to Belsky and Jaffee (2006), personal resources are conceptualized as characteristics of the person that shape who she or he is as an individual. This determinant is built on the hypothesis that "supportive developmental experiences give rise to a mature, healthy personality,

which is then capable of providing sensitive parental care, which fosters optimal child development” (Belsky, 1984, p. 86).

The second determinant of parenting consists of the social sources of stress and support, which brings into play some of the contextual factors in individuals’ lives. Belsky (1984) hypothesized that marital relationships, work, and social networks worked together to influence parental competence. Since the sources of stress and support were originally derived from research on child abuse and primarily utilized in studies of dysfunctional families, the variables studied were those seen as providing the positive and negative aspects of social support for families facing difficult situations. For samples not identified as dysfunctional, findings remain relatively consistent with research findings from abused or psychologically disturbed populations.

The last determinant of parenting is child characteristics. This has historically been operationalized as the child’s physical health, gender, age, and temperament (e.g., Belsky, 1984; Belsky & Jaffee, 2006; Belsky et al., 1984). The underlying assumption has been that the focal child’s temperament influences the specific type of parental involvement (e.g., sensitive involvement) and, ultimately, the extent of the child’s developmental trajectory (Belsky et al., 1984).

Connecting Research to the Determinants of Parenting Model

The remainder of this chapter will be organized around the three determinants of parenting presented in Belsky’s (1984) model: personal resources, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics. Within the section on personal resources, the role of parents’ developmental histories and psychological resources will be examined. The next section, on social sources of stress and support, will examine how marital relations, work, and social

networks predict perceived parental competence. The third section will discuss child characteristics, with an emphasis on adolescent children's characteristics. The chapter will conclude with an examination of affluence as a missing context that the model has not examined, including a brief review of research that has been conducted in the areas of affluence and affluent personal resources, affluent social sources of stress and support, and affluent children's characteristics.

Personal Resources of Parents

In the determinants of parenting model, parents' own childhood experiences (i.e., their developmental history) influence their personal characteristics (Belsky, 1984). In addition, Belsky (1984) hypothesized that parents' personal characteristics, such as personality or general well-being, directly influence their perceived parental competence, whereas their developmental history indirectly affects parental competence through parents' personal characteristics.

Developmental history is often studied as a personal resource. It is conceptualized as experiences during the formative years of childhood (e.g., living with one's own parents) that foster healthy developmental growth in one's psychological well-being or personality, which in turn fosters healthy child development (Belsky, 1984, 1990; Belsky et al., 1984). Previous research has indicated that, in certain situations, harsh parenting (e.g., Capaldi, Pears, Patterson, & Owen, 2003; Conger, Neppl, Kim, & Scaramella, 2003) as well as supportive parenting (e.g., Belsky & Fearon, 2004; Chen & Kaplan, 2001) can be transmitted to successive generations of parents. Whereas Belsky (1984) theorized that the relationship between developmental history and parental competence was mediated by personal characteristics, recent reviews of literature suggest that the developmental history is capable of both directly and indirectly influencing parental competence.

Specifically related to childrearing history, constructs of developmental history have included childhood maltreatment (Lang et al., 2010); early relational antecedents, such as parental care, warmth, autonomy, and control (Pelchat, Bisson, Bois, & Sauicier, 2003); and, difficulties within the family of origin, such as poverty, abuse, harsh discipline, or long parental separations (Meyers et al., 2002). Research suggests that fathers' perception of being less controlled by their own parents increased their sensitivity toward their children (Pelchat et al., 2003). Mothers' perception of difficulties within their families of origin predicted their interactional competence with her own child (Meyers et al., 2002), with mothers who experienced a history of emotional or physical abuse experiencing increased dysfunctional interaction with their own children (Lang et al., 2010). Considering the whole of these results, this present study examines both the direct and indirect influence of developmental history on parental competence. For purposes of this present study, parents' history of how they were reared as a child is focused on the supportiveness and harshness they received from their father and mother.

Another factor of personal resources, which Belsky hypothesized as influencing parental competence, is personal characteristics (e.g., personality) (Belsky, 1984; Belsky, 2005). A common construct frequently used is the Big Five factors of personality (Belsky, Crnic, & Gable, 1995; Belsky, Crnic, & Woodworth, 1995; Smith, 2010). According to McCrae and Costa (2003), personality factors include: neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. Neuroticism is identified as emotional traits in individuals related to fear, anger, sorrow, and shame, as well as behavioral traits related to impulsiveness and vulnerability. Extraversion consists of the interpersonal traits in individuals related to warmth, gregariousness, and assertiveness, as well as temperamental traits related to positive

emotions, activity, and excitement-seeking. Agreeableness is comprised of facets of individuals' trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, and tender-mindedness. Openness to experience is comprised of peoples' openness to imagination, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, and values. Conscientiousness is associated with people high in competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation.

Studies have found that parents who experience increased negative emotional states (i.e., neuroticism) are more likely to practice harsher, less responsive and less sensitive parenting (Belsky, Crnic, & Woodworth, 1995; Brody, McBride, Kim, & Brown, 2002; Kanoy, Ulk-Steiner, Cox, & Burchinal, 2003; Smith, 2010). Insensitive parents (e.g., higher neuroticism) also tend to have more controlling and less supportive parenting behaviors (Belsky, Jaffee, Sligo, Woodward, & Silva, 2005; Smith, 2010; Verhoeven et al., 2007). In contrast, parents who tend to experience more positive emotional states (i.e., extraversion) are more likely to practice stimulating, responsive, and sensitive parenting (Belsky, Crnic, & Woodworth, 1995; Verhoeven et al., 2007). Sensitive parents (e.g., higher agreeableness) have more positive interactions, less overreaction or inconsistencies, and more positive discipline in their childrearing practices (Verhoeven et al., 2007).

In addition, recent studies employing Belsky's model have broadly conceptualized personal characteristics as one's psychological well-being or psychological attributes (i.e., an individual's personal characteristics that contribute to the influence individuals have on their context). Other constructs that have been used in similar studies of personal resources include depression (Lang et al., 2010; Lee, Anderson, Horowitz, & August, 2009; Pelchat et al., 2003; Reis, Barbera-Stein, & Bennett, 1986; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009; Simons, Lorenz, Wu, & Conger, 1993; Simons et al., 1990), personal well-being (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy, self-

esteem, self-expressiveness, maturity) (Downing-Matibag, 2009; Lindsey, Caldera, & Colwell, 2005; Meyers et al., 2002; Seigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009; Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, Widaman, & Cutrona, 2010; Volling & Belsky, 1991; Wong, McElwain, & Halberstadt, 2009), anxiety (Lang et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2010), and general psychological health (Flouri, 2004).

Studies have found that depression is negatively associated with supportive parenting (e.g., emotional availability, protection, and discipline) and parenting self-efficacy (Seigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009; Simons, Lorenz, et al., 1993). Among fathers, depression is also associated with increased destructive parenting (Simons et al., 1990). Among mothers, higher optimism is positively associated with effective child management (Taylor et al., 2010). Higher self-control is associated with more parental responsiveness and positive interactions and with less overreactions, laxness, inconsistency, and verbal punishment (Verhoeven et al., 2007). Parents' level of interpersonal affect, the ability to be sensitive towards others, is associated with supportive coparenting (Belsky, Crnic, & Gable, 1995). For purposes of the present study, personal characteristics are conceptualized as parents' perception of their personal well-being in regard to their psychosocial functioning and overall well-being.

Summary. As determinants of parental competence, developmental history and personality and personal well-being are proposed to be the personal resources of parents that influence parental competence (Belsky, 1984). Although research has identified correlations between developmental history and parental competence, little is known about the influence of developmental history in the determinants of parenting model because it has not been included in the majority of studies employing Belsky's (1984) model. General research related to childhood experiences has identified correlations between negative childhood experiences and negative childrearing practices. This suggests that childhood experiences influence parental competence

most when parents' childhood experiences were very negative. This could be because the transmission of parenting is more likely to occur when extreme childhood experiences are present (either positive or negative) or because extreme childhood experiences are mostly what have been examined.

Belsky (1984) also hypothesized that parents' personality would influence their parental competence, which has often been evidenced in parents' neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness. Alternatively, as described above, other studies have tested the relationship between psychological well-being or psychological attributes and parental competence and have found associations between these variables (e.g., Downing-Matibag, 2009; Lang et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009; Seigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009; Taylor et al., 2010; Wong et al., 2009). In other words, research trends suggest that, whether examining personality or well-being, parents' personal characteristics—influenced by emotional states, interpersonal and behavioral traits, or psychological attributes (e.g., depression, anxiety, or optimism)—influence parental competence. This effect is particularly salient in specific studies of parenting self-efficacy, parental sensitivity and responsiveness towards childrearing, and harsh parenting (e.g., Seigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009; Smith, 2010; Verhoeven et al., 2007). However, several studies presented mixed findings, with some predictor variables not able to predict or even be associated with parenting outcome variables. For example, in one study, parents' depression was not associated with parents' sensitivity (Pelchat et al., 2003); in another study, mothers' optimism was not associated with warm parenting (Taylor et al., 2010), and yet another study suggested mothers' self-esteem was not associated with her childrearing beliefs (Lindsay et al., 2005). Perhaps this is due to measurement issues, or perhaps the determinant is not as influential in specific developmental stages (e.g., parents with young children versus parents with older children).

Social Sources of Stress and Support

According to Belsky (1984), marital relations, work, and social networks have the potential to either undermine or sustain growth-promoting parental competence. Each of these will now be explored.

Marital relations. Although marital relations, such as marital quality (e.g., stress, satisfaction, etc.) and marital interactions (e.g., conflict, support, etc.), are predictors of parenting (and, in turn, children's behavior), marriage and parenting linkages can be so complicated that it is understandable why simple correlations are often not as strong as expected (Belsky & Fearon, 2004; Grych, 2002).

Studies using the determinants of parenting framework have found that parents with lower levels of marital stress experience increased sensitivity toward their child (Pelchat et al., 2003). Conversely, increased marital conflict decreases paternal involvement with adolescent children and is both related to decreased maternal involvement and associated with parents' increased negative expressiveness within the family and with less sensitive fathers (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008; Volling & Belsky, 1991; Wong et al., 2009). Spousal support is positively related to sensitive parenting (e.g., supportive parenting) (Simons, Lorenz, et al., 1993) and increases in spousal support predict positive parental functioning (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Paternal support is negatively associated with maternal psychological and physical aggression so that as paternal support decreases, maternal aggression increases (Lee, 2009). Finally, marital satisfaction is positively associated with increased levels of responsive parenting, structure in parenting, positive disciplining, and warm parent-child relations (Gable, Belsky, & Crnic, 1992; Verhoeven et al., 2007). Conversely, partners who have low marital satisfaction typically demonstrate less responsive and more ineffective parenting (Gable et al., 1992).

Historically, researchers have relied on global constructs of marital relations, such as the ones mentioned above, to evaluate both the general state of the marriage and the specific processes/dynamics of the couple relationship (Simons et al., 1990). More recently, research examining the effects of parenting on children's development shifted from evaluating marital quality to evaluating the relationship between parents concerning their child (i.e., partner support). Partner support typically is examined through the parenting alliance, which is the daily functioning of the coparenting relationship between adults in parental roles (rather than as "spouses") (Feinberg, 2003; Gable et al., 1992; Jia & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011). It is further conceptualized as a social support for parents who can rely on their partner for affirmation, encouragement, and mutual support (Feinberg, Kan, & Hetherington, 2007). However, the parenting alliance also involves transactions with children (e.g., a triadic relationship), which makes it separate and distinct from the marital relationship (e.g., a dyadic relationship) (Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Fincham & Hall, 2005; Gable et al., 1992).

More specifically, the parenting alliance (i.e., investment of both parents in child, value of other parent's involvement, respect for other parents' childrearing, and desire to talk about child-related information) is directly associated with various parenting approaches (Morrill, Hines, Mahmood, & Cordova, 2010). For example, the parenting alliance/coparenting process has been found to be associated with parental engagement and involvement (Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007; Jia & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011; McBride & Rane, 1998). Coparenting (shared parenting, support, etc.) in one study was negatively correlated with fathers who felt undermined by their wives (Van Egeren & Hawkins, 2004), such that increased perceptions of undermining meant decrease in coparenting activities. According to McBride and Rane (1998), however, fathers' childrearing involvement was predicted by their perception of their spouse's confidence

in their parenting, emotional appraisal of their parenting, and similar parenting philosophy. For example, fathers were more involved in childrearing activities when they perceived the mother to have confidence in them, appraise their parenting, and share similar parenting philosophies. The reverse also appears to be true in a similar study, in that the more involved fathers were in playing with their child, the more supportive and less undermining they were in coparenting behaviors (Jia & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011).

In relation to child's behaviors, supportive coparenting moderates the relationship between preschool children's regulation of emotional expressions and their externalizing behavior (Schoppe-Sullivan, Weldon, Cook, Davis, & Buckley, 2009). For example, when supportive coparenting is present, low control of the regulations of emotions is not necessarily associated with increased externalizing behavior (reported by mothers and teachers) (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2009). In a similar study, more frequent and intense behaviors of parents undermining each other's parenting are exhibited when children have more difficult temperaments, such as negative affect or negative mood (Cook, Schoppe-Sullivan, Buckley, & Davis, 2009).

In a study that tested the ability of marital variables (e.g., marital quality, disagreements, and conflict) and coparenting variables (e.g., coparenting conflict) to account for variance in parent-child conflict (e.g., parental negativity), Feinberg et al. (2007) found that coparenting was able to account for the same, if not more, variance in parental negativity than marital variables, which reinforces that couple relations and coparenting relations are related but distinct constructs (Van Egeren, 2004). Additionally, similar findings were reported in research related to this topic (Belsky et al., 1996; Karreman, van Tuijl, van Aken, & Dekovic, 2008; McHale & Rasmussen, 1998). This implies that coparenting can be an accurate measure of the influence of partners'

relations in the context of parenting. This is consistent with research testing the determinants of parenting model, with findings that indicated mothers' and fathers' perceived parenting competence was predicted by partner support, with higher competence demonstrated in parents who perceived greater support from their partner (Bogenschneider et al., 1997; van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven, 2002). For the purpose of this present study, the "marriage" component that Belsky hypothesized as a social source of stress and support is conceptualized as the parenting alliance, which is the day-to-day functioning of the coparenting relationship.

Work. Work is yet another source of stress and/or support that influences parenting, and thus, parents' interaction with their children (Belsky, 1984; Kohn, 1963; Pleck & Hofferth, 2008; Smith, 2010). Studies employing Belsky's (1984) determinants of parenting model have used various assessments to examine the influence of work, including work hours (Bogenschneider et al., 1997) and occupational experience—such as work-family stress and work-family support (Volling & Belsky, 1991). Yet, research has provided mixed findings.

Research examining work as a determinant of parenting has found some relationships between fathers' work and parental competence but has primarily focused on how mothers' work influences parental competence. For fathers, their amount of parenting interaction and childcare responsibilities for their infant children was predicted by stress and support between the work-family interface (Volling & Belsky, 1991). Thus, as fathers perceived more support between the work-family interface, they interacted with their child more than fathers who perceived more stress between work and family (Volling & Belsky, 1991). For mothers, the number of hours of work outside the home influenced their parental competence in varying ways based on the age of their child. Mothers of toddlers who worked more hours outside the home had more controlling parenting behaviors than mothers who spent fewer hours at work (Smith, 2010). Findings on the

influence of maternal work hours are mixed for parents of adolescent children. In one study, increased maternal work hours were associated with decreased parental competence (e.g., engagement and responsiveness) with adolescent children (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). Conversely, another study reported that work hours did not predict perceived parental competence (e.g., supervising, disciplining, engagement, etc.) for either mothers or fathers of adolescents (Bogenschneider et al., 1997).

With regard to employment in general, maternal employment is a predictor of paternal distress among parents of toddlers, specifically with decreases in fathers' personal stress associated with wives' increased work time (McBride et al., 2002). Maternal employment also predicts both parents' total involvement and childcare responsibilities with their young children, with increased total involvement and childcare responsibilities among fathers and decreased total involvement and responsibilities for mothers (McBride et al., 2002). Yet, maternal employment is not associated with father involvement with their adolescent children (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008).

In general, research on the determinants of parenting model that includes work is inconsistent. As evidenced above, research indicates that maternal work hours negatively influence both maternal controlling behaviors with young children and maternal engagement and responsiveness with adolescent children (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008; Smith, 2010). Yet, work hours in another sample of parents with adolescent children did not predict parental competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). These inconsistencies also extend to employment. Maternal employment, as described above, predicts parental distress, parental involvement, and childcare responsibilities of parents with young children but is not associated with levels of paternal

involvement with adolescent children. For the purpose of the present study, work is conceptualized as hours spent working for pay each week.

Social networks. Conceptualized as a source of stress and support, social networks include extended family, friends, and neighbors (Belsky, 1984). More specifically, social networks are personal sets of linkages within a specific group of people that can be a source of encouragement and assistance to families (Cochran & Walker, 2005; Simons, Lorenz, et al., 1993). Several studies suggest that social networks not only directly influence parental competence but also indirectly influence it through parents' well-being (Belsky, 1984; Cochran & Walker, 2005; Simons & Johnson, 1996; Simons, Lorenz, et al., 1993). Specific characteristics of social networks found to positively influence parental competence include larger network size, greater childrearing advice, and greater emotional support (Cochran & Walker, 2005; Gharazian & Roche, 2010; Jennings, Stagg, & Connors, 1991).

Studies that have tested social networks as a determinant have found that they are negatively associated with controlling parenting behaviors among a sample of mothers with toddlers (Smith, 2010). Supportive social networks (e.g., community, school, and neighbors) are positively associated with parenting engagement and positive, sensitive parenting (Bogenschneider et al., 1997; Gharazian & Roche, 2010). Social networks are also negatively associated with levels of parental depression (Lee et al., 2009). Furthermore, parental depressive symptoms can mediate the relationship between social networks and supportive parenting of seventh-grade students/children and between social networks and parent-child relational frustration with young children (Lee et al., 2009; Simons, Lorenz, et al., 1993).

Some studies, however, have found little to no association between social networks and supportive parenting (e.g., parents who are encouraging, helpful, caring, loving, etc.). Simons,

Lorenz, et al. (1993) found that social networks were not directly related to supportive parenting. Similarly, others have found that broader social networks have little influence on maternal satisfaction and parental interactive behaviors (Crnic, Greenberg, Ragozin, Robinson, & Basham, 1983; van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven, 2002). This could be because of gender differences in parenting, as one study found that social networks did not predict mothers' parental competence with daughters or fathers' parental competence with sons or daughters (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). Social networks, for purposes of this study, are conceptualized as parents' perceived relationships with family and friends outside their home.

Summary. Marital relations, including marital quality and interactions, seem to be the primary social source of stress and support that influences parental competence, which is what Belsky (1984) hypothesized. Healthy marital relations can positively influence parental competence, which includes greater parental sensitivity, greater parental involvement, greater supportive parenting, greater parental functioning, and greater parental responsiveness towards children. Conversely, marital stress and conflict can negatively influence parental competence.

Although these general constructs of marital relations have the ability to predict parental competence, research suggests that a more accurate examination of the relationship between parents on parental competence is done by focusing on coparenting or partner support in place of marriage constructs. Coparenting is studied through the parenting alliance, which is the day-to-day functioning of the coparenting relationship (e.g., encouragement, affirmation, respect for the other parent, and value for their involvement, etc.). Previous research suggests that the parenting alliance is directly associated with parenting. As mentioned above, studies have found that parents who feel undermined by the other parent tend to share in less coparenting activities. Conversely, parents who feel affirmed are more involved in childrearing activities, and the more

involved fathers were in childrearing activities, the more likely they were to have affirming/positive coparenting behaviors. A benefit of including measures of coparenting is its ability to accurately reflect the influence of partners' relations on parenting, and, ultimately, child's outcomes.

Less is known about work as a source of stress and support and the influence work has on parental competence, which is evidenced by the inconsistent findings between studies. Although work is associated with, and occasionally predicts, parental competence, those findings pertain primarily to the relationship between mothers' work hours/employment status and mother-child relationship, specifically of young children. Moreover, less is known about the relationship between paternal work and parental competence within the determinants of parenting model. This is because mothers (and young children) have been the primary focus of research using this model. Additionally, work is not always examined in studies on the determinants of parenting model. Perhaps there are more facets of work that should be included, such as more traditional elements of work, including workplace relationships, workplace policies, and work stress (Crouter & McHale, 2005).

Similarly, the relationship between social networks and parental competence is inconsistent as a social source of stress and support in the determinants of parenting model. Social networks positively influence parental competencies but primarily through parents' well-being (e.g., depression). There seems to be little direct effect of social networks on parental competence. This could be due to the developmental stage the child was at when parents were involved in studies, with parents of younger children finding social networks of greater importance, and, therefore, more influenced by their presence or lack of presence in their lives.

Child Characteristics

Belsky hypothesized that, in addition to parents' personal resources and social resources, the child will also contribute to parental competence (Belsky, 1984). Initially, Belsky (1984) focused on temperament as the primary child characteristic. Temperament has been conceptualized in various ways, though the underlying premise is that individual differences in self-regulation and reactivity affect development (Rothbart & Derryberry, 1981). Specific conceptualizations of temperament have included categories (e.g., activity level, mood, adaptability, and distractibility) that allow researchers to study behavioral styles, such as difficult versus easy and approach versus withdrawal (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). Recent research has found that children who are more difficult or negative are likely to elicit unsupportive or even problematic parenting (Goldberg et al., 2002; McBride et al., 2002; Pike, McGuire, Hetherington, Reiss, & Plomin, 1996), whereas children who are easier (e.g., possess positive emotionality) elicit parenting that is more sensitive and responsive (McBride et al., 2002).

Studies examining child characteristics as a determinant of parenting have moved beyond the examination of temperament to study other factors children possess that might influence parents. Research has found that the child's age, sex, behavioral and emotional problems, language skills, and temperament are associated with, and predict, parental competence, specifically parental involvement, parenting stress, parenting self-efficacy, parental control, and discipline—all of which are described further in the following section.

In particular, female children report more maternal involvement than male children (Flouri, 2004), and maternal reports of less-active daughters predict decreases in maternal involvement (McBride et al., 2002). Child's age and sex also predict paternal involvement (e.g., engagement and responsiveness) (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). Additionally, paternal involvement

is positively associated with child's self-esteem and negatively associated with child's emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., temper tantrums) (Flouri, 2004). Lower paternal involvement is predicted by less sociable daughters, and paternal parenting stress is predicted by emotionally intense daughters (McBride et al., 2002). Maternal parenting stress is positively associated with child difficulty and is predicted to decrease with less emotionally intense sons and less active children (McBride et al., 2002; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Although maternal parenting self-efficacy is negatively associated with child difficulty (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009), child difficulty cannot predict paternal or maternal parenting self-efficacy (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Maternal support is positively associated with children's voluntary self-control (Verhoeven et al., 2007). Parents' use of psychological control is positively associated with highly active children (Verhoeven et al., 2007). Positive parental discipline is positively associated with children's language skills (Verhoeven et al., 2007).

Although it is commonly held that children influence their social environments, perhaps more so in adolescence than in early childhood (Pardini, 2008; Scarr & McCartney, 1983), research examining children's influence on parents does not often occur aside from research on the determinants of parenting model (Bogenschneider et al., 1997; Pardini, 2008). Findings from studies that have not incorporated Belsky's (1984) model indicate that children's antisocial behaviors influence parental negativity (Larsson, Viding, Rijdsdijk, & Plomin, 2008; Pardini, Fite, & Burke, 2008). Children's conduct problems (e.g., defiant disorder and conduct disorder) are associated with increases of parents' low positive reinforcement with children and predict increases of timid parenting and poor parental monitoring (Pardini et al., 2008). Additionally, children's oppositional defiant disorder predicted timid discipline, positive parental involvement, and poor communication (Burke, Pardini, & Loeber, 2008). Children's conduct disorder

predicted poor parental supervision, harsh discipline, and low parental warmth (Burke et al., 2008; Hipwell et al., 2008).

Some studies have been devoted to adolescence as it affects parental well-being; however, less is known about how adolescence affects the determinants of parenting (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). Of the studies conducted with Belsky's determinant of parenting model, only a few have focused on the developmental stage of adolescence and its influence on parental competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997; Downing-Matibag, 2009; Pleck & Hofferth, 2008). Bogenschneider et al. (1997) reported finding that perceived parental competence was predicted by adolescent's openness to parents' socialization. Additionally, mother-child stress predicted mothers' parental competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). Parental satisfaction is negatively associated with parents' perceptions of their adolescents problem behaviors (e.g., the parents perceive that they use drugs or alcohol, are in poor health, or have been expelled from school) (Downing-Matibag, 2009). These findings are consistent with other research that has included Belsky's model. However, more research is needed that examines the influence of children's, and particularly adolescent's, characteristics on parenting within the framework of the determinants of parenting model. Child characteristics, for purposes of this study, are conceptualized as an adolescent's behaviors related to conduct problems, emotional behaviors, hyperactivity, and peer problems as reported by their parent.

Summary. As Belsky (1984) hypothesized, child characteristics influence many aspects of parental competence. This occurs in a variety of ways, not just through children's temperament as was originally studied. Findings indicate that children's age, sex, emotions, and behaviors are related to (and occasionally predict) perceived parental competence. A gap is evident in the literature, however. The majority of research on the determinants of parenting

model has examined young children's characteristics. Children's characteristics have not often been explored for parents with older children.

The Intersection of the Determinants of Parenting and Affluence

A limited amount of research has looked at the intersection of affluence and the factors that comprise the determinants of parenting model. Although studies using Belsky's (1984) model have excluded the examination of affluent families, other studies (i.e., not employing Belsky's model) have looked at the effects of affluence on various aspects of components within the model. Due to the emerging nature of research on affluent families, this review of literature is primarily drawn from studies incorporating aspects of the determinants of parenting model and that include socioeconomic status (SES), income, and social class as proxies to measure a person's socio-economic factors. Before discussing findings, the definition of SES will be reviewed, as it is the most widely used proxy for affluence. Then, common measures of SES will be discussed and an alternative to the traditional SES indexes will be explored as indicators of affluence. Finally, each determinant of parenting from Belsky's model (e.g., personal resources, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics) will be discussed as it is experienced by affluent parents.

SES. There is a history of research, dating back to the 1930s, on the impact of poverty on early childhood (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Gecas, 1979; Hoff et al., 2002; Lynd & Lynd, 1929; Rogers, Forehand, Griest, Wells, & McMahon, 1981). In 1929, a foundational study of Lynd and Lynd found that childrearing practices varied depending on one's social status. As one of the first researchers to formally study social class (which was the predecessor of SES) in families, Melvin Kohn (1963) conceptualized social class as parents' occupation (weighted by education). His research, along with subsequent studies (Kohn, 1963; Luster, Rhoades, & Haas,

1989), found that parental values of children's conduct (e.g., conformity, self-direction), as influenced by specific workforces, have an effect on childrearing beliefs, which influence parenting behaviors.

Based on working-class parents' exposure to authority in the workplace, working-class parents place a higher value on children's obedience, compliance, and general cleanliness. Middle-class parents, defined on the scale of prestige as "white collar" workers by Kohn (1963), are influenced by increased self-direction at work and place a higher value on children's overall happiness, curiosity, and self-control. Lower-class parents, defined on the scale of prestige as unskilled manual workers by Kohn (1963), are focused on their children's behaviors and obedience to external rules, whereas middle-class parents are focused on the feelings and motives of their children's actions and on fostering a sense of self-direction in their child (Kohn, 1963; Luster et al., 1989).

As one of the multiple pathways through which parenting is influenced, socioeconomic status (SES) is another construct that can predict processes within families (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003). Ensminger and Fothergill (2003) posit that areas of individuals' development are influenced by SES and the contexts in which SES makes itself evident, such as families and neighborhoods. Yet, upon further review, the seemingly simple relationship between SES and family processes was discovered to be more complex and in need of in-depth research, both through theoretical guidance and through more sophisticated analyses (Conger et al., 2010).

More specifically, parental involvement has been associated with indicators, such as income (Erickson & Gecas, 1991), employment (Erickson & Gecas, 1991), and social prestige (Fouad & Brown, 2000) for constructs related to SES and affluence. Recent research investigating the influence of SES on families suggests that differences between groups are

evident (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003; Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; Fouad & Brown, 2000; Hoff et al., 2002). Upper-SES families appear to hold higher academic expectations for their children (Bodovski & Farkas, 2008; Hill, 1997) and greater use of autonomy-granting and reasoning towards children than lower-SES families (Fouad & Brown, 2000). Another difference is that higher-SES parents value self-confidence and self-direction, whereas lower-SES parents tend to value conformity to societal norms and obedience (Hoff et al., 2002).

Measuring SES. One problem in understanding SES stems from its measurement. The primary issue is that no best way exists to measure SES (Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; Leyendecker et al., 2005). Common practice has simply been to use a single indicator or multiple indicators (e.g., education and/or occupation). Education seems most likely to be used (Early, 1994; Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003; Flanagan & Layfield, 1999; Hoff et al., 2002). Composite indices have been another traditional measurement of SES (Hoff et al., 2000). A popular composite index of SES is the Hollingshead indices, which measure a combination of paternal and/or maternal occupation and education (Leyendecker et al., 2005). Yet, the weakness in an index measurement is that composites are frequently collapsed to create categories for groups to fit in and that, consequently, the measurement masks any effects that the individual factors could have on development (Duncan & Magnuson, 2003). If studies continue to use SES indices, the possibility of alternate explanations that reveal how SES exerts its developmental influence will be nearly impossible to examine (Belsky et al., 1984).

A completely different approach from measuring SES, specifically upper-SES, is to examine socio-economic factors through affluence. Affluence, which tends to be an ambiguous term (and best identified through proxies or multiple indicators), has been defined by many different indicators, such as social prestige, income, and social class (Lee & Marlay, 2007). Lee

and Marlay (2007) purported that appropriate indicators of affluence consist of either aggregate wealth or income. Others have suggested that affluence is comprised of household income (Fischer, 2003), annual income over \$75,000, as well as professional occupation and college education (Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999), median incomes (of a family of four) that exceed at least four times the poverty threshold (Massey, 1996; St. John, 2002), and four kinds of income measures (Lee & Marlay, 2007). Because indicators of affluence do not always identify or capture affluent individuals, the cutoff points (based on income) must be higher in order to truly study affluent families instead of simply upper-middle-class families (Lee & Marlay, 2007). Thus, for the purposes of this study, and as suggested by Lee and Marlay (2007), affluence is broadly conceptualized as individuals “at the very top of the income [and net worth] distribution” (p. 771).

Since every variable associated with affluence was not able to be measured in the present study, a couple will be selected as proxies of affluence. A combination of two different thresholds was used in the current study: an income-based affluence threshold and a net worth-based affluence threshold. For the income-based threshold, the annual income of the top 5% of income earners in the United States at the household level in 2009 was \$180,000 or higher (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). Similarly, national wealth estimates provided another threshold. In 2004, the top 12% of wealth and asset ownership had over \$500,000, which was roughly estimated to be \$586,000 in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). More recent estimates for the top 5% of wealth and asset ownership could not be found, although an estimate would place the cutoff around \$1,000,000. Thus, in the present study, proxies of affluence are operationalized as individuals within the top 5% of annual household income and/or the top 5% of wealth/asset ownership (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, 2010b).

Summary. Although a variety of socio-economic measures have been used, the majority of studies have focused on supporting the premise that families from different socio-economic backgrounds vary between groups rather than focusing on actual experiences within each social category and relating those experiences to child behavior and parenting outcomes (Belsky et al., 1984). The same is true today. Studies have failed to examine SES characteristics that might explain within-group differences in patterns of parental competence (Flanagan & Layfield, 1999; Fouad & Brown, 2000). Although SES will not be employed in this study, research related to it is incorporated in order to inform a body of research that has little information regarding affluence. For purposes of this study, annual household income and/or net worth are used as proxies of affluence.

Personal resources among the affluent. An examination of affluent individuals in the past has revealed specific demographics within this subpopulation. Over half of this subpopulation is in midlife, ranging between the ages of 45 and 64 years old (The Affluent, 2002; Waldrop & Jacobsen, 1992). They are predominantly Caucasian (86%), with the remaining 14% including ethnic minorities, such as African American, Native American, Asian, and Hispanic. High proportions of affluent individuals are family oriented and are married with children (Crispell, 1994; Lee & Marlay, 2007). These individuals also display many indicators of socioeconomic advantage, including higher education and employment within professional occupations (Lee & Marlay, 2007).

According to Bosanko (1995), affluent adults believe that being good parents is a crucial indicator of their own personal success. The high productivity related to affluence, however, tends to signify reduced time in leisure activities and increased levels of stress, which can result in low personal well-being (Deiner, 2000). Accordingly, research on affluent parents suggests

that these individuals are perhaps more likely to face psychological costs and suffer from depression, lower mental health, and an overall unhappiness (Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Sexton, 2004) than the general population. Research also shows that as values and goals toward more extrinsic things increase, the happiness of the individuals decreases (Luthar, 2003). In fact, Zelenko (1992) indicated that drug abuse has been more prevalent among affluent women than low-income women in the past.

Pressures are also present in affluent individuals' lives (Luthar & Becker, 2002). One is that affluent parents feel that they must present a strong, healthy family to others (Luthar & Becker, 2002). As a result, parents "may often be in considerable need of support both for themselves as individuals, and in relation to the challenges of parenting" (Luthar & Becker, 2002 p. 1607), yet they do not seek help. This could be a result of parents' unwillingness to deal with their children's problems, a result of privacy, or a result of avoiding embarrassment (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005b).

Social sources of stress and support among the affluent.

Affluent marital relations. To date, there is little empirical research on affluent marriages, although some studies offer a glimpse into this subject. Wives are seen as providing an important role in their husbands' success, sometimes even to the point of neglecting who they truly are (Wolfe & Fodor, 1996). According to Wolfe and Fodor's (1996) work with affluent women, the wife is expected to manage and arrange her husband's home, social life, and the household, isolating her from her husband. Children are primarily left to the care of the mother since the husband is often traveling or consumed by work (Luthar & Sexton, 2004; Wolfe & Fodor, 1996). This can strain their marriage because the time spent together is used to manage the problems of childrearing. Wolfe and Fodor (1996) suggest that, although nannies may be

used, the mother views her role as caretaker seriously and will try to ensure her child is developing as a successful, competent child who is able to handle the status and power that will be his one day.

Affluent adults hold the belief that a happy marriage is critical to personal success (Bosanko, 1995). However, just as marital relations can be abusive among the middle-SES majority and impoverished marriages, so can those of the wealthy (Weitzman, 2000). In fact, research suggests that affluent women experience emotional and physical abuse by their spouses (Weitzman, 2000). Indeed, wives in affluent families sometimes face a great need for help but are unable to receive it as they feel that asking for help might jeopardize their husbands' or their own reputations. They believe they have a position to uphold. When they do overcome their reluctance to seek help and reach out to someone, "they tend to be rejected by the very systems designed to help battered women" (Weitzman, 2000, p. 9) because they are wealthy.

Affluent work. Fathers and mothers in affluent families express high amounts of autonomy and control in the workplace (Luthar, 2003). The affluent subpopulation is dominated by dual-earner couples (Crispell, 1994; Luthar & Sexton, 2004). This is evidenced in that shared breadwinning is more likely among affluent families than lower-SES families (Coltrane, 2004).

According to Coltrane (2004), successful affluent careers include doctors, lawyers, and scientists (e.g., researchers). Similarly, administrative, executive, managerial, and professional occupations are primarily made up of affluent individuals (Heath, 1994). Interestingly, past research highlights that one-third of affluent households consists of self-employed executives (Heath, 1994). This is not always the case as is seen among the affluent in the entertainment and sports businesses (Heath, 1994), but the majority of the affluent do not attribute their wealth to

work with their hands (i.e., craftsmen or foremen) (Heath, 1994). In fact, recent research reveals that the affluent are not likely to be a part of the labor force (Lee & Marlay, 2007).

Affluent fathers in the work force are challenged with the tasks of balancing work and family life, which results in some fathers having difficulty integrating into family life when returning to the home and sometimes feeling alienated from their family (Luthar & Sexton, 2004). Although affluent mothers tend to leave the workforce to be with their young children, the mothers who remain or return to the workforce face their own set of challenges related to professional obligations and parenting responsibilities (Luthar & Sexton, 2004). An additional stressor is added for women in prestigious occupations that have been traditionally male dominated due to the competition and level of performance involved in their work (Exline & Lobel, 1999).

Affluent social networks. In research related to parenting among affluent families, clinical studies have found that parents, particularly mothers, are not likely to engage in activities with the broader social network (Levine, 2006; Rapp, 1978). Within communities, affluent adults tend to not rely on others for much of anything and forfeit deep connections that can come from mutually dependent social interactions (Luthar, 2003). As Levine (2006) states,

...many affluent women soldier on alone, desperate for connection and terribly tentative about 'making the first move' toward connection, friendship, and, ultimately, intimacy. Many of us, caught in the press of childrearing, marriage, and work, have forgotten how to make friends. While we may give the appearance of having many friends—being busy, working on committees, or having coffee with coworkers and acquaintances—this is not the same as having a good friend, as having a best friend. (p. 213)

Thus, affluent communities can engender isolation and segregation (Dwyer, 2007; Luthar, 2003). Social groups are transient, and that which should provide support actually leaves individuals lacking a healthy social network (Luthar, 2003; Wilson-Doenges, 2000) and , inevitably, encourages individualization (Luthar & Sexton, 2004). The effect of this is exacerbated by affluent families' strong emphasis on privacy (Luthar, 2003; Wilson-Doenges, 2000). For example, parents often will not seek assistance from their social networks when childrearing issues arise (Luthar & Becker, 2002).

Rather than friends and extended family filling houses, households are filled with service workers (Heath, 1994; Rapp, 1978). Affluent families often purchase services that save time on housekeeping, cooking, and childrearing (Crispell, 1994; Heath, 1994). Specific services used include maids, chauffeurs, nannies, nurses, and gardeners (Crispell, 1994; Heath, 1994).

Child characteristics among the affluent. Relatively little is known about characteristics of affluent adolescents. Moreover, it is not known whether or not those characteristics determine or predict the parenting they receive. A small number of empirical studies have investigated the influence of contextual factors on affluent adolescents, with the majority of them examining affluent adolescents' behaviors.

In a series of studies conducted by Luthar and her colleagues, adjustment problems were evident among their upper-SES high school participants (Luthar & Sexton, 2004). Findings suggest that increased parental criticism, limited after-school supervision, limited family dinners, and distance from parents are positively associated with affluent youth's behavior problems (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a; Luthar & Sexton, 2004).

Research also suggests that lack of closeness to mothers and fathers is related to both male and female distress, as well as substance use and delinquency among males (Bogard, 2005;

Luthar & Becker, 2002). Lack of closeness with fathers is negatively related to female adolescents' grades (Luthar & Becker, 2002). The lack of closeness in the parent-adolescent relationship is also potentially exacerbated by income. Data suggest that adolescents' closeness to parents is inversely related to household income (Bogard, 2005; Luthar & Sexton, 2004).

Summary. Although relatively little is known about affluent families, incremental steps have been taken to understand this subpopulation and their family processes (Luthar & Latendresse, 2002). Findings from studies on affluence indicate that not all is well among the affluent. The pressures and stress associated with the responsibilities of affluence are associated with lower overall well-being. Affluent marital relations, a social sources of stress and support, are threatened by high work demands and reduced time together as spouses. This is further complicated by the large amount of affluent families who are headed by dual-earner affluent couples. Although social networks could alleviate some of the stress, affluent social groups actually may increase stress because of the isolation and lack of true support surrounding parents. In place of community support, personal services are used to reduce stress of responsibilities. Finally, affluent youth are negatively affected by their parents' lifestyles. The lack of parental closeness and shared family dinners and the abundance of parental criticism are associated with youth's struggles, specifically in academics and internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Summary of the Review of Literature¹

The determinants of parenting model posits (a) that parents' developmental history indirectly influences parental competence through personal characteristics, (b) that parents' personal characteristics directly influences parental competence, (c) that parents' personal

¹ This section summarizes facts previously referenced. Since all of the facts have been appropriately cited in the above sections, please refer to the above for references.

characteristics indirectly influences parental competence through marital relations, work, and social networks, (d) that parents' marital relations directly influence parental competence, (e) that parents' work directly influences parental competence, (f) that parents' social networks directly influence parental competence, and (g) that child characteristics directly influence parental competence (Belsky, 1984).

Parents' developmental history can influence their parental competence as is seen in studies of childhood experiences. Although Belsky (1984) hypothesized that an indirect relationship existed between developmental history and parental competence, studies incorporating the use of his model have tested the direct relationship as well. As mentioned previously, findings from these studies suggest that developmental history and parenting outcomes are directly related. This influence is exhibited mostly with positive and negative childhood experiences, which are evident in the outcome of positive and negative childrearing practices of parents' own children.

The influence of parents' personal characteristics on parental competence is also evident in parents' personality and overall personal well-being. Neuroticism is the personality trait most widely associated with insensitive and harsher parenting, whereas extroversion is the trait most widely associated with sensitive, responsive parenting (e.g., Belsky, Crnic, & Woodworth, 1995; Belsky et al., 2005; Brody et al., 2002; Kanoy et al., 2003). Additionally, as stated in the review of literature, parents' personal characteristics that are influenced by emotional states, interpersonal and behavioral traits, or psychological attributes (e.g., depression, anxiety, or optimism) also influence parental competence. In general, the review of literature supports Belsky's hypothesis that parental resources are a primary factor in predicting parents' parental competence.

Marital relations are also found to predict levels of parental competence, such as parental sensitivity and involvement. Although research previously cited above supports marital stress, marital conflict, and marital satisfaction as being predictors of parents' ability to rear healthy children, the relationship between parents (e.g., coparenting or partner support) could be a more accurate predictor of parental competence (e.g., Feinberg et al., 2007).

Although Belsky hypothesized that work and social networks would predict parental competence, this review of literature suggests that research findings are inconsistent. These determinants appear to be inconsistent in that sometimes a given determinant predicts parental competence and sometimes it does not. Work determinants that appear to have an influence on parental competence are work hours and maternal employment. Social network determinants that also appear to predict perceived parental competence are neighborhood quality, broader networks, and network size.

As indicated in the literature review, research about child characteristics was also inconsistent, with certain child characteristics having more influence on parenting outcomes. Children's age, sex, emotional intensity, behavioral problems (e.g., temper tantrums), activity level, and sociability predicted parental involvement and parenting stress. Child difficultness, however, does not seem to predict parenting self-efficacy. Less is known about the influence of adolescent characteristics on the determinants of parenting. The characteristics of adolescents that have been examined (e.g., affection and receptivity and openness to parents' socialization) are associated with perceived parenting competence (e.g., ability to discipline, supervise, or empathize with child) (e.g., Bogenschneider et al., 1997).

Because research focusing on the determinants of parenting model has not examined the model based on affluent families, studies with components of the model and proxies of affluence

were reviewed. Since socioeconomic status is the most widely known measure of socioeconomic standing, and has been frequently used in studies of parenting, literature related to SES was also reviewed. Proxies of SES and affluence have also included income, employment, social prestige, wealth, and various measures of household income.

Although proxies of affluence are not hypothesized as a factor in the determinants of parenting model, previous research posits that it does influence family processes as well as parenting outcomes. Its relationship with family processes, though, has primarily been examined among middle- to lower-social and economic samples. Thus, even less is known about affluent parenting, specifically parental competence.

As mentioned above, research indicates that affluent individuals can face considerable threats to personal psychological well-being. Previous research suggests that marital relations, work, and social networks are more likely to be a source of stress than support in affluent parents' lives. This stress can be extended to parenting adolescent children. Findings imply that affluent adolescents face increased risks of depression, substance use, and lower academic achievement, which is partially due to the parenting (or lack thereof) received.

Filling the Gap: A Study of the Multiple Determinants of Affluent Parents' Perceived Parental Competence

Recognizing that there are multiple pathways that influence parents (Belsky, Crnic, & Gable, 1995), previous research has captured the importance of understanding the determinants of parenting that are associated with healthy parenting and has tested the determinants of parenting within families. However, limitations are present among the existing research using this model.

The majority of research reviewed is limited to samples of parents with infants and young children (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). This is partially due to the fact that, with the emergence of this model in the 1980s, parent-infant interactions were the primary dyad of interest (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). As a result, relatively little research testing this model have examined parents of adolescents. Also, several studies have included only mothers as the respondent and have not examined both parents with this model.

Of those that have included parents of adolescents, the full model has not been tested. Research has been inconsistent in the analyses of the full model. Frequently, both developmental history and social networks have been left out of studies. The context of Belsky's model is narrow, so factors commonly included in the Bioecological theory, such as social context and socioeconomic factors, are omitted. In particular, few studies have systematically studied affluence as a contextual influence on parenting. The majority of studies reviewed in this paper have been limited in scope to lower- and middle-SES participants, which, consequently, makes the determinants of parenting for the affluent subpopulation unknown. This gap in understanding is especially unfortunate because of the emerging literature that illuminates the subpopulation of affluence as a potentially high-risk group who are not impervious to life's difficulties (e.g., Grinker, 1978; Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Becker, 2002; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a; Pittman, 1985; Walker, 1982). The effects affluence has on specific parenting outcomes should be a point of future research (Fouad & Brown, 2000; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005b).

The present study will address these gaps. More specifically, it will explore the relationship between perceived parental competence and developmental history, personal well-being, the parenting alliance, work, social networks, and adolescent children's characteristics.

Definitions of the constructs and the measured indicators are presented in Table 1. The model that serves as the framework for the analyses is presented in Figure 2.

Table 1

Major Concepts

Concept	Definition	Indicators
Perceived parental competence	The childrearing style that best enables the “developing person to acquire the capacities required for dealing effectively with the ecological niches that she or he will inhabit during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood” (Belsky et al., 1984, p. 251).	Level of parents’ satisfaction and efficacy related to childrearing.
Developmental history	Experiences during formative years of childhood (that foster healthy developmental growth in one’s personal well-being) (Belsky, 1984, 1990; Belsky et al., 1984).	Score on supportive parenting and harsh parenting scales to measure quality of parenting received from family of origin during childhood.
Personal well-being	An individual’s personal characteristics that contribute to the influence individuals have on their context.	Score on flourishing scale that examines a broad range of well-being, including psychological and overall functioning.

Table 1 Continued

Concept	Definition	Indicators
Parenting alliance	The day-to-day functioning of the coparenting relationship (e.g., encouragement, affirmation, respect for the other parent and value for their involvement).	Scores on the parenting alliance inventory.
Work	The hours spent working for pay each week.	Number of hours worked per week.
Social networks	Perceived relationship with extended family and friends outside the home.	Scores of perceived frequency on a social support scale.
Child characteristics	The behaviors of children between the ages of 11 and 25 regarding their conduct, emotions, peers, and general activity.	Scores on a strengths and difficulties questionnaire (as reported by parents).
Affluence	Individuals at the top of the income and/or wealth/asset ownership (e.g., net worth) distribution within the United States.	A minimum income of \$180,000 (top 5% of annual household income) and/or minimum wealth and asset ownership of \$1,000,000 (the top 5% of wealth/asset ownership) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, 2010b).

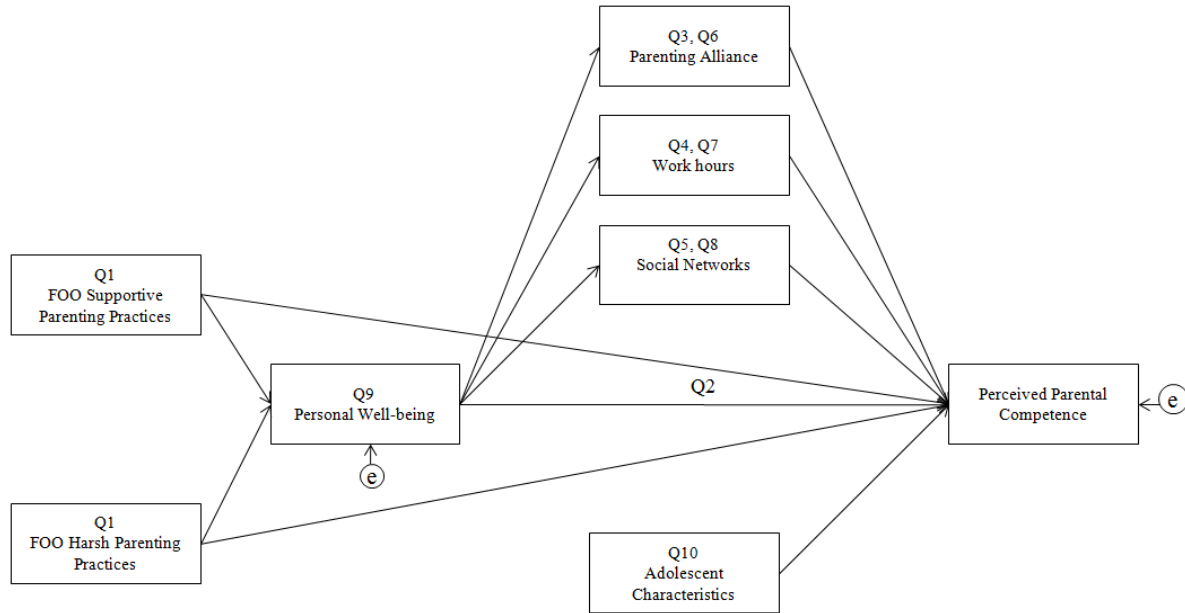


Figure 2. Multiple Determinants of Affluent Parents' Perceived Parental Competence model.

The model presented in Figure 2, adapted from Belsky (1984), proposes (a) that parents' developmental history will directly and indirectly influence perceived parental competence through personal well-being, (b) that parents' personal well-being will directly influence perceived parental competence, (c) that the parenting alliance relationship, parents' work, and parents' social networks will directly influence perceived parental competence, (d) that the parenting alliance relationship, parents' work, and parents' social networks will mediate the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence, and (e) that child characteristics will directly influence perceived parental competence.

Based on Figure 2, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. Do affluent parents' developmental histories predict their perceived parental competence? If so, does affluent parents' personal well-being serve as a mediator to this relationship?
2. Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict perceived parental competence?

3. Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict the parenting alliance?
4. Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict work hours?
5. Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict social networks?
6. Does affluent parents' parenting alliance predict perceived parental competence?
7. Do affluent parents' work hours predict perceived parental competence?
8. Do affluent parents' social networks predict perceived parental competence?
9. If affluent parents' personal well-being predicts perceived parental competence, do affluent parents' parenting alliance, work hours, and social networks serve as mediators to this relationship?
10. Do affluent parents' perceptions of adolescent children's characteristics predict perceived parental competence?

The methods for testing the model and associated research questions are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODS

Based on the areas for future research identified in the review of literature, affluent parents have frequently been neglected in studies related to parenting. As a result, very little is known about affluent parents' perceived parental competence and the factors that determine it. Therefore, this study collected self-report data from affluent parents through an online survey to examine the influence of childhood experiences, personal well-being, co-parenting relations, child characteristics, social networks, and work on parents' perception of their own parenting. In order to examine the determinants of parenting as predictors of affluent parents' perceived parental competence, structural equation modeling was employed. The model to be examined is presented in Figure 2. This chapter will first introduce the participants along with the details of recruitment. Then, the measures that were collected from participants will be discussed.

Participants

The sample included a total of 98 parents; however, five participants did not have a child between the ages of 11 and 25 (the oldest being the focal child). Therefore, 93 participants comprised the final sample for this current study. Fifty-five percent of participants were female ($n=48$). The age range for participants was 33 to 67 years, with a mean of 49.73 years ($SD=7.16$). Educational levels ranged from high school diploma to professional degree, with the average being just above a bachelor's degree ($M=5.37$, $SD=1.28$). The majority of participants had a bachelor's degree (53%, $n=46$). The mean annual household income was between \$225,000 to \$274,999, with participants' responses varying from less than \$175,000 (29%,

$n=25$) to over \$575,000 (11.6%, $n=10$). These income values placed them well above the top fifth percentile of income bracket (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a).

Participants' reported length of marriage ranged from 3 to 47 years. Over half of the participants had been married over 20 years (58.3%, $n=49$), and another 29.8% ($n=25$) had been married from 15 to 19 years. The remaining participants reported the length of their marriage between 3 to 7 years (6.0%, $n=5$) and 10 to 14 years (6.0%, $n=5$). The majority of participants self-identified as Caucasian/white (96.6%, $n=85$). The remaining 3.4% self-identified as Asian American ($n=1$), Native American ($n=1$), and Asian ($n=1$). Participants' number of children ranged from one child to nine children ($M=2.8$, $SD=1.32$). Many participants had two children (42%, $n=37$). Twenty-eight percent ($n=25$) had three children, 15% ($n=13$) had four children, 8% ($n=7$) had one child, and the remainder had over four children ($n=6$). The focal child participants reported on ranged in age from 11 to 25 years with a mean age of 19.75 years ($SD=4.41$). Fifty-three percent of the focal children were males ($n=47$).

Recruitment. Because researchers have suggested that the usual sample size requirements for SEM do not apply if latent constructs are not included in the research model, standard multiple regression sample size requirements are most appropriate (Kenny & Cook, 1999). In assessing the number of participants needed for this study, Green's (1991) rule of thumb for calculating a sample size for a regression analysis was used. The calculation is $N \geq L/f^2$, where L is lambda ($L=15.5$) and f^2 is the desired population effect size. According to this calculation, 103 participants are needed to detect medium effects ($f^2=.15$). In a similar analysis based on a computer package, G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), the estimated power level of .80, the significance level ($\alpha=.05$), and the effect size detectable ($f^2=.15$) are used to derive a sample size. This equation was identical to Green's in that the sample size

estimate was 103 participants. Thus, the actual sample size of 93 was slightly lower than desired.

To be eligible for the study, participants had to have a minimum annual household income of \$180,000 and/or a minimum net worth of \$1,000,000. Participants also had to have a child between the ages of 11 and 25. If parents had more than one child, the oldest child under 25 years old was selected as the focal child whom parents were to report about. Recognizing that researchers have had difficulty obtaining data from affluent subpopulations in the past, a nonprobability sampling method (i.e., “snowball” sampling) was employed in this study. A nonprobability sample is more commonly known as a convenience sample (Babbie, 2004).

Participants were recruited through the client bases of financial planners and wealth advisors, as well as through electronic media outlets, such as e-mails and discussion boards. Initial contact was made with firms to request permission for financial planners to distribute letters and surveys to their clients through emails. The letters presented a description of the study and an invitation for parents to participate by completing the online survey.

Parents who were forwarded information from their advisors or planners were given a detailed description of the study. The letter included a link to the survey website, an invitation to visit the website, and information about participants giving consent to be in the study. Once at the website, parents were presented with a consent letter, instructions on how to be a part of this study, and a link for them to complete the survey.

Information about this research survey and the eligibility criteria was also distributed through electronic media outlets and internet sources, such as e-mails, public listservs, and online discussion boards. Potential participants who viewed the study announcement via electronic

media were given the option to click the internet link, read and agree to the consent questionnaire cover letter, and decide to participate in the survey.

All potential participants were given the opportunity to participate in the administered survey in order to not single out any individuals based on their social or financial standing. Preliminary analysis of the data determined which cases should be included in the full analyses of the data and which should be excluded based on the criteria for affluence and age of the oldest focal child.

Data Collection

Participants followed the web address given in order to first view the consent webpage. The consent webpage informed parents that all information given would be strictly confidential, that their information would be stored under an automated identification number, and that no attribution would be made to them in future publication of results. Parents were also informed that the survey would take approximately 10 to 25 minutes of their time.

Participants then completed the online survey that focused on their perceptions of parenting and their perceptions of events that have occurred in their life. Their current perceptions of parenting were assessed by questions related to their self-esteem as a parent, satisfaction with parenting, and overall parental competence. Their current perceptions of life events focused on their parenting alliance, work, social networks, and characteristics of the focal child (between the ages of 11 and 25).

Measures

Perceived Parental Competence. Perceived parental competence was measured using the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989). This measure is a 16-item, self-report scale (see Appendix A) that examines parenting self-esteem on a 6-point scale

ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Created by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978) to assess new parents’ competence, Johnston and Mash (1989) revised the scale to be used with parents of older children. The Parenting Sense of Competence scale contains a 9-item satisfaction subscale and a 7-item efficacy subscale. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 were reverse scored and a total sum score was created. Sum scores could range from 16 to 96. Higher scores reflected greater perceived parental competence.

Convergent validity has been demonstrated with other samples (Ohan, Leung, & Johnston, 2000). Validity was established using correlations of the Parenting Sense of Competence scale with measures of parents’ reports of childrearing practices and a child behavior checklist. The alpha coefficients reported by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978) were .82 for the satisfaction subscale and .70 for the efficacy subscale. Test-retest correlations ranged from .46 to .82 for both the scales and the total score. Subsequent studies have reported similar alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .88, suggesting that the total scale has adequate internal consistency (Johnston & Mash, 1989; Lovejoy, Verda, & Hays, 1997; Ohan, Leung, & Johnston, 2000). Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .84$.

Developmental history. The Supportive Parenting Scale (Simons, Lorenz, Conger, & Wu, 1992) and the Harsh Parenting Scale (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Wu, 1991) were adapted to measure the parenting quality that was received when participants were children (e.g., from the participants’ family of origin). Each scale is described in the following paragraphs.

Supportive parenting scale. The 9-item, self-report Supportive Parenting Scale examines past communication, approval, and supportive behaviors of participants’ parents on a 5-point scale ranging from “never” to “always” (see Appendix B; Simons et al., 1992). Participants were

asked to give responses based on past interactions with their family of origin. Example items included “How often did you talk with your parent(s) about things that bothered you?” and “How often did your parent(s) talk with you about what was going on in your life?” (Simons, Beamon, Conger, & Chao, 1993, p. 97). Responses from participants regarding supportive parenting from their family of origin were summed together to create a total family of origin supportive parenting score (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). The potential sum scores could range from 9 to 45.

The construct validity of this measure was not previously established, so for this study, three experts established face validity. Internal consistency for this measure has been established in previous research. Coefficient alphas for family of origin fathers were .93 (mothers reports) and .91 (fathers report) (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). Coefficient alphas for family of origin mothers were .92 (mothers reports) and .87 (fathers reports) (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .91$.

Harsh parenting scale. The 4-item, self-report Harsh Parenting Scale was adapted from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979). It examines discipline strategies of participants’ parents on a 5-point scale ranging from “never” to “always” (see Appendix C; Simons et al., 1991). Participants were asked to give responses based on past interactions with their family of origin. Responses from participants regarding harsh parenting from their family of origin were summed together to create a total family of origin harsh parenting score (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). The potential sum scores could range from 4 to 20.

There is evidence for concurrent and content validity based on the original Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979), but construct validity has not been established when using these items to assess harsh parenting; so, for this study three experts established face validity. Internal

consistency for this measure has been established in previous research. For example, coefficient alphas for family of origin fathers were .79 (mothers reports) and .74 (fathers report) (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). Coefficient alphas for family of origin mothers were .75 (mothers reports) and .70 (fathers reports) (Simons, Beamon, et al., 1993). Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .70$.

Personal Well-being. Parents' personal well-being was measured by the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010). This is an 8-item, self-report instrument (see Appendix D) using a 7-point scale ranging from "strong disagreement" to "strong agreement." The scale was chosen because it examines well-being broadly, including psychological well-being and areas related to overall functioning (e.g., positive relationships, meaning in life, and feelings of personal competence). All items were positively phrased, and a sum score was created. Sum scores could range from 8 (strongly disagreeing with all items) to 56 (strongly agreeing with all items).

This measure has correlated highly with other well-being scales (e.g., a measure of life satisfaction, a measure of happiness, a measure of feelings, and measures of optimism, loneliness, and general well-being), suggesting high convergent validity (Diener et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha was reported to be .87 (Diener et al., 2010). Temporal stability was .71, suggesting somewhat moderate inconsistencies over time. Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .93$.

Parenting Alliance. Parents' relations with their spouse were measured by the Parenting Alliance Inventory (PAI; Abidin & Brunner, 1995). This 20-item, self-report instrument examines the relationship between spouses regarding childrearing (see Appendix E) using a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." A strength of this scale is its ability to assess couples' success as parents as a separate construct from their marital success.

Example items included “I feel close to my child’s other parent when I see him/her play with our child” and “My child’s other parent and I communicate well about our child.” Total sum scores were created so that higher scores reflected a stronger alliance between spouses. The potential sum scores could range from 20 to 100.

Construct and concurrent validity has been established with other samples (Abidin & Brunner, 1995) using correlations of the PAI with measures of marital adjustment, parenting stress, and parenting styles. Abidin and Brunner (1995) reported a reliability coefficient of .97, which indicates the scale has high internal consistency. Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .95$.

Work hours. Participants reported their work hours per week and were asked “How many hours do you work per week for pay?” Possible responses were given 1) 10 or less hours, 2) 11 to 20 hours, 3) 21 to 30 hours, 4) 31 to 40 hours, 5) 41 to 50 hours, 6) 51 to 60 hours, 7) 61 or more hours, and 8) I don’t work for pay. Full-time homemaker, student, unemployed, retired, and disabled were all coded as not working for pay.

Social networks. Social networks were measured using an adapted social support scale designed by Orthner and Neenan (1996). This scale is a 6-item, self-report measure (see Appendix F) that examines the perceived frequency with which participants receive support from a relative, friend, or neighbor outside their home using a 5-point scale ranging from “never” to “always.” Total sum scores were created so that higher scores reflected higher perceived levels of social support. Scores could range from 6 to 30.

Since construct validity for the social support scale has not been established, for this study three experts established face validity. Internal consistency for this scale has been reported. For one study, Cronbach’s alpha at time one and time two were .82 and .83,

respectively (Ghazarian & Roche, 2010). Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .85$.

Child characteristics. Children's characteristics were measured using the adapted Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997). This measure is a 20-item scale (see Appendix G) that examines positive and negative psychological attributes of older children, such as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, and peer relationship problems. Parents' reported their child's characteristics on a 5-point scale ranging from "not true" to "certainly true." Example items included "Often loses temper," "Many worries or often seems worried," and "Kind to younger children." Five items were reverse scored so that higher numbers indicated more negative psychological attributes. An overall sum score was created to reflect childrens' psychological attributes, with higher scores signifying a more difficult child. The potential sum scores ranged from 20 to 100.

The concurrent and predictive validity of this measure has been established for other samples (Goodman, 1997). Since its construct validity has not been established, for this study three experts established face validity. Internal consistency for this measure has been established. In a sample of mothers and fathers, a Cronbach's alpha of .82 was reported (Flouri, 2004). Children's reports of the same scale showed similar internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$) (Flouri, 2004). Internal consistency for this sample was calculated at $\alpha = .85$.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of developmental history, personal well-being, parenting alliance, work, social networks, and child characteristics as determinants of perceived parental competence using a sample of affluent parents with older children. This chapter will, first, report the univariate characteristics of the data by describing means, standard deviations, frequencies, variation, and skewness. Next, the bivariate statistics will be examined for the direction and size of the linear relationships between tested variables using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r). Finally, the results from the path analyses will be explored.

Univariate Analyses

The means, standard deviations, skewness coefficients, and kurtosis coefficients for each measure included in the tested model are presented in Table 2. Additionally, the range of missing data for questions within each measure is presented. All composite variables had adequate reliabilities, with the lowest Cronbach's alpha for family of origin harsh parenting ($\alpha = .70$). Because an independent-samples T-test revealed that mothers and fathers did not differ on the study variables, mothers and fathers were analyzed as one group to simplify the presentation. However, gender was included in the model as a control predictor.

As mentioned in the methods, sum scores were created for measures of perceived parental competence and each determinant of parenting: personal resources (i.e., family of origin supportive parenting, family of origin harsh parenting, personal well-being), social sources of

stress and support (i.e., parenting alliance, social networks), and child characteristics. A single... item was used to assess hours worked for pay each week.

Table 2
Univariate Statistics for Variables in the Path Model

Variable Name	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Missing %
Perceived Parental Competence	68.89	10.38	.05	-.56	1.1—2.2%
Family of Origin Parenting					
Supportive Parenting	29.60	6.13	-.26	.42	1.1—3.2%
Harsh Parenting	8.90	2.61	.60	.08	1.1—2.2%
Personal Well-being	50.93	5.23	-1.90	6.67	1.1%
Personal Well-being (transformed)	2621.37	485.26	-1.19	2.28	
Parenting Alliance	86.77	11.18	-1.09	.78	2.2—3.2%
Work	5.05	1.74	.10	-.14	5.4%
Social Network	26.52	3.87	-1.38	2.19	5.4—6.5%
Child Characteristics	34.16	9.00	.61	-.07	6.5—7.5%
Income	3.55	2.91	1.24	.36	7.5%
Education	5.37	1.28	-.21	1.65	6.5%
Gender	1.45	.50	.19	-2.0	5.4%
Child's Age	1991.25	4.41	.14	-1.29	5.4%

Note. See Appendix H for full information about missing data.

After reverse scoring perceived parental competence items, sum scores could range from 16 to 96, with higher scores indicating greater perceived parental competence. The average sum score for parents' perceived parental competence was 68.89 ($SD=10.38$).

The sum scores for family of origin supportive parenting and harsh parenting could range from 9 to 45 and 4 to 20, respectively. Higher scores signified more supportive parents in childhood ($M=29.60$, $SD=6.13$) and harsher parents in childhood ($M=8.90$, $SD=2.61$). Parents'

average sum score for personal well-being was 50.93 ($SD=5.23$), with potential sum scores ranging from 8 to 56.

The sum scores for the parenting alliance could range from 20 to 100, with higher scores reflecting a high alliance between spouses. The average sum score for participants' parenting alliance was 86.77 ($SD=11.18$). This indicates that participants' perceived a relatively high amount of alliance between themselves and the child's other parent.

On average, parents worked 41 to 50 hours per week for pay ($M=5.05$, $SD=1.74$). The majority of parents worked 31 to 50 hours per week for pay (55.7%, $n=49$). Sixteen percent did not work for pay ($n=14$), 12.5% worked for pay 51 to 60 hours per week ($n=11$), 11.5% worked 11 to 30 hours per week ($n=10$), 2.3% worked less than 10 hours per week ($n=2$), and 2.3% worked over 61 hours per week ($n=2$).

The potential sum scores for social networks could range from 6 to 30, with higher scores reflecting higher perceived levels of social support. Parents' average sum score was 26.52 ($SD=3.87$). This indicates that participants' perceived a relatively high amount of support from their social relationships outside the home.

The sum score for the focal child's characteristics, as reported by their parent, could range from 20 to 100, with higher scores indicating a more difficult child. The average sum score was 34.16 ($SD=9.0$). This indicates that most parents did not perceive the focal child to be difficult.

While screening all continuous variables for normality, the distribution of values was examined for skewness and kurtosis. The measure of personal well-being had a higher kurtosis value than deemed acceptable. Because this can produce an underestimate of the variance of a measure and violate the assumption of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), a transformation

was necessary. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) recommend various transformations to improve normality. Based on Tukey's simple family of power transformations, left skewness, as found here, can be corrected by squaring the measure (Emerson & Stoto, 1983). Therefore, the measure of personal well-being was transformed and subsequent use of this measure involves the transformed value.

Bivariate Statistics

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were examined to detect the level of association between variables by looking at the direction and size of the linear relationship. The correlation coefficients for all variables examined in the path analysis are reported in Table 3. The endogenous variable of interest, perceived parental competence, was correlated with the majority of exogenous variables. In addition, several paths previously mentioned in the research questions were supported by the correlation analyses.

Perceived parental competence was positively correlated with the family of origin supportive parenting participants received as children ($r = .21, p < .05$). Thus, participants with more supportive parenting experiences in their childhood reported higher levels of perceived parental competence. Perceived parental competence was also positively correlated with personal well-being ($r = .46, p < .001$) and the parenting alliance ($r = .30, p < .01$), such that greater personal well-being and a higher parenting alliance were associated with higher levels of perceived parental competence. The characteristics of the focal child were also associated with perceived parental competence ($r = -.37, p < .001$); however, it was negatively correlated. Hence, the relationship between perceived parental competence and child characteristics suggests that the more difficult a child is, the less parents perceive themselves as competent in parenting.

Table 3
Correlations for Variables in the Path Model

	Correlations											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Parental Competence	1.00											
2. Supportive Parenting	.21*	1.00										
3. Harsh Parenting	.10	-.56***	1.00									
4. Personal Well-being	.46***	.21*	-.16	1.00								
5. Parenting Alliance	.30**	.25*	-.17	.43***	1.00							
6. Work	-.06	-.21*	.23*	-.11	-.08	1.00						
7. Social Network	.01	.40***	-.35**	.28**	.21*	-.27*	1.00					
8. Child Characteristics	-.37***	-.23*	.09	-.15	-.25*	-.03	-.13	1.00				
9. Income	.00	-.02	-.19	.22*	-.07	.07	-.00	.20	1.00			
10. Education	.05	.32**	-.40***	.24*	.20	-.17	.29**	.01	.23*	1.00		
11. Gender	.11	-.01	.01	.01	.18	.11	-.20	.12	.28**	.08	1.00	
12. Child's Age	-.07	.03	.08	-.20	-.02	.07	-.06	.15	.06	.10	.12	1.00

Note. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients reported. Income, education, gender, and child's age were controls in the tested model.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

As mentioned previously, family of origin supportive parenting was positively correlated with perceived parental competence. Family of origin supportive parenting was also positively correlated with personal well-being, the parenting alliance, and social networks. Participants with more supportive parents reported greater personal well-being ($r = .21, p < .05$), a higher parenting alliance with the child's other parent ($r = .25, p < .05$), and more support from their social networks ($r = .40, p < .001$). In addition, receiving supportive parenting from one's family of origin was negatively correlated with family of origin harsh parenting ($r = -.58, p < .001$), work ($r = -.21, p < .05$), and child characteristics ($r = -.23, p < .05$). Participants with more supportive parents reported lower levels of harsh parenting when they were children, less hours spent working for pay each week, and less difficult children.

As stated above, family of origin harsh parenting was negatively correlated with family of origin supportive parenting. Family of origin harsh parenting was also positively correlated with work ($r = .23, p < .05$), such that participants who reported harsher parenting during their own childhood also reported working more hours for pay each week. Additionally, participants who experienced harsher parenting reported receiving less support from their social networks ($r = -.35, p < .01$).

Correlation coefficients for personal well-being were not only positively associated with perceived parental competence and family of origin supportive parenting but also with the parenting alliance and social networks. Participants reported a higher parenting alliance with their child's other parent when they perceived themselves as having a high personal well-being ($r = .43, p < .001$). Similarly, participants reported high levels of perceived support from their social networks when they viewed themselves as having a high personal well-being ($r = .31, p < .01$).

The parenting alliance was also correlated with child characteristics and social networks, in addition to the previously mentioned perceived parental competence, family of origin supportive parenting, and personal well-being. Parents with higher parenting alliances reported having a less difficult child ($r = -.25, p < .05$). Also, parents with higher parenting alliances reported receiving more support from their social networks ($r = .21, p < .05$).

In addition to being correlated with family of origin supportive parenting, family of origin harsh parenting, personal well-being, and the parenting alliance, social networks were also negatively correlated with the amount of paid work performed ($r = -.27, p < .05$). Increases in perceived support from social networks were associated with decreases in how many hours participants worked for pay each week.

Additionally, correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between all the variables included in the model and the variables used as controls in the path analysis, which included parents' income, education, gender, and age of their oldest (focal) child. Education was positively correlated with family of origin supportive parenting ($r = .32, p < .01$), personal well-being ($r = .24, p < .05$), and social networks ($r = .29, p < .01$). Parents who were highly educated perceived that they had supportive parents in childhood, greater personal well-being, and support from social networks. Conversely, parents who were highly educated received less harsh parenting as a child ($r = -.40, p < .001$). Income was positively correlated with reports of personal well-being ($r = .23, p < .05$), such that parents with higher incomes reported greater personal well-being.

Multivariate Statistics: Path Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) using the Amos statistical program (Arbuckle, 2006a) was used to test the predicted pathways among developmental history, personal well-

being, parenting alliance, work, social networks, child characteristics, and perceived parental competence based on the proposed determinants of parenting model. As the most commonly used method to estimate structural equation models, maximum likelihood estimation was used to obtain parameter estimates and to handle missing data (Allison, 2003). As a missing data technique, full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation is one of the most recommended and best available options to handle missing data (Acock, 2005; Allison, 2003; Schafer & Graham, 2002). Because SEM is sensitive to missing data, FIML estimation was used when testing models with the raw dataset in Amos (Arbuckle, 2006b).

The current study tested the research questions, controlling for parents' income, education, gender, and child's age. These controls were selected based on existing research that suggest parents' income, education, and gender influence their perceptions of themselves specifically regarding their parenting alliance, work, social networks, and parenting outcomes (e.g., Bogenschneider et al., 1997; McBride & Rane, 1998; Jia & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011; Van Egeren & Hawkins, 2004; Volling & Belsky, 1991). The age of the oldest (focal) child was included based on the reports from previous research that parenting outcomes are influenced by the age of their child (e.g., Pardini, 2008; Pleck & Hofferth, 2008; Scarr & McCartney, 1983). Due to the homogenous nature of the sample, ethnicity was not included as a control variable.

To determine the best fitting model, a path analysis including all hypothesized paths and each of the control variables was conducted. To obtain the best fitting model, non-significant paths were trimmed (i.e., fixed to zero) from the final model predicting perceived parental competence (see Figure 3) (Klem, 1995; Lederman & Macho, 2009). Paths for the control variables in the final model (i.e., income, education, gender, and age of focal child) are not shown for ease of interpretation. Significant paths at the $p < .05$ level are signified by bold lines.

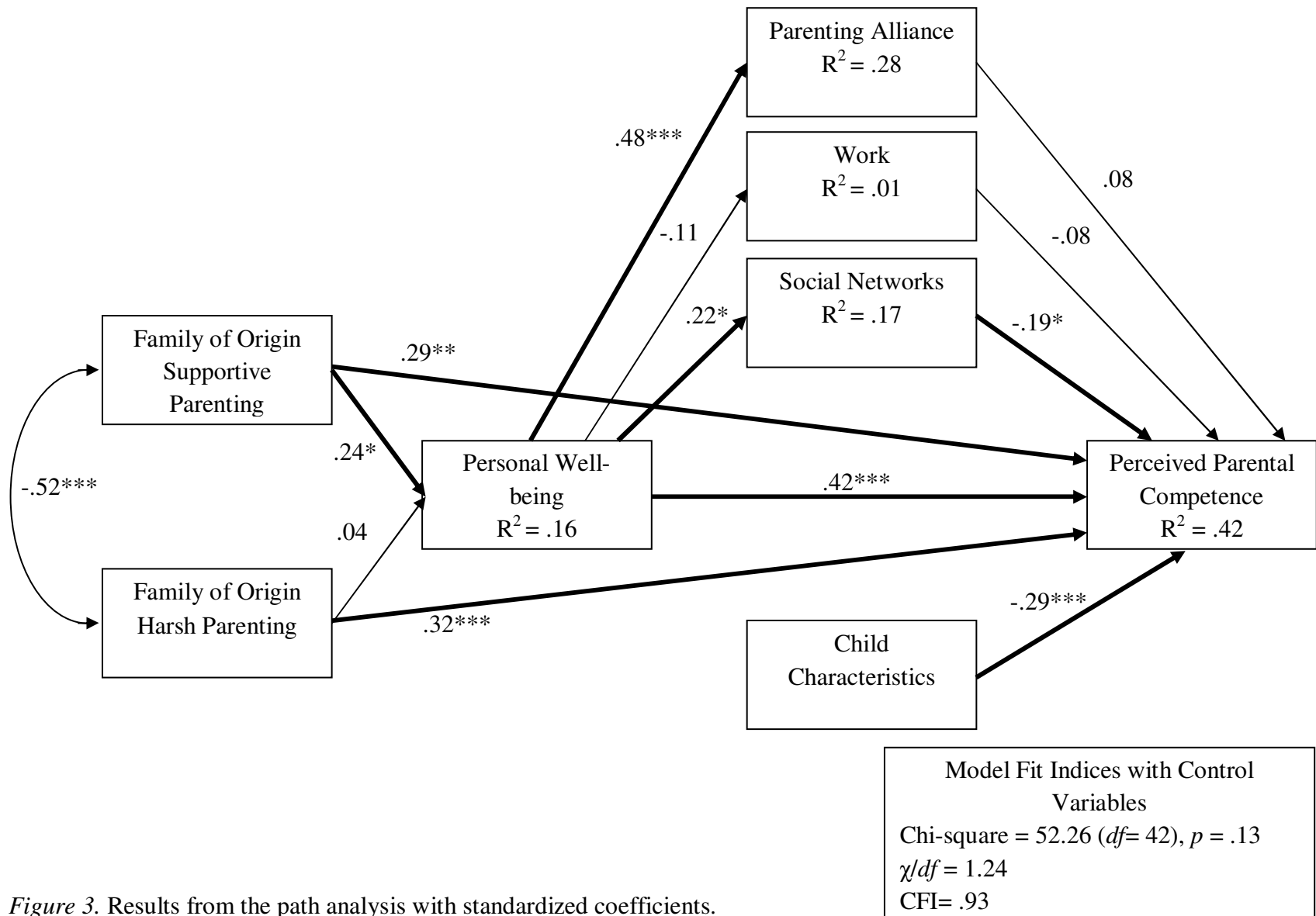


Figure 3. Results from the path analysis with standardized coefficients.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The overall determinants of parenting model fit. Perceived parental competence had the highest squared multiple correlation, .42. The squared multiple correlation for personal well-being was .16. The squared multiple correlations for the three social sources of stress and support ranged widely from .28 for the parenting alliance to .17 for social networks to .01 for work. In relation to the model fit, the chi-square (χ) statistic was 52.26 ($df=42$, $p=.13$), and the χ/df ratio was 1.24. The comparative fit index (CFI) value was .93, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value was .05.

These goodness-of-fit statistics are in line with existing cutoff values hypothesized. For instance, the chi-square goodness of fit statistic divided by degrees of freedom ratio estimates a good model fit when ratios are less than 2.0 (Byrne, 2010; Ullman, 2007). CFI values greater than .95 are considered indicative of a relatively good model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1995), with values greater than .93 indicative of a reasonable fit (Byrne, 1994). According to Browne and Cudeck (1993), RMSEA values less than .05 are indicators of a close model fit, and RMSEA values in between .05 and .08 are indicators of a reasonable fit. For the present study, the fit indices were within the acceptable range. Thus, overall, it appears the proposed model fits the data reasonably well.

Results from the path analysis. Consistent with the correlation analysis, family of origin supportive parenting and family of origin harsh parenting were negatively correlated with each other ($r = -.52$, $p < .001$). There was a statistically significant association between family of origin supportive parenting and perceived parental competence ($\beta = .29$, $p < .01$). Participants who frequently experienced supportive parenting as children reported higher levels of perceived parental competence. There was also an association between family of origin harsh parenting and perceived parental competence ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$). Interestingly, participants who frequently

experienced harsh parenting as children also reported higher levels of perceived parental competence. Related to personal well-being and parents' developmental history, a statistically significant relationship was only found for family of origin supportive parenting and personal well-being ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). Participants reported greater personal well-being when they experienced supportive parenting growing up.

There was also a statistically significant association between well-being and perceived parental competence ($\beta = .42, p < .001$). When parents perceived greater personal well-being, they reported higher levels of perceived parental competence. In addition, when parents reported greater personal well-being, they reported higher parenting alliances ($\beta = .48, p < .001$) and more support from their social networks ($\beta = .22, p < .05$). Personal well-being, however, was not associated with work.

Of the social sources of stress and support, the relationship between social networks and perceived parental competence was statistically significant ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$). The relationship, however, was not in the expected direction. Instead, results indicated that when parents reported more support from their social networks, they reported lower perceived parental competence. Furthermore, neither the parenting alliance nor work was associated with perceived parental competence.

The relationship between parents' reports of their child's characteristics and parents' perceived parental competence was statistically significant ($\beta = -.29, p < .001$). Parents' perceived parental competence was lower when they viewed their child to be more difficult.

Potential mediators in the determinants of parenting model. Path analysis was also conducted to examine if personal well-being mediates the relationship between developmental history and perceived parental competence and to examine if social sources of stress and support

(e.g., parenting alliance, work, and social networks) mediate the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence. In order for mediation to occur, three criteria must be met (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, the exogenous variable (e.g., personal well-being) must account for variation with the endogenous variable (e.g., perceived parental competence). Second, the potential mediators (e.g., the social sources of stress and support) must account for variation in the endogenous variable when the effect of the exogenous variable is held constant. Third, when controlling for the potential mediators, the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variable is no longer significant. If these criteria are met, the magnitude of the indirect effects between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables will be measured by Sobel's (1982) test of indirect effects.

In order to investigate the proposed mediators' effect on the exogenous-endogenous relationships within the model, Sobel's tests were used (Pituch, Whittaker, & Stapleton, 2005; Sobel, 1982). One test was conducted to examine the effects of personal well-being as a mediator between the relationship of developmental history and perceived parental competence. Personal well-being was not a statistically significant mediator of the influence of family of origin supportive parenting on perceived parental competence ($z = 1.88, p = .06$) and was not a statistically significant mediator of the influence of family of origin harsh parenting on perceived parental competence ($z = .38, p = .71$). Sobel's tests were also conducted to examine the effects of social sources of stress and support as mediators between the relationship of personal well-being and perceived parental competence. Neither the parenting alliance ($z = .49, p = .62$), work ($z = -.71, p = .48$), nor social networks ($z = -1.03, p = .30$) were statistically significant mediators of the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence.

Background variables in the determinants of parenting model. Participants' educational attainment was positively associated with family of origin supportive parenting ($\beta = .30, p < .01$) and social networks ($\beta = .25, p < .05$) and negatively associated with family of origin harsh parenting ($\beta = -.39, p < .001$). Consequently, parents with higher education reported receiving more supportive and less harsh parenting during their childhood and more support from their social networks. Gender was positively associated with the parenting alliance ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) and negatively associated with social networks ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$). These relationships suggest that fathers were more likely to perceive a higher parenting alliance than mothers and that fathers were less likely than mothers to view social networks as supportive. Income was positively associated with personal well-being ($\beta = .25, p < .05$) and negatively associated with the parenting alliance ($\beta = -.25, p < .05$). This indicates that participants with higher incomes reported feeling a greater sense of personal well-being, whereas participants with higher incomes reported a lower parenting alliance. Finally, the age of the focal child was negatively associated with personal well-being ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$). Thus, parents with older children reported lower levels of personal well-being.

Summary of Results

In summary, the majority of correlation coefficients were statistically significant, thus supporting several pathways identified in the research questions. Findings partially supported the proposed determinants of affluent parents' perceived parental competence. Within the model, participants' developmental history was related to perceived parental competence, though only partially related to personal well-being in that only family of origin supportiveness was statistically significantly related to personal well-being. As another personal resource, participants' personal well-being was associated with the parenting alliance, social networks, and

perceived parental competence. However, the parenting alliance and work were not associated with perceived parental competence when examining the model. Additionally, the parenting alliance, social networks, and work (i.e., social sources of stress and support) did not mediate the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence. Finally, the third determinant of parenting, child characteristics, was associated with perceived parental competence.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Previous studies indicate that affluent parents have often been overlooked in research, yet recent literature suggests these families face unique circumstances of their own (Gottfried, Gottfried, Bathurst, Guerin, & Parramore, 2003; Kopleqicz et al., 2009; Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a). The aim of the present study was to examine the processes of the determinants of parental competence among a sample of affluent parents to better understand who they are as parents. A path analysis was conducted to test the predicted pathways between the identified determinants of affluent parental competence using structural equation modeling and a convenience sample of affluent parents with a focal child between the ages of 11 and 25.

The following research questions were tested:

- (a) Research question 1: Do affluent parents' developmental histories predict their perceived parental competence? If so, does affluent parents' personal well-being serve as a mediator to this relationship?
- (b) Research question 2: Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict perceived parental competence?
- (c) Research question 3: Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict the parenting alliance?
- (d) Research question 4: Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict work hours?
- (e) Research question 5: Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict social networks?

- (f) Research question 6: Does affluent parents' parenting alliance predict perceived parental competence?
- (g) Research question 7: Do affluent parents' work hours predict perceived parental competence?
- (h) Research question 8: Do affluent parents' social networks predict perceived parental competence?
- (i) Research question 9: If affluent parents' personal well-being predicts perceived parental competence, do affluent parents' parenting alliance, work hours, and social networks serve as mediators to this relationship?
- (j) Research question 10: Do affluent parents' perceptions of adolescent children's characteristics predict perceived parental competence?

Findings from the current study partially support the determinants of parenting model hypothesized by Belsky (1984). Consequently, these findings also support the undergirding premise of the bioecological theory, which states that a reciprocal relationship exists between people and their surrounding contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Although the findings support several pathways in the tested model, the association between some exogenous variables (e.g., family of origin harsh parenting, work, and the parenting alliance) and all endogenous variables (e.g., personal well-being and perceived parental competence) was not statistically significant. An exploration of the results will be discussed further in this chapter. First, the overall determinants of parenting model, and subsequently, each component of the three overarching determinants (i.e., personal resources, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics) will be discussed as they relate to the research questions. Then, strengths and

limitations of the present study will be addressed. Finally, implications for future research and practice will be discussed.

Exploration of Path Analysis Results

As mentioned in the review of literature, the bioecological theory undergirded this present study and framed the examination of the relationship between affluent parents and the contextual factors that shape the dynamic processes influencing perceived parental competence (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). In support of the bioecological theory, the findings from this present study suggest that contexts, including social sources of stress and support, have various levels of influence on affluent parents (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This is consistent with Belsky's hypotheses that the determinants (i.e., personal resources including developmental history and personal well-being, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics) influence parenting, although they are expected to do so differentially (Belsky, 1984; Belsky et al., 1984). Given the purpose of the model, it is not surprising that in the present study, the structural equation model accounted for considerable variance in the outcome of interest—affluent parents' perceived parental competence (42%).

Personal resources in the determinants of affluent parenting model. In the present study, the first research question asked, "Do affluent parents' developmental histories predict their perceived parental competence? If so, does affluent parents' personal well-being serve as a mediator to this relationship?" Although Belsky's (1984) original model indicated a mediated relationship between developmental history and parenting, the findings from the present study support a direct relationship between family of origin supportive parenting and perceived parental competence and a direct relationship between family of origin harsh parenting and

perceived parental competence. The findings also indicate that personal well-being does not mediate the relationship between developmental history and perceived parental competence.

The statistically significant direct relationship between developmental history and parents' perceptions of their role as a parent is consistent with previous research that has studied modifications of the determinants of parenting model (including parental sensitivity, parental competence, and attitudes about parenting) (Lang et al., 2010; Meyers et al., 2002; Pelchat et al., 2003). Findings of a direct relationship between developmental history and parental competence are also consistent with studies that have examined developmental history as a determinant of parenting sensitivity and feelings of stress among samples of non-affluent families (e.g., lower- and middle-class) and parents with younger children (e.g., infants, toddlers, early childhood) (Lang et al., 2010; Pelchat et al., 2003).

As anticipated, parents who were reared in a warm, supportive environment felt greater satisfaction and efficacy in their role as a parent. This is consistent with previous studies that have examined the effects of childhood experiences on parenting, specifically parenting sensitivity (e.g., Pelchat et al., 2003). However, an unexpected result was the finding that parents who grew up in harsher family environments (e.g., parents who yelled, spanked, slapped, hit with a belt, paddle or object, or locked their child out of the house when they did something wrong) also felt greater satisfaction and efficacy in their role as a parent.

Although this finding was not anticipated, research incorporating the determinants of parenting model has also reported similar findings. For example, parents reporting levels of physical abuse during their own childhood have also reported greater parental competence (e.g., they had less negative perceptions of parenting) (Lang et al., 2010). Interestingly, Lang et al.'s (2010) study consisted of lower-middle-class women with infants, suggesting perhaps that the

structure of socio-economic factors and/or the child's life stage (age of the child) are not as important as the relationship processes that are occurring. It should be noted that the same measure for perceived parental competence was also used in Lang et al.'s (2010) study.

Additionally, research supports the concept that individuals are differentially susceptible to their environments (Belsky, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & van Ijzendoorn, 2007). Even though some parents might have experienced harsh parenting during their childhood, not all parents who were exposed to such adverse effects are susceptible to reacting negatively to such parenting. Conversely, it is possible that those who experienced the positive effects of supportive parenting had heightened responsiveness to the beneficial effects of such an (supportive) environment. These interactions have been attributed to individuals' temperament, genetic make-up, or perhaps other unmeasured factors within their environment (Belsky et al., 2007). As mentioned by Teti and Candelaria (2002), the degree of harsh or negative parenting's debilitating influence on children will vary based on the child's age and temperament.

Another consideration is that studies that found negative effects of childhood experiences on parenting outcomes examined parents who were from relatively middle-class families (Meyers et al., 2002). This suggests that the effect of affluence and wealth could differentially influence adults' perceptions of their childhood and also their current perceptions of their own parental competence. Schwartz (2000) suggests that affluent individuals have a heightened sense of autonomy and perceive they have more control over their life perhaps than they do. Although this is beyond the scope of the present study, a direction for future research would be to examine parents from affluent upbringings and how that influences their own parenting as well as to examine parents' sense of autonomy towards life events (e.g., developmental history, personal well-being, social sources, parenting).

Personal well-being and affluent parents' perceived parental competence. Findings from the current study support that affluent parents' personal well-being is associated with perceived parental competence (i.e., "Does affluent parents' personal well-being predict perceived parental competence?"). This finding is in line with Belsky's hypothesis that parents' personal characteristics are a determinant of parental competence and that parents' personal characteristics exert the primary influence over parenting (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). The idea that individuals' characteristics work together to shape individuals' development is also supported by the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

This finding is also consistent with previous studies that have found that personal characteristics (e.g., personality, personal resources, traits, etc.) are associated with parenting (e.g., Downing-Matibag, 2009; Lang et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2009; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). More specifically, studies support that among samples of non-affluent parents, personal characteristics are associated with factors of parental competence related to parenting self-efficacy and satisfaction (e.g., Downing-Matibag, 2009; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Findings from this present study suggest that the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence is no different for affluent parents than for non-affluent parents.

Social sources of stress and support in the determinants of affluent parenting model.

The next set of research questions relates to the influence of personal well-being on participants' social sources of stress and support. Specifically, "Do affluent parents' personal well-being predict: their parenting alliance, their work hours, or their social networks?" Of the social sources of stress and support tested in the present study, only the parenting alliance and social networks were associated with personal well-being.

Personal well-being and social sources of stress and support. Studies have well documented the association of personal well-being and marriage-related variables (e.g., marital quality, satisfaction, success) and have found a positive relationship between marital quality and personal well-being (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007). Less well-adjusted individuals tend to be involved in distressed or dissatisfying marriages (Kim & McKenry, 2002). Research on couples' relationships gives some indication of the link between personal well-being and the coparenting relationship, which includes the examination of the triadic relationship (e.g., mother, father, and child). Although these studies are more closely in line with the current study, relatively little is known about what specifically predicts the coparenting relationship (Burney, 2007).

Studies that have examined the effect of personal characteristics on the parenting alliance, though, have found associations (McHale et al., 2004; Hughes, Gordon, & Gaertner, 2004; Van Egeren, 2003, 2004). For example, one study found that both fathers' and mothers' parenting alliance were predicted by mothers' depression (Hughes et al., 2004), such that the less depressive symptoms exhibited by mothers, the higher the parenting alliance reported by both parents. Another study reported that maternal pessimism and paternal negativity were negatively associated with coparenting cohesion (McHale et al., 2004). When parents in the present study experienced an overall positive state of well-being (in regard to purpose, happiness, and optimism), there was a higher parenting alliance and more support between parents—which is consistent with the literature above. The findings from the present study also contribute to this literature by adding that affluent parents who typically reported high levels of personal well-being also reported a high parenting alliance.

Additionally, the positive relationship between personal well-being and social networks has been established in research (House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988). However, research has

primarily examined the influence of support from social networks on personal well-being and has neglected the examination of personal well-being as a potential predictor of support from social networks. Studies that have examined well-being as a predictor of social networks have found that it positively affects the size of social networks through the expectations of experiences (MacLeod & Conway, 2005) and that over time, optimistic individuals report greater support from their networks (Brissette, Scheier, & Carver, 2002). The findings from the present study are consistent with literature and support that individuals with greater personal well-being also report more support from their social networks.

Interestingly, previous literature has indicated that affluent adults do not often rely on others (Levine, 2006; Luthar, 2003). In fact, affluent communities are seen as causing isolation and segregation (Dwyer, 2007). Yet, it appears that affluent parents with high personal well-being are likely to receive support from their social networks. This seems counter to the belief that affluent parents forfeit the deep connection that comes from mutually dependent social interactions (Luthar, 2003), conversely suggesting that affluent parents receive emotional and instrumental support from relationships outside the home and that high personal well-being is a predictor of the support they perceive to receive.

Social sources of stress and support and affluent parents' perceived parental competence. The next set of research questions relate to the influence of participants' social sources of stress and support on self-reports of their perceived parental competence (i.e., "Do affluent parents' parenting alliance, work hours, and social networks predict their perceived parental competence?" and, "If affluent parents' personal well-being predicts perceived parental competence, do affluent parents' parenting alliance, work hours, and social networks serve as mediators to this relationship?"). Belsky (1984) hypothesized that marital relations were the

primary social source of stress and/or support in parents' lives. Of the social sources of stress and support tested in the present study, social networks were the only source associated with perceived parental competence. Moreover, the findings suggest that social networks are more of a stress than a support to affluent parents' satisfaction and efficacy as parents due to the negative association. Neither parenting alliances nor work hours were associated with perceived parenting competence, suggesting they neither stress nor support affluent parents' satisfaction in their role as parent or their parenting efficacy when considering the full model. Additionally, none of the social sources of stress and support mediated the relationship between affluent parents' personal well-being and perceived parental competence. Perhaps one explanation is that affluent families tend to focus more often on who they are instead of what they do (Rapp, 1978).

The literature related to social networks within the determinants of parenting model has been inconsistent with the association between measures of social networks and measures of parenting. Whereas some research has found a positive association between supportive social networks and sensitive parenting (Bogenschneider et al., 1997; Gharazian & Roche, 2010) and a negative association between social networks and controlling parenting behaviors and parental depression (Lee et al., 2009; Simons et al., 1993), other studies have found no direct associations (Crnic et al., 1983; van Bakel & Riksen-Walraven, 2002).

Findings from the present study indicate that affluent parents who reported less support from their social networks reported higher perceived parental competence. Research not using Belsky's model suggests that regardless of the social network situation, if parents are socially adept, they are likely to be skillful parents (Jennings, Stagg, & Connors, 1991). It is plausible that affluent parents' perceptions of support from social networks were negatively related to perceived parental competence because affluent parents are more skilled socially. Thus, affluent

parents with low social support could report high levels of satisfaction and efficacy towards parenting because they naturally are more adept socially, which could make them feel like they are more skillful parents.

Although literature highlights the benefits of social support on parenting (Cochran & Walker, 2005), the functions and roles of support can vary depending on the social relationships being examined (Belsky, 1984). Belsky (1984) noted that social support can include emotional support, instrumental assistance, and social expectations, yet the expectations one holds regarding this support may be problematic or even conflictual (Belsky, 1984; Cochran & Niego, 2002). For instance, inconsistent expectations, expectations associated with ideological views, or unrealistic expectations (Belsky et al., 1984; Cochran & Niego, 2002) may cause parents to feel burdened to provide reciprocal care.

Moreover, parents' perceptions of their own parenting in light of these expectations could lead to less satisfaction in parenting if they are comparing themselves to what they believe is the standard. Ultimately, these could lead to stress between social networks and parenting rather than support between the relationships. Unfortunately, social expectations were not examined in the current study.

Social sources lack of influence on affluent parents' perceived parental competence.

As mentioned previously, neither the parenting alliance nor work hours were associated with perceived parental competence. Previous literature using Belsky's model to examine work hours has revealed its influence to be inconsistent. Although some research supports its influence on maternal controlling behaviors and maternal engagement and responsiveness (Pleck & Hofferth, 2008; Smith, 2010), other studies have found that work hours did not influence parental

competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). The same is true of studies incorporating measures of employment status. Thus, based on the literature, this relationship was somewhat expected.

The majority of studies that have examined Belsky's (1984) model have continued to use measures of marital relations (e.g., marital quality, satisfaction, etc.) as an assessment of the spousal relationship on parenting (Volling & Belsky, 1991). Yet, Abidin (1992) posits that the parenting alliance is an improved measure of the spousal relationship in relation to rearing a child (Abidin, 1992). The limited studies that have examined the coparenting relationship as a determinant of parenting have found spousal support is positively associated with supportive parenting (Simons et al., 1993), parental functioning (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009), and perceived parenting competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). Research has also found that the support of the father is negatively associated with mothers' aggression (Lee, 2009).

The reality that the relationship between marriage and parenting can vary so greatly is somewhat indicative that associations between coparenting and parenting are not always as expected (Belsky, 2005). Interestingly, the current study found that the association between affluent parents' reports of their parenting alliance with their child's other parent (e.g., their confidence in the other parent, the other parent's parenting attitudes, and support from the other parent) and parents' perceptions of their satisfaction and efficacy in their roles as parents were not statistically significant. It appears as though affluent parents differ in the influence of their parenting alliance and perceived parental competence. Perhaps the absence of a statistically significant relationship is indicative of the one-sided role affluent mothers play in being primarily responsible for managing her children (Luthar & Sexton, 2004; Wolfe & Fodor, 1996). However, instead of the anticipated stress from having that sole responsibility influencing the

coparenting relationship (Wolfe & Fodor, 1996), the findings give no evidence that the parenting alliance is either a stress or support on perceived parental competence.

This finding might also be explained by the possibility that affluent families are more likely to employ childcare providers, such as nannies (Crispell, 1994; Heath, 1994). Because neither the mother nor father are the primary caretakers for the child, coparenting may take on a different quality than when parents personally provide all of the childcare. Thus, these differences could lead to a separation of the coparenting relationship from feelings parents have about their role as parent.

Additionally, studies that have examined the coparenting relationship within the determinants of parenting framework have primarily focused on parenting behaviors, such as sensitive parenting (e.g., Simons et al., 1993), parental functioning (e.g., Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009), and maternal psychological and physical aggression (e.g., Lee, 2009). One study that did include perceived parental competence found that the coparenting relationship positively predicted the parental competence of mothers of sons and of fathers of daughters (Bogenschneider et al., 1997).

Child characteristics in the determinants of affluent parenting model. As the review of literature suggests, it has been unknown how components of affluent adolescents' lives, such as depressive symptoms and anxiety, influence the parenting they receive. Furthermore, affluent parents' reports of an older child's difficulties as a determinant of parenting have been previously unknown. To better understand how adolescent and emerging adult children influence their parents' perceived parental competence, the final research question asked, "Do affluent parents' perceptions of adolescent children's characteristics predict parental competence?" Results from the path analysis suggest that the focal child's emotional, conduct,

and peer problems are negatively associated with affluent parents' satisfaction and efficacy as a parent.

This finding is consistent with literature that has examined the influence of children, particularly younger children, on their parents. For example, parents with difficult and emotionally intense children experienced heightened parenting stress (McBride et al., 2002; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). Child difficultness was also negatively associated with mothers' parenting self-efficacy (Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). This is also supported by literature outside the scope of the determinants of parenting model. For example, research has found that children's antisocial behaviors are associated with parental negativity (Larsson et al., 2008; Pardini et al., 2008). Because the results of the current study are in line with these findings, the relationship between children's influence on parental competence does not appear to change as a result of affluence or the child's age; rather, the relationship is fairly stable across such socio-economic factors and life stages.

Background factors in the determinants of affluent parenting model. As stated previously, individuals' developmental history, personal characteristics, and contexts influence the processes by which parenting is shaped (Belsky, 1984). However, other factors are also known to influence parenting. In the present study, income, education, gender, and the age of the focal child were related to factors within the determinants of parenting model.

The association between affluent parents' income and their personal well-being and parenting alliance was statistically significant. It is not surprising that parents with higher incomes perceived their personal well-being to be greater, especially as this is supported by a body of research beyond the scope of this study (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002). However,

recent research also suggests that affluent families are not necessarily any happier than the general population (Diener, 2000).

Interestingly, affluent parents with a higher income level reported a weaker coparenting relationship with their child's other parent. Previous research suggests that income is negatively associated with both corporal punishment and the closeness of the parent-child relationship (Bogard, 2005; Xu, Tung, & Dunaway, 2000). It is plausible that because higher income is related to a perception of a weaker coparenting relationship, parents with higher incomes are also not as close to their child or perhaps practice harsher parenting—causing difficulties in the relationship with the other parent.

The association between affluent parents' education and family of origin supportive parenting, family of origin harsh parenting, and social networks was statistically significant. Parents' reports of their level of education was positively associated with family of origin supportive parenting and the support they received from social networks, and it was negatively associated with family of origin harsh parenting. Previous research suggests that education has an influence on parents' beliefs about and actions towards childrearing (DeGarmo, Forgatch, & Martinez, 1999; Duncan & Magnuson, 2003; Lee, 2009). However, in the present study, education was not associated with other determinants—perhaps due to the homogenous sample that was relatively highly educated.

As mentioned in the review of literature, studies using the determinants of parenting model have primarily focused on mothers with younger children. In the present study, the association between parents' gender and the parenting alliance and social networks was statistically significant, as well as the association between the age of the focal child and parents' personal well-being. Differences between mothers and fathers suggest that fathers are less likely

to receive social support but more likely to perceive a high level of alliance between themselves and the child's other parent. Differences in the age of the focal child indicate that parents with older children report lower levels of personal well-being. By including both mothers and fathers with older children, it is possible that the expected relationships between the determinants and perceived parental competence were not present. For example, the relationship between the parenting alliance and perceived parental competence might have been absent since fathers' reports were also given and children were older than those whose parents have participated in previous research on this topic.

Strengths and Limitations

This current study offers an important exploration of affluent parents' perceived parental competence. Given the literature suggesting affluent families face difficulties and threats to personal well-being and the findings from this study indicating they are differentially influenced by determinants unlike non-affluent parents (Grinker, 1978; Kopleqicz et al., 2009; Luthar & Becker, 2002; Pittman, 1985), the need for continued research on affluent parents is apparent.

As a step towards understanding a relatively unknown subpopulation, the present study tested Belsky's (1984) determinant of parenting model with a different sample than previous studies employing this model. Additionally, the model was used in conjunction with the bioecological theory, which allowed a synthesis of concepts within the model to be applied to a broader paradigm. This model was then tested through a structural equation model path analysis. The strength of this method lies in simultaneously examining all parameter estimates of the contexts and processes that shape perceived parental competence (Ullman, 2007). However, given that the data were cross-sectional, causal relationships cannot be determined and interpretation of the findings must be made cautiously.

As mentioned previously, participants were primarily Caucasian and the majority of participants held bachelor degrees and had incomes well above the top fifth percentile of income bracket (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). Moreover, various methods were used to recruit participants, including financial planners and wealth advisors. Parents who use financial planners and wealth advisors may differ from the general subpopulation of affluent parents considering their initiative to steward their resources and motivation to seek professional assistance regarding their resources. Consequently, the characteristics of the sample mentioned above could also potentially influence the results, and applying these findings to affluent parents with other characteristics should be cautiously done.

Conversely, a benefit of decreased variability in the sample is that the data and the results contain less “noise” in the explanation of results (Brewer, 2000). The disadvantage of a homogeneous sample, however, is that sampling bias was present, which limits who directly benefits from the findings.

Also, threats to external validity are present. Due to the use of convenience sampling in this study, findings are not representative of all affluent parents and are limited to this subpopulation. Another factor that limited the external validity is the somewhat small sample size. A small sample size can not only affect external validity and generalizability but also the study’s statistical power. Ideally, a larger number of affluent parents would have been sampled. Replication of this study is one way to potentially increase the validity of this study.

Finally, from a methodological viewpoint, the reliability of the family of origin harsh parenting scale was somewhat lower than expected but was not outside an appropriate range. It should be noted, however, that the lower reliability might be an indication of measurement error within the scale and that the scale might account for differences of the two attributes: verbal and

physical harshness. The difference between emotional and physical abuse has been noted in previous research (Lang et al., 2010), so it is possible there are differences between the items that were combined to measure harshness in this scale. If this is the case, the path between harsh parenting in childhood and perceived parental competence might be explained.

Implications

By providing an examination of affluent parents' perceived parental competence and various determinants that influence parents, the present study contributes to the literature on both affluent parents and the determinants of parenting model. The findings from the present study, however, provided only partial support for the determinants of perceived parental competence among a sample of affluent parents. Therefore, the findings also confirm that future research and methodological considerations are warranted on these topics. The following sections will offer both directions for future research and implications for practice.

Future Research. As a direction for future research, first, considerations of the inclusion of more diverse samples will be discussed. Then, the model will be revisited and implications for future research related to the model will be discussed.

Considerations of diverse samples. It is unknown how, or if, the processes highlighted in this study would vary across more diverse samples. As the findings indicate, there are some similarities across affluent and non-affluent parents in regard to how determinants shape their perceived parental competence, though differences are also noted. It is possible, however, that there are more similarities than differences across affluent and non-affluent parents, which previous studies support (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a). Future research should explore this by conducting comparative studies using families from various levels of socio-economic standing.

Specifically, studies should test whether levels of income and net worth create statistically significant differences between groups.

A methodological consideration will need to be addressed by researchers who desire to measure affluence. As mentioned previously, affluence is an ambiguous term and has many possible measurement proxies (Lee & Marlay, 2007). Although the current study included the top 5% of income earners and wealth and asset ownership in the United States, this by no means is the perfect proxy. More accurate indicators of affluence are needed. Lee and Marlay (2007) advocate the use of affluence indicators that consist of both aggregate wealth and income.

Future research is also needed to determine how affluent parents' with young children and adult children are influenced by various determinants. Furthermore, even though the present study specifically focused on parents with adolescents and emerging adults, the inclusion of children within a range of developmental stages could provide a rich understanding of the processes associated with these stages.

Consequently, the inclusion of children with a range of developmental stages could lead to a sample including parents who are at a variety of life stages. The developmental perspective provided by such data could have implications both for a broad understanding of affluent families as well as the processes linked to developmental stages across the lifespan. As noted in the review of literature and as was evident in the findings from the present study, expected paths in the determinant model were not significant in some instances. Although there may be many reasons for this, one testable reason seems to be linked to the developmental stage of the parent and/or child. Additionally, including couple data from both mothers and fathers could help account for shared variance perhaps otherwise not accounted for in similar studies.

Finally, future research examining more diverse samples of parents would benefit from incorporating child reports and observer reports. Obtaining reports from people other than the parent would help validate findings reported in studies examining and testing the determinants of parenting model. In addition to decreasing spurious findings, this would also help increase internal validity and increase the accuracy of reports given.

Reconsideration of the model. The present study was grounded in the bioecological theory and tested the determinants of parenting model (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Several contributions to research can be made from the interpretations of the findings. First, although the relationship between the social sources of stress and support were only partially supported by the data, testing the reciprocal relationship between social sources and other factors in the model could fully support the model. This is also what Belsky (1984) hypothesized, but this was not tested in the present study due to the smaller sample size. Second, testing a fully recursive model introduced the possibility that developmental history is perhaps not indirectly associated with perceived parental competence but rather directly associated with it. This should be replicated in other studies to examine the generalizability and validity of this finding. Third, affluent parents might find they are either stressed or supported by social sources other than those hypothesized by Belsky (1984). Qualitative investigations of such matters would provide insight into how to build a model that more accurately represents the reciprocal relationship between contexts and the individual. Finally, the findings only reveal part of the picture. To truly understand the entirety of affluent parenting, other factors must be added to the model, such as parenting behaviors and child outcomes. Each of these will be explored in the following section.

Reciprocal relationships. The bioecological theory hypothesizes that processes function as the primary means through which development occurs (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). It is through the reciprocal interactions between individuals and other people, symbols, and objects that individuals are influenced by their context (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). Although this study provided some insight into the processes that occur for affluent parents, it did not test the bidirectional relationship of the person and context (e.g., personal well-being and social sources of stress and support).

Future research should aim to study the reciprocal relationship within the determinants of parenting model. This would include examining if personal well-being predicts the parenting alliance, social networks, and work; if the parenting alliance, social networks, and work mediate the relationship between personal well-being and perceived parental competence; if the parenting alliance, social networks, and work predict personal well-being; and if personal well-being mediates the relationship between the parenting alliance, social networks, work, and perceived parental competence (Belsky, 1984). It could be that once these paths are accounted for, a better fitting model is found—though research is needed to confirm this.

Developmental history. Although Belsky (1984) hypothesized that parents' developmental history would indirectly affect their parental competence through personal well-being, little is known about the influence of developmental history because the majority of studies using his model have not examined it. The findings in the present study suggest there is a direct relationship between developmental history and perceived parental competence. This is supported by studies that have incorporated developmental history into the model and consequently found the two are directly related (Lang et al., 2010; Pelchat et al., 2003).

Even though the direction between family of origin harsh parenting and perceived parental competence was unexpected, it does not make the finding any less important. As mentioned previously, due to the lower reliability of the family of origin harsh parenting scale, this scale might have been accounting for two separate attributes: physical harshness and verbal harshness. Future studies may consider addressing physical and verbal harshness separately.

Another consideration is that family of origin harsh parenting is not an adequate measure to capture retrospectively what parents experienced during their own childhood. For example, when asked if participants had parents who lost their temper and yelled at them, participants could easily interpret yelling as simply using raised voices, which might not be a negative interaction to some parents. Thus, in some families, it might not have been a harsh practice within their family of origin to be yelled at.

Concerning other explanations, it is possible that the two measures of developmental history (and the simultaneous assessment of mothers and fathers) simply do not provide ample information to determine the effect of negative home environments in childhood. Examining parenting behaviors might have revealed a clearer picture of the relationship between developmental history and parenting. Studies that have examined negative childrearing practices have found a correlation between perceptions of parents' own childhood difficulties and interactions with their own children (e.g., Lang et al., 2010; Meyers et al., 2002). For instance, parents who reported being abused during their own childhood also reported increased dysfunctional interaction with their own children (Meyers et al., 2002).

Also, it should be noted that some studies included measures of overall childhood abuse and maltreatment and were not exclusively focused on the family of origin (Lang et al., 2010). Perhaps examining the broader context of potential maltreatment would provide future research

clarity about the relationship between developmental history (and any extreme childhood experiences that might have taken place) and parenting.

Essentially, much remains to be known about the effect of developmental history in the determinants of parenting model. In order to more fully understand the processes of parenting in light of parents' developmental history, future research should incorporate parents' reports of their childhood in the examination of their perceptions of parenting. Additionally, studies using Belsky's determinants of parenting model should consider testing the direct paths from all exogenous variables to the primary exogenous variable, including both the direct and indirect effects of developmental history on the parenting outcome. By replicating this study, the influence of childhood experiences can be understood more fully.

Considerations of social sources within the model. As stated above, the social sources of stress and support tested in Belsky's (1984) model might not be the social sources that affluent parents associate with either stress on or support of perceived parental competence. This is somewhat suggested when considering the results from the tested path model because only social networks predicted perceived parental competence. Perhaps there are other factors in affluent parents' lives that should be taken into consideration. Research directed towards qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, etc.) could provide rich insight into contextual factors perhaps not otherwise considered. Qualitative data could then be used to inform the construction of a model to represent determinants of affluent parents' perceptions of parenting. Another consideration is that although this is the best fitting model for affluent parents, the measures could be improved for future studies.

The influence of work hours was inconsistent across studies using Belsky's model. Although work has been found to influence parenting in families with younger children, less

influence was expected with parents rearing older children, such as adolescents and emerging adults. The findings in the present study support this.

However, the bioecological theory posits that a system of forces work together to influence the parent (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Future research measuring more aspects that capture the element and influence of work in a parent's life may provide more precise research findings. This is supported by literature outside the determinants of parenting model, which suggests that employment influences parenting of adolescents (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Gennetian, Duncan, Knox, Vargas, Clark-Kauffman, & London, 2004). For example, research has found that not only are hours of work associated with positive attitudes and practices in parenting, but flexible work schedules and favorable work conditions are positively associated with parents who are more positive in their parenting (e.g., they are more satisfied as parents) (Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 2002). Thus, it seems that much more is occurring within the context of work than simply hours spent working for pay each week and that this should be addressed in future studies.

Another future direction for research is determining the nature of the parenting alliance's influence on perceived parental competence. Future research could potentially control the effect of marital status on the relationship between the parenting alliance and parental competence. The influence of single, married, divorced, or remarried parents on the relationship between parenting alliance and parental competence could be a direction for future research. Unfortunately, this was not an option in the present study.

Additionally, examining gender effects could potentially reveal more behind what is occurring in parents' coparenting relationship. Studies that have examined the gender of parents within the determinants of parenting model have found gender differences between mothers and

fathers (Gable et al., 1992). For example, one study found fathers are more susceptible than mothers to the influence of the marital quality (Gable et al., 1992). Future research should incorporate this in the examination of the parenting alliance.

A final consideration, as mentioned previously, is that the social network measure used did not fully capture all that support from a social network could entail, especially among affluent families. Measuring total networks, which consist of the interconnectedness of relationships between members of a society, is desirable but is often not a feasible task (Cochran & Niego, 2002). However, creating more accurate proxies for total networks could provide researchers with a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between networks and parenting, including factors related to expectations or beliefs about personal social networks. Additionally, research examining the characteristics that make up networks could provide insight into their influence on parents. For example, research including network size, diversity of roles, sex and age, life stage, and degrees of closeness could provide a better picture of total networks (Cochran & Niego, 2002).

Gaining a clearer picture of the range and structure of social networks in individuals' lives will provide a better understanding of how support influences parenting and the source from which influential support comes (Belsky, 1984). By building on the existing research on social networks with the inclusion of affluent families and the use of a range of proxies, we can better understand the influence of social networks as a determinant of affluent parenting.

Considerations of a broader model. The model hypothesized by Belsky (1984) was comprised of the elements included in the present study, but an additional component he hypothesized was child development. This was the final endogenous variable he included in his model, with paths from parenting and child characteristics to child development. Because of the

exploratory nature of the present study, the primary purpose was to better understand how affluent parents' perceptions of parenting are influenced by specific determinants. Now that a step in that direction has been made, future research can build on the present study by adding elements of child development to the model.

Additionally, several recent studies have tested the model using parenting behaviors or practices instead of parents' perceptions of their role as a parent. For example, research has found that parents' personal characteristics are associated with child management, responsiveness and sensitivity in parenting, and harsh parenting (Taylor et al., 2010; Verhoeven et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2009). Research also supports that parents' personal characteristics are associated with perceptions of parenting (Downing-Matibag, 2009; Sevigny & Loutzenhiser, 2009). However, the link between parenting behaviors and perceived parental competence seems not to have been tested in studies using the determinants of parenting model.

Future directions for research could include examining both perceived parental competence and parenting behaviors. Studies could build on this research by testing the association between the determinants of parenting (e.g., developmental history, personal characteristics, social sources of stress and support, and child characteristics) and parental competence and parenting behaviors. It is assumed that determinants would predict parental competence as well as parenting behaviors, parental competence would predict parenting behaviors, and the relationship between determinants and parenting behaviors would be mediated by parental competence. However, future research confirming this is needed.

Practice. As mentioned previously, little is known about the determinants of affluent parenting, specifically because research that has focused on affluent families has primarily made the outcome of the child an area of investigation (Gottfried et al., 2003) and has neglected the

examination of those primarily responsible for children's development—parents (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a). Therefore, the findings from the current study can be drawn upon to better understand practice related to affluent parents.

Understanding the multiple contexts associated with parents' satisfaction in their role as parent to adolescent and emerging adult children has several benefits. As Downing-Matibag (2009) points out, parents' feelings associated with their role of parenting naturally will affect their quality of life, specifically related to their personal well-being. Understanding parents' perception of this role and the factors that influence their perceptions provides practitioners with a foundation from which to supply resources and even support to those parents whose parental competence is low—thus, influencing lower personal well-being.

Another benefit of understanding the factors contributing to affluent parents' perceived parental competence lies in the connection between competence and behaviors. Research suggests that parents who perceive themselves as competent practice optimum parenting and have children who are more likely to report greater academic and psychosocial competence (Bogenschneider et al., 1997). And given more research, resource providers and practitioners could make information from similar studies available to parents and use the information as intervention methods for parents who have unusually low levels of satisfaction and/or efficacy in their role as parents.

Parental competence is important, and according to the findings in the present study, family of origin supportive parenting, family of origin harsh parenting, personal well-being, social networks, and child characteristics could influence perceived parental competence. Although family of origin situations are somewhat difficult to retrospectively assist with, parents who learn to take the positive elements from their childhood experiences and leave behind the

negative could begin to model for their own children positive, supportive parenting and low harshness. Thus, the following generation would be able to take into their parenting experience positive childhood experiences that could positively influence their own perceived parental competence.

Personal well-being seems to play a pivotal role in influencing perceived parental competence. Perhaps programs, intervention methods, parenting coaches, and consulting programs could be made available to parents and easily accessible for those who are interested in gaining a better understanding of themselves as individuals and their role as parents.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to test whether Belsky's (1984) determinants of parenting model applies to affluent parents of adolescent and young adult children. Based on path analysis, the results only partially support the model. This study does, however, contribute to filling the existing gap in the affluent parenting literature. Specifically, findings suggest that the effect of family of origin supportive parenting, personal well-being, and child characteristics on perceived parental competence is no different for affluent parents than for non-affluent parents. On the other hand, the effect of social networks and family of origin harsh parenting to on perceived parental competence is such that differences might exist between affluent and non-affluent parents.

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APPENDIX A

Adapted Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989)

Please answer all the questions using the following scale. Place your answer in the space to the left of each question.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6

- _____ 1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.
- _____ 2. I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my children.
- _____ 3. I would make a fine model for a new parent to follow in order to learn what she/he would need to know to be a good parent.
- _____ 4. Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.
- _____ 5. If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.
- _____ 6. A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one.
- _____ 7. Considering how long I've been a parent, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.
- _____ 8. I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent to my child.
- _____ 9. Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her present age.
- _____ 10. I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.
- _____ 11. My parents were better prepared to be a better parent than I am.

- _____ 12. Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.
- _____ 13. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.
- _____ 14. My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent.
- _____ 15. If being a parent of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.
- _____ 16. Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.

APPENDIX B

Adapted Family of Origin Supportive Parenting Scale (Simons, Lorenz, Conger, & Wu, 1992)

Never	Almost Never	About Half of the Time	Almost Always	Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. How often did you talk with your parent(s) about what was going on in your life?
2. How often did you talk to your parent(s) about things that bother you?
3. How often were you asked what you thought before your parent(s) made decisions that affected your?
4. When you did something your parent(s) liked or approved of, how often did your parent(s) let you know she/he was pleased about it?
5. When your parent(s) and you had a problem, how often could the two of you figure out how to deal with it?
6. Your parent(s) really trusted you.
7. How often did your parent(s) ask you what you thought before deciding on family matters that involved you?
8. How often did your parent(s) give reasons to you for her/his decisions?
9. Your parent(s) experienced strong feelings of love for you.

APPENDIX C

Adapted Family of Origin Harsh Parenting Scale (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Wu, 1991)

Never		About Half of the Time		Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) lose her temper and yell at you?
2. When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) spank or slap you?
3. When punishing you, did your parent(s) ever hit you with a belt, paddle, or something else?
4. When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) tell you to get out or lock you out of the house?

APPENDIX D

Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010)

Below are eight statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1–7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement.

7. Strongly agree
6. Agree
5. Slightly agree
4. Mixed or neither agree nor disagree
3. Slightly disagree
2. Disagree
1. Strongly disagree

I lead a purposeful and meaningful life

My social relationships are supportive and rewarding

I am engaged and interested in my daily activities

I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others

I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me

I am a good person and live a good life

I am optimistic about my future

People respect me

APPENDIX E

Parenting Alliance Inventory (Abidin & Brunner, 1995)

Directions: The question listed below concern what happens between you and your child's other parent, or the other adult most involved in the care of your child. While you may not find an answer which exactly describes what you think, please circle the answer that comes closest to what you think.

YOUR FIRST REACTION SHOULD BE YOUR ANSWER.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Example: My child's other parent and I go to the movies. (If you sometimes go to the movies, you would circle "4".)

1. My child's other parent enjoys being alone with our child
2. During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be a good parent.
3. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.
4. My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child.
5. My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child.
6. Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to.
7. My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child.

8. My child's other parent and I agree on what our child should and should not be permitted to do.
9. I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him/her play with our child.
10. My child's other parent knows how to handle children well.
11. My child's other parent and I are a good team.
12. My child's other parent believes I am a good parent.
13. I believe my child's other parent is a good parent.
14. My child's other parent makes my job of being a parent easier.
15. My child's other parent sees our child in the same way I do.
16. My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way.
17. If our child needs to be punished, my child's other parent and I usually agree on the type of punishment.
18. I feel good about my child's other parent's judgment about what is right for our child.
19. My child's other parent tells me I am a good parent.
20. My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child.

APPENDIX F

Adapted Perceived Social Network Support Scale (Orthner & Neenan, 1996)

Please indicate the frequency with which there is a friend, neighbor, or relative outside your home who would:

Never		Sometimes		Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. Listen when you need to talk.
2. Go with you to do something enjoyable.
3. Help with daily chores if you are sick.
4. Take care of your children in an emergency.
5. Lend household tools or equipment.
6. Provide transportation when needed.

APPENDIX G

Adapted Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997)

For each item, please mark the box for Not True, Somewhat True or Certainly True. It would help us if you answered all items as best you can even if you are not absolutely certain. Please give your answers on the basis of this young person's behavior over the last six months or this school year.

Age of Oldest Son/Daughter.....

Male or Female.....

	Not True		Somewhat True		Certainly True
Considerate of other people's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares readily with other youth, for example books, games, food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often loses temper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would rather be alone than with other youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally well behaved, usually does what adults request	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Many worries or often seems worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has at least one good friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often fights with other youth or bullies them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often unhappy, depressed or tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generally liked by other youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nervous in new situations, easily loses confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kind to younger children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often lies or cheats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picked on or bullied by other youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Often offers to help others (parents, teachers, children)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thinks things out before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gets along better with adults than with other youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Many fears, easily scared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Good attention span, sees work through to the end

Signature

Date

Parent / Teacher / Other (Please specify):

Thank you very much for your help

APPENDIX H

Missing Data for Questions in Each Measure

	Missing <i>n</i>	Missing <i>%</i>
Parenting Sense of Competence Scale		
The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.	2	2.2
I meet my own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my children		
I would make a fine model for a new parent to follow in order to learn what she/he would need to know to be a good parent.		
Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.		
If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.	1	1.1
A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you're doing a good job or a bad one.		
Considering how long I've been a parent, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.	1	1.1
I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent to my child.		
Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his/her present age.		

I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I'm supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.	1	1.1
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

My mother/father was better prepared to be a good mother/father than I am.

Sometimes I feel like I'm not getting anything done.

I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.

My talents and interests are in other areas, not in being a parent.

If being a parent of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.

Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.

Family of Origin Supportive Parenting Scale

Your parent(s) experienced strong feelings of love for you.	2	2.2
-------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

Your parent(s) really trusted you.	3	3.2
------------------------------------	---	-----

How often did you talk with your parent(s) about what was going on in your life?	1	1.1
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

How often did you talk to your parent(s) about things that bothered you?	2	2.2
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

How often were you asked what you thought before your parent(s) made decisions that affected you?	2	2.2
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

When you did something your parent(s) liked or approved of, how often did your parent(s) let you know she/he was pleased about it?	1	1.1
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

When your parent(s) and you had a problem, how often could the two of you figure out how to deal with it?	1	1.1
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

How often did your parent(s) ask you what you thought before deciding on family matters that involved you?	3	3.2
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

How often did your parent(s) give reasons to you for her/his decisions?	3	3.2
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

Family of Origin Harsh Parenting Scale

When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) lose her/his temper and yell at you?	2	2.2
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) spank or slap you?	1	1.1
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

When punishing you, did your parent(s) ever hit you with a belt, paddle, or something else?	1	1.1
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

When you did something wrong, how often did your parent(s) tell you to get out or lock you out of the house?	1	1.1
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

Flourishing Scale

I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	1	1.1
------------------------------------------	---	-----

My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.	1	1.1
-------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	1	1.1
-----------------------------------------------------	---	-----

I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	1	1.1
------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.	1	1.1
------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	-----

I am a good person and live a good life.	1	1.1
------------------------------------------	---	-----

I am optimistic about my future.	1	1.1
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People respect me.	1	1.1
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Parenting Alliance Inventory

During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be a good parent.	2	2.2
My child's other parent enjoys being alone with our child.	2	2.2
When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.	3	3.2
My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child.	2	2.2
My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child.	2	2.2
My child's other parent believes I am a good parent	2	2.2
Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to.	2	2.2
My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child.	2	2.2
I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him/her play with our child.	2	2.2
My child's other parent and I agree on what our child should and should not be permitted to do.	2	2.2
I believe my child's other parent is a good parent.	2	2.2
My child's other parent knows how to handle children well.	2	2.2
If our child needs to be punished, my child's other parent and I usually agree on the type of punishment.	2	2.2
My child's other parent and I are a good team.	2	2.2
I feel good about my child's other parent's judgment about what is right for our child.	2	2.2
My child's other parent makes my job of being a parent easier.	2	2.2
My child's other parent sees our child in the same way I do.	2	2.2
My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child.	2	2.2

My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way.	2	2.2
My child's other parent tells me I am a good parent.	2	2.2
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire		
Restless, overactive, cannot stay still for long	6	6.5
Often complains of headaches, stomach-aches or sickness	6	6.5
Often loses temper	6	6.5
Would rather be alone than with other youth	6	6.5
Generally well behaved, usually does what adults request	6	6.5
Many worries or often seems worried	6	6.5
Constantly fidgeting or squirming	6	6.5
Has at least one good friend	7	7.5
Often fights with other youth or bullies them	6	6.5
Often unhappy, depressed or tearful	6	6.5
Generally liked by others	7	7.5
Easily distracted, concentration wanders	6	6.5
Nervous in new situations, easily loses confidence	6	6.5
Often lies or cheats	6	6.5
Picked on or bullied by other youth	6	6.5
Thinks things out before acting	6	6.5
Steals from home, school or elsewhere	7	7.5
Gets along better with adults than with other youth	6	6.5

Many fears, easily scared	6	6.5
Good attention span, sees work through to the end	7	7.5
Work Hours		
Thinking of how many hours you typically work each week for pay, please select the hours that best describe how much you work:	5	5.4
Perceived Social Network Support		
Listen when you need to talk.	5	5.4
Go with you to do something enjoyable	5	5.4
Help with daily chores if you are sick.	6	6.5
Take care of your children in an emergency.	5	5.4
Lend household tools or equipment.	5	5.4
Provide transportation when needed.	5	5.4
Demographics		
Gender	5	5.4
Consider the income from persons who reside in the same house as you. Which income category best describes the total annual household income (combined total income from work, investments, trusts, etc) before taxes in 2010?	7	7.5
What is the highest educational degree you have attained:	6	6.5
What year was this child born?	5	5.4
