SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY AND CHILD ACADEMIC ANXIETY

by

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(Under the Direction of David Wright)

ABSTRACT

This research assesses the level and manner of parental influence on childhood academic anxiety. A total of fifty-four parent-teacher groups participated at a private Catholic elementary school in Georgia. Parents completed parent-report surveys measuring demographic information, parent involvement, parent instruction, parent work anxiety, and parenting style. Teachers completed the school anxiety scale. Results of the study support research of the trends related to anxiety content and the influence that parents have regarding this anxiety and will prove useful to the students themselves, parents, teachers, and school officials.

INDEX WORDS: Academic Anxiety, Parent Influence, Social Learning Theory, Elementary School

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Children today face a great number of stressors. Pressure to excel in many facets of life exists even among very young children. Academically, these pressures are especially prevalent. It is not uncommon for children to be competing for entry even into preschool. As they age this competition only heightens. Although the degree to which children worry about school does vary, it is extremely rare for a student to report being entirely worry-free (Yi Tang & Westwood, 2007). Oftentimes, parents play a strong role in their child's academic careers. In some cases this involvement has been found to be of benefit (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Wood, McLeod, Sigman, Hwang, and Chu, 2003) while in others it has been a burden (McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007; Wood et al, 2003).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to expand on past studies and measure the degree to which elementary school children worry about academics and the role that parents play in relation to this anxiety. More specifically, it is hoped that this study will identify which components of parent socialization practices have the most influence on a child's anxiety levels related to academics.

Significance

As the family is often cited as the first social institution of a child's socialization (Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009) this issue has great significance internally for the entire family as well as externally to peers, teachers, school administrators, etc. who interact with the children

and their families in a school context. Recognizing degrees of anxiety will allow for everyone to be mindful of its influence and can potentially help foster the development of successful stress management techniques. Parents will also learn of the ways in which they can be positive influences to their children's academic careers. Teachers, guidance counselors, etc. will also find this information useful in their work with both children and adults. As heightened levels of academic anxiety cause poor performance as well as issues related to self-esteem, perception of evaluation, defensiveness, etc. this information is especially critical (Hembree, 1988).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In association with conducting this research it is important to review the literature. The current findings regarding important trends related to students' academic anxiety, academic anxiety, and parent influence will all be discussed. Additionally, components of Social Learning Theory will be discussed as the lens guiding this study. Based on this previous research, which will be elaborated on and explained throughout, it is evident that parents play a unique role in a student's academic experiences and ultimately influence his or her levels of anxiety and worry related to school.

Theory

According to components of Bandura's Social Learning Theory, there are multiple ways that children are socialized to worry about their academics. Originally Bandura used this theory to study children's aggression but it has since been used to examine a variety of behaviors and phenomena within human development, psychology, criminology, etc. The theory states that people, especially children, learn behaviors as a result of those that are modeled to them and through the instructions given to them. By observing those around them and navigating the interplay of positive and negative reinforcements they learn how to behave as expected (Bandura & McClelland, 1977).

Applying Social Learning Theory to the development of children's academic anxieties, it can be expected that parents engage in direct instruction and modeling strategies both intentionally and unintentionally in shaping their child's levels of academic anxiety. It is very

important to note that some strategies might be carried out entirely unconsciously as the parents don't even realize what they're doing and how they might be influencing their child.

Academic Anxiety

For the purpose of this paper, academic anxiety will be defined using Otten's (1991) definition which considers academic anxiety to be: "disruptive thought patterns and physiological responses and behaviors that follow form concern about the possibility of an unacceptably poor performance on an academic task." This definition states that academic anxiety can include any apprehension or discomfort that a student may feel about the overall picture of academic evaluation. The terms academic stress and/or worry can also be used. Regardless of the exact terminology being used it is important to remember that anxiety is not always considered a bad thing. As will be explained through the paper some degree of anxiety is important as it reflects a students concern for school and his or her motivation to succeed. When examining the parent influence on academic anxiety both positive and negative outcomes will be mentioned.

Academic Anxiety and Age

Often thought of as an issue predominantly of preadolescence, many studies have found that even young children experience academic anxieties (Gullone, 2000; Miller, 1983; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976; Ollendick & King, 1991; Orton, 1982; Poznanski, 1973). The youngest school-age children are typically found to exhibit the highest levels of anxiety in relation to the separation from their parents, the end of the routine they had at home, and the fear of interacting with strangers (Gullone, 2000; Ollendick & King, 1991; Orton, 1982). Initially, school can be seen as a new and terrifying place. Although the majority of children are able to adjust to this change and feel comfort in getting to know their new schedule, teachers, and

classmates, more inhibited or shy children take longer to adjust and experience this anxiety for longer (Gullone, 2000; Orton, 1982).

As children age, academic anxieties have been found to increase in terms of both scope and intensity. They experience worry related to a greater number of stimuli *and* experience higher levels of worry in relation to those stimuli (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Ferrari, 1986; Gullone, 2000; Miller, 1983). More specifically, children experience several social fears related to school performance, having/making friends, and generally being 'accepted' (Elbedour et al, 1997; Ferrari, 1986; Poznanski, 1973). They report high levels of fear related to failing tests, having to give an oral report, being laughed at, not having friends, not dressing 'correctly', not making the team, etc. (Ferrari, 1986; Gullone & King, 1993; Orton, 1982). These anxieties greatly reflect the increasing pressures placed on children. Academic and social successes are both high priorities according to a majority of parents and to the children themselves. Consequently, it is unsurprising that many children report frequent worry about their academics and the possible consequences of not being 'successful.' Despite the increasing presence of anxiety among younger school-aged children, adolescence has continued to be found the age of the greatest school-related anxiety (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Gullone, 2000; Ollendick & King, 1991; Poznanski, 1973).

Academic Anxiety and Gender

In addition to the evolution of the content and intensity of anxiety throughout development, there are many other trends regarding school-related anxieties that have been found in past studies. Measured trends regarding gender differences related to academic anxiety have been similar to studies examining gender differences concerning more generalized fear (Burnham & Gullone, 1997; Davidson et al, 1989; Derevensky, 1974; Elbedour, 1997; Ferrari,

1986; Gullone, 2000; Maurer, 1965; Miller, 1983; Orton, 1982; Ollendick & King, 1991; Poznanski, 1973; Scherer & Nakamura, 1968). Girls have consistently been found to manifest significantly more school-related anxiety than boys (Hawkes & Furst, 1971; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976; Orton, 1982). Although it is possible that girls are somehow biologically programmed to experience more anxiety than boys, this is likely not the case. It is more probable that girls simply feel more comfortable expressing their anxieties and the levels to which they experience them whereas boys feel more restricted (Miller, 1983; Ollendick & King, 1991). Morris et al (1976) suggests that these differences are somehow due to a greater variability of interests among boys, stating that girls are more "dependent on academic prestige and social recognition" than boys (49).

Although girls tend to report an overall greater number of school-related fears than boys, the stimuli producing them has been found to differ (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Gullone, 2000; Hawkes, 1971; Khan, Ali, & Mufti, 2011; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976). As might be expected, girls face greater pressure to look and act a certain way and therefore experience greater social anxiety related to fitting in and having friends (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Gullone, 2000; Hawkes, 1971; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976). Overall girls report greater fears of being evaluated (Gullone, 2000; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976). In addition to being judged by their peers, they have greater worry of tests and exams, giving oral reports, and receiving report cards. Boys tend to worry more about getting in trouble or being punished by their teachers (Gullone, 2000; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976). As boys also face a greater threat of being physically bullied they also worry more about their safety at school than do girls (Gullone, 2000; Morris, Finkelstein, & Fisher, 1976).

Academic Anxiety and Sociocultural Influences

Racial and socioeconomic differences have also been measured regarding both anxiety content and intensity of anxiety experienced (Hawkes & Furst, 1971; Jeynes, 2003; Orton, 1982). In a study done by Hawkes & Furst (1971) black children with lower socioeconomic statuses were found to express more school-related anxiety than white children from higher socioeconomic situations. These researchers hypothesize that these differences are likely a result of the increased difficulty to excel experienced by poorer, minority students. They worry more about achievement, as they perceive success as a more impossible goal to reach. With limited financial and social resources being directed towards academics they also experience decreased support in achieving success at school. Additionally, other stressors outside of school also play an influence, as these children are likely to be worrying about them as well.

Academic Anxiety and School Structure

Several studies have sought to measure differences between educational structures regarding various elements of the success of a school's students. In some ways the experiences of students at public schools, private schools, or in homeschool situations are very different while in other ways they are identical (Chattin-McNichols, 1992; Jeynes, 2003; Lopata, Wallace, & Finn, 2005; Orton, 1982; Simon & Lovrich, 1996). Some researchers have argued that schools that take more of a Montessori approach, in which the children have greater freedom and self-direction within their education, experience less stress (Lopata, Wallace, & Finn, 2005). However, others argue that the structure of education doesn't matter; if parents, other authority figures, peers, or the students themselves are placing pressure on the students, they experience anxiety (Jeynes, 2003; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007). Schools with greater levels of competition have also been found to increase student achievement but also the anxiety of its students (Chattin-McNichols, 1992; Simon & Lovrich, 1996). Whether competing academically,

socially, or athletically, students seek to excel and worry about the consequences of not reaching this success.

Consequences of Academic Anxiety

Academic anxiety should not be considered an entirely negative trait. Some degree of worry reflects the student's concern about his or her schoolwork and the hope to be successful. In some cases an absence of any anxiety is worse than the presence of anxiety as a student likely has no motivation in school. However, *too* much anxiety can be very harmful as well. Various researchers agree that students can't properly learn in an environment of stress and anxiety (Hembree, 1988; Khan, Ali, & Mufti, 2011; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007; Wood et al, 2003; Yi Tang & Westwood, 2007). Although a severe example, Khan, Ali, and Mufti's study (2011) found that students experiencing enormous anxiety as a result of physical threat were entirely unable to learn, "…school has turned into a terrifying place, where they feel scared all the time and where there are threats linked with all tasks" (390). This is obviously an unusual scenario but the results are still important to note. If a student is experiencing high levels of anxiety at school then he or she cannot properly learn. Uncovering the root of the anxiety and helping to lessen it becomes a crucial task of both teachers and parents. Lessening this anxiety will not only decrease discomfort but also foster an increase in learning capability.

Students with high levels of stress not only suffer psychologically but physically as well. In addition to these psychological consequences, academic stress has been found to cause the somatization of anxiety and other internalizing behaviors in students' such as depression and physical discomfort: headaches, stomachaches, muscular pains, etc. (Masten, Roisman, Long, Burt, Obradović, Riley, Boelcke-Stennes, & Tellegen; 2005; Rask, Elberling, Skovgaard, Thomsen, & Fink, 2012).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is considered an outcome of education and is defined as a child's success in reaching educational goals (Ward, Stoker, & Ward, 1996). Measures of academic achievement often vary but can include the child's letter grades, GPA, results on standardized tests, etc.

Past studies have highlighted a great number of factors that ultimately influence a student's level of academic achievement including parenting style, parental involvement, SES, school district, relationship with peers, etc. (Jeynes, 2003; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007; Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009). Parental involvement was found to be especially important with regards to all school subjects (Jeynes, 2003). When parents are more involved either through homework monitoring, attendance at school events, and/or by expressing interest in the child's school life he or she is more likely to strive to do well in school. However, regardless of the underlying cause for high levels of academic achievement, the students who experience them are also typically those experiencing the highest levels of academic anxiety (Jeynes, 2003; Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009). The students who are feeling either internal or external pressures to excel are unsurprisingly more likely to worry about their performance and the potential failure to achieve goals set (Jeynes, 2003; Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009).

Parental Influence

Parents are frequently cited as the *most* influential agents of socialization throughout childhood (Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009). As mentioned by Kuczynski and Grusec (1997), parents have the first opportunity to influence their child and maintain this influence as a result of long and sustained exposure to the child as well as through intense and meaningful interactions with him or her. Other researchers argue that the parental sphere of influence

typically decreases as the child ages and enters preadolescence and adolescence as he or she has more experiences outside of the home (Harris, 1995). However, even when this influence has declined, it is still present. Certain learned behaviors also persist from childhood even without direct and continued parental influence. In fact, many of the biggest worries and fears of childhood (both academic and non-academic) continue into adulthood (Ferrari, 1986; Gullone, 2000; Hekmat, 1987; Muris & Merckelbach, 2000).

Specifically regarding how parents influence their children to become anxious about school they may utilize a variety of techniques that could potentially be both proactive and reactive. Parents model anxiety by expressing worry about their own work or other tasks they need to accomplish. This expression of concern for success and how they handle potential stress serve as an example for children in how they perceive academic pressures and how to cope with them (Cappa, Begle, Conger, Dumas, and Conger, 2011; Wood et al., 2003). If parents express low levels of stress or show positive reactions to stress then a child is also more likely to have similarly positive reactions (Wood et al., 2003). Conversely, if a parent is frequently very agitated due to stress and does not handle it well, a child is more likely to behave in the same way (Wood et al., 2003).

Additionally, parents play an influence in terms of their direct instruction, levels of involvement, monitoring and how they structure the child's environment. Involvement can take on a variety of forms and can include both the home environment and the school environment itself. Generally, any participation by the parent in the child's school life is considered parent involvement. This participation can include establishing relationships with teachers and the child's peer group, attending school events, monitoring/assisting with homework, and getting involved in understanding school subject material. In most cases involvement was found to be of

benefit to children, especially with regard to academic achievement (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009). However, McLeod, Wood, & Weisz (2007) found that there is a sort of balancing act that parents must do with regards to their level of involvement to avoid the issues of over-involvement ("excessive regulation") as well as the issues of under-involvement ("parental rejection"). In order to avoid issues of emotion regulation and to foster a sense of autonomy parents must learn to continue to be involved in their child's academics without becoming *too* involved.

Similar to involvement, if parents establish specific times a child must complete homework and/or sets clear goals for the grades he or she must be getting in school then a student will experience this pressure. In most cases this sort of parental instruction and monitoring plays a positive role in a child's academic achievement (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007). However, it is important to note that this pressure and the desire to succeed often do not come without the burden of related anxieties (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009). Students often worry about reaching the lofty expectations many parents have for them. Although guidance is important, it is important not to place too much pressure on a student.

Additionally, parenting style and expectations and role beliefs are also important to evaluate. Research has found that authoritative parenting which balances warmth, affection, and the establishment of boundaries results in higher academic achievement as well as fewer externalizing and fewer internalizing problems for children (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Macie & Stolberg, 2003). Parents who are not overly controlling (authoritarian) or borderline neglectful (permissive) have been found to "monitor and impart clear standards for their children. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-

regulated as well as cooperative" (Baumrind, 1991, 62). These parents also tend to serve as better models as their own behaviors (typically) match these same beliefs regarding self-competency and responsibility. Additionally, parents who *expect* to have high levels of involvement and feel confident in their parenting abilities without setting overly strict rules and harsh punishment behave accordingly (Green & Walker, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, & Wilkins, 2005). Parents who do not feel it is within their role as parents to attend school events, monitor homework, etc. are unlikely to engage in these behaviors.

Lastly, but no less importantly, parents also teach their child to worry about school with regards to their reinforcement behaviors. Through the use of both positive and negative reward and punishment parents often attempt (either consciously or unconsciously) to shape their child's academic routines (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Jeynes, 2003; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007). For example, a parent may notice that the child completed his homework early and reward this behavior by taking him out for ice cream. On the other end, a parent might notice that a child has been doing poorly in a class and punish him by limiting the time he's allowed to spend with friends until the grades in that class improve. Regardless of the exact instance, striving to achieve parental expectation and avoiding potential punishments is found to be somewhat to highly anxiety producing (Wood et al., 2003).

Family Characteristics

In addition to the individual characteristics of the parents there are a few structural family characteristics that also influence parents' influence including SES, marital status, race, and employment. Although these have already been mentioned in regards to their influence on child anxiety it is also important to consider their influence on parents.

As discussed earlier, racial and socioeconomic differences have been measured regarding child academic anxiety finding in general that minority children from lower SES families are found to express more school-related anxiety compared to white children from higher SES families (Green & Walker, 2007; Hawkes & Furst, 1971; Jeynes, 2003; McWayne, Hampton, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004; Orton, 1982). Research suggests that these trends are mediated by the parents' behaviors. Parents who are disadvantaged in relation to their SES or race are more likely to experience stress and react more negatively in terms of their mood and behavior. These families are often also likely to have less resources or knowledge to cope with stress in an effective and healthy way. Additionally, these parents perceive achievement and success as a more impossible goal to reach and relay these messages to their children. They are found to be less involved in the child's school life, monitor their behaviors less, and engage in more negative discipline behaviors (Green & Walker, 2007; McWayne et al., 2004). Consequently, these children experience greater levels of stress, especially academically, compared to their less disadvantaged peers.

Employment is also a key factor influencing a parent's instructed and modeled anxiety behaviors. Parents with high-demand and low-control jobs are unsurprisingly more likely to experience greater levels of stress. Consistent with the work-to-family spillover, this stress is often directly transferred to the rest of the family, including children (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Sandberg, Harper, Jeffrey Hill, Miller, Yorgason, & Day, 2013). Similarly, those with more demanding jobs or long work hours are unable to be as involved as parents with less demanding and more flexible hours. Interestingly, Brown and colleagues found that these patterns do differ between mothers and fathers (Brown, McBride, Bost, & Shin, 2011). This is likely in association with parents' role beliefs discussed previously. As mentioned by these researchers, it is possible

that women have higher parental expectations for themselves and thus feel more responsible for caring for their children and maintaining high levels of involvement despite high work demands. Closely related with their levels of involvement, work hours also influence the frequency of other instructed behaviors i.e. messages related to achievement, reinforcement strategies, and monitoring.

Research has also found that marital status has a substantial influence on a parents modeled and instructed anxiety behaviors. Although dependent the timing of major relationship transitions (marriage, cohabitation, divorce, etc.), a parents' relationship status and relationship quality would inevitably impact a child's subsequent anxiety levels, especially academically. Parents in a less stable relationship regardless of its exact structure are more likely to experience stress and are also more likely to invest more time focusing on their role as a partner and less time on their role as a parent (Amato, 2010; Brooks-Gunn, 2011; Carlson, Pilkauskas, McLanahan). Conversely, those in happy and stable relationships are able to invest more time working to be good parents: "good parents make good partners" (Carlson et al, 2011, 329). As found by numerous studies, children of unhappy, unmarried (cohabitating), divorced, or remarried parents tend to fare worse academically (at least for a length of time) and experience greater levels of academic anxiety compared to those in happy and stably intact families (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Jeynes, 2000; Peleg-Popko, & Dar, 2001). These children often observe higher levels of conflict and anxiety being modeled from their parents, experience inconsistent discipline, and also tend to have less day-to-day support from them (Jeynes, 2000; Sturge-Apple, Davies, & Cummings, 2006). In the case of divorce, children also suffer in relation to significant decreases in contact with their nonresidential parent (Amato, 2010; Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Tornello, Emery, Rowen, Potter, Ocker, & Xu, 2013). These children feel more anxious

themselves as they are distracted from their schoolwork and perceive academic achievement as more difficult to attain.

Conclusion

After reviewing the literature, it is evident that parents play an influential role in a child's stress levels related to school. More specifically, four parent characteristics appear most likely to affect children's academic anxiety: parenting style, parent involvement, instruction, and work stress. Although each characteristic has been found to play a role individually, either positively or negatively, there has been no research to determine their influence collectively. This study seeks to elaborate on past research and fill this potential gap.

Research Question

Based upon the literature there is one main questions this study will answer:

Q_1- Can parenting style, involvement, instruction, and work stress be used to predict elementary school student's academic anxiety?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Although there is a great wealth of information regarding the various trends related to children's academic anxiety, as well as studies that mention individual parental influences, there is no one cohesive study that combines these elements. This study helps to bridge the gap between past studies and establish a cohesive portrayal of children's academic anxieties *and* the dimensions of parental influence.

Participants

For this study, elementary aged children (ages 6-12) enrolled in a Georgia elementary school were accepted as participants. One of the child's parents as well as the child's schoolteacher also participated. The final sample consisted of 54 child-parent-teacher groups. 6 participants were removed due to missing information on the parent survey or failure of the teacher to participate. All students were enrolled in a private Catholic elementary school. Data was collected in the spring and reflected behaviors from the entire school year. Demographic frequencies can be seen in Table 1 below.

Fifty-nine percent of participating students were female (n = 32). The age of students ranged from 6-11. The largest percentages of students were in either 2nd grade (25.9%, n = 14) or 4th grade (25.9%, n = 14), with the remaining in 1st (22.2%, n = 12), 3rd (13%, n = 7), or 5th (13%, n = 7). The majority of students were the oldest (first-born) children in their families (46.3%, n = 25). Eighteen were the youngest (33.3%), 6 were in the middle (11.1%), and 5 were only children (9.3%). The large majority of children were White/Caucasian (92.6%, n = 50) with

the remaining reported as Other, specifying ½ White, ½ Chinese (7.4%, *n* = 4). Regarding academic standing, the majority of students were reported as being above-average (66.7%, *n* = 36) with the remaining being average (29.6%, *n* = 16) and below-average (3.7%, *n* = 2).

The average participating parent was female (96.3%, *n* = 52), married (90.7%, *n* = 49), employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed (66.7%, *n* = 36), with a household income of $125,000+ (85.2%, *n* = 46), and has a graduate (48.1%, *n* = 26) or postgraduate degree (51.9%, *n* = 28).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics- Demographic Variables

	Frequency (*n*)	Percentage
Child's Age		
6	1	1.9
7	12	22.2
8	14	25.9
9	5	9.3
10	16	29.6
11	6	11.1
Child's Grade		
1st	12	22.2
2nd	14	25.9
3rd	7	13
4th	14	25.9
5th	7	13
Child's Gender		
Male	22	40.7
Female	32	59.3
Participating Parent		
Mother	52	96.3
Father	2	3.7
Child's Birth Order		
Only Child	5	9.3
Oldest/First Born	25	46.3
Middle	6	11.1
Youngest/Last Born	18	33.3
Child's Race		

Caucasian/White	50	92.6
Other	4	7.4
Parents' Marital Status		
Married	49	90.7
Divorced	5	9.3
Household Combined Income		
$50,000-69,999	3	5.6
$70,000-89,999	1	1.9
$90,000-124,999	4	7.4
$125,000 and above	46	85.2
Employment Status of Parent		
Full-time, part-time, or self-employed	36	66.7
Unemployed	4	7.4
Retired	1	1.9
Fulltime Homemaker	13	24.1
Parent's Education Level		
College Graduate	26	48.1
Postgraduate Degree	28	51.9
Child Academic Standing (parent report)		
Below-Average	2	3.7
Average	16	29.6
Above-Average	36	66.7

Instruments

Several instruments were used in conducting this study. Both teachers and parents completed surveys composed of instruments utilized by past researchers and found to be both valid and reliable measures. Parents provided basic demographic information and completed the Parent Involvement Scale, Instruction Scale, Parenting Style Assessment, and Workplace Stress Scale. Teachers completed the Student Anxiety Scale- Teacher Report (TR) (See Appendix).

Parent Involvement Scale

The Parent Involvement Scale is part of the Parent Involvement Project-Parent Questionnaire (PIP-PQ) (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) and is intended to measure the degree to which parents are involved in their child's academic lives. It is an 11-item questionnaire and asks parents to indicate how often they've engaged in activities since the beginning of the school year on a 6-point scale ranging from 1=never to 6=daily. Sample items include *'...supervises the child's homework, ...helps the child study for tests,* and *...attends PTO meetings.'* Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues evaluated the content validity of the measure employing factor analysis. In evaluating the scale's reliability they used Cronbach's alpha (.84). Their research concludes that the PIP-PQ and each of its subscales are both reliable and valid measures of parental involvement (Walker et al., 2005). Additionally researchers have continued to utilize this scale and further confirm its legitimacy (Rogers et al, 2009).

Instruction Scale

The Instruction Scale is also part of the PIP-PQ detailed above. It includes 11-items and asks parents to indicate how true each statement is for them on a 6-point scale from 1= not at all true to 6 = completely true. One example is *'I teach my child the importance of doing well on school assignments*.' Once again, Hoover-Dempsey and colleagues determined this portion of the PIP-PQ to be both valid and reliable (alpha=.79) (Walker et al., 2005).

Parenting Style Assessment

The Parenting Style Assessment was modeled after Baumrind's typology of authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative parenting styles. This scale includes 20 items and asks parents to indicate how much they agree or disagree with a statement on a 5-point scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Sample statements include *'it is wrong to expect obedience from children* and *time-out is better than spanking.'* A total score is used to determine which parenting

style the parent is most similar to: authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive. As some parents have been found to be strongly associated with one style while others are less so this scale is especially useful. With the total scores ranging from 20-100 parents aren't necessarily identified solely as one of the three styles. Past researchers have not mentioned the validity of this measure. For the purpose of this study the assessment has been found by collaborating experts to have strong face validity and reliability.

Workplace Stress Scale

The final portion of the parent-report survey is the Workplace Stress Scale. This scale was developed in 1998 by the American Institute of Stress to serve as a simple screening measure indicated an overall measure of the degree of work stress experienced. This scale includes 8-items and asks the parent to identify how often they feel a specific way while at work on a 5-point scale from 1= never to 5 = very often. Sample items include *'I feel that my job is negatively affecting my physical or emotional well-being* and *I feel that job pressures interfere with my family or personal life*.' Similar to the parenting style, answering these questions will result in a total score and indicate the level of anxiety the parent themselves experiences, specifically related to their work life (or workload for stay-at-home parents). This will prove useful for this study in measuring the degree of anxiety that parents are modeling for their children. Past researchers have not mentioned the validity of this measure. For the purpose of this study the assessment has been found by collaborating experts to have strong face validity and reliability.

Student Anxiety Scale- Teacher Report

Teachers will also be asked to complete a brief survey for each of the students for whom permission has been granted. This questionnaire is a subscale of the revised School Anxiety

Scale (SAS) which includes 16 items asking teachers to indicate how often the student has experienced each of the items while at school on a 4 point scale from 0=never to 3 = always. Example statements include *'The child is afraid to ask questions in class* and *this child seems very shy*.' Total scores will be calculated to determine whether the child experiences low, moderate, or high anxiety levels. Past researchers have assessed this measure using content validity. A panel of faculty and psychiatric experts were asked to rate the assessment regarding how well each item was simple, clear, and accurately reflected what they intended to measure and confirmed that it was a valid measure. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha (.80).

Procedure

After the school administration each of the teachers accepted the study, the researcher traveled to the school to distribute the study materials. Packets were sent home to parents explaining the study and inviting them to participate (See Appendix). If they chose to participate they signed the consent forms and filled out the parent-report questionnaire. If they chose not to participate they indicated this and returned the blank forms. To reduce the number of parents who didn't return the documents at all, a few reminder notices were also sent home from the school from administrative faculty.

Next, the researcher worked with each of the students' teachers to complete the teacher-report survey (only for those students with parent permission). In order to keep the parent, teacher, and student portions of the study linked appropriately numeric codes were given to each triad. Colored stickers were placed on the top of each document with the correct code. To help organize the forms a different color was used for each grade level. The code sheets listing the

students' names with their numeric code were shredded at the completion of the data collection for the study.

After data analysis, debriefing materials were sent home to the parents further explaining what occurred throughout the study and what will come from their participation. Resources for additional information were also provided. After data analysis parents were also given the aggregate results of the study.

Proposed Analyses

In determining the results of this study, various statistical analyses will be used. First, the univariate characteristics of each of the study's variables will be examined. Next, analysis of the bivariate relationships for all of the variables of interest will be conducted. Finally, the regression analysis will be conducted using a standard regression model.

Univariate Analysis

The univariate statistics of all of the variables will be analyzed. Basic descriptives will be conducted to measure the overall characteristics of the sample. Tables will be created portraying the mean scores and standard deviations of each of the five dependent variables as well the other control variables.

Bivariate Analysis

Correlations will be conducted to measure the association between parenting style, instruction, parent involvement, parent work anxiety, and child academic anxiety. Additionally, t-tests and one-way ANOVA's will also be conducted using each of the categorical variables to compare means and evaluate their relationship with each of the study variables.

Multivariate Analysis

As the final analysis, a standard multiple regression model will be used to measure the strength of parenting style, parent instruction, parent work anxiety, and parent involvement as predictors of child academic anxiety. The equation used for the standard regression model is shown below:

$$(SANXIETY)^1 = A + B_I\,(INVOLVE) + B_T\,(INSTRUCT) + B_S\,(STYLE) + B_W\,(WSTRESS)$$

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The current study of parent impact on students' academic anxiety evaluates four main areas of influence: parenting style, parent involvement, parent instruction, and parent work stress. Using the established scales mentioned in the previous chapter, these four measurements were obtained via parent-report questionnaires. Teachers provided students' anxiety scores via The Student Anxiety Scale. Additionally, both parents and teachers provided an overall ranking of their perception of the students' anxiety level to be used as comparison. This chapter begins by exploring the univariate characteristics of each variable as well as the bivariate correlations, t-tests, and ANOVA. Results of the regression analyses are then reported.

Univariate Analyses

Basic descriptives conducted to determine the overall characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1 in Chapter 3. Univariate information for the target variables is shown in Table 2 below. Total possible scores for parent involvement ranged from 6 (very low involvement) to 66 (very high involvement). The reported scores ranged from 30-65. The mean score of 43.02 indicates moderate to high involvement. Similarly, possible parent instruction scores ranged from 6-66 (very few instructional messages to very many instructional messages). Reported scores ranged from 33-66. The mean score of 49.98 indicates a high prevalence of instructional messages. Possible scores for parenting style ranged from 20-100 (authoritarian parenting to permissive parenting). Reported scores ranged from 48-72. A mean score of 58.35 indicates that on average the majority of parents were found to be authoritative parents leaning

only slightly towards authoritarian vs. permissive. Possible parent work stress scores ranged from 8-40 (no stress to high stress). Reported scores ranged from 8-27. The mean score of 15.19 indicates low to moderate stress. Finally, possible student anxiety scores ranged from 0-40 (no stress to high stress). Actual scores ranged from 0-37. The mean score of 10.93 indicates moderate stress.

Table 2: Univariate Statistics for Target Variables

	Mean	SD
Parent Involvement Total Score	43.02	6.725
Parent Instruction Total Score	49.98	7.244
Parenting Style Total Score	58.35	6.617
Parenting Stress Total Score	15.19	5.010
Student Anxiety Total Score	10.93	8.317

Bivariate Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Parent Involvement	1				
2. Parent Instruction	.508**	1			
3. Parenting Style TS	-071	.237	1		
4. Parent Work Stress TS	-.415**	-.169	-.152	1	
5. Student Anxiety TS	-.035	-.034	-.071	.104	1

Correlations were computed to measure the association between all of the continuous variables. The correlation coefficient matrix can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients of All Continuous Variables
Note: *p < .05 **p < .01

Only two correlations were statistically significant. A positive correlation was found between parent involvement and instruction ($r = .508$, $p < .01$) while a negative correlation was found between involvement and parent work stress ($r = -.415$, $p<.01$). Parents who were more involved with their children were found to give them more instruction and also tended to be those reporting less work stress.

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare mean involvement, instruction, parenting style, parent work stress, and student anxiety scores based on gender, participating parent, race, marital status, and education. The t values can be shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test for Equality of Means

	Involvement	Instruction	Style	P. Work Stress	Student Anxiety
Gender	1.790	1.127	-.321	-.388	-.012
Part. Parent	.216	.890	-1.013	-1.702	-1.054
Race	-.454	-2.486*	-3.730**	.179	-.328
Marital Status	2.332*	.251	-.439	-3.269**	1.111
Education	-1.116	-.768	-2.706**	1.100	-.490

Note: *p < .05 **p < .01

White children were found to receive less instruction (M= 49.32, SD= 7.00, N=50) than non-white children (M=58.25, SD=5.315, N=4), $t(52)=-2.486$, $p<.05$. White children were also found to have parents with more authoritative parenting styles (M=57.50, SD=5.929, N=50) compared to non-white children (M=69.00, SD=6.00, N=4), $t(52)=.3.730$, $p<.01$.

Additionally, married parents were found to be more involved (M=43.67, SD=6.622, N=49) than divorced parents (M=36.60, SD=4.037, N=5), $t(52)=2.332$, $p<.05$. Married parents were also found to report less work stress (M=14.53, SD=4.35, N=49) compared to divorced parents (M=21.60, SD=6.986, N=5).

Finally, parents with college degrees were found to be more authoritative (M=55.96, SD=5.862, N=26) compared to parents with post-graduate degrees (M=60.57, SD=6.596, N=28), $t(52)=-2.706$, $p<.01$.

A paired-samples t-test was also run to compare parents' overall ratings of the student's anxiety to teachers' overall ratings of the student's anxiety. Results of the test found that there is a statistically significant difference between the parent's rating of the students anxiety (M=1.39, SD=.834) and teacher's ratings (M=1.06, SD=.856), $t(53)=2.265$, $p<.05$. Parents tended to rate

their children with higher levels of overall anxiety compared to teachers. Additional ANOVA's run to compare parent and teacher ratings based on the child's age found that there were statistically significant differences in parent ratings based on age $F(5, 48) = 3.030$, $p<.05$. Parents tended to rate older children as experiencing more stress than younger children: age 6 (M= .00 N=1), age 7 (M=1.00, SD = .739, N=12), age 8 (M=1.14, SD= .864, N=14), age 9 (M=1.40, SD=1.140, N=5), age 10 (M=1.87 SD=.619, N=16), and age 11 (M=1.67 SD=.516, N=6). Comparably, there were no statistically significant differences found in teacher ratings based on age $F(5, 48)=.878$, $p=.503$.

Next, one-way ANOVA's were used to compare mean involvement, instruction, style, work stress, and student anxiety scores according to age, grade, birth order, income, employment status, and academic standing. F values can be found in Table 5 below:

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA

	Involvement	Instruction	Style	P. Work Stress	Student Anxiety
Age	1.176	1.149	.353	.683	.866
Grade	.834	1.362	.639	.571	.788
Birth Order	.761	1.351	1.673	.751	1.095
Income	1.857	2.274	1.938	5.112**	.809
Employment	.664	.216	1.117	1.852	.720
Ac. Standing	.017	.522	.582	.491	3.815*

Note: *p < .05 **p < .01

Results of the one-way ANOVA used to test work stress differences among four income groups indicate statistically significant differences across the groups, $F(3, 50)=5.112$, $p<.01$. Parents with incomes $125,000+ were found less stressed (M=14.20, SD=4.251, N=46) compared to those with lower incomes: $90,000-$124,999 (M=20.00, SD=2, N=4), $70,000-$89,000 (M=23.00, N=1), and $50,000-$69,999 (M=21.33, SD=9.815, N=3).

Results of the one-way ANOVA used to test student anxiety scores among three academic standing groups indicate statistically significant differences across the groups, F(2,

51)=3.815, p<.05. Children with parent-reported below-average standing were found to have statistically significant more academic anxiety (M=26.00, SD=15.556, N=2) compared to those in average standing (M=9.87, SD=5.691, N=16) and above-average standing (M=10.56, SD=8.385, N=36).

Multivariate Analysis

A multiple regression model was used to test the strength of parenting style, instruction, parent work anxiety, and parent involvement as predictors of child academic anxiety. Results indicate that the four predictors explained less than 2% of the variance, R^2= .014, F(4,49)=.176, p=.95. None of the variables were found to be statistically significant predictors of child academic anxiety: parent involvement (β=.016, p>.05), parent instruction (β =-.012, p>.05), parenting style (β =-.054, p>.05), and parent work stress (β = .101, p>.05). Likely explanations for these findings are detailed in the next chapter.

Table 6: Regression Model for Child Academic Anxiety

		B	SE B	Beta	t	p
1.	(Constant)	12.200	15.402		.792	.432
	Parent Involvement	.020	.222	.016	.091	.928
	Parent Instruction	-.014	.195	-.012	-.072	.943
	Parenting Style	-.068	.186	-.054	-.366	.716
	Parent Work Stress	.167	.262	.101	.637	.527

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

To evaluate the relationship between parenting and child academic anxiety, a variety of analyses were conducted. Tests were run measuring trends related to demographic information as well as parent involvement, parent instruction, parenting style, and parent work stress. In this chapter, these results and their meanings are explained further. Limitations of the present study as well as recommendations for future studies examining these same variables and characteristics are also discussed.

Summary of Results

This study sought to examine the relationship between parenting style, involvement, instruction, work stress, and children's academic anxiety. More specifically it sought to answer the question: *Can parenting style, involvement, instruction, and work stress be used to predict children's academic anxiety?* Although results of this study were not as meaningful as originally hoped, there are a few findings important to note.

Regarding the sample itself, the results were extremely uniform, especially in terms of the demographics of the parents. The large majority of the parents reported an identical income, marital status, education level, and employment status. This, combined with the fact that they have the same religious values, make it unsurprising that they were also very similar in terms of their parenting practices (style, involvement, and instruction).

Most participating parents were found to be moderately to highly involved in their children's academic lives. However, these findings did differ slightly depending on the

demographic information and the child him or herself. Consistent with previous studies, parents who are divorced were found less involved than married parents (Carlson et al, 2011; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Green & Walker, 2007, Wood et al, 2003). Similarly, parents who reported higher levels of work stress were also found less involved with their children. Both divorced parents and those experiencing higher degrees of work stress likely *have* to devote more time to work and other responsibilities and are unable to be as involved with their children even if they would like to be.

Additionally, most parents were found to pass a high level of instructional messages to their children. Due to the competitive nature of the school itself these results make sense according to similar research (Lopata, Wallace, & Finn, 2005). Competition and pressure to exceed were both discussed by school officials as highly prevalent even in the younger elementary school grades. However, differences in level of instruction do still exist. As mentioned earlier, parents with non-white children and parents who were more involved were found to give their children more instruction compared to parents of white children and those who were less involved. Parents who are more involved with their children are clearly more likely to instruct them as they have more face-to-face time with them. However, it is somewhat surprising to find a racial difference regarding instruction, but with only four students representing the non-white group it is likely that these differences would not be found consistent in a larger sample. However, it is possible that these differences reflect different cultural values.

All participating parents were found to most closely reflect an authoritative parenting style along the continuum leaning only slightly more towards authoritarian rather than permissive. However, parents with white children, and parents with less slightly less education were found even more likely to be authoritative rather than permissive. Past studies have found

similar findings regarding education level (Macie & Stolberg, 2003). Racial differences are again likely a reflection of the small sample but could offer another instance in which cultural values influence parenting beliefs (Green & Walker, 2007; McWayne, et al., 2004).

Generally, parents were found to report low to moderate work stress. Given their income and knowing the degree of competition within the region these results are fairly surprising. However, it is possible that there was a slight bias in that the most stressed parents were too stressed even to participate and fill out the questionnaire. However, of those that participated, there were differences in terms of marital status, income, and involvement. Divorced parents were found to experience greater work stress. It is possible that they too feel more pressure in being able to provide for their families. This stress may also be a result of a spillover effect in which the stress of the divorce impacts their work life as well (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Sandberg et al., 2013). Also unsurprisingly, parents with higher incomes and parents who were more involved with their children were also found to report less work stress compared to those with lower incomes and those were less involved. It is likely that those who have lower incomes and those who are less involved feel more pressure. They experience more stress as they seek to balance their ability to provide for their family financially as well as physically and emotionally be being present. They may experience more of a strain than those who have higher incomes and are able to be more involved.

Additionally, students who were reported (by parents) as being in below-average standing were found to experience greater levels of anxiety than those in average or above-average standing. These findings are again consistent with past studies examining pressure to excel (Jeynes, 2000; McLeod, Wood, & Weisz, 2007; Strimaitiene & Kvieskaite, 2009). In such a competitive academic environment it is unlikely that these students are just lacking motivation to

achieve and are for some reason experiencing another barrier. Consequently, not meeting these expectations is probably stressful.

Although there was no real age difference found regarding the stress of students, there was a difference found between teacher ratings of student's anxiety and parent ratings of student's anxiety. Parents tended to predict overall higher levels of anxiety and tended to predict that younger children (in lower grades) were less stressed than older children (in higher grades). This adds to the significance of this and similar studies in helping parents realize the stresses of their children, even those that are very young.

Lastly, counter to expectations, parenting style, instruction, involvement, and parent work stress were not found to be statistically significant predictors of child academic anxiety. This is very likely a result of the homogamous nature of the sample. With nearly identical parent characteristics it is not possible to make any real comparisons or measure any real differences.

Limitations

There are a variety of limitations that are important to note. First, this study relied very heavily on the parent-report portion of the study. It relied on the parents taking the initiative to participate by filling out and returning the appropriate forms. This not only limited the pool of parents that are even given the opportunity to participate but also influenced the results especially with regards to parent involvement. Parents who volunteered for the study are also likely those who are the most involved. Similarly, when considering work stress, etc. it is also less likely that those who experience high levels of work stress (and would therefore be more interesting to the study) are also those who do not have the time to have completed the survey.

The sample itself also serves as a large limitation to the research. A private Catholic elementary school in a fairly affluent neighborhood does not serve as a very representative

sample. As discussed in earlier chapters, this group of participants is relatively uniform with regards to race, SES, etc. This not only made comparisons within the sample difficult but also makes it unhelpful in drawing comparisons to other populations.

Finally, the definitions of the variables used in this study also present another limitation. Although the definitions used were considered the most valid according to numerous studies and scholars there are still others who disagree with them. This can present limitations regarding the reliability of the study and in making comparisons with other studies, both past and future. It is especially important when reviewing this study that readers acknowledge the definitions used and remember that other studies might use the same or similar terms but with alternative definitions.

Recommendations for Future Studies

In light of the various limitations there are several recommendations that can be made to improve on studies in the future. First, a more diverse school system or multiple schools should be evaluated. Although private schools and those with religious affiliations can serve as interesting comparisons, they should not be the sole focus.

Additionally, there should be some sort of reward or other motivator to help persuade a greater number of parents to participate. Although it is not possible to get everyone it would be more valuable if a greater range of parents participated. Perhaps there could be an alternate way to measure the target characteristics entirely without relying so heavily on parent participation.

Lastly, it would also be beneficial if *both* parents and the children themselves participated. This would allow for gender differences to be measured more fully across the entire sample as well as individually within each family. It would also provide a more cohesive picture of the students' academic experiences and potentially related stress.

Conclusion

Although there are several limitations inhibiting the significance of this study, it does serve as an important step in seeking to measure a more cohesive picture of children's academic anxiety. Findings correspond with past studies in finding some differences related to parent and individual characteristics and reflect a need for further evaluation. Building off of this study and taking its limitations and recommendations into consideration future studies can prove more substantial and ultimately work to get a better understanding of academic anxiety.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

[Code Sticker]

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA - PARENT CONSENT/PERMISSION FORM
Social Learning Theory and Childhood Academic Anxiety

Researcher's Statement
We are asking parents, teachers, and children to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for both of you. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: David Wright, Ph.D.
Human Development and Family Science
dwwright@uga.edu
706-542-4825

Purpose of the Study
This study is designed to gather information about academic anxiety among elementary aged children within the state of Georgia. More specifically we will measure what components of school life children tend to worry about the most and see if these worries vary depending on the gender or age of the child. Additionally, we would like to discover whether or not parents have any influence on their child's academic anxiety.

Study Procedures
If you, your child's teacher, and your child agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Complete a survey meant to gather basic information about you and your child as well as more in depth information about your parenting practices and beliefs. It should take you around half an hour to read through everything and complete the questionnaire. If you have multiple children eligible for participation it will take you longer because all materials must be completed separately for each.

Your child's teacher will be asked to:

- Complete a very brief survey which asks about the anxiety the child may or may not experience related to the school environment. The time required for teachers will vary depending on the number of participating students in the class. Generally, it should take around 5-10 minutes per student.

Your child will be asked to:

- Complete a 'card game' task rating the top 8 most worrying school events i.e. "Failing a test," "Doing homework," etc. from 1- this never bothers me to 5- this could make me lose control. The card activity that the children participate in is the least time-consuming and should take less than 10 minutes for each child.

Risks and discomforts
There are possible risks to children with regards to bringing up anxiety-provoking stimuli and situations that they might worry about. Also possible that this study will introduce anxieties that the children might not have been worried about but become worried about as a result. Possible risks to parents would be if they feel they are being accused as someone to blame for a child's anxiety. To account for these risks, resources regarding school anxiety will be provided as part of the debriefing procedures to all participating parents and children regardless of whether or not they had a negative reaction to participation. These resources will provide a more thorough explanation of school anxiety, what students and parents can do to overcome the potential negative components of anxiety, and contact information for professionals that can provide more information or assistance if necessary. The school guidance counselor(s) will also be aware of the study being conducted and will be involved and available when necessary. As parents we would also like to remind you that this study is in no way a critique of your parenting. All families are different and there is no one correct way to do things.

Approved by University of Georgia
Institutional Review Board
Protocol # STUDY00000365
Approved on: 10/18/2013
For use through: 10/17/2014

Benefits

It is hoped that your participation in this study will benefit you:

- By providing a new understanding for your child's views on schools and what they worry about
- By opening up a line of communication between you, your child, and the teacher to discuss these anxieties and potential strategies for managing them

It is also hoped that your participation in this study will benefit professionals:

- By suggesting aspects of the school environment that could be altered to create a more comfortable situation for students

Incentives for participation

There is no compensation being made for your and your child's participation in this study.

Privacy/Confidentiality

Your name and your child's name will only be used to link each section of the study. They will not be listed on the questionnaires themselves or any documents discussing the results of the study. A numerical code will be used to link the three portions of the study. The code key and all forms with your names will be stored in a locked file and destroyed at the conclusion of the study next spring.

Taking part is voluntary

It is important for you to remember that your and your child's involvement in this study is voluntary and that you may refuse to participate before the study begins or stop at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you and your child are otherwise entitled. Your decision about participation will have no effect on your child's grades.

If you have questions

The main researchers conducting this study are Dr. David Wright, an associate professor and Kaitlin Waring, a graduate student, at the University of Georgia. If you have questions now or later, you may contact Dr. Wright at dwwright@uga.edu or Kaitlin Waring at kwari113@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study and to voluntarily allow your child to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

Your Child's Name: _____

Your Signature: _____ Date _____

Your Printed Name: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Researcher: _____

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
TEACHER CONSENT FORM
Social Learning Theory and Childhood Academic Anxiety

Researcher's Statement

We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: David Wright, Ph.D.
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Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to gather information about academic anxiety among elementary aged children within the state of Georgia. More specifically we will measure what components of school life children tend to worry about the most and see if these worries vary depending on the gender or age of the child. Additionally, we would like to discover whether or not parents have any influence on their child's academic anxiety.

Study Procedures

If your students are given permission to participate by their parents you will be asked to...

- Complete a very brief survey (for each participating child) which asks about the anxiety the child may or may not experience related to the school environment. The time required for you as a teacher will vary depending on the number of participating students in your class. Generally, it should take around 5-10 minutes per student.

Risks and discomforts

- We do not anticipate any psychological, social, economic, legal, or otherwise risks from participating in this research for you, the child, or the parents.

Benefits

It is hoped that your participation in this study will benefit you:

- By providing a new understanding for your students' views on schools and what they worry about
- By opening up a line of communication between you, the students, and the parents to discuss these anxieties and potential strategies for managing them

It is also hoped that your participation in this study will benefit professionals:

- By identifying trends related to elementary school children's worries and the influence parents have
- By suggesting aspects of the school environment that could be altered to create a more comfortable situation for students

Incentives for participation

There is no compensation being made for your participation in this study.

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Privacy/Confidentiality
Your name will only be used to link your questionnaire with each of your students. It will not be listed on the questionnaire itself or any documents discussing the results of the study. A numerical code will be used to link the three portions of the study. The code key and all forms with your names will be stored in a locked file and destroyed at the conclusion of the study next spring.

Taking part is voluntary
It is important for you to remember that your involvement in this study is voluntary and that you may refuse to participate before the study begins or stop at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have questions
The main researchers conducting this study are Dr. David Wright, an associate professor and Kaitlin Waring, a graduate student, at the University of Georgia. If you have questions now or later, you may contact Dr. Wright at dwwright@uga.edu or Kaitlin Waring at kwari113@uga.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, sign on the line below. Your signature indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

Your Signature: _____ Date _____

Your Printed Name: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Researcher: _____

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Approved by University of Georgia
Institutional Review Board
Protocol # STUDY00000365
Approved on: 10/18/2013
For use through: 10/17/2014

Appendix C

Exploring Academic Worry (Parent Report)

[Code Sticker]

Please fill out the following survey to the best of your ability. If you are unsure of an answer or don't want to answer a question you may leave it blank or answer N/A or I don't know when possible. If you have any questions or would like more information please contact Kaitlin Waring at kwari113@uga.edu Thank you for your time!

1. Write the name of your child's school below:

2. Circle your child's age
   6 7 8 9 10 11 12

3. Circle your child's grade in school:
   1st Grade 2nd Grade 3rd Grade 4th Grade 5th Grade 6th Grade

4. Select your child's gender:
   ○ Male ○ Female

5. Select your relationship with your child:
   ○ Mother ○ Father ○ Other Legal Guardian: _____ (please specify)

6. Select your child's birth order:
   ○ Only Child ○ Oldest/First-born ○ Middle ○ Youngest/Last-born

7. Select your child's race:
   ○ Caucasian/White ○ African American/Black ○ Latino/Hispanic
   ○ Native American ○ Asian ○ Pacific Islander ○ Other: _____ (please specify)

8. Select your current relationship with your child's other parent:
   ○ Married ○ Divorced ○ Separated ○ Living together unmarried
   ○ Never married ○ Other: _____ (please specify)

9. What is your household/family's combined income?
   ○ Less than $50,000
   ○ $50,000- $69,999
   ○ $70,000 - $89,999
   ○ $90,000 - $124,999
   ○ $125,000 and above

10. Select your employment status:
- ○ Employed fulltime, part-time, or self-employed
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired
- ○ Fulltime homemaker
- ○ Student
- ○ Other: _____ (please specify)

11. Select your education level:
- ○ Did not graduate high school
- ○ High school graduate or GED
- ○ Some college
- ○ College graduate
- ○ Postgraduate degree

12. Please rank your child's overall academic standing:

○ below-average standing ○ average standing ○ above-average standing

13. Is your child receiving special education services?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know/prefer not to answer

14. Is your child enrolled in the gifted program?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know/prefer not to answer

As we know, all families are different and all parents are different. The following questions hope to help us get a sense of your parenting beliefs and behaviors and what you consider to be important. It is important to remember that there is no correct or incorrect answer.

15. Please indicate HOW OFTEN you have engaged in each of the following behaviors since the beginning of this school year:

1 = Never 2= 1 or 2 times 3 = 4 or 5 times 4= Once a week 5 = A few times/week 6 = Every day

	Never	1-2 Times	4-5 Times	1/Week	2+/Week	Daily
Kept an eye on the child's progress	1	2	3	4	5	6
Talked with this child about the school day	1	2	3	4	5	6
Supervised this child's homework	1	2	3	4	5	6

Practiced spelling, math, etc. with the child	1	2	3	4	5	6
Read with this child	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helped this child study for tests	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helped out at the child's school	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attended special events at the school	1	2	3	4	5	6
Volunteered to go on a class field trip	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attended a PTO meeting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Went to the school's open-house	1	2	3	4	5	6

16. Please indicate how true each of the following statements are for you:

1= Not at all true 2= A little bit true 3= Somewhat true 4 = Often True 5= Mostly True 6= Completely True

	Not at all true					Completely True
I teach my child that understanding the problem is more important than finding an answer	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child to go at his/her own pace while doing homework	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child to solve problems by breaking them into smaller parts	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child to memorize answers to problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child that getting the right answer is important	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child new ways to do schoolwork when he or she is stuck	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child to use flash cards to learn right answers	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child ways to keep working when he or she doesn't want to do schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6
I teach my child the importance of doing well on school assignments	1	2	3	4	5	6
I expect my child to do the best he or she can on all school assignments	1	2	3	4	5	6
There is no excuse for my child to do poorly on his or her schoolwork	1	2	3	4	5	6

17. Indicate whether you disagree or agree with the following statements:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2= Somewhat Disagree 3= Not Sure/Undecided 4 = Somewhat Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

	SD	D	NS/U	A	SA
It is wrong to expect obedience from children	1	2	3	4	5

It is ridiculous to think children should be seen, not heard	1	2	3	4	5
It is best to let children do what they want	1	2	3	4	5
Being too strict with children is emotionally damaging	1	2	3	4	5
It is never okay to spank your children	1	2	3	4	5
Children respond better to talking than spanking	1	2	3	4	5
If you love your children, you will not spank them	1	2	3	4	5
It does not matter if a child's room is clean	1	2	3	4	5
Parents should let their children play and have fun	1	2	3	4	5
A good parent has well-behaved children	1	2	3	4	5
Physical punishment is an ineffective parenting tool	1	2	3	4	5
It is better to be a disciplinarian than a friend to children	1	2	3	4	5
It is better to be permissive than strict with children	1	2	3	4	5
Being carefree is more important than being obedient	1	2	3	4	5
Children should feel free to ask why when being disciplined	1	2	3	4	5
It is not necessary for children to fear you to respect you	1	2	3	4	5
Time-out is better than spanking	1	2	3	4	5
It is important to talk to children about misbehavior	1	2	3	4	5
Being strict is worse than being permissive	1	2	3	4	5
Children should not be required to do chores	1	2	3	4	5

18. Thinking about your current job (or most recent job if not currently working), how often does each of the following statements describe how you feel? Note: If you are a stay-at-home parent please complete this question considering your role as homemaker as your job/work environment.

1 = Never 2= Rarely 3= Sometime 4= Often 5= Very Often

Conditions at work are unpleasant and sometimes unsafe	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that my job is negatively affecting my well-being	1	2	3	4	5
I have too much work/too many unreasonable deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
I find it difficult to express my opinions to my superiors	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that job pressures interfere with my family life	1	2	3	4	5
I have adequate control or input over my work duties	1	2	3	4	5
I receive appropriate recognition for good performance	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to utilize my skills to the fullest extent at work	1	2	3	4	5

19. Overall, how would you rank your child's anxiety level related to school?

0 (No Anxiety)	1 (Low Anxiety)	2(Moderate Anxiety)	3(High Anxiety)
O	O	O	O

Appendix D

Exploring Academic Worry (Teacher Report)

[Code sticker]

For each item please fill in the circle that best describes how this child has been so far this school year. Please answer all of the items.

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
This child:				
... is afraid of asking questions in class	O	O	O	O
... only talks when someone asks a question	O	O	O	O
... worries what other people think of him or her	O	O	O	O
... doesn't volunteer answers/comments in class	O	O	O	O
... is afraid of making mistakes	O	O	O	O
... hates being the center of attention	O	O	O	O
...asks questions before starting an assignment	O	O	O	O
... worries about things at school	O	O	O	O
... worries that he or she will do badly at school	O	O	O	O
... worries that something bad might happen	O	O	O	O
... seems very shy	O	O	O	O
... gets stomachaches or feels sick at school	O	O	O	O
... feels afraid when talking in front of the class	O	O	O	O
... hesitates to speak in group situations	O	O	O	O
... feels shaky when he/she has a problem	O	O	O	O
... seems nervous when approached by others	O	O	O	O

Overall, how would you rank this students' anxiety level in school?

0 (No Anxiety)	1 (Low Anxiety)	2(Moderate Anxiety)	3(High Anxiety)
O	O	O	O