



## Parenting styles and psychological needs influences on adolescent life goals and aspirations in a South African setting

Nicolette V. Roman<sup>a</sup>, Eugene L. Davids<sup>a</sup>, Alice Moyo<sup>a</sup>, Lauren Schilder<sup>a</sup>, Marlies Lacante<sup>b</sup> and Willy Lens<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Child and Family Studies, Department of Social Work, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa*

<sup>b</sup>*Department of Psychology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium*

The present study examined the role of parenting styles and basic psychological needs in the adoption of goals and aspirations of learners, as well as for their psychological wellbeing (positive versus negative affect) in a South African sample of learners. A cross-sectional design was used to conduct this study with a sample of 853 learners at public schools in the Western Cape of South Africa (females = 57%, mean age 16.96 years, SD = 1.12). Data were collected using the Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), Psychological Needs Scale, Aspiration Index and the Positive And Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). The results suggest that authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles influence the adoption of life goals and psychological wellbeing of adolescents with fathers' negative parenting possibly reducing adolescent wellbeing. Extrinsic life goals was a significant predictor of positive affect, while need frustration was a significant predictor of negative affect. These findings suggest parenting styles and basic psychological needs influence life aspirations and psychological wellbeing of learners in a developing country context.

**Keywords:** parenting styles, self-determination theory, basic psychological needs, goals and aspirations

### Introduction

Parenting is the mechanism through which a child learns appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, experience right and wrong choices in decision-making, acquire skills; understand roles and norms of a community (Carr & Springer, 2010; Ford et al., 2009; Pérez & Cumsille, 2012). It plays a major part in child socialisation, providing an early understanding of the self (Baumrind, 1966; 1967; 1971; 1978; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007; Soenens et al., 2007; Latouf & Dunn, 2010). For example, quality of parenting is associated with general adjustment (Lamborn & Groh, 2009) and psychological wellbeing, including a healthy self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Roman, Mwaba, & Lens, 2008). By contrast, suboptimal parenting is associated with externalising behaviour, such as anti-social behaviour, social initiative and decision-making (Soenens, 2006; O' Conner & Scott, 2007). The adoption of intrinsic goals and aspirations could have positive implications for the future wellbeing and functioning of individuals (Deci & Ryan 2008; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2009). In addition, parents provide the environment to encourage the adoption of

intrinsic goals and aspirations. Family and specifically parents, play a crucial role in providing environments which could either enhance or hinder the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs and subsequent wellbeing and personal growth of their children into well-adjusted adults (Grolnick, 2003; Soenens, 2006). Adolescence is a critical developmental stage for young people (Bray, Gooskens, Khan, Moses, & Seekings, 2010).

The pursuit of certain goals has both positive and negative implications for adolescents. Much of the literature pertaining to basic psychological needs and their influence on the identification of goals and aspirations has been carried out in developed countries (Deci & Ryan 2008; Grouzet et al., 2005; Niemiec, Ryan, & Deci, 2009) but the generalisability of this effect should be tested in other cultures (Ingrid et al., 2009). Ingrid et al. (2009) state that people's life aspirations reflect the culture and economic conditions in which they find themselves and that extrinsic aspirations are not necessarily detrimental, but may well contribute to the psychological wellbeing of individuals, especially in less affluent developing countries. Currently there is a dearth of South African research concerning basic psychological needs and their influence on goal and aspiration adoption in adolescents. Furthermore, no known study has collectively combined the variables of the current study within a single study. The current study contributes to new knowledge in South Africa, and may add to the international knowledge base regarding the influence of basic psychological needs in the adoption of goals and aspirations and adolescent psychological wellbeing. This area of research is important as it provides the impetus for understanding the content and adoption of the goals of adolescents, what the possible risk factors could be as well as their subsequent psychological wellbeing.

### **Parenting styles**

Parenting styles refer to the approach parents have in guiding and directing their children. These approaches include authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; 2005). The authoritarian parenting style is characterised by physical coercion, verbal hostility and non-reasoning/punitive dimensions. Authoritative parenting style has connection, regulation, and autonomy-granting dimensions. The dimension of indulgence is found in the permissive parenting style. Mothers and fathers have unique influences on their children. For example the impact of fathers' behaviours is dependent on how the child or adolescent understands 'what fathers are' instead of comparing with maternal parenting approaches (Overbeek et al., 2007). Previous international research suggests that paternal parenting is vital and has been linked to different outcomes for children (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008) in comparison to mothers. Specifically, a systematic review of longitudinal studies found that father involvement aided cognitive development of children and reduced behavioural problems in boys and psychological problems in young women. In addition, families in low socio-economic households were especially advantaged by father involvement as there was a reduction in child delinquency and economic disadvantage to the family (Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2008). Parenting styles and to a limited extent parental practices have been shown to influence performance in school, self-esteem and self-worth, sympathy, social competence and behavioural problems as associated with family adversity and discipline, perceptions and so on (Aunola & Nurmi, 2004; Baumrind, 2005; Dumas et al.,

2009; Endicott & Lioassis, 2005; Laible & Carlo, 2004; Vieno et al., 2009). Limited research has been done linking parenting to the adoption of life goals and aspirations (Laible & Carlo, 2004; Sheldon & Kasser, 1998). Research by Bray et al. (2010) showed that among South African children, sharing a home with their parents did not guarantee them quality of care and relationships. According to Bray et al. (2010), young people would respond to the shortfall in their care in order to protect their wellbeing through silence, reaction against strategic communication or residential moves. Thus, it can be assumed that adolescent goals and aspirations, as well as their psychological wellbeing could be shaped by their experience of parenting.

### ***Psychological needs and psychological wellbeing***

The natural trajectory towards self-enhancement and self-motivation is based upon the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; 2003; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005; 2006). These are the need for relatedness, autonomy and competence, and they are said to be innate and universal, directing human motivation and development. The satisfaction of these needs result in a state of wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2000) or more specifically psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing refers to the internal experiences of individuals and their own perception of their lives (Diener & Suh, 1997). It is often indicated by (but not limited to) a state of happiness, being satisfied with life and having a positive sense of self while simultaneously acknowledging that there are realities of pain and disappointment which do not impact on long-term wellbeing (Huppert, 2009). According to Huppert (2009) there are particular indicators, which alert one to effective psychological wellbeing. These include the development of the individual's potential, control over one's life, having goals and aspirations and experiencing positive relationships. This could be very closely related to the satisfaction of psychological needs.

In meeting psychological needs, a distinction is made between intrinsic goals (e.g., affiliation, personal growth, self-acceptance, physical health and prosocial behaviour or community contribution) and extrinsic goals (e.g., wealth, fame and image or physical appearance, social praise and rewards) (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996; Strassberg, Gilbert, & Russel, 2010). Thus aspirations toward intrinsic goals are satisfying for the self (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; 2000b), while extrinsic goals focus outward, centering on external manifestations (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000).

There is evidence to suggest that having strong aspirations for extrinsic rather than intrinsic outcomes is negatively associated with mental health indicators; whereas placing more importance on intrinsic than on extrinsic aspirations has been found to be positively associated with mental health indicators such as self-esteem and self-worth, pro-social behaviour, performance in school, sympathy, social competence and behaviour (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996; Laible & Carlo, 2004; Vieno, Nation, Pastore, & Santinello, 2009). Studies have reported self-reported attainment of intrinsic rather than extrinsic aspirations to be positively associated with wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Grouzet, et al., 2005). For instance, adolescents who aspire towards wealth and financial success were at risk for several psychological disorders (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Schmuck, Kasser, & Ryan, 2000). Similarly,

Sheldon, and Kasser (2008) found that when people were under psychological ‘threat’, such as unemployment they were more likely to pursue extrinsic goals and aspirations rather than intrinsic goals. In a country such as South Africa, where the majority of people live in low socio-economic environments, young people would want to aspire to something better, with the focus often being on wealth, which in developed countries has been suggested to result in ill-being rather than psychological wellbeing. However, this may not be the case for a developing country (Ingrid et al., 2009) such as South Africa.

### ***The South African situation***

Transition into adulthood in South Africa provides opportunities to focus decision-making regarding career path and thus enter either higher education or (un) employment (Maree, 2010; 2013). Often these decisions are based on previous goals to aspire to a better life, to be a better person, help others, to have wealth or to be famous (Ingrid et al., 2009; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). The National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10–12 (Department of Education, 2003) stipulates that goal-setting, decision making and career counselling are part of the school curriculum and are therefore taught at schools. What motivates South African learners is in need of study. The learners may be variously motivated by society (such as poverty in the family) and media (role models such as successful singers) to aspire to being wealthy and famous (Sheldon & Kasser, 2008). Parents could also covertly or overtly encourage their children to pursue a particular life path (goals and aspirations) by the parenting approaches they use (Jodl et al., 2001; Malmberg, Ehrman, & Lithen, 2005). For instance, a South African qualitative study (Robbins, Wallis, & Dunston, 2003), suggested that students perceived family and community orientation as offering salient support in aspiring towards career decision making. Furthermore, in South Africa, previous studies indicate that adolescents who live in low to middle income households do not have a good relationship with their fathers (De Jager, 2011), which might affect the pursuit of their goals and aspirations and subsequently their interest in school and internal academic self-regulation. According to Maree (2010) the social environment or context is important for how individuals make sense of their interactions and relationships within these contexts so that they can construct a purpose (goals) for themselves and subsequently design a life which is “experienced as satisfactory and that can be redesigned as needs, interest and life experiences change” Maree (2010, p. 365). By implication then, the potential adoption and implementation of the life goals and aspirations of adolescents could potentially be affected by both external factors (parents) and internal factors (basic psychological needs) and therefore have ramifications for the broader South African society.

The goal of this study was therefore to examine the role of parenting styles and basic psychological needs in the adoption of goals and aspirations of learners and for their psychological wellbeing (positive versus negative affect). The study sought to answer the following questions: (1) what is the influence of parenting styles and basic psychological needs on the adoption of life goals and aspirations and psychological wellbeing of South African learners. Findings could extend theory and practice effects of parenting on goals and aspirations of learners (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000; Lokes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner, & Fang, 2010). For South Africa, this is new information.

## Method

### *Participants and setting*

The study sample consisted of learners in Grade 11 at public schools from eight school districts in the Western Cape of South Africa. The final sample included 853 participants

(mean age = 16.96, SD = 1.12); females = 57.0%; Coloured 45.7%; (see Table 1 for participant demographics). The majority of the learners (n = 517; 60.6%) spoke English as their home language, 197 (23.1%) spoke IsiXhosa and 119 (14%) had Afrikaans as their home language. Only 20 (2.3%) spoke another language. The majority of the learners (n = 490; 57.4%) lived with both their parents, 249 (29.2%) lived with their mothers, 43 (5%) with their fathers and 70 (8.2%) with a guardian/caregiver.

### **Measures**

The data were collected by means of self-report questionnaires. The Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ: Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001), Psychological Needs Scale (PNS: Sheldon & Hilpert, 2012), Aspiration Index (AI: Kasser & Ryan, 1996) and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS: Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) were administered. Participants also provided data on their demographic characteristics (gender, ethnicity, age, etc.)

The PDSQ is a 32-item questionnaire assessing the perception of mothers and fathers about their style of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative and indulgence/permissive. Each dimension has between 4 and 5 items. Participants respond on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not at all like her/him; 4 = a lot like her/him). The Cronbach alpha coefficients observed in the present study were as follows: 0.92 for authoritative parenting style, 0.88 for authoritarian parenting style and 0.62 for permissive parenting style for mothers; 0.96 for authoritative parenting style, 0.94 for authoritarian parenting style and 0.78 for permissive parenting style for fathers.

The PNS is an 18-item measure of the three needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. For each of the three needs, three items assess the degree of satisfaction and three items assess the degree of frustration. Participants were asked to respond on a 4-point

**Table 1.** Participant demographic characteristics

Variables	N = 853
Gender	
Male	364 (42.7%)
Female	486 (57.0%)
Ethnicity	
Coloured	390 (45.7%)
Black African	225 (26.4%)
White	171 (20%)
Indian/Asian	56 (6.6%)
Living arrangements	
Both Parents	490 (57.4%)
Only mothers	249 (29.2%)
Only fathers	43 (5%)
Guardian/caregiver	70 (8.2%)
Home Language	
English	517 (60.6 %)
Afrikaans	197 (23.1%)
IsiXhosa	119 (14.0%)
Other	20 (20.3%)

Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all true to 4 = very true. The Cronbach alpha coefficients observed in the present study were 0.73 for need satisfaction and 0.74 for need frustration.

The AI is a measure of people's aspirations in seven categories: the extrinsic aspirations of wealth, fame, and image, and the intrinsic aspirations of meaningful relationships, personal growth, and community contributions; and the aspiration of good health which could not be defined clearly as either extrinsic or intrinsic. Participants rate the importance to themselves of each aspiration by responding on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = somewhat important to 4 = very important. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the study sample were 0.90 for extrinsic life goals and 0.81 for intrinsic life goals.

The PANAS is a measure of psychological wellbeing, more specifically positive and negative affect. It comprises of 10 positive and 10 negative affects. Participants indicate on a 5-point Likert scale to what extent they experienced those 10 feelings over the past few weeks (1 = very slightly or not at all; 5 = extremely). Mean scores are calculated for the 10 positive and 10 negative affect items. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the current study were 0.81 for positive affect and 0.78 for negative affect.

### ***Procedure***

Permission to conduct the study was provided by the Western Cape Education Department and the principals and teachers of the participant schools. Learners individually assented to the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the learners and a date, time and venue was arranged with the teacher for those learners who were interested and consented to participate in the study. The questionnaires were self-administered and completion of the questionnaire took approximately 30–45 minutes.

### ***Data analysis***

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. Two separate hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. One hierarchical regression analysis was to predict positive affect and the other one was for negative affect. A Bonferonni method was applied using a threshold of significance at  $p < 0.005$ .

### ***Results***

In Table 2 the majority of the participants indicated that their basic psychological needs were satisfied ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ), they aspired to extrinsic life goals ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ) and experienced positive affect or psychological wellbeing ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). For both fathers and mothers, parenting scores were highest for the authoritative parenting style and lowest for the authoritarian parenting style. For all three types of parenting styles, mothers scored significantly higher than fathers: authoritative ( $t(761) = 10.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.42$ ); authoritarian ( $t(762) = 5.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.20$ ); permissive ( $t(763) = 6.44$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.25$ ). However, Cohen's  $d$  showed that all three effects were rather small.

Maternal authoritarian parenting was significantly positively associated with the importance placed on extrinsic life goals ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), need frustration ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and

negative affect ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A significantly negative association was found with positive affect ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Paternal authoritarian parenting was significantly positively associated with the importance placed on extrinsic life goals ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), need frustration ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and negative affect ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). No significant relationship was found with positive affect (see Table 3).

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Satisfaction index	2.82	0.50
Frustration index	2.31	0.60
Intrinsic life goals	2.84	0.47
Extrinsic life goals	3.34	0.36
Positive affect	3.51	0.76
Negative affect	2.42	0.73
Mother authoritative parenting style	3.05	0.69
Father authoritative parenting style	2.63	0.96
Mother authoritarian parenting style	2.19	0.70
Father authoritarian parenting style	2.01	0.90
Mother permissive parenting style	2.37	0.68
Father permissive parenting style	2.11	0.86

### ***Predicting positive affect from negative affect***

Table 4 shows the results of the hierarchical regression analyses to predict positive affect from negative affect. In Step 1 positive and negative affect, as indicators of psychological well- and ill-being, were regressed on parenting styles. In Step 2 intrinsic and extrinsic goal importance were added as two additional predictors, and in Step 3 positive and negative affect were regressed on parenting styles, life goal importance and finally on need satisfaction and need frustration.

#### *Positive affect*

In step 1, both maternal ( $\beta = 0.23$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and paternal authoritative ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ) parenting styles significantly and positively predicted positive affect. Only maternal authoritarian parenting styles significantly negatively predicted positive affect ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). These predictions remained for step 2 when intrinsic and extrinsic life goal importance were added to the model. Intrinsic life goal importance significantly and positively predicted positive affect ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). In step 3, when adding need frustration and satisfaction; neither paternal authoritative parenting nor intrinsic life goal importance were significant predictors of positive affect. However, extrinsic life goal importance ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p = 0.047$ ) became a significant, negative predictor of positive affect. The final model explained 26% of the variance for positive affect.

#### *Negative affect*

In step 1, significant positive predictors of negative affect were both maternal ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) and paternal authoritarian ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) and maternal permissive parenting styles ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ). Significant negative predictors of negative affect were maternal ( $\beta = -0.14$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and paternal authoritative parenting styles ( $\beta = -0.17$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). These predictions remained significant for step 2 when intrinsic and extrinsic life goal importance were added to the model. Intrinsic life goal importance significantly positively predicted negative affect ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). In step 3, when adding need frustration and

satisfaction, neither maternal authoritarian, permissive parenting styles nor intrinsic life goal importance were significant predictors of negative affect.

However, need frustration ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) became a significant positive predictor of negative affect. The final model explained 26% of the variance for negative affect.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to examine the role of parenting styles and basic psychological needs in the adoption of goals and aspirations as well as the psychological wellbeing (positive versus negative affect) of adolescent learners. The learners were in the transitional stage of adolescence and developmentally found themselves within a period of change characterised by tremendous pressure and upheaval – mentally, physically and emotionally (Thom et al., 1998; La Guardia & Ryan, 2002; Bray et al., 2010).

An authoritative parenting style was the most prevalent perceived parenting style, with mothers being perceived more positively than fathers. This finding is consistent with previous local research, which also found high prevalence levels of maternal authoritative parenting styles (Latouf & Dunn, 2010; Makwakwa, 2011). An authoritative parental style is characterised by warmth, support and nurturing (Baumrind, 2005). Research has shown that authoritative parenting type is associated with fostering personal and social responsibility and enhancing self-development (Aldhafri, 2014; Baumrind, 2005; Nyarko, 2011). Supporting literature indicates that mothers, who use an authoritative parenting style, are more involved and are more aware of the everyday activities of the child (Hiramura, Shikai, Chen, Matsuoka, & Kitamura, 2010).

In relation to goals and aspirations, the learners placed more importance on intrinsic than extrinsic goals. This was an unexpected finding as research suggests that adolescents are more inclined to focus on extrinsic goals given the socio-economic environment (Ingrid, 2009) and popular media. The learners may be attracted to more intrinsic goal pursuits because South African young people consider giving back to others and may aspire to collectivist, rather than individualist thinking. A possible explanation for the latter could be the ethos by which many South Africans and their communities live, that of Ubuntu, “I am because of you”, and so having an attitude of benevolence is only natural. In addition there may also be an influence of peers or other interpersonal relationships on having a sense of community orientation, which could allow for the adolescent to develop a sense of psychological wellbeing from active citizenship.

Authoritative parenting predicted intrinsic life goals and aspirations, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting predicted extrinsic life goals. These results were expected and in line with previous socialisation research (McKinney et al., 2014; Milevsky et al., 2007; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Soenens et al., 2007), which found that more positive parenting was linked to positive adolescent outcomes. Furthermore, the findings from the current study provide similar results to more local African research, which highlighted the important role of parents in the wellbeing and adjustment of adolescents (Ntinda, Mpofu, Bender, & Moagi, 2014; Roman, 2014). This finding also highlights the role of parents providing the social



**Table 3: Correlations between the variables**

Variables	Int.oals	Ext.Goals	Satisf.	Frustr.	MAutive	FAutive	MAutrian	FAutrian	MPerm	FPerm	Pos.Affect
Ext.Goals	0.20**										
Satisfaction	0.30**	0.25**	-0.07*	-0.06	0.27**	-0.01	0.38**	0.23**	0.30**	0.06	-0.12**
Frustration	0.19**	0.14**	0.29**	-0.07	0.09*	0.34**	0.50**	0.55**	-0.04	0.08*	
MAutive	0.11**	0.02	0.21**	0.34**	0.07*	0.06	0.19**	-0.05	0.15**		
FAutive	0.07*	0.10**	-0.02	0.16**	0.30**	0.62**	-0.14**	0.18**			
MAutrian	0.03	0.25**	-0.02	0.20*	0.12**	0.17**	0.23**				
FAutrian	-0.02	0.10**	-0.01	0.09*	0.09*	0.23**	-0.11**				
Mperm	-0.06	0.16**	0.08*	-0.10**	-0.13**						
Fperm	-0.01	0.19**	0.48**	0.48**							
Pos.Affect	0.18**	0.03	-0.13**								
Neg.Affect	0.07*	0.05									

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Table 4: Regression analyses predicting positive and negative affect (in parentheses)**

	<i>b</i>	SE <i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Step 1</b>					
Constant	2.96 (2.31)				
Maternal authoritative parenting	0.25 (-0.15)	0.04 (0.04)	0.23* (-0.14*)	5.72 (-3.66)	0.000 (0.000)
Paternal authoritative parenting	0.10 (-0.14)	0.04 (0.04)	0.12* (-0.17*)	2.44 (-3.45)	0.015 (0.001)
Maternal authoritarian parenting	-0.12 (0.14)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.11* (0.13*)	-2.52 (2.95)	0.012 (0.003)
Paternal authoritarian parenting	-0.06 (0.11)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.07 (0.13*)	-1.49 (2.96)	0.136 (0.003)
Maternal permissive parenting	-0.06 (0.10)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.09*)	-1.16 (2.02)	0.248 (0.043)
Paternal permissive parenting	0.03 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)	0.56 (1.34)	0.57 (0.180)
<b>Step 2</b>					
Constant	1.90 (1.63)				
Maternal authoritative parenting	0.23 (-0.17)	0.04 (0.04)	0.21* (-0.16*)	5.29 (-4.02)	0.000 (0.000)
Paternal authoritative parenting	0.09 (-0.14)	0.04 (0.04)	0.10* (-0.18*)	2.17 (-3.64)	0.030 (0.000)
Maternal authoritarian parenting	-0.15 (0.13)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.14* (0.12*)	-3.05 (2.71)	0.002 (0.007)
Paternal authoritarian parenting	-0.05 (0.12)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.06 (0.14*)	-1.23 (3.07)	0.220 (0.002)
Maternal permissive parenting	-0.04 (0.12)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.11*)	-.68 (2.38)	0.497 (0.018)
Paternal permissive parenting	0.03 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)	0.03 (0.08)	0.54 (1.46)	0.588 (0.144)
Intrinsic goal importance	0.31 (0.22)	0.08 (0.07)	0.15* (0.11*)	4.09 (3.06)	0.000 (0.002)
Extrinsic goal importance	0.03 (-0.03)	0.04 (0.04)	0.03 (-0.02)	0.68 (-.60)	0.50 (0.549)
<b>Step 3</b>					
Constant	1.30 (1.31)				
Maternal authoritative parenting	0.10 (-0.11)	0.04 (0.04)	0.09* (-0.10*)	2.53 (-2.72)	0.012 (0.007)
Paternal authoritative parenting	0.03 (-0.09)	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.11*)	0.90 (-2.56)	0.370 (0.011)
Maternal authoritarian parenting	-0.12 (0.01)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.11* (0.01)	-2.66 (0.170)	0.008 (0.865)
Paternal authoritarian parenting	-0.03 (0.10)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.03 (-0.11*)	-0.71 (2.70)	0.48 (0.007)
Maternal permissive parenting	0.01 (0.08)	0.05 (0.05)	0.00 (0.07)	0.100 (1.75)	0.920 (0.081)
Paternal permissive parenting	0.04 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)	0.80 (0.89)	0.425 (0.373)
Intrinsic goal importance	0.13 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	0.06 (0.04)	1.75 (1.07)	0.080 (0.286)
Extrinsic goal importance	-0.08 (-0.02)	0.04 (0.04)	-0.07* (-0.02)	-1.99 (-0.59)	0.047 (0.554)
Need frustration	-0.03 (0.51)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.42*)	-0.72 (-11.84)	0.474 (0.000)
Need satisfaction	0.66 (-0.07)	0.06 (0.05)	0.44 (-0.05)	12.00 (-1.33)	0.000 (0.183)

Note Positive affect:  $\Delta R^2 = 0.09$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.11$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.26$  for Step 3

Note Negative affect:  $\Delta R^2 = 0.10$  for Step 1;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.11$  for Step 2;  $\Delta R^2 = 0.26$  for Step 3

context, which can either facilitate or impede children's intrinsic motivation and internalisation (Williams et al., 2004). Parental styles could be important in promoting certain goals and aspirations. Furthermore parents differ in the approaches they use with their children (Gamble, Ramakumar, & Diaz, 2007). In the current study, father authoritarian parenting style predicted negative affect (psychological wellbeing) whereas mother authoritative parenting style predicted positive affect. Previous South

African research highlights the unique contributions of fathers to the parent-child relationship (Nduna, 2015; Sylvester & Bojuwoye, 2011). For example Sylvester and Bojuwoye (2011) found that adolescents considered the roles of fathers to be protectors, guiders and authority figures. Similarly, in Nduna's (2015) study, the importance of having a father's surname was identified as having implications for developing an identity. Often fathers are not primary supportive figures for children in comparison to mothers (Overbeek et al., 2007) because they may have additional support, which mothers do not necessarily have. This study clearly highlights the important role that fathers' parenting style plays in psychological wellbeing, specifically negative affect among adolescent learners.

### **Implications for theory and practice**

Environments, which provide autonomy support, lead to qualitatively superior life orientation goals and aspirations. This effect might be from high levels of self-determination being conducive to more adaptive cognitive, affective and behavioural life outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008b; Joussemet et al., 2008). Positive parenting and intrinsic goals and aspirations have been found to be associated with positive self-worth and self-discovery (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; 2000b). The results of the current study extend on those of previous studies highlighting the important role which parenting plays in the psychological wellbeing of adolescents as well as their future goals and aspirations. In addition, the study highlights the unique contributions of fathers to the parent-child relationship. However, very importantly, although this research extends the knowledge on this topic in developed countries, for a developing country such as South Africa, this information is unique.

### **Conclusion and limitations of the study**

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that positive parenting and basic psychological needs influence life goals and aspirations of adolescents. A limitation of the current study is the cross-sectional research design and the focus only on adolescents in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. This type of research design only allows for one segment of the given population to be examined at one point in time, which potentially suggests that the findings of the current study may not generalise to the population of South African youth at large. This study used self-report measures, which are subject to social desirability influences. The views of parents were not solicited and data from parents and adolescents would provide a more complete picture of influences on adolescent life orientations.

### **Acknowledgements**

The first author received funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) to conduct this study.

## References

- Aldhafri, S. (2014). Self-efficacy and physical self-concept as mediators of parenting influence on Adolescents' school and health wellbeing. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 21(4), 511–520.
- Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J. E. (2004). Maternal affection moderates the impact of psychological control on a child's mathematical performance. *Developmental Psychology*, 40(6), 965–978. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.40.6.965>
- Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behaviour. *Journal of Child Development*, 37(4), 887–907. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1126611>
- Baumrind, D. (1967). Child care practices interceding three patterns of preschool behavior. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 75(1), 43–88.
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology*, 4(1), 1–103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0030372>
- Baumrind, D. (1978). Parental disciplinary patterns and social competence in children. *Journal of Youth & Society*, 9, 239–276.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting styles on adolescent competence and substances. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11(1), 56–95. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0272431691111004>
- Baumrind, D. (2005). Patterns of parental authority and adolescent autonomy. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 108, 61–69.
- Bray, R., Gooskens, I., Kahn, L., Moses, S., & Seekings, J. (2010). Growing up in the new South Africa: Childhood and adolescence in post-apartheid Cape Town. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Carr, D., & Springer, K. W. (2010). Advances in families and health research in the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 72(3), 743–761. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00728.x>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\\_01](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01)
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-Determination Theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49(3), 182–185. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0012801>
- De Jager, N. (2011). Adolescents' relationships in a town in the Western Cape, South Africa. Unpublished 'Masters thesis, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch. Department of Education. (2003). National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General). Pretoria: Life Orientation.
- Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1997). Measuring quality of life: Economic, social, and subjective indicators. *Social Indicators Research*, 40(1/2), 189–216. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1006859511756>
- Dumas, T. M., Lawford, H., Tieu, T., & Pratt, M. W. (2009). Positive parenting in adolescence and its relation to low point narration and identity status in emerging adulthood: A longitudinal analysis. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(6), 1531–1544. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0017360>
- Endicott, R., & Liossis, P. (2005). Australian adolescent's perceptions of their parents: An

- analysis of parenting styles, communication and feelings towards parents. *Youth Studies Australia*, 24(2), 24–31.
- Ford, C. A., Davenport, A. F., Meier, A., & McRee, A. (2009). Parents and health care professionals working together to improve adolescent health: The perspectives of parents. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*, 44(2), 191–194. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.06.017>
- Gamble, W. C., Ramakumar, S., & Diaz, A. (2007). Maternal and paternal similarities and differences in parenting: An examination of Mexican-American parents of young children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(1), 72–88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2006.11.004>
- Grolnick, W. (2003). *The psychology of parental control: How well-meant parenting backfires*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Grouzet, F. M. E., Kasser, T., Ahuvia, A., Dols, J. M. F., Kim, Y., Lau, S., . . . Sheldon, K. M. (2005). The structure of goal contents across 15 cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89(5), 800–816. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.5.800>
- Hiramura, H., Uji, M., Shikai, N., Chen, Z., Matsuoka, N., & Kitamura, T. (2010). Understanding the externalizing behaviour from children's personality and parenting characteristics. *Psychiatry Research*, 175(1-2), 142–147. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2005.07.041>
- Huppert, F. A. (2009). Psychological well-being: Evidence regarding its causes and consequences. *Applied Psychology. Health and Well-Being*, 1(2), 137–164. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x>
- Ingrid, B., Majda, R., & Dubravka, M. (2009). Life goals and wellbeing: are extrinsic aspirations always detrimental to wellbeing? *Psychological Topics*, 18(2), 317–334.
- Jodl, K. M., Michael, A., Malanchuk, O., Eccles, J. S., & Sameroff, A. (2001). Parents' roles in shaping early adolescents' occupational aspirations. *Child Development*, 72(4), 1247–1266. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00345>
- Joussemet, M., Landry, R., & Koestner, R. (2008). A self-determination theory perspective on parenting. *Canadian Psychological Association*, 49(3), 194–200. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0012754>
- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1993). A dark side of the American dream: Correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65(2), 410–422. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.2.410>
- Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1996). Further examining the American dream: Differential correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(3), 280–287. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167296223006>
- Laible, D. J., & Carlo, G. (2004). The differential relations of maternal and paternal support and control to adolescence social competence, self-worth and sympathy. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19(6), 759–782. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558403260094>
- Lamborn, S., Mounts, N., Steinberg, L., & Dornbusch, S. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62(5), 1049–1066.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1131151>

- Lamborn, S., & Groh, K. (2009). A four-part model of autonomy during emerging adulthood: Associations with adjustment. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 33(5), 393–401. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0165025409338440>
- Latouf, N., & Dunn, M. (2010). Parenting styles affecting the social behaviour of five-year olds. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 20(1), 109–112.
- Lekes, N., Gingras, I., Philippe, F. L., Koestner, R., & Fang, J. (2010). Parental autonomy-support, intrinsic life goals and wellbeing among adolescents in China and North America. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(8), 858–869. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10964-009-9451-7>
- Maccoby, E., & Martin, J. (1983). Socialization in the context of the family: Parent-child interaction. In E. Hetherington & P. Mussen (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. IV. Socialization. Personality, and Social Development*. New York: Wiley.
- Makwakwa, T. (2011). Emerging adulthood: Examining the relationship between parenting styles and decision-making of university resident students. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.
- Malmberg, L. E., Ehrman, J., & Lithen, T. (2005). Adolescents' and parents' future beliefs. *Journal of Adolescence*, 28(6), 709–723. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2004.12.007>
- Maree, J. G. (2010). Brief overview of the advancement of postmodern approaches to career counseling. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 20(3), 361–368.
- Maree, J. G. (2013). Latest developments in career counselling in South Africa: Towards a positive approach. *South African Journal of Psychology. Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Sielkunde*, 43(4), 409–421. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0081246313504691>
- McKinney, C., Morse, M., & Pastuszak, J. (2014). Effective and ineffective parenting: associations with psychological adjustment in emerging adults. *Journal of Family Issues*, June, 1–23. doi: 10.1177/0192513X14537480
- Milevsky, A., Schlechter, M., Netter, S., & Keehn, D. (2007). Maternal and paternal parenting styles adolescents: Associations with self-esteem, depression and life satisfaction. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 16(1), 39–47. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-006-9066-5>
- Nduna, M. (2015). Growing up without a father and pursuit of the right surname. *The Open Family Studies Journal*, 6(1), 31–38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/1874922401406010031>
- Niemiec, C. P., Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2009). The path taken: Consequences of attaining intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations of post-college life. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43(3), 291–306. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2008.09.001>
- Ntinda, K., Mpofo, E., Bender, B., & Moagi, S. (2014). Bptswana school child parents: Their personal and community relationships contexts for counseling. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 1–13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2014.939944>
- Nyarko, K. (2011). The influence of authoritative parenting style on adolescents' academic achievement. *American Journal of Social and Management Science*, 2(3), 278–282.
- O' Conner, T. & Scott, S. (2007). *Parenting and Outcomes for Children* (Review commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

- Overbeek, G., ten Have, M., Vollebergh, W., & de Graaf, R. (2007). Parental lack of care and overprotection: Longitudinal associations with DSM III R disorders. *Social Psychiatry Epidemiological Journal*, 42, 27–93.
- Pérez, J. C., & Cumsille, P. (2012). Adolescent temperament and parental control in the development of the adolescent decision making in a Chilean sample. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35(3), 659–669.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.09.002>
- Robbins, S. B., Wallis, A. B., & Dunston, K. T. (2003). Exploring the academic achievement and career aspirations of college-bound and postsecondary Zulu students. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 31(5), 593–618.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000003256349>
- Robinson, C. C., Mandlco, B., Oslen, S. F., & Hart, C. H. (2001). The parenting styles and dimensions Questionnaires (PSDQ). In B. F. Perlmutter & G. W. Holden (Eds.), *Handbook of family measurement techniques* (pp. 319–321). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Roman, N. V. (2014). Parenting in a rainbow nation: A South African perspective of parenting. In H. Selin (Ed.), *Parenting Across Cultures: Childrearing, Motherhood and Fatherhood in Non-Western Cultures*. Netherlands: Springer Publishers.  
[http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7503-9\\_16](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7503-9_16)
- Roman, N. V., Mwaba, K., & Lens, W. (2008). Exploring psychological well-being among South African mothers and children. *Journal of Community and Health Sciences*, 3(2), 31–38. Retrieved online at  
<http://www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/CHS/Lists/Faculty%20Publications/Attachments/7/Journal%20of%20Community%20and%20Health%20Sciences%20October%202008.pdf>
- Rudy, D., & Grusec, J. E. (2006). Authoritarian parenting in individualist and collectivist groups: Associations with maternal emotion and cognition and children's self-esteem. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(1), 68–78.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.20.1.68>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000a). Self-Determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and wellbeing. *The American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000b). When rewards compete with nature: The undermining of intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. In C. Sansone & J. M. Harackiewicz (Eds.), *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The search for optimal motivation and performance* (pp. 13–54). New York: Academic Press.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-012619070-0/50024-6>
- Sarkadi, A., Kristiansson, R., Oberklaid, F., & Bremberg, S. (2008). Fathers' involvement and children's developmental outcomes: A systematic review. *Acta Paediatrica* (Oslo, Norway), 97(2), 153–158. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1651-2227.2007.00572.x>
- Schmuck, P., Kasser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The relationship of wellbeing to intrinsic and extrinsic goals in Germany and the United States. *Social Indicators Research*, 50(2), 225–241. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1007084005278>

- Sheldon, K. M., & Hilpert, J. C. (2012). The Balanced Measure of Psychological Needs (BMPN) Scale: An alternative domain general measure of need satisfaction. *Motivation and Emotion*, 36(4), 439–451. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11031-012-9279-4>
- Sheldon, K. M., & Kasser, T. (1998). Pursuing personal goals: Skills enable progress, but not all progress is beneficial. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(12), 1319–1331. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/01461672982412006>
- Sheldon, K. M., & Kasser, T. (2008). Psychological threat and extrinsic goal striving. *Motivation and Emotion*, 32(1), 37–45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11031-008-9081-5>
- Soenens, B. (2006). Psychologically controlling parenting and adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leuven, Belgium.
- Soenens, B., Van Steenkiste, M., Lens, W., Luyckx, K., Goossens, L., Beyers, W., & Ryan, R. M. (2007). Conceptualizing parental autonomy-support: Adolescent perceptions of promotion of independence versus promotion of volitional functioning. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(3), 633–646. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.3.633>
- Strassberg, S., Gilbert, S. M., & Russell, B. (2010). Left unfinished: Temporary absence and dropout from South African schools. *Access to Education series, 2. Johannesburg: Social Surveys Africa*. Retrieved online: [https://www.academia.edu/751670/Left\\_unfinished\\_Temporary\\_absence\\_and\\_dropout\\_from\\_South\\_African\\_schools\\_Access\\_to\\_Education\\_Series\\_Volume\\_2\\_Social\\_Surveys\\_Africa](https://www.academia.edu/751670/Left_unfinished_Temporary_absence_and_dropout_from_South_African_schools_Access_to_Education_Series_Volume_2_Social_Surveys_Africa); date 05 December 2014.
- Sylvester, T., & Bojuwoye, O. (2011). Experiences of father absence adolescents from a South African community. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 21(1), 115–120.
- Thom, D. P., Louw, A. E., van Ede, D. M., & Ferns, I. (1998) Adolescence. In D. A., Louw, D. M. van Ede, A. E., Louw (eds). *Human Development (2nd ed.)*. Cape Town: Kagiso Tertiary.
- Vansteenkiste, M. (2005). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal promotion and autonomy support versus control. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Leuven. Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(1), 19–31. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4101\\_4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4101_4)
- Vieno, A., Nation, M., Pastore, M., & Santinello, M. (2009). Parenting and antisocial behaviour: A model of the relationship between adolescent self-disclosure, parental closeness, parental control and adolescent antisocial behaviour. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(6), 1509–1519. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0016929>
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(6), 1063–1070. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063>
- Williams, G. C., Hedberg, V. A., Cox, E. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Extrinsic life goals and health risk behaviors in adolescents. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30(8), 1756–1771. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02466.x>

Williams, G. C., McGregor, H. A., Zeldman, A., Freedman, Z. R., & Deci, E. L. (2004). Testing a self-determination theory process model for promoting glycemic control through diabetes self-management. *Health Psychology, 23*(1), 58–66.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.23.1.58>