

PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY VACATION AND FAMILY COHESION AND THE MODERATING  
EFFECTS OF PARENTING STYLE

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Family cohesion, or emotional bonding, is important to family functioning. Shared activities such as family vacations offer opportunities for strengthening the family unit which can improve cohesion. Additionally, parenting style has direct influence on the family unit and family cohesion. This study's purpose was to assess to what extent the perception of the family vacation experience predicted the perception of family cohesion and whether that relationship was moderated by parenting style. An online survey was conducted, resulting in 97 adult participants responding to items regarding their last family vacation, family cohesion, and parenting style. Using hierarchical multiple regression, a medium effect size was found for the predictive ability of a participant's perception of their last family vacation on family cohesion. Findings also indicated a negative correlation between an authoritarian parenting style and perception of family cohesion, but a positive relationship between the interaction of family vacation experience and authoritarian parenting to family cohesion. Stronger predictive abilities were found for those with children in the 3-11 age group. Results may encourage parent and family educators to use family vacation as a tool in assisting families with the processes of building strong and cohesive families.

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# PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY VACATION AND FAMILY COHESION AND THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF PARENTING STYLE

## Introduction

Family cohesion is considered “an important variable for understanding family functioning” (Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012, p. 837) and gives children a solid footing from which to meet the daily hassles and challenges of growing (Lucia & Breslau, 2006). Family cohesion is “the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another” (Olson, 2011, p. 65). Family cohesion can be gained through shared activities that offer opportunities for family interaction. Shared activities can include family vacations. Such vacations may increase overall family well-being, strength, and cohesion (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009; Crespo, 2012; Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor, & Jose, 2011; Lehto et al., 2012; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2008). Potential problems within the family may be related to a lack of family cohesion (Houlberg, Henry, & Morris, 2012; Lucia & Braslau, 2006).

Vacation is a varied, sustained interaction that requires planning, and includes anticipation, experience, and recollection (Lehto, Choi, Lin, and MacDermid, 2009). Vacations are important for individual adult health, both mental and physical (de Graaf, 2003; Verbakel & DiPrete, 2008), as well as children’s mental and physical health (Quinn & Stacey, 2010; Ward & Zabriskie, 2011). The taking of a family vacation builds family cohesion and promotes the health of the family, as well as improves communication (Lehto et al., 2009), builds problem solving skills (Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975; Wells, Widmer, & McCoy, 2004), reduces stress (Austin, 2006), and improves quality of life (Agate et al., 2009; Austin, 2006; Lehto et al., 2009; Mactavish & Schleien, 2004; Quinn & Stacey, 2010). This study furthers family cohesion

research by expanding our knowledge of its connection to the perception of family vacation experiences.

Researchers have studied the ontology or nature of vacations over the past 70 years, as taking a vacation has been a cultural norm for Americans since the mid-1950's (Agate et al., 2009; Aron, 1999; McAlpine, 2011; Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975; Rugh, 2008). Historically, vacations brought the family together (Scheuch, 1960), where they engaged in novel activities (Aron, 1999), and created a sense of camaraderie and unity (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Rugh, 2008). These outcomes continue to be contemporary goals as these bonding experiences allow children to not only learn new things, but to experience their family in unique situations thereby fostering greater unity (Lehto et al., 2009; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

In contemporary American society, daily stresses, harried schedules (de Graaf, 2003), and work/life balance issues negatively affect family connections and cohesion (de Graaf, 2003; Maume, 2006) with potential deleterious effects on the children (Lucia & Breslau, 2006; Rosenfeld, 2004). Family resiliency literature demonstrates the importance of protective factors such as shared leisure activities and spending time together (McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson, Han & Allen, 1997). In fact, parent-child activities help prevent negative externalizing behaviors in children (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2008).

Family vacation has a place in society as a vehicle for strengthening the family unit, but is it possible that parenting style could affect the realization of a parent's goals or family vacation experiences? Research indicated the benefits of an authoritative parenting style (Baumrind, 1966; Belsky, 1984; Brooks, 2013; Fletcher, Walls, Cook, Madison, & Bridges, 2008) as well as suggested an impact of parenting styles on family functioning (Henry, Robinson, Neal,

& Huey, 2006; Luster & Okagaki, 2005; Mupinga, Garrison, & Pierce, 2002), and childrearing (Baumrind, 1966; Berk, 2010; Bolkan, Sano, DeCosta, Acock, & Day, 2010; Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer, & Murphy, 2012).

This study examined authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1966; Baumrind, 1996; Berk, 2010; Brooks, 2013) as they related to family cohesion. The authoritative parenting style was considered to be a higher quality, successful parenting style (Brooks, 2011; Kotchick & Forehand, 2002; Popkin, 2012; Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002) than that of the authoritarian or permissive style, although some research indicated a permissive style was not as harmful as initially assumed (Bolkan et al., 2010). An authoritative parent was one who was warm, sensitive, and caring with a high level of responsiveness, but a high level of demandingness as well (Baumrind, 1996; Belsky, 1984). A permissive parent was one who was highly responsive to the child, but has few demands and low in exerting control, offering little parental authority (Baumrind, 1996; Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini, & Yalcinkaya, 2005; Reitman et al., 2002). Finally, an authoritarian parent exerted high levels of control over the child, demanding much from the child, but not always allowing for input from the child (Baumrind, 1966; Reitman et al., 2002). The authoritarian parent typically used punishment and overt control as well as covert control, showing little nurturance or warmth (Berk, 2010; Brooks, 2013; Leyendecker et al., 2005).

Family vacation research was typically found in leisure, health, and recreation related journals rather than in family-related journals such as *Journal of Child and Family Relations*, *Journal of Family Issues*, or *Journal of Family Studies*. In ten separate family-related journals examined, there were no articles with the word “vacation” in the title, although several articles

did address vacation in some form or fashion, typically by including it as a family ritual (Crespo, 2012) or leisure activity (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Prior research found positive correlations between family vacation and family cohesion (Crespo et al., 2012; Garst, Baughman, Franz, & Seidel, 2013; Lehto et al., 2009; Lehto et al., 2012; Palmer et al., 2007) as well as parental influence via family goals for a vacation (Shaw, 2008; Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Shaw et al., 2008).

### Theoretical Framework

A family systems theoretical framework provided the basis for family vacation research (Crespo et al., 2011; Lehto et al., 2009; Lehto et al., 2012; Ward & Zabriskie, 2011; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), family cohesion research (Olson, 1999; Olson, 2011), as well as research regarding parenting practices (Henry et al., 2006; Houlberg et al., 2012; Jansen et al., 2012; Segrin et al., 2012). The family systems model represented transactional patterns operating within a family (Minuchin, 1978). Within the family system were subsystems (e.g. parent-child, child-child) which was how the “family system differentiates and carries out its functions” (Minuchin, 1975, p. 52). The family systems perspective is appropriate for the study of family vacation, focusing on the subsystems within the system, as well as the entire family (system). Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) stated leisure activities allow for interaction within a changing environment thereby strengthening bonds between subsystems and clarifying family boundaries. Family vacations often include unique situations, accentuating the system’s separateness from the surroundings.

Researchers often used family systems theory as a metaphor to understand family cohesion because change in one person ultimately affects the entire family system as all individuals are interconnected (White & Klein, 2008). When the family interacted as a system, it developed something similar to a feedback loop in that the family processes affect all members in a continuous and simultaneous fashion (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Families would reorganize in order to adapt to particular needs within the family according to the circumplex model (Olson, 1999). The circumplex model, designed to mesh systems theory with family development theory, suggested that when one family member changed in some way, the family would ultimately accommodate that change. When families were strong and balanced, according to this model, they handled crises more effectively.

Finally, family systems theory was applicable to studies of parenting due to the emphasis on dyadic (parent-child) and triadic (parent-child-child, parent-parent-child) relationships. Houlberg, Henry, and Morris (2012) utilized systems theory in their research on adolescents in recognition of “complex interaction patterns” (p. 284) that exist within the family structure. Identifying a systems theoretical perspective as a way to demonstrate the dynamic and goal-directed nature of families, Garst, Baughman, Franz, and Seidel (2013) researched the connections between family camping, family functioning, and parenting. With positive or negative feedback from a parent, the parent-child dyadic relationship was affected by creating a loop between parent and child that ultimately affects the balance of the entire family (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993; White & Klein, 2008).

This research focused on the perception of one parent with an understanding that, although not all family members were represented, family systems theory supports that a

parent's perception of family vacation and family cohesion would influence others within the family unit. Or, as Satir, Stachowiak, and Taschman (1975) stated, a change in one subsystem "changes the balance of the system" (p. 25). Prior research on family leisure (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) as well as parenting styles (Mupinga et al., 2002) had similarly used systems theory as a backdrop to research conducted on only one family member. Therefore, with a family systems perspective, this study helped bridge the research gap in family studies regarding family vacation and family cohesion and provided insight for those who work with families.

This study's purpose was to address the research question - To what extent was the perception of the family vacation experience predictive of family cohesion and was that relationship moderated by parenting style?

## Methods

### Participants

Survey participants included 106 adults who had taken a family vacation within the past year with at least one child aged 3 through 18. A demographically heterogeneous sample, participants from thirty-five states were represented (20% from Texas), with 23% living in a rural area, 53% in a suburban area, and 24% in an urban area. Caucasians represented 82% of the sample, with 9% African American, 2% Hispanic/Latino, 2% Asian, and 1% multi-racial. Females represented 86% of the sample and 87% traveled with a spouse or significant other. Total annual family income of participants included 14% making \$50,000 or less, 24% in the \$50,001 to \$90,000 range, 34% in the \$90,001 to \$130,000 range, and 28% in the \$130,001 and

over range. Finally, the age range of adult participants was 25 to 60 with a mean age of 42.67. The age range of their children was 1 to 30. A majority of participants stated their last family vacation consisted of 4-7 days (54%), but 17% stated it was 1-3 days and 19% stated it was more than a week. Those whose last family vacation was more than 2 weeks represented 10% of the sample. Seventy percent indicated they definitely planned to take another family vacation within the next year, 24% stated they probably would, and 6% stated they might or might not. Finally, 18% of the participants were on or had just completed the family vacation within the past month and 61% had taken the family vacation within the prior 3-6 months.

#### Instrumentation

Participants responded to three instruments, fifteen demographic questions, and two open-ended items all embedded within one survey requiring 10-15 minutes to complete via a Qualtrics™ (2013) internet link. The three instruments consisted of 16 family cohesion items from the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale-II (FACES II; Olson, Portner, & Bell, 1992), the Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R; Reitman et al., 2002), and the Family Vacation Experience (FVE) measure constructed for the purposes of this study.

Participants completed FACES II, a measure used in prior vacation research, which has a family systems foundation and strong psychometric properties (Kouneski, 2000). Aggregated scores on the 16 cohesion-specific items indicated the participant's perception of their family cohesion with 71 - 80 = very connected, 60 - 70 = connected, 51 - 59 = separated, and 16 - 50 = disengaged (Olson & Tiesel, 1992).

Participants also responded to items on the PAQ-R which is aligned with Baumrind's (1966) authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. The PAQ-R has adequate

psychometric properties in that reliability was moderate ( $\alpha = .843$  authoritarian;  $\alpha = .720$  authoritative;  $\alpha = .778$  permissive; Reitman et al., 2002). The PAQ-R consisted of 30 Likert-scaled items with each parenting style assessed by 10 items. Each participant received an aggregated score on each parenting style.

The FVE included items grounded in research regarding the family vacation experience. Participants responded to items regarding their enjoyment of the family vacation, their perceived enjoyment of family members, opportunities for family interaction, ability to bond, and whether the vacation achieved what they wanted it to achieve and was worth the time. The open-ended items were (a) briefly describe the family vacation you had in mind when you answered the above questions, and (b) briefly describe why you go on a family vacation. These items were included to provide supportive and descriptive information, offering an additional perspective of family vacation.

#### Procedures

The protection of rights and the welfare of human subjects involved in this study were ensured by obtaining approval from the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (IRB 13-579). Recruitment of participants occurred by sending identical emails to personal and organizational contacts. Identical information was also posted on FaceBook, LinkedIn, National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) section listservs (new professionals and Certified Family Life Educators), and the National Parenting Education Network (NPEN) listserv. All invitations to participate included the requirements for participation, instructions, and the survey link. Recipients were also encouraged to forward the information in its entirety to others (snowball sampling). A type of convenience sample, snowball sampling was not random sampling and



therefore, in this case, could not represent all who may take family vacations. It was, however, a viable approach when analyzing relationships between people (Bryman, 2012). Results indicated 13.5% of participants heard about the survey from a listserv, 12.5% heard about it from a co-worker, 31% heard through an organization to which they belong, and 36.5% heard about the survey from a friend or relative.

#### Data Analysis

Data was downloaded from Qualtrics<sup>™</sup> to SPSS 22.0 for analysis. Of the 107 initial records, 106 were retained for demographic data (one record deleted due to significant missing data). For regression analyses, 9 additional records were deleted due to missing data and one outlier (assessed via residual plots). Of the remaining 97 records, homoscedasticity was present, confirmed by scatterplots between standardized residuals and standardized predicted values. Non-systematic missing values in the three instruments were replaced with the participant's mean score for the particular scale (Downey & King, 1998).

With family cohesion as the dependent variable, a series of regressions were performed in order to assess the predictive abilities of family vacation and parenting style on family cohesion. Moderating effects (i.e. strength and/or direction of relationship; Baron & Kenny, 1986) of the three parenting styles on the connection between family vacation and family cohesion were also assessed through hierarchical regressions. Interaction variables were centered on the mean, reducing the potential of multicollinearity (Keith, 2006). Structure coefficients (Courville & Thompson, 2001; Henson, 2002) helped identify the contribution of each predictor in the regression analyses and thus helped inform interpretation of the beta

weights (Kraha, Turner, Nimon, Zientek, & Henson, 2012). Structure coefficients are reported in Tables 3 through 6 as are adjusted  $R^2$  effect sizes (Leach & Henson, 2007).

Six hierarchical regressions were performed. The first three included all participants ( $N = 97$ ) and assessed overall variance accounted for in the first block by four variables, namely family vacation experience, authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, and permissive parenting style. The second block included one interaction term between one of the parenting styles and FVE, thus requiring three separate regressions. Identification of changes in family cohesion variance as related to each parenting style was possible with this procedure. As a secondary exploration of the data, three hierarchical multiple regressions were then run in similar fashion for those participants whose oldest child fell in the 3 – 11 age range. This age group meshed with PAQ-R target age range and consisted of 58 participants. Regressions were not run on the 12 – 18 age range due to such a small sample size ( $n = 31$ ) rendering potential results non-interpretable. Analysis of the two open-ended items included a search for key words with the aid of QSR NVivo 10™ software (2013). Appendix E contains all responses to the two open-ended items.

## Results

In order to meaningfully aggregate responses to the 9 items in the Family Vacation Experience (FVE) measure, both a principle components analysis and principle axis factoring were conducted in order to corroborate findings. Both indicated the presence of one strong component (7 items) and one weak component (2 items). Described as the preferred factor retention strategy (Zwick & Velicer, 1986), a parallel analysis (i.e. comparison of results to

random data) was conducted, revealing one component. Inspection of the 2 items loading on the weak component revealed they measured family experiences *after* vacation rather than family vacation experiences specifically and thus were removed from the FVE measure. The mean values (Table 1) for the 7 individual items retained for the Family Vacation Experience (FVE) measure all had means above 4.5 out of 5 (5 = strongly agree) except for family vacation achieved what I wanted it to achieve for me ( $M = 4.38$ ). Mean of the aggregated FVE was 32.68 out of a possible 35. Table 1 also demonstrates all item correlations were statistically significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 2 shows reliabilities for all 3 measures as well as correlations, skewness, kurtosis, means, and standard deviations. Cronbach's alpha for the family vacation experience was .917. The FACES II measure had an internal reliability of .932, somewhat higher than prior research (Kouneski, 2000; Olson et al., 1992). A reliability coefficient was obtained for each of the three different parenting styles in the PAQ-R, resulting in somewhat higher alphas than prior results (low to mid 70s; Reitman et al., 2002), although the authoritative scale had the lowest reliability, similar to Reitman's study (2002). Regarding correlations, of note was the statistically significant positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and family cohesion ( $r = .228, p < .05$ ). However, the highest positive correlation was between FVE and family cohesion ( $r = .233, p < .05$ ), demonstrating moderate correlation between perception of family vacation experience and family cohesion.

### Regression Results

In order to address more fully the first part of the research question, i.e. to what extent was the perception of the family vacation experience predictive of family cohesion, perception

of family cohesion was simultaneously regressed on the perception of family vacation experience (FVE), authoritarian parenting style (Tarian), permissive parenting style (Perm), and authoritative parenting style (Tative). With a medium effect size ( $R^2 = .139$ ) and some shrinkage (adj.  $R^2 = .102$ ), accounting for approximately 10% of the variance in family cohesion scores, results were statistically significant,  $F(4, 92) = 3.713, p = .008$ . Table 3 gives beta weights, structure coefficients, and product measures (partitioning of  $R^2$ ; Nathans, Oswald, & Nimon, 2012), demonstrating Perm was a very weak predictor of family cohesion and a possible suppressor variable. In combination, FVE and Tative accounted for 77% of the variance in the family cohesion scores ( $r_s^2 = .392, .375$  respectively).

In order to address the second half of the research question, is that relationship (between FVE and family cohesion) moderated by parenting style, hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. Three separate hierarchical regressions were conducted with the first block including FVE and the three parenting styles and the second block consisting of an interaction term between one parenting style and FVE. FVE and PAQ-R scores were centered around their means in order to aid interpretation of moderating effects by reducing the potential of multicollinearity (Keith, 2006).

Table 4 shows the corresponding B weights, beta weights, and structure coefficients, indicating the interaction term of authoritarian parenting style with family vacation experience (FVE $\times$ Tarian) was statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .089, p = .002$ ). Figure 1 visually demonstrates the interaction effect, namely higher authoritarian scores enhanced the relationship between family vacation experience and family cohesion. Those participants scoring one standard deviation above the mean on authoritarian parenting style saw a greater interaction effect

between authoritarian and family vacation scores as demonstrated in the more pronounced slope. Scores that fell one standard deviation below the mean had a similar slope and although not as strong as the higher authoritarian scores, still demonstrated a slight enhancement in relationship between family vacation experience and family cohesion.

Table 5 shows permissive parenting style with family vacation (FVEPerm) was statistically significant as well ( $\Delta R^2 = .045, p = .027$ ). Authoritative parenting style with family vacation experience (FVETative) showed no statistically significant additional variance accounted for ( $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .128$ ), as seen in Table 6. Visual inspection of all PAQ-R scores identified only 6 participants with the highest parenting score as authoritarian and only 2 as permissive. A full 89 participants (92%) had their highest score as the authoritative parenting style.

Controlling for age of child, an exploratory series of regressions were run for those whose oldest child was 11 or younger ( $n = 58$ ; see Table 7 for regression summaries). This age group matched the target age group of the PAQ-R. The correlation between FVE and family cohesion was noteworthy at  $r = .330, p < .01$  and an initial regression of the independent variables FVE, Tarian, Tative, and Perm accounted for almost 17% of the variance in family cohesion scores ( $adj. R^2 = .165$ ). Although the interaction terms FVETarian and FVEPerm demonstrated statistically significant changes in variance accounted for (similar to the full sample), this smaller sample resulted in a statistically significant change for FVETative as well ( $\Delta R^2 = .045, p = .080$ ) though not particularly noteworthy.

## Qualitative Results

Analysis of the two qualitative open-ended items was performed using QSR NVivo 10™ (2013). Simple word frequencies were performed to get a sense of the responses, however individual inspection of responses via NVivo nodes was necessary due to double meanings of some terms such as “family” (i.e. immediate family versus relatives) and “park” (i.e. theme park versus national or state park). The first prompt asked participants to briefly describe the family vacation they had in mind when answering the questions. Although Disney was mentioned 14 times and Florida mentioned 12 times, beach (11 times), camping (8 times), and mountains, swimming, and water (6 times each) were also identified as were lake and museums (5 times each). The term “family” or “families” occurred in 56 different responses and the term “relative” or “relatives” occurred 6 times. Analysis of the family node indicated 16 of the family references were synonymous with relatives indicating 40 participants were referring to their immediate family. The use of “park” or “parks” occurred 11 times but only 3 of those were referencing a national park. The other references were in connection with Disney, amusement, or water parks.

The second open-ended prompt asked participants to briefly describe why they go on a family vacation. Almost half ( $n = 47$ ) included the words “together,” “togetherness,” “bond,” or “bonding” in their responses. Fifty participants used the word “family” or “families” in their response, 29 referenced “fun,” and 15 included the word “memories.” Away (38 times), new (36 times), experiences (28 times), enjoyment (22 times), relaxation (13 times), and work (12 times) were other commonly found words.

## Discussion

### Family Vacation Experience and Family Cohesion

Results indicated a positive correlation between the perception of family vacation experience and the perception of family cohesion, producing a low to medium effect size ( $r = .233, p < .05$ ; Cohen, 1992). Verbalizing this connection, one participant stated they go on vacations “to have time together to experience new-ness....new aspects of each other, new places, new experiences, and to enjoy each other’s company.” Perception of family vacation experience combined with the three parenting styles accounted for 10% of the variance in family cohesion scores. Of that 10%, FVE scores accounted for almost 40% as demonstrated by its squared structure coefficient ( $r_s^2 = .392$ ). Results for the 3-11 age group, although a smaller sample, showed an even stronger connection with the four variables accounting for almost 17% of the variance in family cohesion scores of which FVE scores were almost 50% of that 17% as seen in its squared structure coefficient ( $r_s^2 = .486$ ). Supporting a family systems model for the benefits of family vacationing for family cohesion, one parent stated, “we try new things, explore and have those common experiences to look back on, laugh about. We feel a sense of family identity from the things we do.” These findings corroborate and strengthen previous research connecting family vacation and family cohesion (Lehto et al., 2009; Shaw et al., 2008; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), although this is the first study to specifically do so by utilizing the original 16 FACES II family cohesion items with family vacation experience.

None of the correlations between parenting styles and FVE were statistically significant, although results showed a weak positive correlation between both authoritarian and authoritative styles with FVE and a weak negative correlation between permissive and FVE.

These findings may be due to the self-report process of the participant's perception, but may also be due to the perception of family vacation being an overall positive experience for most parents, regardless of parenting style.

Perception of family cohesion correlated positively with both authoritative parenting and perception of FVE at  $p < .05$ . Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles correlated negatively with family cohesion, but only the authoritarian style was statistically significant, albeit only at  $p < .10$ . Therefore, the strongest correlation was between FVE and family cohesion. For this sample, it would seem the perception of family vacation experience had more connection to their perception of family cohesion than did the parenting style. This was also evident in regression analyses discussed below.

Although the sample was demographically heterogeneous, overall results indicated a much more homogeneous group regarding responses. Mean scores on the perception of FVE as well as family cohesion were generally high as was the mean score on authoritative parenting style. Speaking to both was one person's comment

We began [visiting the Cape] when the children were little. Then for many years we weren't able to get away. Then I had two teenagers and I felt it was important to reconnect by visiting the Cape where we had strong memories. The old familiar closeness helped heal some disagreements that had come up. It was good to be together, but know we were all individual.

The overall mean of 69.1 on the FACES II measure indicated overall perception of family cohesion to be connected, verging on very connected as identified by Olson & Tiesel's scoring categories (60 – 70 = connected, 71 - 80 = very connected; 1992). Families who were connected also displayed positive communications and interactions, which meshed with an authoritative parenting style (Kouneski, 2000; Mupinga et al., 2002) and established a



systemically positive feedback loop (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). This study showed a positive correlation between family cohesion and authoritative parenting style, but the interaction between family vacation and authoritative parenting style did little to improve prediction of family cohesion scores possibly indicating redundancy in measurement.

#### Moderating Effects of an Authoritative Parenting Style

The second part of the research question addressed the moderating effects of three different parenting styles. Hierarchical regressions indicated the interaction effect of authoritative parenting style with FVE was small, only accounting for an additional 2% variance in family cohesion scores. This might be due to the possibility that the FVE measure already reflected an authoritative parenting style. Although both individually contributed heavily to the regression equation, their interaction term only accounted for 3% of the 2% additional variance accounted for in family cohesion scores. With 89 of the 97 participants scoring highest on the authoritative measure, it is possible there was limited variation in scores, reducing the potential effect of the interaction. Essentially, most of the sample claimed an authoritative parenting style, had a great time on their vacation, and had high family cohesion. To some extent, then, one would expect interaction effects to be minimal.

It is worth noting that although this study's purpose was not to confirm psychometrics of the PAQ-R, it is possible that scoring may have been somewhat ambiguous, depending on the way a particular item was worded. In fact, an email received from a participant confirms this.

One participant stated:

I just took the survey and one question was confusing and I think needs to be re-worded:...the question about children not following the requests on their parents need to be "punished". Punish is a very ambiguous word - does it mean

"consequence" or physical punishment? Wasn't sure how to answer that one because my children do get consequences but never physical punishment.

This particular item was actually scored as an 'authoritative' item but clearly this person, and possibly others, may have responded differently than anticipated due to the word "punished" being used. Issues such as these can make interpretation of the data less accurate.

#### Moderating Effects of an Authoritarian Parenting Style

Unlike the interaction between an authoritative style and family vacation experience, the interaction effect between family vacation experience and authoritarian parenting style resulted in an additional 9% variance accounted for in family cohesion scores for an overall statistically significant model ( $p < .001$ ). This regression revealed a unique phenomenon in that the beta weight and structure coefficient for authoritarian parenting style were both negative, but the interaction with FVE had a positive beta weight. Because this is the first study to analyze the potential moderating effects of parenting style and family vacation on family cohesion, one cannot draw strong conclusions. However, it would appear that an authoritarian parenting style is somehow positively affected by the perception of family vacation experience. As one participant stated, they went on vacation "to take a break from our everyday chaos and responsibilities in order to regroup, have fun, and focus on one another." Higher maternal stress is associated with a more authoritarian parenting style for younger children (Healey, Flory, Miller, & Halperin, 2011) and outside stressors in general can affect the parent's style of parenting (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). If family vacation allows those stressors to disappear, albeit even for a short time, possibly one who is typically authoritarian can be less so while on vacation.

Exploratory regressions on scores from participants with children 11 or younger demonstrated similar results, although even more pronounced with the interaction effect accounting for an additional 11% of the variance in family cohesion scores. One participant whose highest parenting score was authoritarian, with children ages 9 and 10, indicated family vacations are “a great time to get away from the everyday routine. My husband can be away from work and relax; I can be away from everyday stresses; and our kids can be away from the everyday chores and routine.”

It would appear the effects of an authoritarian parenting style are different when on vacation and/or an authoritarian parenting style does not necessarily carry into the family vacation experience. This conclusion, however, must be considered while keeping in mind the potential issues of self-reporting one’s parenting style. Regardless, this may be helpful information for those assisting authoritarian parents in developing a more authoritative approach to parenting.

#### Moderating Effects of a Permissive Parenting Style

Permissive parenting style was also unique. In every regression, permissive parenting style acted as a suppressor variable, confirmed by the use of squared structure coefficients and product measures (Nathans et al., 2012). With its high negative correlation with authoritarian parenting style, it may be that permissive parenting style is suppressing the “noise” in the authoritarian parenting style, allowing it to have greater impact on perception of family cohesion. However, the mean for all scores on the permissive parenting items in the PAQ-R was the lowest of the parenting styles ( $M = 24.05$ ) indicating these 97 participants were not very permissive thus may not be variant enough for meaningful interpretation. To some extent,

full explanation is not possible until replicated in order to assess whether these results are unique or consistent with other samples.

Although permissive parenting style was a suppressor variable, its interaction with family vacation experience was clearly not, complicating interpretation. In both the full sample as well as the smaller sample, the interaction between permissive parenting style and family vacation experience added statistically significant predictive abilities for family cohesion scores. For the full sample, the inclusion of the interaction effect accounted for an additional 4.5% and for the smaller sample of those with younger children, the interaction effect accounted for an additional 15% variance accounted for.

For the smaller sample, the interaction term between the family vacation experience and permissive style had the largest negative beta weight and squared structure coefficient for any of the interaction terms in both samples. This would seem to indicate that in the younger group, the interaction between family vacation experience and permissive parenting style negatively predicted family cohesion. Popkin (2012) described permissive parenting as a doormat approach to parenting in that parents get walked over by the child. From a systems theoretical perspective, this situation can lead to a chaotic, enmeshed system (Mupinga et al., 2002). A family vacation may not be able to alter this system. Again, however, this interpretation could be overstating the effects due to the smaller sample of 58. For the full sample of 97 participants, a negative beta weight and structure coefficient indicated a similar pattern such that a permissive parenting style interacting with FVE negatively predicted family cohesion.

Replication of this study with parents known to score high on permissive parenting may be helpful. Additionally, testing the interaction effects on a large group of parents with teens may also reveal differences especially since the parenting measure used is most appropriate with those having children in the 3 to 11 age range. An important task of parents of adolescents is “to allow adolescents to move in and out of the family system, requiring an increased flexibility of family boundaries” (Crespo et al., 2011). Testing the interaction between permissive parenting and family vacation experience for those with adolescents may reveal a very different result.

#### Qualitative Items

Qualitative items can add a subjective dimension and provide deeper meaning to a survey (Gilgun, 2005). Family vacation and family leisure researchers (Agate et al., 2009; Bowan, 2001) have recommended including qualitative items in future research. Thus, two qualitative open-ended items were included in order to provide descriptive support for the quantitative measures as well as to identify how 21<sup>st</sup> century families describe and view family vacation. Although there were a number of themes such as togetherness, fun, creating memories, and getting away from daily routines, similar to the results of Shaw, Havitz, and Delamere’s research in 2008, there were also several comments regarding the importance of being with extended family (suprasystems). Resiliency, self-esteem, and lower incidence of behavior problems are benefits for children who are connected to family and family history (Rollins, 2013). One participant stated their vacation included a trip to Taiwan because “kids haven’t met their grandparents for more than a decade.” Another participant indicated their last family vacation was to spend time with the children’s great grandfather before he passed

away. Six participants mentioned the word “relative(s)” in their responses and 16 participants mentioned family or families as reference to relatives.

Although most families considered their family vacation to be a positive event, several mothers commented on negative or difficult aspects. As Shaw (2008) stated, “family vacations, though, are not free of parental responsibility” (p. 694) and are typically more work for mothers than fathers (Shaw et al., 2008; Shaw, 2008) with potentially different goals (Harrington, 2005). One participant echoed this sentiment by stating, “as a mother vacations are too stressful.” Another stated, “I was hoping it would be relaxing, but I found it stressful at times.” However, another mother stated ‘we are away from the chores that call out to all mothers when at home.’ Finally, one participant’s vacation goal was evidently not realized, as she stated

Destination New York with husband (#2) and his daughters (ages 14 and 16) to sightsee and visit with relatives of all ages. Teens have lived full time with us for 3 years had generally low energy, dislike of walking and were unresponsive to my attempts at conversation.

True to her comments, this participant’s scores on family cohesion and family vacation experience were lower than the mean scores. Certainly, this was not a ‘fun’ vacation. However, this participant must have felt the attempts were worth it. As to why she went on family vacations, she responded “for adventure – to discover new and interesting places or activities. Or for social – to visit with family or friends,” reflecting a positive attitude, albeit not specifying the ‘adventures’ would occur with stepchildren. She rated herself highest on the authoritative parenting style.

Several participants also commented on the expense of a vacation. One stated, “staying at home is often just as expensive as vacationing” while another stated “wish I had been able to do this more when my kids were younger.” With a somewhat positive twist, one participant

stated “the children seem to only remember the good memories and laugh about the bad ones, so all the work, money, sacrifice, planning, sibling fighting, etc. is worth it.” Certainly not all families can afford to take a vacation to Disney or the Bahamas, but one parent demonstrated how important vacations were to her and her family even though finances were an issue.

This time we went to watch and support our oldest son [NCAA wrestling tournament]. For the past three years this has been our family vacation. We are able to spend time together and bond. We are on the low socioeconomic status so vacations are rare and we sacrifice a lot to get this one in.

This research has the potential of providing a positive, proactive way of improving and strengthening the family as a system by demonstrating predictive abilities of family vacation experience and parenting styles on family cohesion. This study has, in small part, responded to Shaw’s (2008) concern that family leisure has ignored ideologies of parenthood but from a larger perspective, has demonstrated the importance family vacation can have on family cohesion.

#### Limitations

Most respondents were very pleased with their last family vacation and had an authoritative parenting style. This potentially limited the ability to discover differences in family vacation experiences and parenting styles as it related to family cohesion. Additionally, a ceiling effect occurred for the FVE measure due to the high ratings of perceived family vacation experience. This lack of variability potentially had a deleterious effect on the robustness of the regression analyses, although the sufficient sample size may have mitigated some of that effect. Additionally, many participants indicated a perception of high family cohesion (connected or very connected), once again limiting the variability of scores on the dependent variable.

Self-report measures potentially reduce statistical rigor although there was a sufficient sample size. Chan (2009) stated “there is no strong evidence to lead us to conclude that self-report data are inherently flawed or that their use will always impeded our ability to meaningfully interpret correlations or other parameter estimates obtained from the data” (p. 327). Certainly, in this study, assessment of the participant’s perception of their parenting style, vacation experience, and family cohesion required some sort of self-report measure. Because anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, socially-desirable responses were more likely decreased, especially given the non-sensitive nature of the measures utilized (Morsbach & Prinz, 2006).

Obtaining a demographically heterogeneous group indicated computer accessibility was not an issue, although some feedback indicated the survey was hard to read on iPhones. Although others stated they were able to complete the survey both on iPads as well as iPhones, with today’s technology, an online survey does need to be tested on various devices before release.

The survey was in English only, possibly limiting a more heterogeneous response. Another limitation was that the participant was asked to indicate their perception of family member experiences, rather than inclusion of other family members in the study. This, of course, may or may not be an accurate representation of other family members’ experiences but sheds light on the parent’s perceptions which systemically can influence other family members. Similar studies regarding vacation have surveyed adults only (Lehto et al., 2009; Palmer et al., 2007; Shaw et al., 2008). Sample selection bias may have been an issue in that



only those adults who had taken a family vacation over the past year were solicited (Alreck & Settle, 2004).

In 2001, Sheehan found online survey response to be dwindling either due to time constraints or due to the fact that the novelty of such a process had worn off. This trend may be continuing, although an initial 107 responses was positive. Possibly an additional limitation was the amount of time and follow-through required on the part of the participant, leading to self-selection bias (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Those who had more discretionary time to complete the survey may have represented a different response set from those who did not have time. It is also possible that the Hawthorne effect played a part in the overwhelming number of parents rating themselves authoritative such that participants were able to glean from the instructions their parenting style was being assessed. They may have answered differently than their actual behaviors might indicate. Finally, although the release of the study was set to coincide with year's end to capture all types of family vacations throughout the seasons, it may be the holiday process prevented some participation.

### Implications and Conclusions

Parent educators, family life specialists, and other parent and family professionals may find these results to be useful in practice. Although data presented here does not prove a family vacation leads to better family cohesion, the analyses do indicate moderately strong correlations between the perception of family vacation experience and family cohesion, coupled with unique moderating effects of parenting style. When working with families, this information may be part of a positive approach to some family issues.

Possibly the family vacation experience actually moderates the parenting style as related to family cohesion versus parenting style moderating the family vacation experience. For those authoritarian-style parents, vacation may be an opportunity to practice more authoritative behavior, possibly due to reduced stress while on vacation. As one participant stated, “we go to relieve stress. I have found that having a few days without any obligation helps us all manage our stress levels better.” Preparing parents for such possibilities may encourage a parent to be more aware of their parenting style both on and off vacation. In terms of family system theory, then, although the initial family vacation may offer first-order change to occur in one parent, a higher level of change, i.e. second-order (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), may occur by the adaptation of a more authoritative style.

Twenty-three responses to the question of why they took a vacation included the phrase “get away.” One participant stated they go on vacation “to get away and connect more deeply with one another.” Half of all participants used the words bonds, bonding, together, or togetherness in their responses. As one participant stated “we enjoy being together. It’s an opportunity to get away from distractions and spend time together. We try new things, explore and have those common experiences to look back on, laugh about. We feel a sense of family identity from the things we do.” Certainly comments like these, coupled with the results of this study, may lead professionals to recommend a family vacation as a respite from stress and to temporarily “avoid the distraction associated with society pressures” as another participant stated. From a family systems theoretical perspective, this positive parental mindset, as well as the creation or strengthening of family identity, can encourage positive interaction between family members thereby influencing family cohesion.

With family cohesion being an important factor for successful families, family vacations offer the opportunity to strengthen familial bonds. As Rugh (2008) stated, “family vacations are life journeys” (p. 184). Reflecting this sentiment and meshing with other studies (e.g., Shaw et al., 2008), one participant stated,

Our vacations are not only a great deal of fun, but we’ve also learned over the years that they make up a large percentage of our great memories. They become part of our family story and we enjoy talking about them from time to time. They are definitely bonding experiences.

Another participant stated “the main reason for our family vacations is to make memories that last longer than any gifts we could buy for each other. It provides undisturbed time to bond with each other and provides a break from our busy lives.” Comments such as these may encourage family educators to use family vacation as one more tool in assisting families with the daily processes of building strong and cohesive families.

Finally, family vacations offer the opportunity for the entire family system to strengthen thereby creating a resiliency against the myriad stressors in society today. As one participant stated, “getting away from the usual surroundings puts things in perspective and clears my head so I can come back more focused on what really matters in life.” With such potential positive opportunities for families, researchers and practitioners need to consider the implications of taking a family vacation.

This type of study does not allow for causal interpretation and, therefore, cannot indicate family vacation experience causes family cohesion. Nor can one identify family cohesion leads to the perception of a better family vacation. However, these preliminary results would indicate a moderately strong connection between the two and a moderately

strong connection between the interaction of parenting style and the perception of family vacation experience.

Future research in this vein could assess whether family vacation has a short-term and/or long-term effect on changing parenting style. Longitudinal studies are typically more robust than a cross-sectional study such as this (Bryman, 2012) and may provide further insight on the connections between family vacation experience and family cohesion. Pre-vacation and post-vacation analysis on all three measures may offer additional information as well. Other recommendations for future studies include

- Expanding the FVE measure to a 7-point Likert scale in order to flesh out small differences in experience;
- Targeting particular groups to sample in order to remove the self-selection bias of those who enjoyed their last vacation (and thus being potentially more inclined to respond to an online survey);
- Assessing whether differences in responses exist according to gender
- Utilizing a parenting style measure that more directly addresses issues of parenting of older children and teens, and
- Finding ways to obtain a purposeful and representative sample.

Continued study in this vein may reveal greater nuanced differences since it is possible that those families who do vacation together may truly be those families with higher cohesion and a tendency towards an authoritative parenting style (either regularly, or while on vacation). Results of this study, combined with previous family vacation literature, indicate this topic may offer value to the field of family studies.

Table 1

*Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of 7 FVE Items, N = 101*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. FV worth the time	-						
2. FV enjoyable for me	.774	-					
3. FV enjoyable for family	.746	.775	-				
4. Activities encouraged interaction	.729	.657	.698	-			
5. Family able to bond	.798	.756	.714	.757	-		
6. FV achieved for me	.640	.687	.502	.574	.656	-	
7. FV achieved for family	.626	.670	.669	.699	.642	.731	-
<i>M</i>	4.82	4.65	4.74	4.71	4.61	4.38	4.60
<i>SD</i>	.607	.741	.627	.698	.848	.947	.708

Note: all correlations are statistically significant at  $p < .001$

Table 2

*Descriptives for FVE, FACES II, and PAQ-R (3 Parenting Styles), N = 97*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Authoritarian	-				
2. Permissive	-.540**	-			
3. Authoritative	-.239*	.123	-		
4. Family Vacation Experience	.057	-.045	.022	-	
5. FACES II	-.172†	-.019	.228*	.233*	-
Possible range of scores	10-50	10-50	10-50	7-35	16-80
Actual range of scores	10-47	10-37	27-50	7-35	30-80
<i>M</i>	27.6392	24.0515	41.6907	32.6804	69.1959
<i>SD</i>	6.9345	5.7796	4.66	3.9858	9.5084
Coefficient of Skewness	.225	-.107	-.534	-3.611	-1.414
Coefficient of Kurtosis	1.152	-.557	.320	18.333	2.475
<i>A</i>	.843	.778	.720	.917	.932

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .10$ .

Table 3

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles, N = 97*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 1					
Authoritarian	-.305	-.222	-.462**	.213	.038
Permissive	-.250	-.152	-.052	.003	.003
Authoritative	.384	.188	.612**	.375	.043
Family Vacation Experience	.561	.235†	.626**	.392	.055

Regression Summary:  $R = .373$ ,  $R^2 = .139$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .102$ ;  $F(4,92) = 3.713$ ,  $p = .008$ \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.

Table 4

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVETarian Interaction, N = 97*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.474	-.346*	-.361**	.130	.060
Permissive	-.309	-.188	-.041	.002	.004
Authoritative	.291	.143	.478**	.228	.033
Family Vacation Experience	.926	.388**	.489**	.239	.090
Family Vacation Experience with Authoritarian (FVETarian)	.139	.349*	.249†	.062	.042

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .477$ ,  $R^2 = .228$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .185$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .089$ ,  $p = .002$ ; Model 2  $F(5,91) = 5.365$ ,  $p < .001$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.



Table 5

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVEPerm Interaction, N = 97*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.295	-.215	-.401**	.161	.037
Permissive	-.166	-.101	-.045	.002	.002
Authoritative	.355	.174	.531**	.282	.040
Family Vacation Experience	.706	.296*	.543**	.295	.069
Family Vacation Experience with Permissive (FVEPerm)	-.124	-.226†	-.377**	.142	.037

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .429$ ,  $R^2 = .184$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .140$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .045$ ,  $p = .027$ ; Model 2  $F(5,91) = 4.115$ ,  $p = .002$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.

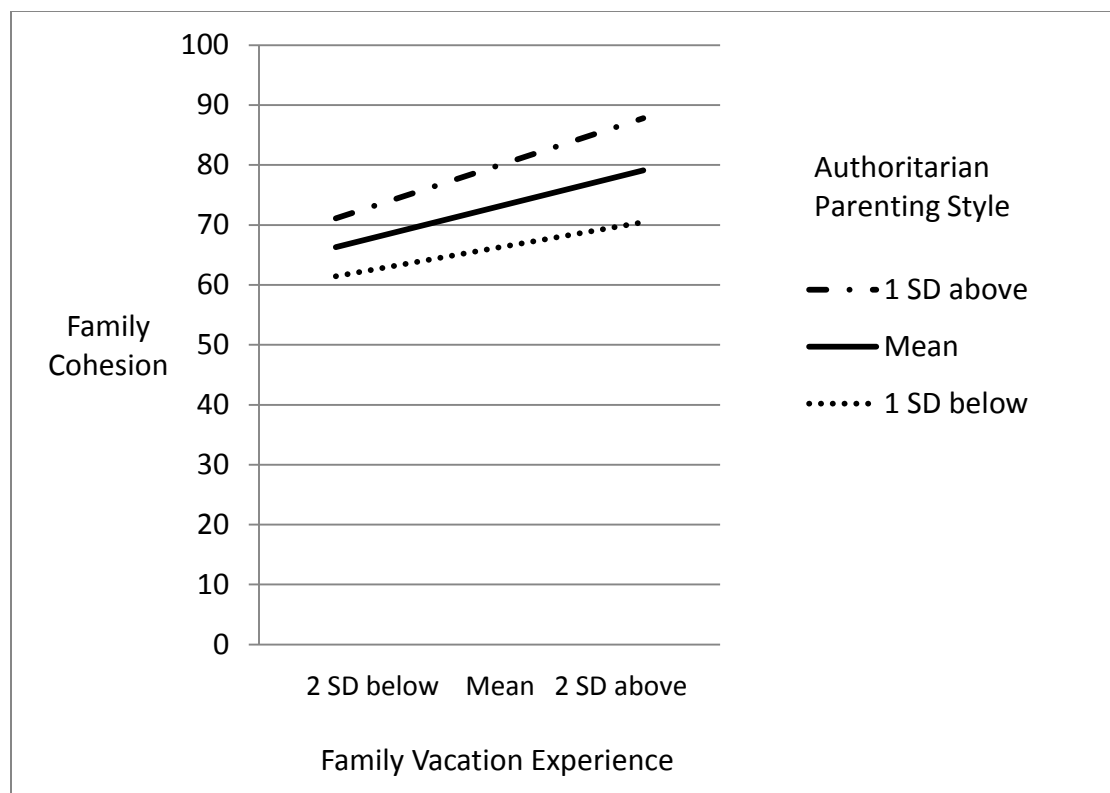
Table 6

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVETative Interaction, N = 97*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.288	-.210	-.429**	.184	.036
Permissive	-.251	-.152	-.048	.002	.003
Authoritative	.425	.208†	.569**	.324	.047
Family Vacation Experience	.644	.270*	.582**	.339	.063
Family Vacation Experience with Authoritative (FVETative)	-.117	-.153	-.181	.033	.011

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .401$ ,  $R^2 = .161$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .115$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .128$ ;  
Model 2  $F(5,91) = 3.486$ ,  $p = .006$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.



*Figure 1.* Relationship between FVE and family cohesion at 3 levels of authoritarian parenting

Table 7

*Regression Summaries for 3-11 Age Group, N = 58*

Regression	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Adj. R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>F Change</i>	<i>p</i>
4 Predictors (Authoritarian, Permissive, Authoritative, Family Vacation Experience)	.472	.224	.165		(3.822)	.008
4 predictors + FVETarian (Model 2)	.578	.334	.270	.110	8.574	.005
4 predictors + FVEPerm (Model 2)	.612	.375	.314	.151	12.529	.001
4 predictors + FVETative (Model 2)	.518	.269	.198	.045	3.178	.080

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APPENDIX A  
EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW

With the myriad challenges facing families today, professionals in the family studies field have numerous opportunities to assist. From a family systems perspective, most families have the ability to dodge the perils of 21<sup>st</sup> century childrearing by strengthening their family as a whole. Family vacation is one of those family activities that can benefit the family as well as the individual, leading to family cohesion. Family cohesion strengthens the family, offering support throughout life's challenges. A parent's style of interacting with their child can also be a factor in strengthening the family as a unit and the child as an individual. Thus, the analysis of family vacation, family cohesion, and parenting style through the family systems lens is but one way to shed light on the opportunities to assist families. This review will first address the family systems theoretical perspective and then review current literature in family cohesion, vacation, and parenting styles.

### Family Systems Theory

General systems theory, or GST, was derived within the fields of biology and robotics but has been expanded to include organizational and management research, mathematics, military interests, and ultimately psychiatry and sociology (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993; White & Klein, 2008). It is within the human sciences arena that systems theory began to be utilized when looking at family processes. A key tenet of systems theory is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, that is to say the family unit is more than just various relationships between individuals (described as *holism*, Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). As Brooks (2013) described, this can be visualized as a ripple effect such that something happening to one person within the family ultimately ends up affecting the entire family just as the ripples in the water from a rock will emanate throughout the body of water. Thus, dyadic relationships

between spouses, for example, do not only affect the spouses but the entire family. In fact, Thompson and Walker (1982) stated relationships, in particular dyads, cannot just be researched from the perspective of the two individuals, but from the perspective of the overall relationship as well.

When studying family vacation and family cohesion, a family systems theoretical perspective is apropos due to the focus on variables of the *whole*. White and Klein (2008) stated that family systems have forms of feedback built in such that “a system’s behavior affects its environment, and in turn the environment affects the system” (p. 157), always seeking some form of homeostasis. Taking a family vacation creates a new environment for the family. Within that environment, the family is thus affected as a matter of feedback from the environment. In the process of a feedback loop, a family vacation has the potential of affecting the entire family and how family members relate thus affecting family cohesion.

Another tenet of family systems theory is the concept of boundaries which are not only physical, but social and emotional as well (Knox, 2011). Family vacation ties a family together as a unit, allowing for opportunities to change the social and physical boundaries (Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). The change in boundaries (and environment) through family leisure, including vacation, can lead to emotional benefit through improved family cohesion as new experiences “test” the family and allow for new ways of interacting (Ward & Zabriskie, 2011).

One particularly relevant marital and family model based on systems theory is the circumplex model developed by Olson and colleagues (Olson, 1999; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993; White & Klein, 2008). Most often utilized for family and couples therapy, the model operates from a systems perspective in that imbalances in cohesion, adaptability, and



communication within the system can trigger dysfunction within the entire system. As Olson (1999) stated “when one family member’s desires change, the family system must somehow deal with that request” (p. 8). The circumplex model has been influential in leisure research in that a scale developed from this model, the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES) is often utilized as the main instrument when cohesion, communication, or adaptability of families is one of the variables (Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor, & Jose, 2011; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). FACES has also been reworked to more closely fit the needs of leisure research as in the case of Lehto and colleagues’ development of the Family Function and Leisure Travel (FFLT) measure (2009; 2012). Additionally, FACES has been used in research of parenting practices from a family systems perspective (Henry, Robinson, Neal, & Huey, 2006).

#### Family Cohesion

Family cohesion is typically defined as the sense of togetherness, connectedness, or bonding a family may have. Defined by Olson as “the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another” (1999, p. 2), family cohesion is identified as including such variables as bonding, boundaries, friends, interests, and recreation. In a study assessing the connection between vacation and family functioning, Lehto, Choi, Lin, and MacDermid (2009) stated “cohesion focuses on how systems balance separateness (differentiation) and togetherness (mutuality)” (p. 464). Family cohesion has also been characterized by its connectedness and openness (Richmond & Stocker, 2006).

Family cohesion is beneficial for children. A longitudinal study by Lucia and Breslau (2005) found behavioral and conflict issues in children ages 6 and 11 were negatively associated with family cohesion ( $\beta = -1.39, p < .05$  for 6 years olds;  $\beta = -0.70, p < .05$  for 11-year-olds).

Similarly, Richmond and Stocker (2006) found family cohesion was statistically significantly negatively related to adolescent externalizing behavior ( $-3.39, p < .01$ ). Intact families with children between the ages of 13 – 16 were videotaped during family discussions regarding topics prompted by the investigators. Consistent with family systems theory, both studies indicated immediate family members had direct impact on individual development, behavior, attachment, and adjustment, both in terms of dyadic relationships as well as multiple family member relationships, thus affecting family cohesion.

#### Circumplex Model and FACES II

The circumplex model of marital and family systems identifies family cohesion as one of three key components for family functioning. Developed from a family systems perspective, the model includes cohesion, flexibility (also referred to as adaptability), and communication (Olson, 1999). The circumplex model explains that families who are balanced tend to be more functional. Alternatively, those families that exhibit unbalanced behaviors tend to be more dysfunctional (Olson, 1999). The major thesis of this model is that “balanced levels of cohesion and flexibility are most conducive to healthy family functioning” (Olson, 2011, p. 65).

Olson (1999, 2011) stated there were four levels of cohesion – very low (termed *disengaged*), low to moderate (termed *separated*), moderate to high (termed *connected*), and high (termed *enmeshed*). The middle two categories, that of separated and connected, tend to identify families that are balanced. However, Kouneski (2000), in a full overview of the model and the numerous empirical studies utilizing it, cautioned these terms and associated nuances represent an individualistic societal frame of reference. Although a family identified as enmeshed may be seen in contemporary American society as unbalanced, in other cultures it

may not be an accurate representation of the family system. Although a number of studies based on the circumplex model are intervention-based or therapeutic in nature (Olson, 1999; Kouneski, 2000; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), this model has also been utilized in leisure and recreation.

In order to assess families according to the tenets of the circumplex model, a linear scale was developed - the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES). It has been utilized in studies of families (Kouneski, 2000; Olson, 1999; 2011) and has been updated and revised three times. The current edition, FACES IV, continues to be utilized in national and international studies (Life Innovations, 2013b). Designed to assess not only family cohesion, but communication and flexibility within the family, all four FACES versions reflect the circumplex model.

Each iteration of FACES has had particular foci. FACES II and III were both found to measure cohesion in a linear fashion, not necessarily addressing extremes in cohesion (Olson, 1999; 2011). Therefore, a family scoring high on FACES II indicated balanced family functioning. FACES II was found to have better psychometric properties than FACES III although both indicated families who scored high on cohesion had more positive coping strategies (Kouneski, 2000). FACES II and III were also found to be highly reliable and valid, with FACES II consisting of 30 items and FACES III consisting of 20 items (Life Innovations, 2013a).

Further research on family cohesion as well as adaptability indicated the existence of curvilinear properties with too much cohesion or flexibility ultimately indicating an unbalanced family (Olson, 1999, 2011). FACES IV was developed to recognize and accurately measure the curvilinear nature of such situations, resulting in unbalanced cohesion being measured as both

disengaged and enmeshed. A high score for family cohesion on FACES IV would, therefore, indicate unbalanced cohesion and be termed enmeshed (Olson, 2011). The FACES IV version was found to have high concurrent and discriminant validity as well as high reliability (Olson, 2011) and is often used in clinical work.

Research regarding family vacation and family cohesion often utilizes the FACES II scale as a foundation in order to ascertain the relationships between family cohesion and vacation quality (Crespo et al., 2012; Lehto et al., 2009, Lehto et al., 2012; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). In an open letter from Life Innovations, Dr. Olson writes

Norms for FACES II were created using a national survey of over 1,000 “non-problem” couples and families across the family life cycle from young couples to retired couples. About 400 adolescents also took the FACES II in that survey and separate norms are provided for families with adolescents. (Olson, n.d.)

Having been normed on “non-problem” families, as described above, the linear nature of FACES II appears to be a good fit for those who participate in research regarding connections between family cohesion and family vacation. The Lehto et al. (2009) study utilized the FACES II scale, but adapted it to family leisure, in particular. In their study, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted on cohesion as a construct and resulted in three factors: emotional bonding ( $\alpha = .89$ ), coalitions ( $\alpha = .68$ ), and family boundaries ( $\alpha = .78$ ), accounting for 56% of the variance in cohesion scores. The authors stated “[o]verall, the results indicate that family vacation contributes positively to family bonding, communication and solidarity” (p. 472). However, citing a waning usage of FACES II due to dimensional psychometric issues, Place, Hulsmeier, Brownrigg, and Soulsby (2005) used FACES II in order to assess whether it could differentiate

between two groups of mothers. One group of mothers was depressed and the other group had children who demonstrated school refusal issues. FACES II was able to differentiate family cohesion levels between the two groups even though this version of FACES is not necessarily clinically oriented. These authors concluded the FACES II and circumplex model were still of use in contemporary research.

FACES II, with its family systems framework, was part of Crespo and fellow researchers (2011) research. They conducted a longitudinal study of New Zealand families, focusing on links and mediation effects between family rituals, family cohesion, and adolescent well-being. Psychometrics of the study were robust for several reasons. The sample size was large ( $N = 713$  dyads drawn from the 3-year Youth Connectedness Project [YCP] in New Zealand) and included one parent and one child between the ages of 10 and 16 at the time the data was first accessed (Wave 2 of 3). Additionally, the sample was tested twice (Wave 3 of 3) in order to assess adolescent well-being as well as perception of well-being over time. The use of longitudinal data, although still a cross-sectional survey design, allowed for analysis of change of certain variables and possible causal interpretation (Bryman, 2012).

Family rituals were assessed both at Time 1 and Time 2 using a Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ), and cohesion was assessed both times with FACES II (Crespo et al., 2011). It was unclear whether vacation was specifically mentioned as a ritual in the questionnaire. However, the researchers did reference rituals similarly to other research on family rituals (Crespo, 2012; Homer, Freeman, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2007) thereby providing an indirect link to family vacation.

Results indicated bidirectionality in links between family ritual meaning and family cohesion for parents between Times 1 and 2 although a similar link was not found for adolescents. In addition, parental assessment of family cohesion did not statistically significantly relate to adolescent well-being. However, family cohesion was found to mediate the link between family rituals and adolescent well-being. Results indicating adolescents are positively influenced by family cohesion are similar to the connections found in research by Homer et al. (2007). One concern of the authors (Crespo et al., 2011) was the potential for other confounding factors such as the ability of adolescents to fully understand family ritual meaning and an ability to accurately report it, especially younger children. They also acknowledged a system feedback loop, recognizing that other constructs may be involved in the link between family rituals, family cohesion, and adolescent well-being. Indeed, social research is “messy” (Bryman, 2012, p. 15) and hardly ever free of confounding variables, spurious relationships, or indirect effects.

### Vacation

Tourism, leisure, and travel marketing journals are rich with studies about how happy someone is while on vacation (Nawijn, 2011), who makes the decisions on where to vacation (Decrop, 2005; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001), and what role vacation might play for families with children with developmental or intellectual disabilities (Mactavish, MacKay, Iwasaki, & Betteridge, 2007). Within family studies journals, however, overall leisure and/or recreation (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001) or family rituals (Crespo et al., 2011) are the focus, not necessarily vacation per se. Regardless, most vacation research points to numerous life benefits. This section will review the historical perspective of vacation, as well as current

trends and issues, to provide a point of reference for family vacation specifically, thus leading to the connection between family vacation and family cohesion.

### Historical Perspective

The United States has not kept up with other industrialized nations in workers being offered or required to take time off. But this may be due in part to the historical perspective of vacation in this country. The term “vacation” was used in the early 1800s and was essentially an activity of the wealthy (Aron, 1999). Even elite colonists traveled (late 1700s), mostly for health reasons, following in the European tradition of visiting spas (Aron, 1999, p. 17). By the mid- to late-1800’s, vacation travel was fast becoming a tradition of the middle class as well, although with it came issues of over-drinking and rowdy behavior. The progression of vacationing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of ambivalence towards vacation. Although vacation brought rest, renewed health and leisure time, it was also connected to idleness, lewdness and socially as well as religiously questionable behavior (Aron, 1999). One solution was to condone work-like activities during a vacation, thus making a vacation “a useful, productive endeavor” (Aron, 1999, p. 257). Remnants of this thinking can be seen in the resurgence of what could be considered purposeful leisure (Decrop, 2005; Palmer, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2007; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Recent history indicates family vacations have been seen as a norm and tradition of American society (Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975; Rugh, 2008). During the twentieth century, state and national parks, fairs, campgrounds, railroads, cars, theme parks and resorts all contributed to a steady upsurge of vacationing. Traveling by car and railroad in order to camp, experience nature, see the sights, “see America first,” and so on were considered the typical American

family vacation. By the 1960-80's, possibly due to the women's movement, niche markets were created; and the traditional family vacation was starting to decline as a mass phenomenon as separate adult and child vacations were becoming more common (Rugh, 2008).

Although some contemporary families still take what would be considered a traditional family vacation, today's families find themselves overworked, overstressed and overcommitted, resulting in fewer vacations (de Graaf, 2003). And some say one of the pervading issues this country is still trying to overcome is the antiquated notion that taking a vacation is somehow connected with idleness, non-production and time away from tasks that are more important (Aron, 1999; Rugh, 2008; de Graaf, 2003; Rosenfeld, 2004).

#### Current Vacation Trends and Issues

Contemporary research demonstrates simply "going on vacation" can contribute to quality of life, stress reduction, improved communication, temporary role identity, higher energy levels, group cohesion, strengthening of relationships, spirituality, self-improvement, improved health and sleep, and happiness (Agate, n.d.; Austin, 2006; Lehto et al., 2009; Mactavish et al., 2007; Nawijn, 2011; Quinn & Stacey, 2010; Sleep Deprivation, 2002; Stein, 2011). A study by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986) found a significant increase in life satisfaction after a vacation. However, Heymann, Earle, and Hayes (2007), found that although 137 countries mandated paid annual leave and 121 countries guaranteed 2+ weeks per year, the United States does neither, even though family vacations have been found to strengthen not only families but society as well (McAlpine, 2011, p. 52). Vacations have declined by 28% over the past 30 years (Rosenfeld, 2004). In 2006 only "57% of American workers took a vacation of a week or longer" (Take back your time press release, 2008).



Of those who take a vacation, 34% of those who use email say they will check their email during a vacation (Madden & Jones, 2008). Citing what he considered “withdrawal symptoms” from checking emails regularly, Bugeja (2006) addressed the problem many employees have in pulling away from job responsibilities while on vacation. The concern of missing out on a potential promotion, not wanting to be perceived as prioritizing family over career, and feeling the pressures of at-work “face time” relegate vacations to fewer employees (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002; Friedman, 2001). This leads to what Gilbert and Van Voorhis (2003) consider a paradox in family policy (i.e., even when benefits exist, employees are reticent to use them).

Although the United States is one of very few countries that does not mandate paid annual leave (de Graaf, 2003; Gilbert & Voorhis, 2003; Heymann, Earle, & Hayes, 2007; Raising the Global Floor, 2011), some companies are beginning to understand the importance of work-life balance and workplace flexibility, including access to vacation time (Brookman, 2011; Friedman, 2001; Jackson, 2011). Too many hours at work can negatively affect family and individual welfare (de Graaf, 2003; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Lehto et al., 2009) so, when taken, vacation can be a coping tool and reduce depression (Joudrey & Wallace, 2009). Additionally, many employees are stating paid vacation is more important than a raise (de Graaf, 2003; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986; Verbakel & DiPrete, 2008).

Several factors affect the occurrence or quality of vacation. Certainly, not all family vacations are without issues, such as difficulties in negotiating mutually-agreeable activities, potential illness, unfulfilled expectations, and so on (McAlpine, 2011; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, & Havitz, 2008; Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975; Rugh, 2008.) Gender role issues in

families can affect vacation quality and quantity of vacations as mothers' roles while on vacation may have an element of work and concern involved in caring for the children, unlike many fathers (Agate, n.d.; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Maume, 2006; Shaw, 2008; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2008.) Some research shows gender inequities regarding vacation such that women have less unused vacation time than men (Maume, 2006), are depicted in stereotypical roles within vacation advertising (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000), tend to work less on-the-job hours than men when children are present (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001), and have less free time than men when young children are involved (Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003). Certainly men and women without a job or employment benefits may not have the option of taking a vacation. Likewise, too much vacation or too little time on the job negatively affects a family's financial welfare (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001).

A limitation of any study of vacation is that not everyone gets a vacation. Vacation research, therefore, cannot be generalized to the entire population. For example, in 2007, 30% of lower-wage American workers had no paid leave for vacation (Why You Should Care?, n.d.). Another limitation is the preponderance of quantitative versus qualitative analysis (Bowan, 2001), as typical questionnaires glaze over vacation experiences, missing a qualitative perspective which could deepen the research. Research about vacation can inform employers, family members, as well as family practitioners of the importance of vacation, or that which is "in opposition to what makes up daily experience" (Stein, 2011, p. 292) and its potential benefits to family cohesion by using both quantitative as well as qualitative methods.

## Family Vacation

Vacations are related to family values and beliefs and correlated with a number of positive outcomes for all members of the family (Crespo, 2012), including providing the opportunity for family members to reflect on their lives together and allow for transformational change (Austin, 2006). But much research on vacation as it relates to the entire family is commonly found in leisure studies. Several studies have utilized a Core and Balance Model developed by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001). This model identifies core activities as those that are home-based, common, and/or daily. Balance activities are those that are not typically home-based nor daily, which includes vacation and special events. Using a Core and Balance Model, Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, and Poff (2009) analyzed overall family satisfaction for both parents as well as adolescents and concluded family leisure satisfaction may be the single most important explanatory factor of perceptions of satisfaction with family life. Leisure satisfaction, coupled with leisure participation, explained 30% of the variance for parents' satisfaction with family life ( $R^2 = .280, p < .001$ ) and 20% of the variance in adolescents' satisfaction with family life ( $R^2 = .193, p < .001$ ). Core activities were stronger predictors of family life satisfaction, although the authors felt core and balance activities complemented each other. A recent literature review (Ward & Zabriskie, 2011) found similar results even in single parent families, noting daily or common leisure activities better predicted adolescent satisfaction with family life. The importance of core activities is also evident in research regarding family functioning (Agate, Zabriskie, & Eggett, 2008). Balance leisure activities, which include family vacation, were not found to be statistically significantly predictive of family functioning. They found a

stronger connection between core leisure activities and family cohesion than balance leisure activities and family cohesion.

Consistent with child and adolescent developmental processes, qualitative work by Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, and Havitz (2008) found older adolescents had more negative experiences regarding family vacation due to a desire for more separation from the family. However, 10 to 12 year olds felt vacation was a fun break from the routine. Through semi-structured interviews, the researchers found this age group felt a sense of belonging to their family through vacation, with overall enjoyment as the key aspect. This may support differentiation in activities as defined by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001). Regardless, Ward and Zabriskie (2011) stated it was difficult to find literature stating shared leisure activities do *not* correlate with positive outcomes for child and family life. Although this may seem contradictory to the need for novel activities such as vacation, the authors cited other research indicating family vacation (a balance activity) may be a more salient feature of togetherness for parents. Family systems theory suggests a benefit for the whole family in that what benefits parents benefits children and vice versa.

The term “purposive leisure” has been coined by Shaw and colleagues (2001, 2008) to describe leisure with a purpose. After interviewing 53 adults and 45 10- to 12-year-olds, Shaw and Dawson (2001) utilized discourse analysis to identify two categories of family leisure – togetherness and child benefits (such as learning family values and healthy lifestyle). Parents saw leisure, including vacations, as a way to bond and unify the family as a unit, thus having an inherent purpose. Mothers’ and fathers’ purposes were different, though, as mothers tended to focus on the bonding aspect whereas fathers tended to focus on what the child learned.

Differences between mothers' and fathers' purposes, however, may be due to differences related to their perception of their role as a parent (Harrington, 2005).

Purpose in leisure can also be found in research on diverse families. Zabriskie and Freeman (2004) found higher scores in transracial families possibly due to purposeful goals (possibly even an exaggerated purpose) behind family recreational activities. *T*-tests indicated scores on cohesion, adaptability, as well as family functioning via FACES II were all statistically significantly higher in the adoptive family sample ( $p < .01$ ,  $N = 197$  adults and 56 children ages 11-16). Additionally, similar statistically significant results were found when comparing the two samples on core ( $p < .01$ ), balance ( $p < .05$ ), as well as overall family leisure involvement ( $p < .01$ ).

Specifically addressing the purpose of family vacation, Shaw, Havitz, and Delamere (2008) qualitatively assessed vacation experiences, looking for meaning. Within the sample of 15 families, a total of 65 pre- and post-vacation interviews were held (32 with mothers, 16 with fathers, 17 joint mothers and fathers). Results indicated three main themes: (a) parents saw family vacations as a way to remove the family from everyday pressures, (b) parents wanted to utilize family vacation time as a way to bring the family together, and (c) parents wanted positive memories for their children, feeling this would strengthen the family unit. The authors stated "parents were actively engaged in creating a strong sense of family that would not only solidify the family unit, but would be of value to their children in the long run" (Shaw et al., 2008, p. 20).

Finally, in her paper, Shaw (2008) directly mentioned family vacations as a leisure activity that had specific meaning for parents. Citing the changing roles of parents such that

society expects mothers as well as fathers to spend more time with their children in various activities, the responsibilities of parenthood extend into the family vacation. Because family vacations often have a purpose for the parent, they often take work to organize and manage (Shaw, 2008, p. 695), although much of the work falls to the mother (p. 697). Research has demonstrated parents often have goals for family vacations such as teaching values and healthy lifestyles (Shaw & Dawson, 2001), service to others (Palmer, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2007), creating positive memories (Shaw et al., 2008), and creating a sense of family (Shaw, 2008). Shaw (2008) stated many parents saw it as their job to provide these types of opportunities for their children, even though “family vacations are work for parents” (p. 698) and can include some negative experiences (Shaw et al., 2008; Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975). Shaw (2008) discussed the need of many fathers to impart family values through family vacation while mothers may focus on emotional and social development. When vacations are seen as successful, parents feel successful and feel the effort was worth it. Shaw concluded by referencing family leisure as a way to demonstrate and reinforce “the ideal of active, involved parenthood” (p. 699).

#### Family Vacation and Family Cohesion

A *National Geographic* magazine article from May, 1970 stated “a do-it-together vacation is an investment in family strength – and in America’s future.....let the boys set up camp for the night. Let the girls do the cooking” (Grosvenor, 1970, p. 738). From an historical perspective, this indicated what purpose family vacation may have had in the ‘70s. From a gender perspective, some researchers such as Shaw (2008) may state not much has changed.

But in regards to the “investment in family strength,” (Grosvenor, 1970, p. 738) contemporary research indicates this continues to be true.

Vacation experiences, positive or negative, have the potential to help build a family bond, thus creating a stronger family unit. For example, research by Wells, Widmer, and McCoy (2004) concluded that in stimulating family interaction, family vacations can have positive effects in dealing with at-risk youth. Even negative vacation experiences can lead to family cohesion as a result of successful conflict resolution (Rosenblatt & Russell, 1975).

As early as 1960, Erwin Scheuch was discussing the relatively new field of leisure and its availability to working classes due to industrialization. Additionally, he stated “leisure is considered to be a factor of mounting consequence for the demonstration of and the assistance in family cohesion” (p. 38). Likewise, Orthner and Mancini (1990) stated family cohesion through leisure began to develop in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whereas previously family bonding had occurred through work-related activities. Orthner and Mancini were also some of the first to identify the leisure – family cohesion connection as being rooted in a family systems framework.

Contemporary research continues to substantiate the claim of interconnectedness between leisure and family cohesion, in particular family vacation and its connection to family cohesion. With the exception of Zabriskie and McCormick’s study (2001), published in *Family Process* and Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor, and Jose’s study (2011), published in *Journal of Family Psychology*, all other studies reviewed were published in travel, leisure, or experiential education journals. Three of the studies are cross-sectional quantitative (Lehto et al., 2009, Lehto et al., 2012, Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), one study is longitudinal quantitative (Crespo

et al., 2011), one study is mixed methods (Garst et al., 2013), and one study is qualitative (Palmer et al., 2007), offering a range of research designs.

A key study conducted in 2005 focused on a number of factors related to family vacation and family functioning. With a sample size of 265 adults and a family systems theoretical framework, two research articles were published connecting family vacation and family cohesion. Identifying vacation as a varied, sustained interaction that requires planning, and includes anticipation, experience, and recollection, Lehto, Choi, Lin, and MacDermid (2009) indicated families considered traveling with their family as quality time spent. The event also made them feel closer to one another and made their family ties stronger – all statements of cohesion.

Rather than use FACES II as published, Lehto et al. (2009) focused on cohesion constructs from a travel perspective and, thus, with permission, reworded many of the items to include the words “while traveling together” (p. 466). This adapted FACES instrument was entitled Family Function and Leisure Travel (FFLT), which assessed both cohesion and adaptability from a travel perspective. Principal components analysis utilizing varimax rotation was performed on the 16 cohesion items. The researchers retained three factors for cohesion (emotional bonding, coalition/decision-making [functional bonding], and family boundaries), accounting for 56% of the variance. Results were very similar to cohesion factors in FACES II, with internal consistency of .80.

Cluster analysis was performed followed by discriminant analysis in order to ascertain and verify two different types of families – connected ( $n = 184$ ) and separated ( $n = 81$ ), with both falling on the continuum of midrange to balanced cohesion according to linear



psychometric properties of FACES II (Kouneski, 2000). With the construct of emotional bonding, differences between the two groups were not statistically significant ( $t = -.85, p = .40$ ). However, coalition/decision-making differences were statistically significantly different ( $t = -3.54, p = .001$ ) as were differences in family boundaries ( $t = 19.74, p = .000$ ). These results led the authors to state family vacation “contributes positively to family bonding” (Lehto et al., 2009, p. 473) and as such, vacation should be recognized “as a valuable contributor to family cohesion” (p. 474).

The second study, taken from the same data set (Lehto, Lin, Chen, and Choi, 2012), focused on a series of questions regarding specific vacation activities. Thirty-one vacation activities were rated on a 5-point Likert scale and subjected to a principal components analysis, resulting in seven factors. Cluster analysis with the FFLT and activities produced four groups, bonded/nature seeking ( $n = 87$ ), self-directed/recreation oriented ( $n = 33$ ), sociable but static ( $n = 79$ ), and attached/enthusiastic ( $n = 59$ ). Regardless of group, the more popular family activities were those that were joint activities versus individual activities. As the authors stated, joint activities lend themselves to family cohesion.

These two studies offer important connections between family vacation and family cohesion. The sample, taken from a Midwest U.S. travel club, was mostly Caucasian (94%), above 45 years old (57.8%), married (70.6%), educated beyond a bachelor’s degree (67.2%), and with 36% reporting an annual income over \$200,000. Clearly, this sample did not represent the population in 2005 due to a high income for a large portion of the sample, nor would it match much of the current population today. Additionally, the authors of both studies

indicated drawbacks due to self-reporting by one member of the family and the potential issues of a cross-sectional rather than longitudinal study.

Similar to the research by Lehto and colleagues (2009; 2012), a family systems theoretical perspective and usage of FACES II are found in work by Zabriskie and McCormick (2001). Focusing on family functioning, which included cohesion, these researchers tested a new model of identifying family leisure activities. The basic hypothesis was that core leisure activities consisting of consistent, accessible leisure activities (e.g., watching a movie together, playing board games) related to family cohesion and balance leisure activities consisting of novel, changing activities (e.g., family vacations, trips to a park) related to family adaptability. A measure entitled Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) consisting of 14 items was created for the study. Sampling mostly university freshmen and sophomores ( $N = 138$ ), the hypothesis was substantiated in that hierarchical regression indicated statistically significant predictive abilities of core leisure activities ( $\beta = .36, p < .01$ ) and balance leisure activities ( $\beta = .20, p < .05$ ) for family cohesion. Although core activities were indeed more predictive of family cohesion than balance activities, the authors noted both core and balance activities were similarly predictive of family adaptability ( $\beta = .20, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .19, p < .05$ , respectively). Concluding that regardless of the type of activity, family-shared leisure activities contributed to family functioning, results and conclusions were similar to the Lehto et al. (2009) and Lehto et al. (2012) studies.

Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) did not include a limitations section possibly due to the exploratory nature of their newly created FLAP measure and hypothesis regarding core and balance leisure activities. One limitation, however, could have been the sample composition. As with the Lehto and colleagues' studies (2009; 2012), this sample was 93% Caucasian and

between the ages of 18 – 22. Stating the sample provided a “different perspective of family behavior than the typical parent views” (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 284), it might also offer a limited perspective on family cohesion. The value of receiving input from emerging adults is not questioned, but rather the time frame of family involvement. Being instructed to recall activities a year or two before entering college, it is possible memories may not have been as accurate as more recent family interactions reported by parents or younger children still living at home. Future research, therefore, would benefit from a more heterogeneous sample and requiring participants to recall their last family vacation within the past year.

Building on the Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) model for core and balance leisure, as well as family systems theory, Garst, Baughman, Franz, and Seidel (2013) looked at family cohesion changes as a result of family camping. Quite often a vacation activity due to its affordability, the researchers looked at what motivated families to camp, what benefits the families could attribute to camping, and how family cohesion changed as a result. Eleven camps participated, none of which were therapy- or intervention-based (camps were open to the general public). Open-ended questions as well as the Family Environment Scale (FES) were completed by 60 families ( $N = 67$ ) who had visited one of the 11 camps one to two months prior. Unlike the research of Lehto and colleagues (2009; 2012), only 31% reported incomes over \$100,000. Families reported some of their motivations for camping were to spend quality time together and strengthen family relationships, among other reasons. Eighty-six percent felt camping helped reinforce family relationships as well as good parenting (60%). Statistical analysis of the FES bore out these results as a statistically significant improvement was found in family cohesion ( $t_{(40)} = -3.77, p = .001$ ), that is, before-camp cohesion scores were lower with a

medium effect size ( $d = .36$ ). However, the authors did note Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha = .62$ ) of the family cohesion measure was slightly lower than considered acceptable. Although this particular research focused on one specific type of family vacation, the results supported connections between family vacation and family cohesion. Limitations included, once again, the use of self-report from parents only, however the addition of qualitative statements offered substance to the quantitative data.

Finally, a qualitative, grounded theory study was undertaken by Palmer, Freeman, and Zabriskie (2007). Referencing Shaw and Dawson's (2001) work on purposive leisure, the authors utilized snowball sampling to find five families who participated in what they termed service expeditions. Using grounded theory against the backdrop of the family systems theory and circumplex model (Olson, 1999) as well as a family strengths model, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with parents as well as children. They also viewed vacation photos and analyzed journals, offering triangulation of analysis or trustworthiness (Glesne, 2011). The qualitative study on five families not only demonstrated increased family cohesion while on a service-oriented vacation, but also produced the emergence of a theory described as "family deepening." Description of their experiences included reference to a strengthening of the family, feeling closer to family members, and creation of bonds between family members. Some of the families had engaged in the service expedition up to five years prior to being interviewed. Yet, researchers found a continued feeling of deepening of family relationships due to the experience. Although this particular research was volunteer-focused and the vacation clearly had purpose and goals initially established, it offers further substantiation for the connection between family vacation and family cohesion. Limitations

include the small sample size, although this is not unique to qualitative study nor should it invalidate individual responses (Glesne, 2011). Another possible limitation lies in the fact that these service expeditions constituted some sacrifice (e.g., time, energy, finances) on the part of the families and, thus, may not necessarily be identical to family vacations with strictly personal purposes. The authors note further research would need to be conducted, addressing the newly established terminology of family deepening.

### Parenting Styles

An additional impact on overall family functioning is parenting style (Mupinga, Garrison, & Pierce, 2002). Although research has shown parenting style can be influenced by the role-modeling from generation to generation (Chen & Kaplan, 2001), temperament of the child, characteristics and experiences of the parent, and stressors and support of the family unit (Belsky, 1984; Lee, Lee & August, 2011), the basic parenting approach of each individual parent has direct impact on the child (Brooks, 2011; Luster & Okagaki, 2005). To this author's knowledge, no studies have been conducted that directly addressed the connection between parenting style, vacation satisfaction, and family cohesion. The qualitative study by Shaw et al. (2008) discussed the ancillary concern of parents to be "good" parents and, as such, encourage family time and effort towards leisure activities such as vacation. One might assume high quality parenting would be correlated with vacation satisfaction and family cohesion, although no studies have been found that analyze these connections.

The unique opportunities offered to families through vacation experiences are influenced by individual personalities as well as family members' ages, vacation locations, events, abilities, and the family system itself (Agate, n.d.; Agate et al., 2009; Lehto et al., 2009;

Mactavish et al., 2007). Personal differences affect the vacation decision-making process (Decrop, 2005) and, combined with parenting style, can directly impact the level of involvement of the child in vacation planning. As Kotchick and Forehand (2002) stated, “in the quest of family researchers to identify the factors that contribute to child and family well-being, parenting has emerged as playing a critical role” (p. 255).

### Parenting Styles Defined

Baumrind (1966), in a seminal literature review article, described three types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. She also established two factors of parental behavior, responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness included the amount of warmth and communication between parent and child with an emphasis being placed on the person, not the position (e.g., parent or child). Demandingness referred to the amount of supervision, monitoring, consistent discipline, and direct (rather than subtle or manipulative) confrontation. Thus, an *authoritative* parenting style was based on reason, firm control, and give and take, showing high on both responsiveness and demandingness. Others have stated an authoritative parent can be distinguished by her or his warm, but firm parental response, as well as rational and flexible behavior (Brooks, 2011; Cowan & Cowan, 2002; Garbarino, Bradshaw & Kostelny, 2005). Using Baumrind’s (1966) parenting style categories, Bolkan, Sano, De Costa, Acock, and Day (2010) analyzed adolescent perceptions of their parents’ parenting styles and relationships to substance abuse and delinquency. Robust statistical procedures revealed adolescents who viewed both parents as authoritative had the fewest behavioral problems related to substance abuse and/or delinquency.

An *authoritarian* or “dictator” (Popkin, 2002) style of parenting is demonstrated through punitive measures to control a child, and power of the parent over the child is often carried out through the use of rewards and punishment (Brooks, 2011; Popkin, 2002). This defines a parent who “believes in keeping the child in his place, in restricting his autonomy, and in assigning household responsibilities in order to inculcate respect for work” (Baumrind, 1966, p. 890), thus one who is high in demandingness but low in responsiveness. Minorities and individuals of a lower socio-economic status (SES) have been found to use more authoritarian parenting styles, although some of the use may be due to cultural expectations and issues of safety (Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini & Yalcinkaya, 2005; White & Roosa, 2012). Additionally, those parents who are employed in jobs that allow for minimal input into their daily routine tend to use more authoritarian parenting techniques than those who are employed in higher level, participatory positions (Crouter & McHale, 2005). Fletcher et al. (2008) found parenting styles to have a moderating effect on child outcomes such that authoritarian parents had children with the highest level of social issues whereas authoritative parents had children with the highest academic grades. Sample size ( $N = 370$  dyads of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their mothers) was heterogeneous in that 37% of the sample was African American.

The third parenting style identified by Baumrind (1966) is *permissive*, indicating a parent who sets few limits, and although warm (responsive), is not firm or demanding. Additionally, the permissive parent does not believe in being “an active agent responsible for shaping or altering [the child’s] ongoing or future behavior” (p. 889). Popkin (2002) identified this parenting style as a “doormat” as the child is allowed to “walk all over” the parent, potentially

leading to insecurities in the child. However, permissive parenting style from either the father or the mother has been found to be marginally statistically significant ( $\beta = .032$ ,  $p = .10$ ) in relation to behavioral problems related to substance abuse and/or delinquency (Bolkan et al., 2010). This particular finding led the authors to note a permissive parenting style may not be as adverse as initially considered.

#### Parenting Styles and Family Functioning

A study by Mupinga, Garrison, and Pierce (2002) lends credibility to the connection between family cohesion and parenting style. The authors analyzed the relationship between family functioning, including cohesion and adaptability, and parenting styles. Using the FACES II, a systems-based measure, as well as the Primary Caregiver Practices Report, results showed higher cohesion and adaptability scores (indicating balanced families) were strong predictors of an authoritative parenting style ( $\beta = .65$ ), controlling for socioeconomic and demographic factors. For the overall model, 26% of variance was explained ( $R^2 = .29$ ; adj.  $R^2 = .26$ ), demonstrating a medium effect size. Similarly, Henry et al. (2006) demonstrated a positive correlation between family functioning and parental monitoring ( $r = .34$ ), support ( $r = .61$ ), induction ( $r = .25$ ) and a negative correlation between family functioning and punitiveness ( $r = -.33$ ). All correlations were statistically significant at a  $p < .01$  level. These authors utilized the FACES II measure with 160 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders, with the goal of analyzing adolescent perceptions of their fathers' and mothers' behaviors coupled with family functioning.

Consistent with previous findings (Brooks, 2013; Leyendecker et al., 2005), Jansen et al. (2012) found there were cultural differences in parenting styles with lower socioeconomic status associated with more harsh discipline. Older participants were associated with less harsh



discipline. The authors found family dysfunction contributed to both paternal as well as maternal harsh discipline, and harsh parenting was related to behavioral and emotional problems in children. Using FACES II as well as other measures, Houlberg, Henry, and Morris (2012) found family cohesion was associated with anger regulation via parental support ( $\beta = .43, p = .001$ ). Adolescent anger regulation improved in at-risk disadvantaged youth ( $N = 84$ ) with parental warmth and praise as well as family cohesion.

Finally, Segrin et al. (2012) analyzed behaviors that are contemporarily termed “helicopter parenting” (p. 237). Because over-parenting could lead to enmeshment, the FACES IV version was used in order to capture the overly-cohesive family. Structural equation modeling indicated over-parenting was statistically significantly negatively related to positive communication ( $\beta = -.20, p < .001$  for parents and  $\beta = -.11, p < .01$  for young adult children) and positively related to young adults’ sense of entitlement ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ). The authors stated helicopter parenting was paradoxical in that over-involvement led to more negative than positive behaviors similar to an authoritarian parenting style.

### Conclusion

Given the research findings supporting connections between family cohesion and family vacation experience, and findings supporting the influence of parenting styles on child and family functioning, additional knowledge of the family could result from exploring the relationships between these three constructs. The family systems theory has been shown to be useful in both family cohesion and family vacation literature, as well as in parenting styles literature. With the potential of parenting styles to impact the family system as a whole, it is possible it would also have a moderating effect on the connection between family vacation

experience and family cohesion. Research on the connection between family vacation and family cohesion by Lehto and colleagues (2009, 2012) as well as Zabriskie and colleagues (2001, 2004; Ward & Zabriskie, 2011) give foundation for future studies. The work of Shaw and colleagues (2001, 2008, 2008) on the parental influence to family vacation meaning provides impetus for future research to analyze family vacation experience, family cohesion, and parenting styles from a family systems perspective.

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APPENDIX B

DETAILED METHODOLOGY

## Detailed Methodology

The purpose of this study was to analyze the predictive abilities of both family vacation experience and the interaction of that experience with parenting styles on family cohesion. Utilizing prior research on the various benefits and characteristics of the family vacation, a self-report online survey was created. A cross-sectional research design, this survey included items related to family vacation, family cohesion, and parenting style as well as demographics.

### Participants

Participants were 97 adults, living with a child or children in the home between the ages of 3 and 18, and residing within the United States. The minimum age of 3 was chosen because the Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R), used for this study, was designed and tested on those who had children ages 3 through grade 5 (Reitman, Rhode, Hupp, & Altobello, 2002). The maximum age of 18 was identified due to the possibility that those over the age of 18 could introduce a different cohort effect due to the life course perspective (Blichfeldt, 2007; Bucx, Van Wel, & Knijn, 2012). Survey instructions indicated only one parent per household was allowed to respond to ensure independent data.

Thirty five states were represented in the sample, with 19 participants being from Texas (20%), 7 participants from Oklahoma, and 5 participants from Michigan and Minnesota. Ohio, Washington, and Vermont each had 4 participants, with other states represented by 1 – 3 participants. Caucasians represented 83% of the sample ( $n = 81$ ), with 8% African American ( $n = 8$ ), 2% Hispanic/Latino ( $n = 2$ ), 2% Asian ( $n = 2$ ), and 1% stating they were multi-racial ( $n = 1$ ). Three participants (3%) did not indicate race/ethnicity. Another demographic item asked whether the participant resided in a rural, urban, or suburban environment with 25% indicating

they were rural ( $n = 24$ ), 51% indicating they were suburban ( $n = 50$ ), and 24% indicating they were urban ( $n = 23$ ) offering a heterogeneous response for this category.

Total annual family income suggested a heterogeneous sample, with 11.4% reporting they made \$50,000 or less ( $n = 11$ ), 24% in the \$50,001 to \$90,000 range ( $n = 23$ ), 34% in the \$90,001 to \$130,000 range ( $n = 34$ ), and 27% in the \$130,001 and over range. The age range of participants was 25 to 60 with a mean of 42.67. The age of the oldest child ranged from 3 to 30 with a mean of 12.65, median of 12, and bimodal of 3 and 9. The age of the youngest child ranged from 1 to 18 with a mean of 9.1, median of 9, and bimodal at 9 and 13. Seven participants failed to indicate the age of their youngest child (7.3%) and 6 participants failed to indicate the age of their oldest child (6.3%). Fifty-two percent of the participants typically traveled with 2 children, 21% with 3 children, and almost 17% with 1 child. Only three participants traveled with more than 3 children. Six percent of the participants did not respond to this item and 1 participant indicated they typically traveled without children. Interpretation of this may be that the family vacation they were thinking of was not a 'typical' vacation for this person.

Females represented 89% of the sample ( $n = 86$ ) and 87% stated they traveled with a spouse or significant other ( $n = 84$ ) leaving 13% of participants stating they traveled as the only adult ( $n = 13$ ). A majority of participants stated their last family vacation consisted of 4-7 days (54%), but 17% stated it was 1-3 days and 19% stated it was more than a week. Those whose last family vacation was more than 2 weeks represented 10% of the sample. Seventy-three percent indicated they *definitely* planned to take a family vacation within the next year, 22% *probably* planned to take a family vacation within the next year, and 5% *might* or might not.

Two people indicated their last family vacation was beyond 12 months ago (one was 18 months ago, one was 14 months ago) but this time frame did not seem to be too variant as to require removal from the study, especially given they had completed all other items. All other 94 participants indicated their last family vacation was within the last 12 months with the majority of participants referencing a vacation during the summer months (53%) or within the last month (18%) which included Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

### Instruments

The online Qualtrics survey consisted of three measurement instruments, fifteen demographic questions to describe the participant pool, and two qualitative open-ended questions. The three instruments were the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale-II (FACES II) survey (items regarding cohesion only; Olson, Portner, & Bell, 1992), the Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R; Reitman et al., 2002), and nine items that made up the Family Vacation Experience (FVE). The two open-ended questions were (a) briefly describe the family vacation you had in mind when you answered the above questions, and (b) briefly describe why you go on a family vacation. The complete survey consisted of 72 items, 15 of a demographic and categorical nature, 55 Likert-type response (FACES II, PAQ-R, and FVE), and two qualitative open-ended questions.

#### FACES II

FACES II (cohesion items only) was chosen due to the wide usage in prior vacation research, the psychometric properties, and its family systems foundation. FACES II has been “tested rigorously and [has] proven to be reliable and valid” (Kouneski, 2000, p. 8). FACES II, a revision of the original Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES), was written

in order to gain an insider perspective of a family member's opinion of cohesion, adaptability, and communication (Olson et al., 1992). Using family systems as the theoretical framework, items on the FACES II assess how well family members get along. FACES II has continued to be revised by Olson and various colleagues, although later versions show curvilinear properties and are more applicable to marriage and family therapy and intervention. FACES II demonstrates linear properties and is used more for determining balanced or unbalanced families in general (Olson, 2011). FACES II was purchased for use in this study and written permission was received from Dr. Olson via Life Innovations for the 16 cohesion items to be included in this research (Olson, n.d.).

#### Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised

The Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R) was chosen as it was developed according to Baumrind's (1966) authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. These three parenting styles were confirmed as distinct parenting styles although psychometric properties were modest especially for African American authoritative parenting style (Reitman et al., 2002). The survey produced a score, ranging from 10 to 50, for each of the three parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Parents responded to the thirty Likert-scaled items (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), with each parenting style being represented by 10 items. Permission was received from Dr. Reitman to include these items.

#### Family Vacation Experience (FVE)

To this author's knowledge, no general family vacation experience survey existed prior to this study. Similar family surveys that do exist tend to focus on specific leisure and/or vacation activities. For an example, see Lehto et al. (2009) for details on their Family Function



and Leisure Travel survey instrument. Specific survey items for this research were geared towards reactions and feelings of the adult participant's most recent family vacation rather than specific vacation activities.

#### Pilot Study

In order to assess family vacation experience, an initial online survey of 15 items, developed from prior research, was piloted in the summer of 2012. Participants were recruited through emails to various individuals and organizations, as well as via snowball sampling. A total of 87 participants were obtained, representing 11 different states. Identified as the Family Vacation Quality Survey, a principal components analysis (PCA) was run and although three factors were identified, the first two accounted for a full 50% of the variance. The third factor accounted for 18% variance. Reliability was indicated by a Cronbach's alpha of .908. Overall enjoyment, interaction with others, and stress or worry were identified as the three constructs.

For the purposes of this study, it was determined a one-component measure would more directly address the potential of moderating effects of parenting style. Additionally, the pilot study demonstrated some weaknesses in clarity. Therefore, content validation was necessary (Crocker & Algina, 2008; Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995; Messick, 1989) and conducted by forwarding the items to five independent reviewers who are experts in the area of family vacation and leisure. Experts included Sarah Taylor Agate, John de Graaf, Xinran Lehto, Susan Shaw, and Ramon Zabriskie. Because content validity "is based on professional judgments about the relevance of the test content" (Messick, 1989, p. 17), it was helpful to have both quantitative and qualitative input from these experts (Crocker & Algina, 2008; Haynes et al., 1995). In order to do so, a basic Likert-type rating scale was established allowing

each reviewer to judge each item on relevance, clarity, and specificity (Haynes et al., 1995) and the experts were requested to qualitatively comment, addressing any issues of grammar, perceived reading level, and wording (Haynes et al., 1995). Analysis of responses from the experts led to a number of changes such as eliminating items, rewording items, and renaming the survey. Ultimately, one additional item was removed due to a lack of substantive literature to support its inclusion, resulting in nine items being included in the current survey regarding family vacation experience.

#### Family Vacation Revised Instrument

The revised family vacation measure, the Family Vacation Experience (FVE) assessed the participant's most recent vacation within the last year. The Likert response items were analyzed as continuous data with scores ranging from one to five (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) with no descriptor for a rating of 2, 3, or 4 (Alreck & Settle, 2004). Additionally, all nine items were positively worded and similarly scored as some research has indicated including both positively worded and negatively worded items (e.g., reverse scoring) does not necessarily assess opinions equally (Weems & Onwuegbuzie, 2001). Inclusion of these nine items on the survey was substantiated by the literature review and pilot study reviewer feedback. The Family Vacation Experience (FVE) items were aggregated into one score for statistical analysis.

#### Procedure

This survey used Qualtrics™, a global supplier of software for online data collection and analysis (Qualtrics, 2013) and was distributed through a specific web link via the University of North Texas' license with Qualtrics. Email invitations requesting participation were sent to

individuals as well as family-related groups and organizations. Invitation to participate was also shared via list serves for the National Council on Family Relations (certified family life educators and new professionals) and National Parenting Education Network (NPEN). Invitations to participate were also posted on Facebook and LinkedIn, ensuring full instructions and IRB procedures were followed. Finally, recipients were also instructed to forward the survey web link to anyone whom they felt would be interested in participating (snowball sampling). No incentives were given for participation. The survey was opened the evening of December 20, 2013 and remained open until midday January 7, 2014. Initial notification of the survey occurred December 20, 2013 with several additional notifications occurring during the survey period due to the holidays.

#### Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES II)

As directed by the FACES II literature (Olson & Tiesel, 1992), the FACES II aggregated score was obtained in a two-step process. Cohesion item numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 were summed and then subtracted from 36, which took into account the reverse scoring of these 6 items. Cohesion item numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were summed and added to the figure from step one. This final sum indicated the parent's perception of their family's cohesion, with possible scores ranging from 16 to 80 (continuous data). A score of 16-50 indicated the perception of family cohesion to be disengaged, 51-59 as separated, 60-70 as connected, and 71-80 as very connected.

#### Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R) Measure

PAQ-R aggregated scores were obtained in three separate steps in order to get three different scores: one for authoritarian parenting style, one for permissive parenting style, and

one for authoritative parenting style (Reitman et al., 2002). The 10 items for each of the three different parenting style items were interspersed throughout the measure. Scores that identified an authoritarian parenting style were item numbers 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26, and 29. These items were summed to create an aggregate authoritarian score. To obtain a score for a permissive parenting style, items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, and 28 were summed. Finally, to obtain a score for the authoritative parenting style, items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, and 30 were summed. Although not the goal of this study, one could determine one's parenting style by analyzing which of the three scores were highest.

## Data Analysis

### Data Screening

Qualtrics' summary indicated 168 participants had taken the survey. However, 61 survey records contained no data and 1 contained only 3 data points. Therefore, these 62 records were immediately deleted (40% of original responses). Of the remaining 106 records, five participants indicated they had not vacationed within the last year. Because the survey had been branched at the initial question (have you taken a family vacation within the last year), these five participants did not complete the Family Vacation Experience (FVE) measure, but did complete the FACES II as well as the Parental Authority Questionnaire-Revised (PAQ-R). These 5 records were thus deleted for the quantitative analysis although were retained for descriptive and qualitative analysis since responses had actually been received for these. Finally, three other records were missing significant portions of either the FACES II measure or the PAQ-R measure requiring deletion for quantitative analysis but were retained for descriptive and qualitative analysis.

## Missing Data

Ten records had missing values on either the FACES II or PAQ-R measures. Because the missing values seemed non-systematic, and were less than 20% of the possible items overall, and less than 20% individually, they were replaced with the individual participant's mean score for the given measure (Downey & King, 1998). This allowed these 10 records to be retained for full analysis with meaningful aggregated scores on FACES II and PAQ-R.

Only two records contained missing data for the FACES measure. Due to six items on the FACES II measure being reverse-scored, care was taken to substitute according to the mean of positively or negatively scored items, not the entire measure.

The other eight records had missing values in the PAQ-R. Because the PAQ-R purports to measure three separate parenting styles, care had to be taken to replace the participant's mean value for that particular parenting style. In other words, the mean replacement value was only derived from the other scores within that parenting style, not the mean score for the entire measure. Frequency tables were then examined for both measures to ensure all missing values had been replaced.

For the Family Vacation Experience measure, there was only 1 missing value for one item (family vacation achieved what I wanted it to achieve for my family) which was replaced with the group mean ( $M=4$ ). Visual inspection of the other 8 responses for this participant indicated the mean would be the best choice even though the mode for this item was 5.

## Outliers

Initial residual plots (standardized residual with standardized predicted residual) indicated three potential outliers. However, a studentized residual plot was also run as

Pedhazur (1997) and Andersen (2008) made a case for higher accuracy in outlier identification with this plot. The studentized residual plot indicated only two outliers approximately 3 or more standard deviations from the mean (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). Analysis of these two records and corresponding qualitative comments indicated a likelihood that one of these participants reverse-scored the FVE measure. Therefore, one outlier was deleted but one was retained. The third potential outlier initially identified was also inspected. Qualitative comments meshed with scoring on all measures and no scoring irregularities were observed. Deletion of this outlier was not deemed appropriate and was therefore retained, resulting in 97 participants included in quantitative analysis. Having qualitative data to compare to quantitative data enabled more accurate decisions to be made regarding outliers.

APPENDIX C  
DETAILED RESULTS

## Detailed Results

### Data Screening and Descriptives

#### Family Vacation Experience (FVE) Measure

Initially, the nine Family Vacation Experience items (FVE) were reflected in one aggregate score. This aggregated score was obtained by performing a simple “compute” statement in SPSS, adding the values of each of the nine items. However, a principal components analysis, with varimax rotation, indicated only seven of the nine items loaded on the first component. Inspection of the remaining two items comprising the second component indicated they reflected perceived behavior *after* the vacation (after the last family vacation, I noticed more family camaraderie than before the vacation and after the last family vacation, I felt like spending more time with my family.) Both a scree plot and eigenvalues greater than 1 indicated two components present in the original FVE measure, although marginally ( $\lambda = 1.08$  for the second component). Considered the premier procedure for determining the number of factors to retain (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004; Zwick & Velicer, 1986), a parallel analysis was also run, indicating only one component. With mixed results, it was determined principal axis factoring (PAF) should be conducted as it accounts for measurement error. Convergence was not obtained within 25 iterations, although Gorsuch (1990) stated convergence is not necessary while Thompson (2004) stated this may occur due to a small sample size. SPSS output for this particular PAF indicated an attempt had been made to extract two components. However, output indicated only one component should be retained. Henson and Roberts (2006) stated the differences between PCA and PAF may be due, in part, to a smaller number of variables such as the current measure.



Therefore, prior research in factor analysis was consulted in order to determine next steps. Regarding factor extraction, Thompson (2004) stated “although empirical evidence can inform this judgment, these decisions are in the final analysis matters of exactly that: judgment” (p. 31). Sample size ( $N = 97$ ) was sufficient (Henson & Roberts, 2006; Stevens, 2009) to test 7 or 9 variables, although not robust (Goldberg & Velicer, 2006) indicating a possible better fit of this particular sample size with fewer variables. Also, Goldberg and Velicer (2006) stated “a minimum of three variables for each factor is needed for its identification” (p. 213). Both the PCA and PAF identified only two items loading on component two and the parallel analysis indicated the presence of only one component. Prior literature states both overextraction and underextraction of variables is a concern although overextraction or underextraction by one component is not cause for significant concern (Fava & Velicer, 1992; Zwick & Velicer, 1986), especially when component saturation is achieved. Communalities were all over .50.

Although both of the items that loaded on component two were grounded in prior literature (Havitz et al., 2010; Lehto et al., 2012; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986; Palmer et al. 2007), it was decided these items represented something different from the actual family vacation experience. Combining this acknowledgment with prior research, various analytic strategies, and Occum’s razor principle (“the most direct and robust solution is the best” Gorsuch, 1990, p. 37) the two items were thus removed from the aggregated FVE score, leaving 7 items to reflect family vacation experience (FVE\_7). Validating this decision was the response from one participant in that “lower rankings on questions above about effects after the vacation were because we already enjoyed spending time together so there was no need for

this to change much.” Although these 7 items accounted for only 55.5% of the total variance explained, it is possible this still represents significance within the social sciences field (Henson & Roberts, 2006). Certainly, further work on the FVE is warranted if it is to be used in future research.

The mean of the 7-item FVE measure was 32.68 out of a possible score of 35, clearly indicating positive family vacation experience. It was negatively skewed (-3.61) and leptokurtic (coefficient of kurtosis = 18.33). Transformation of the scores was not performed as transformation can negatively affect meaningful interpretation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). See Table 1 for means and standard deviations for all 7 items of the measure. Internal reliability of the FVE results for this sample was  $\alpha = .917$ , indicating these 7 items address the same construct, allowing for the composite, or aggregated, score to be interpreted “as a reflection of all the test’s items” (Henson, 2001, p. 177). The high Cronbach’s alpha indicates a high level of internal reliability, although not so high as to indicate redundancy (Streiner, 2003). Multicollinearity was not an issue for the FVE as all Pearson  $r$  correlations were well below .9. The highest correlations were between *FV was worth the time* and *family was able to bond* ( $r = .798$ ) and between *FV achieved for me* and *FV achieved for my family* ( $r = .731$ ). Table 2 indicates all correlations were significant at  $p < .001$ .

## FACES II

FACES II had a Cronbach’s alpha of .927 for the 10 positively worded items and an alpha of .830 for the 6 negatively worded items, possibly confirming some concern over the use of negatively worded items (Weems & Omwuegbuzie, 2001). However, recoding the negatively worded items (1=5, 2=4, and so on) produced an overall reliability of .932, exceeding an alpha

of .87 reported by Kouneski (2000) as a summary coefficient of internal reliability for cohesion in the FACES II measure and demonstrating the reliance of alpha on the length of the scale (Streiner, 2003). The range of scores possible for FACES II cohesion items is 16 to 80 with 16-50 indicating *disengaged*, 51-59 indicating *separated*, 60-70 indicating *connected*, and 71-80 indicating *very connected* (Olson et al., 1992). For this study, FACES II scores ranged from 30 through 80, indicating some parents perceived their families to be disengaged ( $n = 3$ ) and some parents perceived their families to be a “5” on all items, producing the highest possible score of 80 ( $n = 5$ ).

#### PAQ-R

Authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles were negatively correlated ( $r = -.239$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and permissive and authoritarian were statistically significantly negatively correlated at  $-.540$ ,  $p < .001$ . Permissive and authoritative parenting styles were positively correlated, although not statistically significant.

#### Regression Results

Homoscedasticity was confirmed by scatterplots between standardized residuals and standardized predicted values. Homoscedasticity is present when the variability in scores on all measures is relatively similar (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Although the scores on FVE were leptokurtic, data transformation of the variable was not conducted as it would have been harder to interpret, and “heteroscedasticity is not fatal to an analysis” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 80).

All regression results were analyzed with reference to the adjusted  $R^2$  value due to the potential of overestimating the effect size of  $R^2$  for a general population or future sample

(Leach & Henson, 2007). For the initial multiple regression, an  $R^2 = .139$  indicated 14% of the variance in family cohesion scores could be explained by the FVE and the 3 parenting styles, a medium effect size, whereas the adj.  $R^2 = .102$  indicated a small-to-medium effect size.

Likewise, the hierarchical regression including FVETarian demonstrated an  $R^2 = .228$ , a medium-to-large effect size, but an adj.  $R^2 = .185$ , a solidly medium effect size (Cohen, 1992).

Hierarchical regressions including the FVETative term turned out to be relatively ineffective in predicting family cohesion scores, especially when compared to the FVETarian and FVEPerm variables.

In every regression, permissive parenting style was a suppressor variable, i.e. relatively strong beta weights (negative) but very low structure coefficients and product measures. Structure coefficients, obtained by correlating independent variables with the predicted ( $\hat{Y}$ ) scores, allow for determining the structure of the variance accounted for in the regression model (Courville & Thompson, 2001.) As Henson (2002) stated, they “inform the researcher as to what variables could have gotten credit for” (p. 11) as opposed to relying solely on a beta weight indicating what they *did* get credit for. Their use is helpful in identifying suppressor variables (see Tables 4 – 10 for all structure coefficients). A product measure (the product of the variable’s correlation with the dependent variable multiplied by the independent variable’s beta weight; Nathans et al., 2012) was also deemed of benefit in this study in order to confirm the apparent suppressor effect of permissive parenting style. For all four hierarchical regressions, permissive parenting is clearly revealed as a suppressor variable. With its high negative correlation with authoritarian parenting style, it may be that permissive parenting

style is suppressing the “noise” in the authoritarian parenting style, allowing it to have greater impact on perception of family cohesion.

Although not an initial purpose of this study, separate hierarchical regressions were run for those participants indicating their oldest child was aged 11 or younger. This resulted in some different predictive abilities of interaction terms. However, the sample size of 58 is somewhat smaller than it should be for 5 variables (Cohen, 1992) and therefore results should not be overstated. All results for these regression models can be found in Table 7 and Tables C.1 through C.4 and results for the initial regression plus 3 hierarchical regressions on the full sample size can be found in Tables 3 through 6.

Table C.1

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles for 3-11 Age Group, N = 58*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.385	-.378 <sup>†</sup>	-.574**	.329	.103
Permissive	-.203	-.165	.008	.000	.001
Authoritative	.089	.060	.262 <sup>†</sup>	.069	.007
Family Vacation Experience	.830	.347*	.697**	.486	.115

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .473$ ,  $R^2 = .224$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .165$ ;  $F(4,53) = 3.822$ ;  $p = .008$

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . <sup>†</sup> $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.

Table C.2

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVE-Tarian Interaction, 3-11 Age*

*Group; N = 58*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.549	-.539*	-.470**	.221	.147
Permissive	-.303	-.247	.007	.000	-.001
Authoritative	.092	.062	.215	.046	.008
Family Vacation Experience (FVE)	.687	.287†	.571**	.326	.095
FVE with Authoritarian	.125	.364*	.408*	.166	.086

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .578$ ,  $R^2 = .334$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .270$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .110$ ,  $p = .002$ ;  
Model 2  $F(5,52) = 5.209$ ,  $p = .001$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.

Table C.3

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVEPerm Interaction, 3-11 Age*

*Group; N = 58*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.350	-.344†	-.444**	.197	.094
Permissive	-.112	-.091	.007	.000	.000
Authoritative	.105	.071	.203	.041	.009
Family Vacation Experience (FVE)	.774	.323*	.539**	.291	.107
FVE with Permissive	-.153	-.394*	-.689**	.475	.166

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .612$ ,  $R^2 = .375$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .314$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .151$ ,  $p = .001$ ;  
Model 2  $F(5,52) = 6.229$ ,  $p < .001$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.

Table C.4

*Regression Statistics - FVE With Three Parenting Styles and FVE/Tative Interaction, 3-11 Age*

*Group; N = 58*

Predictors	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	$r_s$	$r_s^2$	<i>Product Measure</i>
Model 2					
Authoritarian	-.393	-.386*	-.524**	.275	.105
Permissive	-.210	-.171	.008	.000	.001
Authoritative	.198	.133	.240	.058	.016
Family Vacation Experience (FVE)	.824	.344*	.637**	.406	.114
FVE with Authoritative	-.138	-.224	-.294†	.086	.034

Regression Summary Model 2:  $R = .518$ ,  $R^2 = .269$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .198$ ;  $\Delta R^2 = .045$ ,  $p = .080$ ;  
Model 2  $F(5,52) = 3.819$ ,  $p = .005$ .

\* $p < .01$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . † $p < .05$ .  $r_s$  = structure coefficient.



APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

### Qualitative Responses to First Item

*Briefly describe the family vacation you had in mind when you answered the above questions.*

Took two children, ages 10 and 13, to Washington, DC. Visited the Smithsonian Museums. Also took detours through Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolina's.

A trip to Mexico

We went to Florida to visit my mother. She lives on the water in Western Florida.

We went to the beach and stayed in a beach house with several extended family members. We were there for about 4 days.

Stone Mountain

Tent camping at a campground with a site by a river, campfire cooking, tubing, cave tour, and castle style playground.

Went to NCAA wrestling tournament in Des Moines Iowa

Disney World

We drove 24 hours to a Disney and spent seven days at the park then drove home again

A family vacation in which we could participate in activities together where no one was excluded or overlooked.

We went to Florida.

I am a grandmother who keeps a 7 yr old and 2 year old while parents work. I have them at least 3 nights and 4 days a week, so I feel like I am raising them. I took the 7 yr old on a Disney Cruise to the Carribean with my sister and her grandson.

We went to Disney World.

Family of 4, kids ages 7 & 4. Road trip 14 hours from home to gulf shores, AL

Trip to Disney World

A trip to Germany with my 7 year old son

We went camping in a town a few hours from our own. We did not have much money but we were all stressed so we packed up and left town. My kids got to swim in the lake for the first

time ever, we also went to some museums and other activities like eating at a restaurant we had seen in a book.

We took a long weekend vacation to Santa Fe the weekend before Thanksgiving so that we had time to celebrate and just be together in our immediate family (3).

A trip back to Taiwan to visit families. Kids haven't met their grandparents for more than a decade.

travel to a national park in Utah

We spent the weekend with relatives in another state.

Trip to the lake

We have 3 children ages 6,7,10 we went to Disney in Florida for 8 days.

Destination New York with husband (#2) and his daughters (ages 14 and 16) to sightsee and visit with relatives of all ages. Teens have lived full time with us for 3 years had generally low energy, dislike of walking and were unresponsive to my attempts at conversation.

We went to the Bahamas to the resort of Atlantis. While I do not swim and do not enjoy water activities my family does so the vacation better served the purpose of uniting the family but it also added the cognitive and emotional awareness to my children because they are now old enough to comprehend that mom did not have that great of a time. Vacations at resorts and amusement parks are stressful expensive and exhausting. I believe Walt Disney would have a conniption as he watched families at his amusement parks. In my observation parents do not receive enjoyment and children do not like how they are pushed from park open to park close to receive the full value of the day. I am only drawing from my past experiences. As a mother vacations are too stressful.

Rocky Mountains, Condo and no schedule

I wanted to do something active with my family that would be an experience my children would remember and would make us feel closer.

Weekend getaway to St. Louis. Art museum, zoo, city museum. Met another family there we do not get to see very often.

My children are grown adults so my husband and I vacation together. We have an excellent marriage so our time together is rewarding. We usually go camping and have camped next to authoritarian parents and their children. I don't know how the children possibly had a positive benefit from the experience. I'm a retired teacher of many many years I can see that with SOME families vacations may be beneficial but if the family is primarily dysfunctional, the

vacation is more bad parenting in a different place.

My family of four (4), which included a cousin in similar age to my then 9 y/o son took a 16-hour road trip to Orlando, Florida to spend a week in a very nice resort and visit Disney World. It was an Awesome experience and we all had a Grand time!

We travelled to Cuzco and Iquitos Peru and did humanitarian work as well as sightseeing.

My son and I travelled to long beach island with my sister, her husband and their son who is the same age as my son. We went parasailing, crabbing, ate out at some neat places, shopped, played in the beach, swam in the ocean and did some geocaching. We rode in one car and shared a motel room. The question below asks when I go in vacation I am the only adult it I travel with another adult. For me, my vacations include both.

My husband, three kids, ages 5, 6 and 8, and I went to Destin, Florida.

Going to visit a college friend and her like-minded family

We rented a condo in Colorado and enjoyed skiing and snowboarding.

spent three weeks in the rio grande valley

Flew back to Minnesota for summer vacation visiting family, friends and spending a few days at a lake with family members.

One week at Acadia national park on maine

We spent a week at Disney World - just the four of us.

We traveled about 8 hours away for Thanksgiving to be with my wife's brother's wife's family. There were a few other families there and lots of kids.

Sea World

Trip to Pittsburgh, road trip via NC, VA & FL

We drove 15 hours to spend Christmas with family.

Traveling to a different state to visit grandparents and do all the touristy things in that town.

We visited my parents in NY.

We drove to Disneyland with just our family.

a trip to florida from seattle to visit family members and have fun

Our family went to a family wedding in another state and spent about 2 days touring and on activities in the area.

Travelled to visit extended family (about 8 hrs away by car)

Summer 2013 family vacation to Toronto and Niagara Falls.

We travelled to the Big Island of Hawaii with our two children ages 5&3 to visit family who had just moved there.

Husband and I took the children to Cape Cod (Eastham). We stayed in a cottage within walking distance to the bay. Visited the beach together, but didn't necessarily do ALL activities together. However, always had dinner together.

My family took a trip to New York city, which was unusual for us; vacations usually entail visiting relatives in other states. This trip was just the four of us, and we had such a good time. Wish I had been able to do this more when my kids were younger.

We had a road trip through southern Colorado.

We visited a presidential library and saw some of Austin and San Antonio, and visited family in another Texas town

We spent a week at a resort, in a cabin on a lake in MN.

we spent about a week traveling in Arizona. our children were able to experience new places, meet new people (including family), and we were able to simply relax as a family.

Trip to new York

We went to Colorado. We hiked, went white water rafting, attended a rodeo, and in general, enjoyed the being in the outdoors.

We went to Iceland on an active tour, unfortunately with only one of my three children, and my mother-in-law (and both parents)

My family and I took a trip down the shore to Wildwood. We stayed at a hotel together my siblings, parents, fiance, and son. We did a lot of activities together and had moments that we were still laughing about after the vacation.

We used our families timeshare to take the kids to new smyrna beach in October. With a 3 year old and an infant it was nice getting away for more then a couple days. The beach was

relaxing and our unit was larger than expected. We spent the first couple weeks back from vacation recalling our vacation and the next planning our 2014 trip to Disney.

We just got back from Disney. Had a blast.

Just being together

A trip to Arizona to visit an older sibling in college and explore central AZ

Family togetherness; a time to enjoy each other since everyone lives in a different state. We did enjoy a week at the beach. The first time many of the family have been together in years. Fifteen family members vacationed together.

My family drove to Jackson Hole, WY for Spring Break. We enjoyed a variety of activities together, including games, swimming, snowmobiling, shopping and just family dinners and laughter. We stayed in a condo for a week. There are two teenagers in our home, 14 & 16, then 13 & 15. Very good time together was had by all.

We went for about a week to Florida (Disney World).

We took our 3 oldest children to a water/amusement park.

We went to Chicago and visited a couple of museums and rode some rides on the pier.

Due to a work conference, we decided to make it into a family vacation. It involved visiting a city in Texas and staying in a motel. We, as a family went swimming and went out to eat. Also toured a historical site. Another relative also lived in the city so she was able to be with us also.

easy trip to San Antonio & Sea World with my sister in law & her family, and my mother & father in law. We all stayed in a hotel but in separate rooms.

week long trip to Mexico over spring break

Lake trip

We drove from the Pacific Northwest to Central California for a camping trip. We met relatives from Southern California.

I was hoping it would be relaxing, but I found it stressful at times.

Driving out west to the Badlands, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. We stayed at hotels or a hostel. We enjoyed a lot of outdoor activities together such as: hiking, cliff climbing, mountain biking, swimming, exploring. We also visited a few other sites along the

way. Most of it was planned, but we took a few extra side routes when things interested us. We had a wonderful time, all got along well. Laughed and joked a lot. It was a wonderful time for our family!

Our trip to Smoky Mountains for Christmas

We took the first flying family vacation we've ever taken, although we have taken many, many vacations by car. With four children, flying has always been too expensive. We usually drive and camp. We flew to Europe to visit our oldest son who was studying there and to meet an aunt & uncle and first cousins we had not met. We rented a minivan and camped there.

Me my wife and my son took a 5 day 4 night cruise for Spring Break. We went to 3 locations in the Bahamas. It was very relaxing and fun for the entire family.

Spent time at a ranch in South Texas

Visiting relatives in Orlando, Florida. / Quality family time @ restaurants, adventure parks, family gatherings, car trips, airport/airplane, etc.

Trip to Disney World with my husband, son, mother and father-in-law and sister in law.

Vacation to the beach

Went with aunt & cousins from Norway to Florida (including Disney World, etc.) in the car with family -- 2 parents, 3 children in our family.

My son and I spent the night at Great Wolf Lodge and played together at the water park.

Our vacation was in the wilderness, where we rented a small cabin with the basic necessities - roof, water, stove, fridge. No phone, no cell service, no internet. The family then spends time exploring nature and relaxing by the fire. Even the dog likes it,

We spent a week together at a cabin outside of Denver for the holidays. It's an annual tradition and we love it.

A 16-day trip to Scotland.

My daughter and I went backpacking to the mountains. We do it every year, and it makes a big difference to our feeling of family togetherness. We only were able to go for 3 days, though usually we go for a week. Our time had always been fun, in spite of adversities like cold temperatures, mosquitoes, boring food. The memories have always been great.

July trip to outer banks -- 2 weeks

Our family went on a camping trip to the White Mountains. Despite the rough start with a broken camper and the weather, we had a wonderful time together.

week long trip to florida. lots of sunshine, swimming, activities outside with the whole family participating, excellent food, lots of laughter

Spent a week at Siesta Key with my two children, my sister, and a friend for each child

My family and I went on our annual family vacation to Cape Cod in July of 2013. We have close family that lives in Wellfleet and so we look forward to spending time with family, but also being at the beach and getting away from everyday life at home. Our two daughters love the time with their cousins that they only see a few times a year. Each year we plan a fun family activity, last year we did our own version of the show "Chopped" on the food network. It was a lot of fun getting the materials together and planning the event, and then actually taking part in our own game show. We also look forward to the fourth of july parade in the small town of Wellfleet. Every year the girls decorate t-shirts and bags and wear the shirts to the parade and bring their decorated bags to collect candy.

My husband and I took our sons and 2 each of their friends to the beach for a week.

A road trip from dfw through the southeastern us with stays in New Orleans Louisiana, destin Florida, Atlanta Georgia, Charlotte NC, and a stop in Ashville NC & Memphis Tennessee.

10 days in Italy for Christmas



### Word Frequency Counts (3 or more) for First Qualitative Item

*Briefly describe the family vacation you had in mind when you answered the above questions.*

Word	Count	Weighted %	Similar Words
family	56	4.27	families, family
trip	29	2.21	trip, trips
went	24	1.83	went
vacation	23	1.75	vacation, vacationed, vacations
visit	22	1.68	visit, visited, visiting
time	21	1.60	time, times
together	21	1.60	together, togetherness
week	18	1.37	week, weeks
children	16	1.22	children
disney	14	1.07	disney
took	13	0.99	took
activities	12	0.92	active, activities, activity
days	12	0.92	day, days
florida	12	0.92	florida
spent	12	0.92	spent
park	11	0.84	park, parks
son	11	0.84	son, sons
year	11	0.84	year, years
beach	11	0.84	beach
world	10	0.76	world
travelled	9	0.69	travel, traveled, traveling, travelled
ages	9	0.69	age, ages
also	9	0.69	also
camping	8	0.61	camp, camped, camping
just	8	0.61	just
parents	8	0.61	parenting, parents
enjoyed	8	0.61	enjoy, enjoyed, enjoyment
stayed	8	0.61	stayed, staying, stays
husband	7	0.53	husband
kids	7	0.53	kids
new	7	0.53	new
lot	7	0.53	lot, lots
hours	6	0.46	hour, hours
like	6	0.46	like, likes
mountains	6	0.46	mountain, mountains

relatives	6	0.46	relative, relatives
swimming	6	0.46	swim, swimming
another	6	0.46	another
drove	6	0.46	drove
old	6	0.46	old
water	6	0.46	water
lives	5	0.38	live, lived, lives
able	5	0.38	able
car	5	0.38	car
experience	5	0.38	experience, experiences
first	5	0.38	first
fun	5	0.38	fun
lake	5	0.38	lake
law	5	0.38	law
many	5	0.38	many
mother	5	0.38	mother
relaxing	5	0.38	relax, relaxing
road	5	0.38	road
sister	5	0.38	sister
spend	5	0.38	spend, spending, spends
state	5	0.38	state, states
town	5	0.38	town
two	5	0.38	two
including	5	0.38	include, included, including
museums	5	0.38	museum, museums
always	4	0.31	always
away	4	0.31	away
back	4	0.31	back
city	4	0.31	city
four	4	0.31	four
friend	4	0.31	friend, friends
home	4	0.31	home
long	4	0.31	long
members	4	0.31	members
met	4	0.31	met
one	4	0.31	one
planning	4	0.31	plan, planned, planning
tour	4	0.31	tour, toured, touring
usually	4	0.31	usually

weekend	4	0.31	weekend
cousins	4	0.31	cousin, cousins
different	4	0.31	difference, different
getting	4	0.31	get, getting
resort	4	0.31	resort, resorts
stressful	4	0.31	stressed, stressful
adult	3	0.23	adult, adults
daughters	3	0.23	daughter, daughters
destin	3	0.23	destin, destination
exploring	3	0.23	explore, exploring
feel	3	0.23	feel, feeling
grand	3	0.23	grand, grande
hotel	3	0.23	hotel, hotels
make	3	0.23	make, makes
night	3	0.23	night, nights
places	3	0.23	place, places
site	3	0.23	site, sites
amusement	3	0.23	amusement
break	3	0.23	break
cabin	3	0.23	cabin
christmas	3	0.23	christmas
colorado	3	0.23	colorado
condo	3	0.23	condo
couple	3	0.23	couple
food	3	0.23	food
got	3	0.23	got

## Qualitative Responses to Second Item

*Briefly describe why you go on a family vacation.*

Family time; take the children to see something new, interesting, and fun; visit friends and family in other parts of the country.

To take time together and explore new places.

To visit family and see the sights.

We like to relax and have fun as a family. The past vacation, we went so we could spend time with my husbands grandfather before he passed away.

In order to relax and enjoy my family

I like to have the experience of no screen time or schedule interruptions. We all experience new adventures together and make memories, or we revisit past places as building traditions. The children seem to only remember the good memories and laugh about the bad ones, so all the work, money, sacrifice, planning, sibling fighting, etc is worth it.

This time we went to watch and support our oldest son. For the past three years this has been our family vacation. We are able to spend time together and bond. We are on the low socioeconomic status so vacations are rare and we sacrifice a lot to get this one in.

To let my children experience family fun like I did as a child. To make memories for them.

We go to make memories and avoid the distraction associated with society pressures

mexico to scuba and beach it

To get away from the busy world of work and school. To spend quality time together with the family.

To get away from work and other daily responsibilities.....to recharge.....retool .....and rejuvenate before jumping back into the fray called life.

To get away from our normal routine and to spend time together.

I just wanted to have fun with him. I want the grandsons to experience flying, cruising, the world. We will go again. We are planning a trip to Las Vegas to ride a water slide thru a shark tank that the 7 yr old saw on the internet. We are planning a trip to Hawaii with our 3 kids, 2 spouses, 2 grandsons in the spring to celebrate retirement.

To take a break from our everyday chaos and responsibilities in order to regroup, have fun, and focus on one another.

To enjoy time together as a family. Away from routine & distractions.

To have new experiences, have fun and to expose my kids to new experiences and to have fun with my husband and kids

To see new things and let my kids experience different places. To have fun together. We go to relieve stress. I have found that having a few days without any obligation helps us all manage our stress levels better.

Visit families.

to spend time as a family, to visit family, to travel somewhere fun as a family

Mostly, it is to visit relatives that live in other cities or states.

Family togetherness, break from our routines/work, fun & relaxation

Fun, family time, / Relaxation

to spend time together, to have fun, to experience new activities/experiences

For adventure - to discover new and interesting places or activities. Or for social - to visit with family or friends.

We go on family vacation to offer our children experiences they do not have in every day life. We also go on vacation to allow my husband to get away from work and spend time with the children.

Experience together new places

Divorce

To make memories and get away from life's distractions

We go to visit new places and we like to camp so we usually go camping where we can kayak, hike, and ride bikes.

We go on vacation to rest and relax; to get away from the everyday routine; to bond as a family; to explore new environments and partake of fun activities; to learn history; to see different parts of the country and world; to have extended 'down time'; and for Family Fun!

To experience new things together. To have fun together.

To see new places and do new things with my son. Sometimes it is related to a special interest of his and sometimes it is something I want to expose him to or share with him.

To get away as a family and learn new things and experience new things. We love making memories for our family.

Often to visit family/friends we don't see often and we enjoy spending time with

Our vacations are not only a great deal of fun, but we've also learned over the years that they make up a large percentage of our great memories. They become part of our family story and we enjoy talking about them from time to time. They are definitely bonding experiences. Lower rankings on questions above about effects after the vacation were because we already enjoyed spending time together so there was no need for this to change much.

visit family members outside of the DFW area

Time to get away and connect more deeply with one another. Time to enjoy nature together and have fun!

It's a lot of fun. We like the kids to get to know their relatives.

For a break from the environment and the stressors in the environment. Also, for fun with my family and experiencing new places.

To be together and learn new things

We enjoy spending time away as a family. We do things that are fun that we don't get to do at home.

It's almost always to be with family. Sometimes it's to the beach or something fun just to get away.

To get away from the responsibilities of home and work

Group time. Family fun time. Visit places and locations.

This one was to visit family. Often it is to have adventures as a family

Visit family and a new place

To see family, relax and do something different.

We want to create memories for our children as well as having fun together.

to connect, spend quality time together, have fun, experience new things, build memories

to spend time with family at a location with activities that they enjoy and we can do some together and spend some time having fun together.

To have time together to experience new-ness--new aspects of each other, new places, new experiences--and to enjoy each others' company

Important to me and my wife to travel and expose our kids (and selves) to new things and experiences.

To experience a new place.

Because it's fun and special to be together . . . at the beach. We love swimming, sitting in the sun, eating at our favorite restaurant, biking, going on ranger walks, exploring yarn stores or thrift stores, visiting art galleries, walking along the beach, gazing at the stars. We began doing this when the children were little. Then for many years we weren't able to get away. Then I had two teenagers, and I felt it was important to reconnect by visiting the Cape where we had strong memories. The old familiar closeness helped heal some disagreements that had come up. It was good to be together, but know we were all individual.

To spend quality time together as a family that's normally hard to do because of kid's activities.

Usually to visit out-of-state relatives.

Family vacations are a good way for us to be together as a family, and away from our routine. We enjoy seeing other parts of the United States (and hopefully the world, someday). Our vacations are really important to us as a way to maintain our relationships, as well as our sanity.

It's great to see other parts of the country both to broaden the children's perspectives and to get away from our usual life.

We spend our summers at various cabins throughout MN. Going on vacation allows us to get away from the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. We are away from the chores that call out to all mothers when at home. There is no TV, and while we do have cell phone reception, the use is very minimal. We can focus on each other, playing outside, fishing, swimming, and playing games.

it's a great time to get away from the everyday routine. my husband can be away from work and relax; I can be away from everyday stresses; and our kids can be away from the everyday chores and routine.

To let my family see great places together and bond

We go on vacation to get away from our daily grind. We have the chance be together and unplug from electronics and media for awhile. We take the opportunity to explore new areas and activities.

To take the family away from the household distractions, and be together, and do some interesting fun things together.

To have time together that we may not have been able to create in our home environment due to distractions or busy schedules.

1. we own timeshare, so we are "obligated"
2. I get the time off from work, and staying home is often just as expensive as vacationing.
3. watching my kids discover the world is priceless

Family bonding and memories

Because of our daughter wanting us to spend time with them

An opportunity to explore new experiences together.

Family enjoyment. A time to get away from the day to day and relax.

We take vacations to spend time seeing and visiting other areas and having experiences we don't get in our normal day to day life. We enjoy time "away" from home together, without distractions and doing activities we enjoy.

we enjoy being together and seeing new things as well as visiting places we've been to many times before that we've liked. We go on at least one long vacation each year (about 8-10 days) and then go on shorter trips as they become available.

To make memories, bond and relax with our children.

To enjoy different areas/cultures as a family.

We are basically home-bodies so this allows us to go beyond the city we live in. I also think it is good for my child to experience a vacation. It will hopefully include memories of events we completed as a family. As stated, we do the vacation in combination with a work obligation but this impact is minimal.



to give our children memories & for them to learn about other places.

have family time without media/electronics and experience a different culture

Get away from routine, do something fun.

For a break from the norm, spending quality time together as a family, experience things that are oftentimes only seen on television, in magazines, in books and advertisements.

We go to spend time with my parents. We live in the Southwest, they live in New England. So we drive there and stay for a month in the summer.

We enjoy being together. It's an opportunity to get away from distractions and spend time together. We try new things, explore and have those common experiences to look back on, laugh about. We feel a sense of family identity from the things we do. Example, a quote from our last vacation: "our family doesn't relax on vacation, we just play harder!"

I love spending quality time with my kids

To be together in a new place, to see new places, to get away together from the pressures and responsibilities of work, school and housework.

The main reason for our family vacations is to make memories that last longer than any gifts we could buy for each other. It provides undisturbed time to bond with each other and provides a break from our busy lives.

To get away from daily responsibilities and stress

To keep the family connected. To get away from the routine.

To enjoy time together as a family.

Take a break from our everyday craziness, explore a new place, hang out together as a family

Spend time together as a family.

Getting away from the usual surroundings puts things in perspective and clears my head so I can come back more focused on what really matters in life.

To get away from our day-to-day lives, do something different.

We love being together, talking, hiking, playing games, reading and eating.

Great to see new places and spend time together as a family

Visit with family, see the sights outdoors,

To bond in a great environment, and, also, to create life-long memories.

expose kids to a different environment; get out of adult rut; other family members enjoy beach activities; spend time with other friends

We go on family vacations to get away from work and other obligations so we can spend time together

to relax, enjoy each others company, get together with other family members, sight seeing and learn about other cultures

Relaxation, get-away.

love to travel, to get away, to have time/place to relax and experience a different place

I think it is important to go away from everyday life. For myself and my husband, we are forced to take a break from work. I think for myself I need that time away from household chores, and my children enjoy the different experiences they gain where ever we travel too. The time together as a family is very important to us.

To spend time together and have fun

We go on family vacations to exclusively enjoy each other without interruptions. We thoroughly enjoy time set apart for fun & for new experiences for our son.

We go on vacation for a change in routine and change in pace. We go to fun places, like traveling or the beach.

# Word Frequency Counts (3 or more) for Second Qualitative Item

*Briefly describe why you go on a family vacation.*

Word	Count	Weighted %	Similar Words
family	56	4.27	families, family
trip	29	2.21	trip, trips
went	24	1.83	went
vacation	23	1.75	vacation, vacationed, vacations
visit	22	1.68	visit, visited, visiting
time	21	1.60	time, times
together	21	1.60	together, togetherness
week	18	1.37	week, weeks
children	16	1.22	children
disney	14	1.07	disney
took	13	0.99	took
activities	12	0.92	active, activities, activity
days	12	0.92	day, days
florida	12	0.92	florida
spent	12	0.92	spent
park	11	0.84	park, parks
son	11	0.84	son, sons
year	11	0.84	year, years
beach	11	0.84	beach
world	10	0.76	world
travelled	9	0.69	travel, traveled, traveling, travelled
ages	9	0.69	age, ages
also	9	0.69	also
camping	8	0.61	camp, camped, camping
just	8	0.61	just
parents	8	0.61	parenting, parents
enjoyed	8	0.61	enjoy, enjoyed, enjoyment
stayed	8	0.61	stayed, staying, stays
husband	7	0.53	husband
kids	7	0.53	kids
new	7	0.53	new
lot	7	0.53	lot, lots
hours	6	0.46	hour, hours
like	6	0.46	like, likes
mountains	6	0.46	mountain, mountains

relatives	6	0.46	relative, relatives
swimming	6	0.46	swim, swimming
another	6	0.46	another
drove	6	0.46	drove
old	6	0.46	old
water	6	0.46	water
lives	5	0.38	live, lived, lives
able	5	0.38	able
car	5	0.38	car
experience	5	0.38	experience, experiences
first	5	0.38	first
fun	5	0.38	fun
lake	5	0.38	lake
law	5	0.38	law
many	5	0.38	many
mother	5	0.38	mother
relaxing	5	0.38	relax, relaxing
road	5	0.38	road
sister	5	0.38	sister
spend	5	0.38	spend, spending, spends
state	5	0.38	state, states
town	5	0.38	town
two	5	0.38	two
including	5	0.38	include, included, including
museums	5	0.38	museum, museums
always	4	0.31	always
away	4	0.31	away
back	4	0.31	back
city	4	0.31	city
four	4	0.31	four
friend	4	0.31	friend, friends
home	4	0.31	home
long	4	0.31	long
members	4	0.31	members
met	4	0.31	met
one	4	0.31	one
planning	4	0.31	plan, planned, planning
tour	4	0.31	tour, toured, touring
usually	4	0.31	usually

weekend	4	0.31	weekend
cousins	4	0.31	cousin, cousins
different	4	0.31	difference, different
getting	4	0.31	get, getting
resort	4	0.31	resort, resorts
stressful	4	0.31	stressed, stressful
adult	3	0.23	adult, adults
daughters	3	0.23	daughter, daughters
destin	3	0.23	destin, destination
exploring	3	0.23	explore, exploring
feel	3	0.23	feel, feeling
grand	3	0.23	grand, grande
hotel	3	0.23	hotel, hotels
make	3	0.23	make, makes
night	3	0.23	night, nights
places	3	0.23	place, places
site	3	0.23	site, sites
amusement	3	0.23	amusement
break	3	0.23	break
cabin	3	0.23	cabin
christmas	3	0.23	christmas
colorado	3	0.23	colorado
condo	3	0.23	condo
couple	3	0.23	couple
food	3	0.23	food
got	3	0.23	got

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL LETTER



A green light to greatness®

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE

December 18, 2013

Dr. Arminta Jacobson  
Student Investigator: Debbie Kruenegel-Farr  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of North Texas  
RE: Human Subjects Application No. 13-579

Dear Dr. Jacobson:

In accordance with 45 CFR Part 46 Section 46.101, your study titled "The Perception of Family Vacation and Family Cohesion and the Moderating Effects of Parenting Style" has been determined to qualify for an exemption from further review by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Enclosed are the consent documents with stamped IRB approval. Please copy and **use this form only** for your study subjects.

No changes may be made to your study's procedures or forms without prior written approval from the UNT IRB. Please contact Jordan Harmon, Research Compliance Analyst, ext. 4643, if you wish to make any such changes. Any changes to your procedures or forms after 3 years will require completion of a new IRB application.

We wish you success with your study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia L. Kaminski, Ph.D." The signature is fluid and cursive.

Patricia L. Kaminski, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

PK:jh

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS®

1155 Union Circle #310979 Denton, Texas 76203-5017  
940.369.4643 940.369.7486 fax [www.research.unt.edu](http://www.research.unt.edu)

Hello –

I am a doctoral student at the University of North Texas. I am researching the connection between perceptions of family vacation and family cohesion (togetherness) and the influences of parenting styles on that connection. If family vacations are found helpful in bringing families together, those who work with families can encourage family time away from the usual routine. With this knowledge family educators can offer parenting classes to help build family cohesion.

Below, please find a survey link. If you have children living at home between the ages of 3 and 18 and have vacationed away from home with your family in the past year, please complete the survey. Please – only one parent per household. If your child(ren) are all younger than 3 or all older than 18, please pass this email along to others you may know with children within that age range.

The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete and all family types and styles are invited to participate. The survey includes questions about your last family vacation, about your family's togetherness, and about your parenting practices. There are also some general demographic questions. No names or identifying information will be required – it is completely anonymous and voluntary. There are no risks in taking the survey and although answering each question will be important for my study, you are free to stop the survey at any time. There is no penalty should you choose not to participate. For any questions about the survey, please contact me directly at [Debbie.farr@unt.edu](mailto:Debbie.farr@unt.edu) or my dissertation committee chairperson, [Arminta.jacobson@unt.edu](mailto:Arminta.jacobson@unt.edu). The study has been reviewed and approved by UNT's Institutional Review Board (IRB 13-579) – 940-565-3940.

Feel free to share this email with others who may be willing to participate. One hundred adults are needed. If you share this information with others, please make sure to forward the entire email so they understand all directions.

LINK: <http://unt.qualtrics>

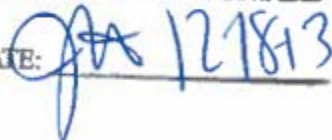
SURVEY WILL BE OPEN FROM DECEMBER 17 – 31, 2013.

THANK YOU!

Debbie Farr, MS.Ed.; Doctoral Candidate, ABD

APPROVED BY THE UNT IRB

DATE:

 12/18/13



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