

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMITMENT TO THE MARITAL RELATION
AND THE PARENTING STYLE IN PARENTS OF LEBANAESE SCHOOL AGED
CHILDREN

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by
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Abstract

A minimal amount of research has been conducted on marital commitment and parenting styles. There has barely been any acknowledgment on the importance of one's relationship on raising a child. Thus, the following study aims to examine the relationship between each of the indicators of commitment in Rusbult's investment model of commitment (investment size, satisfaction, and quality of alternatives) and the parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive). Participants are married individuals of elementary and middle school aged children in Lebanon who have completed a socio-demographic questionnaire, the PSDQ (Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire), and the IMS (Investment Model Scale). Data was analyzed through the use of SPSS and AMOS. Results showed that individuals who are not satisfied in their marital relationship are more likely to exhibit permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. Also, fathers who are less invested in their marital relationship are generally more prone to be authoritarian or permissive. Fathers who also have alternatives outside of their marital relationships are likely to exhibit permissive or authoritative parenting styles. As for mothers with alternatives outside the marital relationship, they were more likely to make use of authoritarian parenting styles. With regards to the correlations that emerged with regards to the partners' ratings of both parenting and their own commitment, further research is recommended to more amply explore the relationship between those two aspects.

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CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Introduction and Rationale

Parenting is one of the most difficult experiences one could experience in their lifetime. Having to raise another human being to aid them in eventually leading a psychologically healthy life is not a matter to be taken lightly. However, what some parents fail to consider is that parenting in itself is not the only aspect that shapes an individual into what he or she actually is. There are several other factors that may come into play, such as the relationship between the parents for example.

Commitment in the marital relationship is an important factor to consider when it comes to one's parenting. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their marriage may exhibit rather strict punishments on their children (Buehler & Gerard, 2002). However, some studies do show opposing results. Fathers who are unhappy with their marriages tend to make up for that dissatisfaction in their son's lives (Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1993). Interestingly, satisfaction within a marital relationship seems to have an effect on one's parenting style. Current literature has focused on the importance of commitment towards raising a child and its relationship with parenting styles (Verini, 2003). However, few studies have tackled relationship commitment and its effect on parenting styles whether be it the effect of commitment on parenting or vice versa. These two factors taken together may explain most of the better outcomes for the children of these married couples.

What we know from the literature is that the more satisfied and invested partners are and the less alternatives (other potential partners, additional friends...) they have to their relationship, the more likely they are to exhibit a balance between being responsive and demanding towards their children (Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1993; Ponnet et al, 2012). The lack of sufficient research on the impact of relationship commitment on parenting styles suggest that research should investigate the relationship between the two. Moreover, it is important to ensure that children are living in healthy environments where they are raised

properly. In other words, a child's education begins at home and parenting is a crucial factor when it comes to proper education. Parenting is also very crucial within a child's early development which is why it is important to ensure a healthy that he or she has a healthy childhood development. The aim of this study explores how factors of marital relationships influence parenting styles which each parent adopts.

1.2. Relationship Commitment

The idea of relationship readiness pervades popular culture, with periodicals such as Huffington Post to websites such as eHarmony offering advice as to whether people are ready for a committed relationship. Several researchers have featured commitment as a main paradigm in their studies on romantic relationships. Commitment is considered to be vital to the development and stability of a romantic relationship; it is what makes an individual want to carry on within a relationship (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Barton et al., 2016; Tan & Agnew, 2016). Commitment is what keeps a relationship grounded through its difficulties as well as its delights (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

Commitment is generally characterized through three components: the plan to stay with a partner (conative), emotional attachment to the relationship (psychological) and having a deep-rooted direction towards the relationship (cognitive) (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Tan & Agnew, 2016; Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015; Weigel, 2010). Furthermore, the value of the partnership as well as the ability to adapt to a relationship are more present in individuals who have high levels of commitment. That is not to mention the fact that individuals tend to be a part of a steadier partnership (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

Cognitively speaking, the person may see himself or herself as being with their partner in the long run through the highs and the lows. Dependency may play a role in painting the former picture (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). Moreover, stable partnerships may lead individuals to build a solid foundation for their relationship in the future; this is where

their thoughts and cognitions become aligned with one another (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). With regards to the psychological component, their dependence on one another increases their vulnerability to sensitive situations prompted by their partner's actions. Their partner's ups and downs may also directly have an effect on their emotions. Although individuals may feel like they have lost touch of a sense of emotion towards their partner as they split, they soon realize how in touch they are with their sentiments towards one another (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001).

As for the conative aspect of commitment, individuals tend to remain in a relationship as a result of motivation. In other words, having the motivation or intent to stabilize an existing relationship may bring about that stabilization through several circumstances that enable the couple to persist in their relationship (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001).

1.2.1. Individuals' Understanding of Commitment

The previously discussed “construct of commitment “are general scientific conceptualizations regarding commitment. However, when it comes to peoples' conception of the construct, words like: faithfulness, accountability, loyalty, and fidelity emerge. Care, declarations of affection and fondness to the other partner, and reliability; however, are some of the behavioral aspects that individuals find as markers of commitment in a relationship (Barton et al., 2016). Research has also shown that there is an existing association between one's commitment and the perception of their partner's level of commitment (Ogolsky, 2009; Weigel, 2010).

1.2.2. Indicators of Commitment

Some researchers believe that a couple's consistency in their everyday life is one of the most obvious indicators of commitment. In other words, every contact or discussion that takes place between two individuals in a relationship indicates their level of commitment.

Weigel (as cited in Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014) devised six indicators that individuals make use of to portray a level of commitment towards their partner.

Guaranteeing companion of feelings is the first indicator and it includes elements such as expressing feelings towards your companion, affirming commitment, and displaying feelings (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Elements such as attending to what one's companion needs and listening to what they have to say, in addition to showing them encouragement, treating them in a decent manner, and boosting their self-confidence belong to an indicator known as support (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Presenting palpable reminders involves offering presents, leaving messages, and little gestures to aid their companions (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Generating a future in the partnership comprises of aspects such as making arrangements with one another with the relationship future being an important component, commemorating anniversaries and highlights within the relationship, and having quality time with one another (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Relationship work includes actions such as informing one's companion on his or her readiness to sort out glitches, discussing issues, and putting in the effort to communicate on a daily basis (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). As for the last indicator, displaying honesty, actions such as the following are involved: being truthful with one's companion, staying true to promises, and residing to the loyalty of the partnership (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

1.2.3. Commitment and Age

Research suggests that as individuals progress with age, they tend to exhibit behaviors that are characterized by a higher degree of commitment. It has also been discoursed that the duration of one's relationship, despite the age, leads to higher degrees of attachment to one's partner (Meier & Allen, 2009). Studies have shown that adolescents experience commitment gradually; that is, it develops throughout one's romantic relationship. However, Barton et al.'s study (2016) has shown that adolescents do not differ that

significantly from adults in their understanding of what indicates commitment and its functioning in a romantic relationship.

Generally, when individuals entering adulthood engage in committed romantic relations, the former indicates that they have developed psychosocial maturity and the ability to envision themselves engaging in a potential familial relationship (Kogan, Yu, & Brown, 2016). Moreover, relationship commitment seems to be related with sexual enjoyment for young adults as well with the former predicting the latter for both men and women in a relationship (Galinsky & Sonenstein, 2012).

It has also been shown that that low commitment level is a direct outcome of unmet romantic expectations and a high commitment level is a direct outcome of unmet romantic expectations of alternative relationships (Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2016). Studies have also shown that a serious (flirting, engaging in an emotional relationship) observation of alternatives when it comes to young adults does not seem to be related to an individual wanting to terminate a relationship. However, these young individuals tend to exhibit a low level of Stanley and Markman's dedication construct. With that being said, the more dedication you exhibit, the less likely you are to consider alternatives (Quirk et al., 2015).

Research has shown that young adults whose parents have gone through a divorce process tend to perceive commitment in a more doubtful manner and therefore handle relationships with restraint as opposed to young adults with non-divorced parents. They are more drawn to sexual interactive relationships being that the prior type of relationships lack the investment aspect that they are afraid of when it comes to committed relationships (Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham, 2008). Moreover, young adults' attitudes towards marital relationships may also be affected by parental divorce; they portray less commitment when it comes to the concept of marriage (Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham, 2008). Maddox Shaw, Rhoades, Allen, Stanley, and Markman (2013) have also shown that non –

married young adults (18 to 35) who show a high level of commitment also tend to be less interested in extra dyadic sexual involvement.

“Difficult factors that drive an individual to stay in a given relationship irrespective of their desire for it.” This definition of constraints will be revisited as we reach the theoretical constructs. When it comes to men, research has shown those who have married before they reach the age of 20 exhibit the lowest level of constraint commitment, an aspect that will be discussed in Stanley and Markman’s theory in subsequent sections. However, those who have married after the age of 50 exhibit the opposite, the highest level of constraint commitment (Adams & Jones, 2013). As for females, the highest level of constraint commitment is exhibited when married for the first time in the following range of ages: 30 to 49 (Adams & Jones, 2013).

1.2.4. Commitment and Gender Differences

A variety of studies have tackled the different aspects of commitment with respect to gender differences such as levels of commitment when it comes to men and women as well as their understanding of it. One study conducted by Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2014) in Nevada among heterosexual couples examined both individuals' indicators of commitment as well as their levels of commitment. The following indicators came across more commonly in women than in men: "reassuring their partners, offering tangible reminders, creating relationship future, behaving with integrity, and regularly working on the relationship." As for their levels of commitment, no substantial difference appeared (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

Another study also examined interaction patterns within individuals. It was divided into two studies with the first being the identification of patterns that individuals thought yield a sense of commitment and the second being the judgment of those patterns and their probability of producing commitment (Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008). With respect to the

former study, it was shown that men and women pinpointed interaction patterns correspondingly. As for the latter study, results showed that men and women evaluated the idealism of the individual interaction patterns differently. For example, “If I need food, clothing, or a place to stay, my partner will provide it,” and “If I am in danger, my partner will protect me,” were the only two patterns that women exemplified in their judgment more than men (Hampel & Vangelisti, 2008). Carter, Duncan, Stoilova, and Phillips (2015) conducted a study on non-cohabitating partners to examine the effects of distance and commitment on one's relationship in terms of sex, love, and security. Being that the current study's literature is on commitment, these effects will be the area of focus in terms of results. Both genders seem to have reported sexual exclusivity as being a fundamental component of commitment (Carter, Duncan, Stoilova, & Phillips, 2015). Additionally, joint decision making, cooking with one another, confiding in one another, sharing hobbies and pursuits, and willingness to live with one another were all described by the participants as indicating commitment within a relationship with no mention of gender differences (Carter, Duncan, Stoilova, & Phillips, 2015). Hence, it is possible to conclude that men and women do not differ tremendously in their view on indications of commitment.

Another study was conducted on cohabitating partners unlike the former study. It was based upon Stanley and Markman's dedication and constraints and showed that the connection was stronger for women than men in terms of growing constraints (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). The dedication score for women was one standard deviation or more beyond her companion's score for 29% of the partners. However, the dedication score for men was one standard deviation or more beyond his companion's score for 17% of the partners (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). With regards to plans before cohabitation; on the other hand, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman (2011) reported no significant difference in gender. Nevertheless, men and women who had common arrangements to wed before living

with one another conveyed a strong level of dedication. The level of dedication for men and women who had prior plans to marry was stronger than those who did not plan to wed before living with one another (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). Having discussed commitment differences when it comes to gender, we can move into parenting styles and its probable connection with commitment. Before doing so, we will briefly outline how commitment can fit into different theoretical constructs.

1.2.5. Multidimensional Theoretical Approaches

Being that a variety of factors come into place to form the commitment process, this construct falls under theories with multidimensional approaches. In other words, there are several elements that constitute the notion of commitment. It is also important to mention that the rationality behind research regarding commitment is to examine why relationships seem to endure rather than end even when unsuitable circumstances exist (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011).

1.2.5.1 Johnson's Tripartite Theory of Commitment

Commitment, according to his model is divided into three categories: personal (one wants to remain in a partnership) moral (one ought to remain in a partnership) and structural (one has to remain in a partnership) (Alexander, 2008; Agnew, 2009; Kurdek, 2007). Cognitive, behavioral, and emotional consequences emerge as a result of the three previously mentioned types of commitment. Structural commitment can be explained through its division into four mechanisms: probable substitutions to the existing relationship, apparent social weight to remain within the partnership; unchangeable ventures accumulated throughout the partnership; and the supposed complexity of breaking up with one's current partner. Hence, structural commitment is a direct effect of one's social system. An example on the previously mentioned "apparent social weight to remain within the partnership" can be staying in the relationship as a result of shared system of peers and family members. Time,

income, and energy are possible examples of “unchangeable ventures accumulated throughout the partnership” as well (Alexander, 2008; Agnew, 2009).

Moral and personal commitments are constituted of three components respectively. One's gist of morality when it comes to not divorcing their partner, one's feeling of subjective duty to their partner; and the necessity of sustaining steadiness in an individual's universal morals and definite beliefs systems are the components that make up moral commitment. For this genre of commitment, individuals tend to stay in a relationship setting despite the fact that constant dissatisfactions exist with that relationship. The former comes about as a result of a moral compulsion. Not only do they possess solid values as a whole, but they also hold intense values and rules when it comes to relationships as well. The desire to stay in a relationship when it comes to morally committed individuals does not depend on whether they are pleased on a personal level but rather on a general necessity for steadiness (Alexander, 2008; Agnew, 2009).

Personal commitment, otherwise known as global commitment, is composed of the following: general desirability towards a companion, desirability towards the partnership as a whole, and an individual's interpersonal self which can be described as the degree to which the current relationship corresponds to that individual's self-concept (Alexander, 2008; Agnew, 2009). In other words, the desirability in this type of commitment is dedicated towards both the partner and the partnership. In this case, the partnership has to be able to match that individual's solid sense of self for the relationship to be high in personal commitment (Alexander, 2008; Agnew, 2009).

There exists quite a bit of research that backs up the categorization of commitment into: moral, personal, and structural (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2010). However, Johnson's theory of commitment could be limited in the fact that commitments formed in one area are generally attached to commitment formed in other areas. Also, one's culture may

have an impact on the type of commitment being perceived as important. Also, individuals who are amateurs do not perceive structural and moral commitment to be significant in indicating one's commitment (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2010).

1.2.5.2 Levinger's Cohesiveness Theory of Commitment

The motivation behind Levinger's cohesiveness theory was to understand the rationality behind what keeps a relationship together as well as what tears it apart. With respect to his theory, there exists two social factors that bring about commitment in a relationship (Agnew, 2009). These two factors are known as attraction factors and barrier factors. Within the former, there also exists two factors with those factors being: present attractions and alternative attractions.

Present attractions are basically the currently existing factors in one's relationship that drive an individual to remain in it (e.g. love towards one's partner, need satisfaction of one's needs, wealth, and reputation.) Evidently, alternative attractions would be the factors that might drive an individual away from his or her partner (e.g. attraction towards a coworker) (Agnew, 2009).

Barrier factors are Levinger's second social factor and are defined as the elements that hinder an individual from leaving his/current relationship. There also exists two additional factors within this category: internal barriers (e.g. duty towards a partner as a result of one's religiosity, duty towards children who are better off with two parental figures) and external barriers (e.g. difficulty of a divorce process; pressure from loved ones to try harder.) The latter are barriers that exist outside of those two individuals who are in the given relationship (Agnew, 2009). With that being said, Agnew (2009) explains that attraction and barrier forces are subject to change. Hence, commitment may vary as time passes by.

While some of the features of Levinger's theory of cohesiveness do seem to correspond with the Rusbult's and Johnson's theories of commitment, unfortunately, barely

any form of research has been conducted using this particular theoretical model which may lead us to question its validity.

1.2.5.3. Stanley and Markman's Theory of Commitment

With respect to Stanley and Markman's view, commitment is established as a result of the factors leading to a longing to stay in a given relationship as well as difficult factors that drive an individual to stay in a given relationship irrespective of their desire for it (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011). Difficult factors driving an individual to stay in a relationship are otherwise known as constraints. (e.g. moral duties to remain with one another, operational or monetary investments within the partnership, viewing other partners/circumstances as less tempting than their existing partnerships, and caring for their partner's well-being.)

Dedication; however, is what drives an individual to remain in his or her current relationship on a personal level as well as improve it. Individuals with a high level of dedication tend to think in terms of them and their partners (Kurdek, 2007; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011; Stanley, Rhoades, & Whitton, 2010). Often times, constraints and dedication come hand in hand. That is, constraints don't always come about in a negative manner. However, most of the time, they do when it comes to matter such as finances, which according to this theory, are what constraints are supposed to be (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2011).

This particular model is advantageous in the fact that it is clear-cut; it is quite easy to comprehend. To exhibit dedication and constraints as distinct features of commitment, Stanley and Markman conducted a principal component analysis on their findings. The study was conducted on heterosexual individuals including dating, engaged, and married couples. However, there is no confirmation that dedication and constraints, as separate factors, revealed a unique variance in commitment, only global commitment (Kurdek, 2007).

1.2.5.4. Investment Theory of Commitment.

1.2.5.4.1. Root of the Theory

Commitment may fall under a phenomenon known as the Interdependence theory. The fundamental goal behind the emergence of this theory was to examine the roots of the following aspects: behaviors, emotions, and exchanges within societal relationships (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

1.2.5.4.1.1. Satisfaction

According to the interdependence theory (ITC), satisfaction is a factor to consider when it comes to commitment within a relationship. Relationship satisfaction, which is the result of the cost and the rewards to stay in the relationship, predicts stability of that relationship. When costs are greater than rewards, individuals are less satisfied with their relationship and are therefore more likely to step away from it (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2012).

1.2.5.4.1.2. Dependence.

Another factor to consider in ITC is dependence. Dependence is defined by the level of reliance of an individual on their partner to achieve crucial life needs when it cannot be provided through other means. As the dependence between both individuals increases, commitment begins to embody itself within the relationship (Tan & Agnew, 2016; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

1.2.5.4.1.3. Communication

The third component of ITC is communication, which is defined as the interaction between the partners. The theory clearly explains that as the partners discuss their feelings and issues with one another, they are progressively building a committed relationship (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2012).

1.2.5.4.2. Expansion of the Theory

Interdependence comes across through the partners' experiences with one another as well as the rewards that emerge within a relationship as a result of their interaction. (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Therefore, to form a proper comprehension of the ITC, it is critical to understand the original existence of interdependence between two partners. This theory leads us to a well-known theoretical approach when it comes to commitment with that approach being Rusbult's investment model of commitment.

The investment model of commitment (IMC) was originally developed by Rusbult and colleagues (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) as an expanded version of the interdependence model. The basic understanding behind this model is that commitment varies with respect to three elements: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. (Figure 1). The degree of satisfaction can be otherwise explained in terms of rewards and costs. When rewards and the degree of investment are relatively high, and costs and alternatives are rather low, commitment is expected to be high (e.g. Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Kurdek, 2007; Stanley, Rhoades, & Whitton, 2010; Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Below are definitions and examples of these three indicators of commitment.

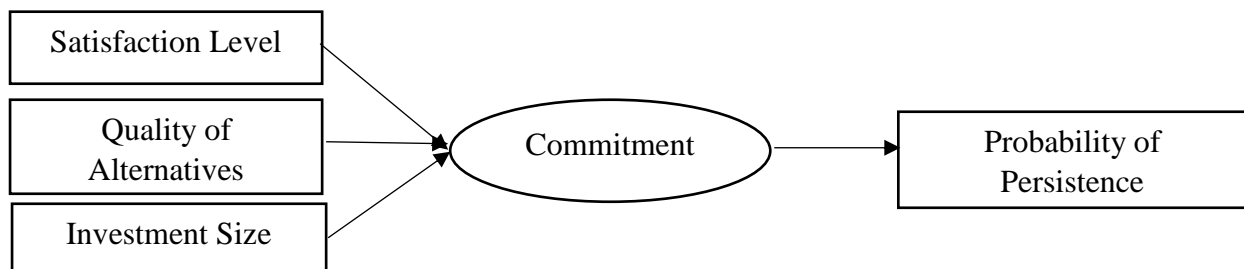


Figure 1. The investment model of commitment process. Reprinted from “The investment model scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size,” by Rusbult, C. E, Martz, J. M., & Agnew, C. R, 1998, *Personal Relationships*, 5(4), 357-387. Copyright 1998 by ISSPR.

1.2.5.4.2.1. Satisfaction

Individuals are satisfied when profits from a partnership exceed one's private prospects. Rewards can be defined as helpful aspects of the existing relationship between the couple such as enjoyable activities experienced with one another or how drawn they are by one another. Costs are quite the inverse of rewards; the negative aspects of the existing relationship. The prior could verge from repeated disagreements to peevish behaviors (Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Evidently, commitment is greater whenever rewards are high and costs are low; that is whenever the positive consequences outweigh the negative ones (e.g. Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

1.2.5.4.2.2. Investment Size

Investment size is defined as the degree to which partners allocate resources to their partnership in such a way that those resources would decrease if the relationship were to terminate (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). Researchers have shown that factors which fit under the umbrella of investment would have elements such as the time, emotion, and common substantial belongings, currency, memories experienced with one another, and the individuality of the partnership (e.g. Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). The former three are considered to be influences that have been manifested in the relationship while the latter two are influences that have come about through the collaboration of the couple with one another (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999). They can be otherwise characterized as tangible and intangible. Examples on tangible could be money and peers while examples on intangible could be individuality and time (Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015).

Another categorization may be intrinsic (e.g. time and energy) and extrinsic resources (e.g. mutual friend and shared belongings) (Kurdek, 2007). Tan and Agnew (2016) add that

investment may be embodied in the form of future plans as well. With that being said, the more investments individuals hold within their partnership, in a relationship, the less likely they are to end it. The former is veritable being that ending the relationship would result in a loss of the prior investments (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Tan & Agnew, 2016; Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014).

1.2.5.4.2.3. Quality of Alternatives

Alternatives can be explained as the presence or interest of other possible partners as well as the interest in being single if the relationship was to come to an end. In other words, being in a relationship with another individual, spending time with other peers, as well as the desire to be alone are all possible alternatives to the existing relationship (e.g. Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014). Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1999) add that experiencing certain activities in one's free time can also be considered as alternatives. The less likely for an individual to see these alternatives as replacements for their relationships the more likely they to stay committed to their current partner (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999).

Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1999) mention two additional factors that may have an influence on commitment: comparison level and obstacles.

1.2.5.4.2.4. Comparison Level

Comparison level is clearly defined as the following: "The standard by which a relationship is judged" (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999). The criterion to which the relationships is compared/judged can verge from involvements with preceding partners to relationships between other individuals holding an analogous position to a mental construction of one's idyllic relationship contribution. Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1999) explain that if an individual's existing relationship was to meet or even surpass the possible previously mentioned standards; consequently, the equivalence to the ultimate comparison level would have to be

high. However, if it does not meet the standard, the equivalence to the ideal comparison level would be rather low. Hence the higher the match, the more committed the individual is (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999).

1.2.5.4.2.5. Obstacles

Obstacles is the other supplementary factor that Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1999) have stated. Obstacles are basically aspects that restrict an individual from breaking up with his/her partner such as shortfalls experienced within the relationship or remaining with a partner only for the sake of other community members' approval. Shortfalls may include absence of friendship between the two while societal expenses may include dissatisfaction with the partner or unwelcoming behavior from family members and peers (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999).

The investment model of commitment is the most widely utilized model in studies on commitment; a large amount of empirical research has been conducted to support it (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2010). A study examining four factors of relationship commitment (dedication and three types of constraint commitments) with relationship adjustment as well as stability reinforces the validity of IMC. (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2010). However, the IMC has been criticized for not including cognitive factors in the understanding of commitment. (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). In fact, it focus merely on satisfaction and investment rather than on the reasoning behind being committed to another individual.

1.2.5.5. Unitedness of Commitment Theoretical Frameworks

All of the previously discussed theories go hand in hand. The interdependence theory is a brief understanding of what came to be known as Rusbult's investment model. Rusbult's investment size and alternatives are also evident in Johnson's structural commitment. The level of satisfaction factor in Rusbult's theory is explained in terms of personal and moral

commitment in Johnson's model. Correspondingly, Stanley and Markman's dedication is characterized through Johnson's personal commitment. As for the constraints, they come about as barriers in Johnson's theory of commitment.

The consistencies could go on; however, the objective of this section is to underscore the fact that all of the existing theories on commitment involve several factors, all of which are explained and categorized differently with respect to different theorists. Some focus on both what keeps a relationship intact and what pulls it apart (Levinger; Stanley and Markman). Others emphasize the different aspects of commitment that may lead to its different levels depending on what aspects are manifested (Johnson; Rusbult). Nevertheless, they all bring about a variety of factors to explain one construct which is: commitment.

With that said, this study will be conducted in accordance to Rusbult's Investment model of commitment being that it is the most widely used model when it comes to commitment studies. Also, the commitment scale that is applied in almost all research studies involves the investment model of commitment scale as a result of its proven validity which may make it more applicable to the cultural context in Lebanon. Moreover, this particular model will aid in exploring a dyadic relationship between marital commitment and parenting styles.

1.3. Parenting

1.3.1. Parental Responsiveness and Demandingness

1.3.1.1. Parental Responsiveness

It is defined as the degree to which both parents nurture independence within their children, self-regulate their children, as well as self – assert them. The former takes place in a verbal or nonverbal manner through offering support, accommodation, and acceptance towards their child's needs as well as pleas (Estlein, 2011).

1.3.1.2. Parental Demandingness

It is the opposite of responsiveness and is defined as the assertions that parents set forth on their children in order to accommodate to the family situation through the use of demands, regulation, punitive energy, as well as the inclination to face the child when he or she breaks the rules (Estlein, 2011). This includes both psychological and behavioral demandingness with the former comprising of control over the child's feelings as well as his or her actions through psychological tools. As for the latter, it comprises of control over the child's actions through well-founded and dependable discipline, supervision of behavior, as well as boundary setting (Estlein, 2011). The two categories will be subsequently explained in terms of parenting styles in later pages. Baumrind (1971) has shown the existence of three distinct parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive. Most researchers portray parenting styles through the use of two factors: responsiveness and demandingness (Fan & Zhang, 2014). Responsiveness is when parents display warmth, approval, and concern. Demandingness is displayed through restraint, enclosure, and strictness. Originally, Baumrind (1971) created the three parenting styles based on demandingness as a factor. Maccoby and Martin (1983); however, added the factor of responsiveness. This in turn generated a fourth parenting style: neglectful or uninvolved.

1.3.2. Parenting Styles

1.3.2.1. Authoritative.

Parents with an authoritative parenting style exude both the act of responding and demanding (Simons & Conger, 2007); that is they possess a high level in both of these factors. Acts of responsiveness come across through warm-heartedness, approval, and engrossment in the child's life. While acts of demandingness come across through direction, regulation, and mandates. In other words, parents who exude an authoritative style are in control but in a way that provides the child with a logical reasoning for their demands

(Verini, 2013). Thus, it is a combination of both love and encouragement as well as set standards for acceptable conduct (DeHart, Pelham, & Tennen, 2006; Simons & Conger, 2007).

1.3.2.2. Authoritarian

In an authoritarian parenting style, parents show low levels of responsiveness. Parents adopting this style generally project a more penalizing role through the use of coercions and condemnation. Also, parents in this case are rather demanding; however, they differ from the authoritarian style in the fact that their demands are inexplicable (DeHart, Pelham, & Tennen, 2006). Simons and Conger (2007) explain that parents within this parenting styles are known to be stiff in terms of their standards. Moreover, the lack of responsivity comes across evidently in parents adopting this particular parenting style being as they are emotionally detached (Simons & Conger, 2007).

1.3.2.3. Permissive

The permissive parenting style is otherwise known as indulgent. Indulgent parents are quite unpredictable in their implementation of rules (DeHart, Pelham, & Tennen, 2006). Despite the fact that parents adopting this style might display warmth, DeHart, Pelham, and Tennen (2006) explain, they fall short in controlling their children's conduct. In other words, they are rather accepting of their children's wrongdoings and do not seem to exert any form of control to handle any of those wrongdoings (Simons & Conger, 2007). Hence, their level of demandingness is quite low but their level of responsiveness is known to be high (Fan & Zhang, 2014).

1.3.2.4. Neglectful

The neglectful parenting style is represented by low levels of both responsiveness and demandingness. They may also be defined as uninvolved (Simons & Conger, 2007). Attitudes of emotionlessness and aloofness are main characteristics of parents implementing

the neglectful parenting style. Aggression and dismissal may also be expressed by indulgent parents as a result of their children's wrongdoings (Simons & Conger, 2007).

1.3.3. Commitment and Parenting Overview

Commitment within a marital relationship may have an effect on commitment in rearing children. In other words, if two individuals are committed within their marriage, they are more likely to exude more commitment with one another in parenting their children (Howard & Reeves, 2014). Marriage can be otherwise labeled as a "commitment device". What is meant by the former term is that marriage is a constant partaking of responsibilities when it comes to raising children and educating them properly (Howard & Reeves, 2014). Cigno (2012) and several other authors view marriage as a "commitment device".

Through marital commitment, the couple establishes effectual investments when it comes to partition of work in the child rearing process and accomplishments that produce earnings (Cigno, 2012). When it comes down to the scenario where the individual who is more of an expert in the child rearing process produces less income than the individual who is more concentrated on the money earning aspect, Cigno (2012) explains that no sort of arrangement for one of the two individuals to be the leading care giver of the child will be established if no satisfactory reimbursement is provided by the primary salary earner. Therefore, Cigno (2012) concludes, married couples are more likely to reach an agreement when it comes to the former scenario with the primary salary earner providing compensation as opposed to the same scenario with an unmarried couple. The reasoning behind the prior conclusion is that in the case of an unmarried couple, the leading earner may not commit to compensate as fully as a leading earner in a married relationship.

A study by Zhang, A. Gowan, and Treviño (2014) has shown that there exists a relationship between a female's ethnicity and her commitment to the parenting role. Non-Hispanic women were found to have a higher level of commitment within their role as

parents when compared to Hispanic women. Also, there seems to be another existing relationship between a female's country of origin and her commitment to the parenting role. The former result came about through a comparison of American and Mexican women with the prior showing a higher level of commitment to the parenting role (Zhang, A. Gowan, & Treviño, 2014). The female's family achievement orientation was also found to be a mediator between her country of birth and parental role commitment in the previous study. Gender role attitudes was found to be a mediator among the two as well (Zhang, A. Gowan, & Treviño, 2014).

Consequently, further literature on parental commitment will be explored in relation to parenting styles that will eventually lead to the examination of relationship commitment and parenting styles.

1.3.4. Parental Commitment

The amount of investment that is put into the couple's role as parents as well as the nurturing process leading to a proper development of the child is otherwise known as parental commitment. It can also be explained through the significance of parenting to one's individuality, the importance of parenting when compared to other undertakings, as well as the hopes of executing the parenting process in a proper way (Verini, 2013).

1.3.5. Exploration on Parental Commitment and Parenting Styles

One study conducted by Greenburger and Goldberg (as cited in Verini, 2003) aims to explore whether a high level of investment in one's role as a parent would result in an increasing eagerness to provide an appropriate amount of time and energy to adopt an authoritative parenting style. The authors also wished to examine whether the encouraging consequences that may emerge as a result of an authoritative parenting style on a child's actions would be redirected whenever parents perceive their child to be capable (Verini, 2003).

As a result, parental commitment was found to have a positive correlation with both a demanding and responding parenting style (authoritative) and quite the opposite when it comes to an easy-going and strict parenting styles (Verini, 2003). Moreover, the correlation between acts of responsiveness and parental commitment was understandably higher for mothers than fathers.

Other results of the study that came about were the existing positive correlations between parental commitment and grown-up demands regarding independent conduct in the child as well as positive correlations between parental commitment and their perceptions of their children (Verini, 2003). The more committed the parents are to the parenting role, the more they perceive their children's behavior as well-behaved (Verini, 2003). Greenburger and Goldberg (as cited in Verini, 2003) also revealed that mothers, in this particular study, are more committed to the parenting role than fathers.

Impact of parental commitment combined with life stressors, the quality of the marital relationship, observed social support, and socioeconomic status were examined by Abidin and Riebeling (as cited in Verini, 2003) to see whether or not they have an effect on one's parenting styles and parental adjustment. A vast amount of parental commitment was found to have a positive and significant relationship with one's parental style (as well as parental adjustment). The former seemed to apply for mothers as well as fathers in Abidin and Riebeling's study (as cited in Verini, 2003). A responsive parenting style was only found to be significantly associated with parental commitment as a main factor for mothers as well as fathers, Verini (2003) explains.

Being that the focus of this study is on the relationship between parental commitment and parental styles, the results of the former irrespective of the other previously outlined variables have been discussed. However, what will be briefly mentioned is the fact that parental commitment was the biggest predictor of parenting styles when compared to the

other variables mentioned at the beginning of the study (life stressors, the quality of the marital relationship, etc).

Another study examined the association between divorced and non-divorced fathers' recognition of the parenting role and their degree of involvement with their children. This study, conducted by Minton and Pasley (as cited in Verini, 2003) showed that fathers' identification of the parenting role was strongly associated with their involvement with their children whether or not they were divorced; however, the dimensions for their identities as parents that exemplified a high degree of involvement with their children differed in order when compared to the following order for divorced fathers: role investment, perceived competence, and perceived satisfaction.

For non-divorced fathers, perceived competence comes before role investment, according to Minton and Pasley's study (as cited in Verini, 2003). In this case, the involvement in the child's life is considered to be nurturing which can be viewed as an authoritative parenting style, although it was not a direct resulting variable of this particular study. The reason for this indirect resulting variable could be that involvements in a child's life which fits under the category of responsiveness, may also be viewed as an indulgent parenting style. The difference between authoritative and indulgent is that the authoritative parenting style is also characterized by being high in demands while the indulgent parenting style is not. Because the demand aspect is not known, it is quite difficult to conclude whether or not the fathers in this study adopt an authoritative parenting style.

Most studies have examined the role of commitment in terms of parental commitment individually or its relationship with parenting styles. Also, most research on the relationship with parenting styles are quite outdated and has not been examined lately. However, what is mainly being explored throughout this study in another facet of commitment; relationship commitment. A few authors, as listed earlier in this study, view marriage as a commitment

device. This aim of this study is to examine and delve further into the relationship between commitment between two individuals in a marital relationship and their resulting parenting styles.

1.3.6. Exploration on Relationship Commitment and Parenting Styles

Research has shown that parental responsiveness and demandingness seem to have a relationship with marital responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness was shown to have a strong positive correlation in parenting and marriage while demandingness was shown to have positive but non - significant, correlation between parenting and marriage (Estlein, 2011). Marital commitment therefore seems to be related to parenting in terms of responsiveness which can be explained by the fact that responsiveness in a relationship contributes greatly to commitment (Einav, 2013; Ponnet et al., 2012). Marital relations in general and the three factors of IMC (satisfaction, investment, and alternatives) will be explored in relation with parenting styles.

1.4. Marital Relationships and Parenting Styles

Most studies focus on the association between the quality of two individual's marital relationship and the positive effect it exudes on parenting styles (Einav, 2013; Ponnet et al., 2012). The more positivity in the marital relationship, the more responsiveness in terms of parenting (Ponnet et al., 2012).

Research has shown the effect of marital conflicts on parenting styles. Couples with more frequent conflicts tend to demand more and become less responsive (Ponnet et al., 2012). In general, studies show that marital conflicts tend to "spillover" into the individual's parenting styles (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Camisasca, Miragoli, & Di Blasio, 2014; Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014; McCoy, George, Cummings, & Davies, 2013; Tritt & Pryor, 2005; Yu & Gamble, 2008).

1.4.1. Satisfaction and Parenting Styles

Devito and Hopkins (2001) have shown in their study that individuals who are not satisfied in their marriage tend to exhibit more permissive parenting styles that is high in responsiveness and low in demandingness. These results were most interesting because they shed light on the negative impact parenting styles can have on school-aged children, leading to developing behavioral problems. As for adolescents, marital dissatisfaction was associated with adolescents keeping problems to themselves (Ha et al., 2009).

One study explored the relationship between conflicting marital relationships and parenting styles within a collectivist and conservative culture and found that mothers who are dissatisfied in their marital relationship as a result of conflict prefer the use of an authoritarian parenting style rather than an authoritative one. Although previous research has shown that dissatisfied individuals tend to portray a permissive parenting styles, such results did not coincide with this Iranian study; instead, demandingness seems to be exercised by mothers who experience marital dissatisfaction (Ahmadi & Saadat, 2014).

One particular study on parents of seven-year-old children has shown an existing link between marital satisfaction and responsiveness. The study shows that individuals who are dissatisfied in their marital union tend to be less responsive and supportive towards their children (Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012). Pedro, Ribeiro, and Shelton (2012) found parental cooperation to be a mediating variable between marital satisfaction and parenting styles. In other words, if one partner is satisfied within the marriage, this satisfaction may have a positive impact on the manner in which both parents relate to the child in terms of respecting, committing, cooperating with one another.

As for fathers, research has shown that the more dissatisfied the father is in his marriage, the more he tends to compensate for that in the son's life. For instance, he might dedicate more time towards his son's extracurricular activities. However, that dissatisfaction

seems be transferred onto the daughter's life (e.g. lack of approval when it comes to her school work, physical appearance...) otherwise known as the spillover effect (Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1993). In general, they tend to exhibit more negativity towards their daughters, the study concludes. Hence, studies have generally shown that the more dissatisfied individuals are in their marriage, the more they tend to transfer that dissatisfaction onto their children. In other words, mood, affect, and behavior are transported from the dissatisfied marriage towards one's children (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Camisasca, Miragoli, & Di Blasio, 2014; Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014; McCoy, George, Cummings, & Davies, 2013; Yu & Gamble, 2008). Hence, if irritability and antagonism is experienced within the marital relationship for example, these feelings would be exhibited in terms of impatience and irritability towards the children which could come across in terms of control (Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014).

Marital dissatisfaction was also shown to be related to strict retributions and absence of approval of the child (Buehler & Gerard, 2002). Strict punishments are one of the main factors of parental demands. The opposite effect may also occur where the parents are too psychologically exhausted from their dissatisfied marriage that they fail to offer their children an adequate level of responsiveness (Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014). A compensatory effect may come about where parents make up for their dissatisfied marriage through parenting their children in a proper manner by dedicating time and effort towards their children, thus being more responsive. The former is known as the compensatory hypothesis (Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014; Yu & Gamble, 2008). Camisasca, Miragoli, and Di Blasio, 2014 explain that the compensatory hypothesis may result in permissiveness which is high in response and low in demands as well as hostility. Interestingly, the number of children that a couple have might have an effect on their marital satisfaction (Ahamdi and Saadat, 2014).

1.4.2. Investment Size and Parenting Styles

Selkin (2012) explains that the more both partners are invested in working together to parent the child, the more unified they are in terms of marital commitment. In particular the more the father is invested in his children's lives, the more committed he is to his wife and the less likely they are to separate (Selkin, 2012). Moreover, marriage is a large sign of commitment that includes future plans. It also seems that when the partners' investment in their future plans is set out before they even have children, they demonstrate better parenting (Stanley, 2014). Effort, time, and energy are considered to be an intrinsic investment, as discussed in the Investment Model of Commitment. Parents who do not invest the needed time and energy to resolve certain disagreements and choose to respond to their partners in a negative manner tend to be less responsive and emotionally accessible towards their children (Ganiban et al., 2009).

It was also shown that partners who are supportive of one another tend to exhibit more responsiveness and less demands when it comes to parenting their children (Ponnet et al., 2012). Support may include both active and emotive types of support, Olsen, Martin, and Halverson (1999) add. As a result, they are able to exhibit better parenting practices.

It was previously mentioned in the marital satisfaction section how marital conflict can lead to dissatisfied marriages which in turn can affect parenting styles. However, we now consider a deeper construct of marital conflict otherwise known as constructive marital conflict. The one discussed in former sections is known as destructive marital conflict which evidently has a negative effect on parenting styles. However, when it comes to constructive marital conflict, we are referring to relationship effort which is considered to be one of the major components of investment in Rusbult's model. Constructive marital conflict is characterized by positive conflict resolution, clarifications on how conflict is settled, and hopeful clarifications of unsettled conflict (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017). This brings us back

to the spillover effect which was previously discussed when exploring destructive marital conflict and parenting. In this case, however, few researches have been conducted for us to be able to devise a proper conclusion on whether it produces positive parenting styles (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017).

Hosokawaa and Katsura's study (2017) has shown that parents do tend to be assertive when exhibiting constructive marital conflict. Nevertheless, this assertiveness is done indirectly and through the use of positive parenting styles, otherwise known as authoritative. Another study has shown that one spouse's satisfaction in the marital relationship leads the other spouse to report his/her partner's responsiveness and control towards their children (Estlein & Theiss, 2014).

1.4.3. Quality of Alternatives and Parenting Styles

Social relationships in one's marital union are considered to be alternatives, as previously discussed in Rusbult's model. What we will be elaborating upon in this section is the effect of those alternatives on a parent's parenting style. Individuals in a marital relationship are expected to have loose- knit network on the exterior. Rosser and Harris (2012) explain that both of these individuals originally have their network of close friends and family prior to their engagement in marriage. It is also likely for them to be attracted to separate activities and interests.

Research suggests a common example on alternatives for fathers; they tend to engage in nightlife activities with workmates after hours instead of engaging in their share of responsibility when it comes to responsive child rearing. (Rosser and Harris, 2012). However, it is important to mention that the extent to which individuals are drawn by these alternatives is what affects the parenting outcomes. Although this study has discussed conflict in terms of marital dissatisfaction and its effect on parental responsiveness/demands, conflicts as a result of alternative partners and their resulting effects will now be explored.

Research has shown that marital dissatisfaction; however, is an apparent cause for one's alternative romantic/sexual relationships. Parents who experience conflict due to existence of other possible partners are known to be more demanding and less responsive towards children (Schmidt, Green, & Prouty, 2015). Thus, they exhibit a strict persona when dealing with the child and fail to offer them affection and support. One important aspect that has also come about in other studies is emotional isolation which is clear sign of lack of responsiveness (Schmidt, Green, & Prouty, 2015).

1.4.4. Research Questions

Research has generally shown that individuals make use of better parenting when they are satisfied in their marital relationship, invested towards it, and have no conflictual relationship alternatives. However, there is no research that pertains to the Arab population. This study aims to understand the relation between one's commitment to their marital relationship (satisfaction, investment, and quality of alternatives) and the parenting style they and their partners adopt in Lebanon.

- a. How does satisfaction in the marriage influence the parenting style a parent will adopt?
- b. How does investment in marriage influence the parenting style a parent will adopt?
- c. How do alternatives in a marriage influence the parenting style a parent will adopt?

1.4.5. Hypotheses

H₁: The less committed parents are to their marital relationship, the more likely they are to exhibit strict parenting as means of expressing their dissatisfaction. They may also be very lenient in their parenting because of their distraction from their lack of marital

satisfaction. Thus, we hypothesize the following: The less satisfied individuals are in their marriage, the more likely they are to exhibit authoritarian or permissive parenting styles.

H₂: The less invested parents are in their marital relationship, the more likely they are to also be invested in their parenting. Thus we hypothesize the following: The more invested individuals are in their marriage, the more likely they are to exhibit authoritative parenting styles.

H₃: The more alternatives parents have to their marital relationship, the more likely they are to be lenient or strict due to their external distractions. Thus, we hypothesize the following: The more alternatives the individuals have in their marriage, the more likely they are to exhibit authoritarian or permissive parenting styles.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

After having reviewed the literature, a series of steps were taken in order to begin with the exploration of parenting styles and relationship commitment in parents of Lebanese school aged children.

2.1. Procedure

Approval from the IRB of NDU was granted to conduct this study. (Appendix B). The data for the study was collected from parents whose children attend different English speaking sections/schools in Lebanon, specifically elementary and middle school. A formal letter from the supervisor (Appendix C) was sent to principals of the targeted schools requesting the permission to conduct the research with the parents of these students. Parents who agreed to participate indicated whether they would like a copy for the mother, the father or both. According to their indication, copies of the following questionnaires were provided accordingly: A Socio - demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F), the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Appendix G), as well as the Investment Model Scale (Appendix H). Also, a consent form (Appendix E) was attached addressing their willingness to participate, their right to discontinue at any time, their right to ask questions, and an overview of the study. The consent form as well as the questionnaires were placed in an envelope that was provided for them and they were asked to seal the envelopes. Thus, the school did not have access to any of the information provided by the parents; only the researcher and research assistants had access to these sealed envelopes. The timeline for the different steps of the procedure is presented in the timetable (Appendix A).

2.2. Participants

The study included voluntary participation of married mothers (N =65) and fathers (N=9) of elementary and middle school aged children in English-speaking schools in Lebanon. Details regarding their socio-demographics are provided in Table 1. The schools involved the study were the following: Antonine Sister School Ghazir, Adma International

School, and College Notre Dame Louaize (English section). Initially, principals of the schools were contacted for approval to participate. After having received the approval, invitation forms were handed out the parents through their children. Parents who were willing to participate checked off boxes at the very end of the invitation form whether be it the mother, the father, or both. Questionnaires were then handed out according to the number of boxes checked. Participants who were eligible to participate were required to be currently married to the individual with whom they had their school aged child with. Participants who are separated or divorced are not eligible to participate. The initial study through which the parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire was developed involved parents of preschool and school aged children (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995). For that particular reason, we decided to give out the questionnaires to parents of school aged children.

Table 1

Frequency Table for Socio-Demographic Variables

	Mothers		Fathers	
	<i>N</i> = 64	%	<i>N</i> = 9	%
<u>Mother Tongue</u>				
Arabic	60	92.3	9	100.0
English	2	3.1	—	—
French	1	1.5	—	—
Other	2	3.1	—	—
<u>Religion</u>				
Catholic	11	16.9	2	22.2
Maronite	43	66.2	4	44.4
Orthodox	9	13.8	2	22.2
Protestant	1	1.5	—	—
Druze	—	—	—	—
Shiite Muslim	—	—	1	11.1
Sunni Muslim	—	—	—	—
Other	1	1.5	—	—

<u>Highest Degree Earned</u>				
Brevet	4	6.2	—	—
High School Graduate	14	21.5	1	11.1
Technical School Training	11	16.9	—	—
College Graduate (BA or BS)	24	36.9	3	33.3
Master's Degree	8	12.3	3	33.3
Doctorate Degree (MD, PhD, JD)	2	3.1	2	22.2
<u>Employment Status</u>				
Unemployed	29	44.6	1	11.1
Part time	8	12.3	—	—
Full time	25	38.5	7	77.8
Retired	3	4.6	—	—
<u>Annual Income</u>				
Less than 9999 \$	18	27.7	—	—
10 000 \$ to 19 999 \$	14	21.5	—	—
20 000 \$ to 29 999 \$	4	6.2	1	11.1
30 000 \$ to 39 999 \$	3	4.6	1	11.1
40 000 \$ to 49 999 \$	3	4.6	1	11.1
50 000 \$ or more	1	1.5	5	55.6
<u>Number of Children</u>				
One Child	4	6.2	1	11.1
Two Children	25	38.5	5	55.6
Three Children	26	40.0	1	11.1
Four or More Children	10	15.4	2	22.2
<u>Name of School</u>				
AIS	1	1.5	—	—
ASG	22	33.8	4	44.4
NDL	42	64.6	5	55.6

2.3. Instruments

The parents were required to fill out three separate questionnaires: Socio - demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F), Rusbult's Investment Model Scale (Appendix G), and the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Appendix H).

2.3.1. Socio - Demographic Questionnaire

The participants were required to fill out information on their age, gender, mother tongue, religion, highest level of education, current work situation and personal annual income. They were also required to provide their number of children as well as the gender and corresponding ages of each of their children.

2.3.2. Rusbult's Investment Model Scale

It is a 22-item scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) that includes the four constructs of the investment model: Satisfaction level, investment size, quality of alternatives, and level of commitment. The first three components comprise of facet items that were asked prior to the global items as well variables under investigation within this study. However, the facet items are not computed in the final analysis of the scale. They were simply present to make the participants ready for subsequent global items. For this study, we decided to eliminate the preliminary questions due to redundancy. All of the items in the global scales range from 0 to 8 on a Likert scale with the 0 indicating "*not at all*" and 8 indicating "*completely*". The scale was originally divided into satisfaction, investment size, quality of alternatives, and commitment. For the purpose of this study, the scale was divided only into global items with 5 items of satisfaction, investment and alternatives. However, commitment level includes 7 items. Satisfaction contains items such as: "I feel satisfied with our relationship" and "Our relationship makes me very happy." Investment size includes items such as: "I have put a great deal into our relationship that I would lose if the relationship were to end" and "Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I would lose all of this if we were to separate". Quality of alternatives is comprised of items such as the following: "The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are rather appealing", "My alternatives to our relationship are close to ideal (dating another, spending time with friends or on my own". As for commitment,

items such as: “I want our relationship to last for a very long time” and “I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner” are included.

2.3.3. The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire

This scale was originally developed by Robinson and his colleagues. This scale (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001) includes three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive in accordance with Baumrind’s approach of parenting styles. These parenting styles are three other variables under investigation within this study. However, recent research has shown the existence of one additional category of parenting styles: uninvolved. Kimble (2014) attempted to construct and validate a version of the scale that includes the fourth parenting style. Unfortunately, the scale was not proven to be valid. For that reason, only the three original parenting styles will be assessed in our current study with the use of *The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire*. This is a 32- item (short version) parent report questionnaire rated along a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 with the former indicating “never” and the latter indicating “always”. Originally, the scale included two forms, one for the mother and one for the father. For the current study, the scale included a single form that can be used for either of the two spouses. The participants are thus required to rate both themselves and their partners on each item. The authoritative parenting style is divided into three subfactors: connection dimension (warmth and support), regulation dimension (reasoning/induction), and autonomy granting dimension (democratic participation). The connection dimension is obtained by calculating the mean of items 7, 1, 12, 14, and 27. The mean of items 25, 29, 31, 11, and 5 provides the score on the regulation dimension. The autonomy granting dimension is also obtained through a calculation of the mean (items 21, 9, 22, 3, and 18). The score on the whole authoritative factor is obtained by calculating the mean of each of the previously mentioned items. The authoritarian parenting style is also composed of three subfactors and is obtained through the mean calculation of the

items on each of these subfactors: physical coercion dimension, verbal hostility dimension, and non-reasoning/punitive dimension. The physical coercion dimension is obtained by calculating the mean of items 2, 6, 32, and 19. The mean of items 16, 13, 23, and 30 provides the score on the verbal hostility dimension. The non-reasoning/punitive dimension is obtained through a calculation of the mean of items 10, 26, 28, and 4. As for the permissive parenting style, it is composed of one subfactor, thus the permissive parenting style itself and is called indulgent dimension. It is calculated by generating the mean of items 20, 17, 15, 8, and 24.

Both of the previously mentioned tools are not validated in the Lebanese population. Further studies are required to examine the commitment construct and parenting styles in Lebanon to be able to devise more relevant versions of these tools.

2.4. Analytical Strategy

The study used a quantitative approach with a fundamental aim of identifying the association between marital commitments and parenting styles through the use of specified scales for both factors. Furthermore, the use of a statistical package known as SPSS, correlations were examined between different types of parenting styles and the three indicators of commitment (satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives). Given that the Parenting Styles and Dimensions questionnaire provides us with a rating on the perception of the spouse's parenting style, correlations among the rater's indicators of commitment and the spouse's perceived parenting style will be examined as well. These correlations were done to examine whether this particular relationship is significant enough to be examined in future research.

Regression analysis was also conducted through the use of SPSS between each of the parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive) and the three indicators of commitment for a stronger determinant of the relationship between the two. The three parenting styles are our independent variables while the indicators of commitment are out

dependent variables thus resulting in three equations for each of the parenting styles: A (Authoritarian) = $b_0 + b_1S + b_2Q + b_3I$, A' (Authoritative) = $b_0 + b_1S + b_2Q + b_3I$, P (Permissive) = $b_0 + b_1S + b_2Q + b_3I$.

Further analysis was conducted by using causal modeling with latent variables through the use of a statistical package known as AMOS graphics. Our intended data analysis was performed through the use of structural equation modeling. SEM will be used with marital satisfaction, investment size, and quality of alternatives being our exogenous variables and authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles being our endogenous variables (Figure 2). Moreover, our latent constructs were the sub factors under the authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles: connection, regulation, autonomy granting, physical coercion, verbal hostility, non-reasoning, and indulgence.

In other words, the design of the model used in this study is a causal one and includes a combination of both path analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. The model fit was evaluated through the use of a chi-square test of model of fit, a comparative fit index (CFI), a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), a Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR).

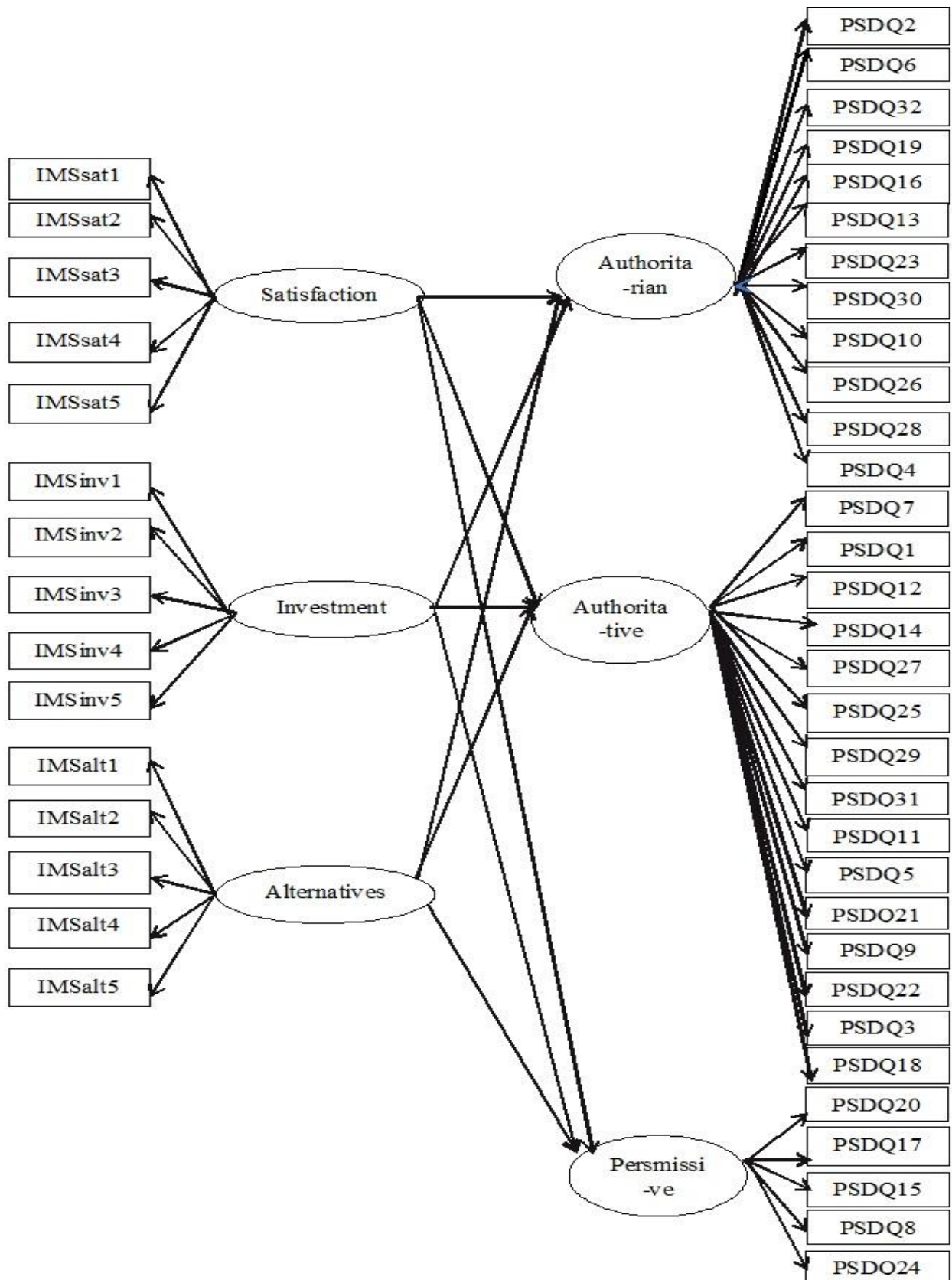


Figure 2. SEM model for indicators of commitment and parenting styles

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

3.1.1. Parenting Styles

In the Parenting Styles and Dimensions questionnaire, the level of each parenting style is obtained by generating a final score over 5. Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations of the parenting styles. With respect to this sample, mothers exhibited more of an authoritative parenting style followed by a permissive and authoritarian parenting style respectively. Fathers also exhibited more of an authoritative parenting style in this sample followed by an authoritarian and permissive parenting styles respectively.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the parenting styles (permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian) in mothers and fathers. There was no significant difference in the scores for mothers (Table 2).

3.1.2. Commitment

Means and standard deviations of the indicators of commitment and provided in Table 2. With regards to the indicators of commitment, the mothers in this sample exhibit a reasonable amount of investment ($M = 25.86$, $SD = 9.68$) and satisfaction ($M = 31.03$, $SD = 7.34$) and a minimal amount of quality of alternatives ($M = 8.02$, $SD = 6.82$). As for commitment in general, mothers portray a generally high level of commitment ($M = 39.50$, $SD = 4.83$). Similar results emerged for men in this sample with them reporting high amounts of investment, satisfaction, and commitment level (Table 2).

An independent-samples t-test was also conducted to compare the indicators of commitment (satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size) in mothers and fathers. There was also no significant difference in the scores for mothers ($M=4.2$, $SD=1.3$) and fathers ($M=2.2$, $SD=0.84$) (Table 2).

Table 2

Parenting Styles and Indicators of Commitment in Mothers and Fathers of School Aged Children

	Self-Report				<i>t</i>	Perception				<i>t</i>
	<i>Fathers</i>		<i>Mothers</i>			<i>Fathers' Partner</i>		<i>Mothers' Partner</i>		
<u>Parenting Style</u>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Permissive	2.76	.61	2.54	.72	-.707	3.06	.77	2.34	.56	-.284
Authoritative	4.31	.39	4.15	.43	-.987	4.15	.28	3.79	.54	-.172
Authoritarian	2.59	.81	2.21	.67	-.137	2.71	.77	2.02	.74	-.197
<u>Indicators of Commitment</u>										
Satisfaction	32.50	4.03	31.03	7.34	-.550	—	—	—	—	—
Investment Size	9.62	9.82	8.02	6.82	-.568	—	—	—	—	—
Quality of Alternatives	29.37	7.67	25.86	9.68	-.976	—	—	—	—	—

3.1.3. Correlations

Correlations were conducted between different socio demographic variables and both of the parenting styles and indicators of commitment and are provided in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively. This was done to examine whether there exists a relationship between certain socio demographic aspects of parents and both the parenting styles they adopt as well as their marital commitment.

The only significant correlation that emerged in terms of socio- demographics and parenting styles was that between permissive parenting styles in mothers and employment status ($r = .391$). The significant correlations between permissiveness in mothers and employment status suggest that mothers' employment status has an effect on their leniency.

Table 3

Correlations between different Socio-demographic Variables and Parenting Styles

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive
Mother Tongue	.033	-.006	-.022	—	—	—
Religion	-.017	-.100	-.042	-.271	.099	.633
Highest Degree Earned	.165	.091	-.259	.036	-.464	-.729
Employment Status	.036	.091	.391 *	.339	-.351	-.659
Annual Income	.203	.023	.023	.119	-.783	-.729
Number of Children	-.288	.036	-.094	-.110	-.586	-.133

Note. *p < 0.05

As for the correlations between the socio-demographics and the indicators of commitment, two particular significant associations emerged. The first significant correlations was between the highest degree earned in fathers and their satisfaction level ($r = .730$) while the second was that of annual income with satisfaction as well ($r = .850$). This may imply that the satisfaction level in fathers may be related to their income and degree level.

Table 4

Correlations between different Socio-demographic Variables and Indicators of Commitment

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Satisfaction	Quality of Alt	Investment	Satisfaction	Quality of Alt	Investment
Mother Tongue	-.082	.171	-.154	—	—	—
Religion	-.163	.216	-.274	-.153	.173	-.493
Highest Degree Earned	.006	.197	.035	.730 *	-.476	.563
Employment Status	.134	-.004	.092	.234	-.407	.479
Annual Income	-.064	.300	-.046	.850 *	-.661	.664
Number of Children	-.106	.175	.085	.483	-.065	.165

Note. *p < 0.05

3.2. Correlations between Parenting Styles and Indicators of Commitment

The main aim of this study is to examine the relationship between parenting styles and commitment in a marital relationship. Thus, correlations were conducted between different types of parenting styles and the three indicators of commitment (satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives) through the use of the Pearson correlations. These correlations were done for the participants as well as the perceived ratings for their partners and are reported in Table 5 and Table 6 respectively.

With regards to the authoritative parenting style and its correlations with the three indicators of commitment for mothers, only the quality of alternatives is moderately correlated ($r = -.383$) with the authoritative parenting style (Table 5). The correlations between quality of alternatives and the authoritative parenting style is also a negative correlation thus suggesting that mothers having less alternatives in their relationship generally exhibit more balanced parenting.

The quality of alternatives was also moderately and significantly correlated to authoritarian parenting styles for mothers ($r = .466$) (Table 5). This may lead us to believe that mothers with alternatives in their relationship may also be strict as well.

Finally, the same procedure was done for the permissive parenting style and the indicators of commitment. All correlations were weak (Table 5). When it comes to the participants who were fathers, no significant correlations emerged (Table 5).

Table 5

Correlations between Parenting Styles and the Indicators of Commitment

	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Satisfaction	Quality of Alt	Investment Size	Commitment
Authoritarian	1	-.303	.172	-.231	.466**	-.104	-.435**
Authoritative	.082	1	.055	.181	-.383*	.285	.350*
Permissive	.744	-.381	1	.010	-.229	.173	-.099
Satisfaction	-.732	-.253	-.655	1	-.415**	.573**	.575**
Quality of Alt	.748	.199	.541	-.632	1	-.092	-.293

Investment Size	-.354	-.147	-.452	.413	-.714*	1	.323*
Commitment	-.168	-.129	.152	.336	-.051	.283	1

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

With regards to the mothers' ratings of their perceived partners' parenting styles and their correlations with their own commitment indicators, the authoritative parenting style was only moderately correlated with investment size ($r = .390$) (Table 6). This shows that mothers who are invested in their marriage view their partners as exhibiting a balanced parenting style. As for the authoritarian parenting style, it showed a moderate and negative correlation with satisfaction ($r = -.314$) and a moderate correlation with quality of alternatives as well ($r = .487$) (Table 6). The results show that mothers who perceive their partners as strict are less likely to be satisfied in their marriage. Moreover, perceiving their partners as authoritarian also shows their likelihood of engaging in alternatives. Table 6 provides the remaining correlations between their indicators of commitment and their perceptions of their partners' parenting.

As for the fathers' ratings of their partners' parenting styles, authoritative parenting styles correlated strongly with satisfaction ($r = .817$) and authoritarian parenting styles correlated strongly with quality of alternatives ($r = .860$) (Table 6). However, they both did not emerge as significant. This insignificant result is probably due to the minimal number of fathers in the sample. No significant correlations emerged between the other two parenting styles and the indicators of commitment for the fathers' ratings (Table 6). Moderate correlations did emerge however for both satisfaction and quality of alternatives and the fathers' ratings of their partners as permissive.

Table 6

Correlations between Parenting Styles in Partners and the Indicators of Commitment

	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive	Satisfaction	Quality of Alt	Investment Size	Commitment
Authoritarian	1	-.492*	.053	-.314*	.487**	-.243	-.324*
Authoritative	-.045	1	-.076	.299	-.160	.390*	.448**
Permissive	.825	-.567	1	.064	-.164	.299	-.124
Satisfaction	-.877	-.108	-.391	1	-.415**	.573**	.575**
Quality of Alt	.860	-.259	.373	-.632	1	-.092	-.293
Investment Size	-.545	.266	-.048	.413	-.714*	1	.323*
Commitment	-.324	-.504	.018	.336	-.051	.283	1

Note. *p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

3.3. Regressions

Regression analysis was conducted between each of the parenting styles and the three indicators of commitment for a stronger determinant of the relationship between the two. In this case, the parenting styles are our independent variables while the indicators of commitment are our dependent variables thus resulting in three equations for each of the parenting styles with the results presented in Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9. There were no significant results that emerged; however, there was one moderate prediction for the authoritarian parenting style in fathers by the investment size (Table 7) As for the authoritative parenting style, satisfaction in mothers very strongly predicted their authoritativeness while investment size did so moderately. As for fathers, satisfaction was a strong predictor of an authoritarian parenting style while quality of alternatives and investment size were both very strong predictors (Table 8). Satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size moderately predicted a permissive parenting style in fathers (Table 9).

Table 7

Regression for Authoritarian Parenting Style and the Indicators of Commitment

<u>Indicators of Commitment</u>	<i>B</i>	<u>Mothers</u>			<u>Fathers</u>			
		<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Satisfaction	-.042	-.438	-.240	.022	-.078	-.411	-1.04	.374
Quality of Alt	.030	.333	2.08	.046	.056	.733	1.43	.246
Investment Size	.012	.179	1.09	.283	.034	.347	.803	.481

Table 8

Regression for Authoritative Parenting Style and the Indicators of Commitment

<u>Indicators of Commitment</u>	<i>B</i>	<u>Mothers</u>			<u>Fathers</u>			
		<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Satisfaction	.003	.052	.231	.819	-.078	0.61	-.343	.749
Quality of Alt	-.029	-.517	-.313	.004	.056	.032	.054	.959
Investment Size	.006	.126	.594	.557	.034	.035	-.038	.971

Table 9

Regression for Permissive Parenting Style and the Indicators of Commitment

<u>Indicators of Commitment</u>	<i>B</i>	<u>Mothers</u>			<u>Fathers</u>			
		<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Satisfaction	-0.59	-.573	-.239	.024	-.162	-.943	-1.02	.415
Quality of Alt	-0.41	-.416	-2.27	0.31	-.062	-1.02	-.489	.673
Investment Size	.034	.401	1.83	.077	-.077	-.105	-.616	.601

3.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to investigate the different factor loadings of each of the indicators of commitment on the separate parenting styles and results are provided in Table 10. Satisfaction and investment size both loaded negatively on the authoritarian parenting style thus showing that the more satisfied and invested an individual is in his other marital relationship, the less likely he or she is to exhibit an authoritarian

parenting style. Another negative loading that emerged is investment size on the permissive parenting style. Therefore, the less invested an individual is in his or her relationship, the more likely he or she is to be permissive in parenting the children. Lastly, the quality of alternative's loading on the authoritative parenting style was the final negative loading that emerged showing that the more alternatives couples have in a relationship, the less likely they are to exhibit an authoritative parenting style. Other loadings were generally positive however extremely weak (Table 10).

Table 10

Results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

	Total Sample		
	Authoritarian	Authoritative	Permissive
Satisfaction	-.027	.043	.284
Investment Size	-.013	.065	-.344
Quality of Alternatives	.129	-.091	.045

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

Before delving into the main findings, it is important to discuss results regarding our socio-demographic variables. Results in this study suggest that men and women do not differ substantially when it comes to their level of commitment which is a finding that was also apparent in previous research (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2014; Carter, Duncan, Stoilova, & Phillips, 2015). This suggests that men and women in the Lebanese population are either both committed to one another or not. Now that the gender differences have been explored, it is essential to probe into the four main findings that came about as a result of this study.

4.1. Marital Satisfaction and Parenting Styles

Previous research has shown that parents who are dissatisfied with their marriage tend to exhibit more of a permissive parenting style. (Devito & Hopkins, 2001). With regards to the current study, results show that marital satisfaction and permissive parenting styles are barely even correlated for mothers. Regressions have shown that satisfaction predicts an authoritative parenting style in mothers; thus mothers who are satisfied in their marriage exhibit a balanced parenting style. Results do however show a moderate and negative correlation with the mothers' satisfaction and the perception of their partners as authoritarian. Thus, mothers are obviously less satisfied with their partnership when the father is exhibiting a strict and demanding personality with the children. The mothers' dissatisfaction could be explained by their lack of approval of their partners' parenting methods.

As for fathers, there exists a moderate negative correlation between being satisfied in one's marriage and exhibiting a permissive parenting style. This was also evident in the regression analysis between investment size and permissiveness. With that being said, when it comes to fathers, the less satisfied they are in their marital relationship, the more likely they are to portray a permissive parenting style thus falling in line with previous literature on the link between the two (Devito & Hopkins, 2001). This may be evident because some fathers in

the Lebanese population tend to let their lack of satisfaction in their personal relationships affect their parenting which in turn leads them to neglect their children.

This study also shows a weak negative correlation for mothers and a strong negative correlation for fathers when it comes to marital satisfaction and authoritarian parenting styles. This suggests that the less satisfied an individual is in his or her relationship, the more likely they are to exhibit strict authoritarian parenting. Although the correlation was weak for mothers, it does agree with previous findings regarding dissatisfied Iranian mothers and their preference when it comes to strict parenting. Moreover, other studies have shown that dissatisfied parents are less likely to be responsive towards their children (Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012) which came about in terms of authoritarian parenting in this study, specifically for fathers. This may lead us to conclude that parents are generally more prone to exhibiting strict parenting especially when they are not part of a happy marriage. These findings may also agree with literature regarding the spillover effect in which any source of bitterness within the marital relationship will come through in terms of strictness in one's parenting (Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014). In other words, dissatisfaction experienced in the marriage will most likely be transferred into the parenting in terms of strictness (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Camisasca, Miragoli, & Di Blasio, 2014; Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014; McCoy, George, Cummings, & Davies, 2013; Yu & Gamble, 2008). The results of this study may also be related to the fact that dissatisfied individuals are less accepting of their children and thus may reprimand them in a strict manner (Buehler & Gerard, 2002).

Results regarding fathers exhibiting permissive and authoritarian parenting styles when less satisfied with their marriage can ultimately lead us to mostly accept our first hypothesis. One odd result that emerged was satisfaction being a strong predictor of authoritarian parenting styles in fathers which opposes the literature of dissatisfaction in a

marriage spilling over into one's parenting in the form of severity (Kouros, Papp, Goeke-Morey, & Cummings, 2014).

Fathers who were satisfied with their marriage also rated their partners as authoritative. This was shown by a strong correlation between the two which suggests that fathers are more satisfied with their partners when the partner exhibits favorable parenting techniques with the children. Satisfied fathers also rated their partners as permissive which was shown through a moderate correlation between the two. Thus, fathers may exhibit more satisfaction in their marital relationship when their partners avoid strict parenting and lean towards authoritative or responsive parenting.

4.2. Investment Size and Parenting Styles

Previous studies have generally shown that couples who are more invested towards their marital relationship are more prone to exhibiting the needed amount of response and demands towards their children. Within this study; however, the correlation of the balance between response and demands (authoritative) and investment size is extremely weak for mothers. This may be due to the sample size within this study being that even the highest correlations are barely moderate. Investment size however did moderately predict authoritativeness in mothers thus agreeing with previous studies. Moreover, the moderate correlation between investment and the mothers' rating of their partners as authoritative shows that mothers who are invested in their marriage view their partners as exhibiting a balanced parenting style. This may be explained by invested mothers viewing their partners as both invested to them as couples as well as parents.

Results regarding correlations between investment and parenting were only noteworthy with regards to fathers. Investment was shown to be moderately and negatively correlated to both authoritarian parenting styles and permissive parenting styles. Regressions; on the other hand, showed that investment size was a strong predictor of authoritarian

parenting styles and a moderate predictor of permissive parenting styles. The moderate and negative correlation between investment and authoritarian parenting leads us to believe that the less invested fathers are in their marriage, the more likely they are to be strict. On the other hand, the negative and moderate correlation between investment and permissive parenting may lead us to conclude that the less invested fathers are in their marriage, the more likely they are to be lenient and responsive towards their children. This correlation between investment and permissiveness completely opposes previous findings regarding the relationship between high marital investment and high levels of responsiveness. Investment size being a strong predictor of strict parenting also opposes this piece of literature (Selkin, 2012; Stanley, 2014). This may be due to the fact that the Lebanese culture is different and that fathers may be less invested in their marriages to begin with. Investment size being a moderate predictor of permissiveness; nevertheless, does fall in line with the literature regarding investment being linked to responsiveness (Selkin, 2012; Stanley, 2014).

Findings regarding lower levels of investment being correlated with authoritarian parenting styles for fathers coincide with the literature explaining that parents who do not invest time and effort into their relationship are prone to responding to their children in strict and negative manners (Ganiban et al., 2009). This may be explained in terms of fathers' negative marital practices being also portrayed through negative parenting. In general, results showing that more invested fathers are less likely to be authoritarian or permissive may show that they are more likely to be authoritative. Although results did not show a direct correlation between the authoritative parenting style and investment, the negative correlation between the other two parenting styles and investment may lead us to believe that the two are associated with one another being that no negative correlation emerged. However, investment size did moderately predict authoritativeness in our regression analysis which validates the

conclusion regarding invested fathers being authoritative. This also, agrees with our second hypothesis.

4.3. Fathers' Alternatives and Parenting

When it comes to fathers and their alternatives, a moderate positive correlation and a strong positive correlation emerged for permissive and authoritarian parenting styles respectively. Regressions also showed that alternatives was a very strong predictor of authoritarian parenting styles in fathers and a moderate predictor for permissiveness. This may be linked to the literature regarding fathers who have more alternatives outside the relationship offering less assistance when it comes to proper parenting (Rosser and Harris, 2012). Within the output of this study, this may either come about in terms of leniency or strictness. Thus, this may allow us to accept our third hypothesis regarding more alternatives being associated with authoritarian or permissive parenting. Moreover, parents who have more relationship alternatives are also more likely to experience conflict within the relationship (Schmidt, Green, & Prouty, 2015). This in turn generates more demands in terms of parenting which offers a justification for the reason why a strong correlation emerged for the authoritarian parenting style. Fathers' alternatives was also highly correlated with their perception of partners as authoritarian. This could be explained by the fact that mothers exhibit strict parenting as a result of dissatisfaction of the father's relationship alternatives as well. Alternatives for fathers was also moderately correlated with their perception of partners as permissive. Fathers who have more alternatives outside of the marital relationship could be viewing their lack of marital presence as being compensated by their partners through warmth and responsiveness towards the child.

4.4. Mothers' Alternatives and Parenting

A positive, moderate, and significant correlation emerged for quality of alternatives in mothers and authoritarian parenting styles. Thus, the more alternatives a mother has, the more

likely she is to be demanding. This falls in line with the literature regarding parents being demanding due to conflict with their partner as a result of marital alternatives (Schmidt, Green, & Prouty, 2015). This slightly verified our third hypothesis but only regarding alternatives being associated with authoritarian parenting. Another negative, moderate, and significant correlation was evident between quality of alternatives in mothers and authoritative parenting styles. This means that the more alternatives a mother has outside of her marital relationship, the less likely she is to exhibit a favorable parenting technique which is most probably explained by her distraction as a result of extraneous variables. Also, the less alternatives she has, the more likely she is to exhibit positive parenting due to her focus on her children rather than extraneous distractions.

Moreover, a moderate correlation with quality of alternatives and the perception of their partners as authoritarian may be explained by the possibility of mothers engaging in alternatives to compensate for their partners' strictness in the household. Moderate correlations did emerge however for both satisfaction and quality of alternatives and the mothers' ratings of their partners as permissive. Thus, mothers who are satisfied with their marriages view their partners as being responsive. This satisfaction could be justified by their happiness regarding their partners' warmth towards their children. Mothers having alternatives outside of the relationship viewing their partners as permissive could be explained by the fact that they may be trying to answer questions in a socially desirable manner. In other words, they may be trying to portray their partners as accepting and responsive to hide their distraction from their own parenting as a result of alternatives.

4.5. Limitations

As previously mentioned in the instrument section, the scales used were not validated in the Lebanese population which could limit the accuracy of the results. Hence, further studies will be required to be conducted with specified validated scales designed for the

Lebanese population. It is important to mention the fact that most of the research conducted when it comes to commitment and parenting styles focuses on commitment towards the parental aspect rather than the marital aspect. Therefore, more evidence based research is required to explore the relationship between commitment to the marriage and the resulting parenting styles. One crucial suspicion to consider is the fact that the scales are attitudinal; therefore, parents could be adjusting their answers in a manner that would portray them as adequate partners and parents. It is also important to mention that the study was conducted in only three schools with the third school only including two participants. With that being said, it would be beneficial to explore a variety of schools in the future that may differ in their primary language. In addition, being that only elementary and middle school aged children were the target of focus, higher levels of schooling could possibly be examined (high school) to study whether parenting differs with children of other ages. Lastly, one major limitation of the study is its sample size. In order to conduct structural equation modeling, the sample should contain a minimum of a hundred participants. Although this sample contains around 70 participants, it was still not enough to generate a saturated model and hence run the indices of fit.

4.6. Conclusion

The results of this study generate four main outcomes. First, individuals who are not satisfied in their marital relationship are more likely to exhibit permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. Second, fathers who are less invested in their marital relationship are more likely to be authoritarian or permissive. Third, fathers who value alternatives to their marital relationships also tend to portray permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. Fourth, mothers with alternatives were more prone to adopt authoritarian parenting styles. This may lead us to conclude that lack of marital satisfaction and valuing alternatives to one's marital relationship leads to unfavorable parenting styles.

Further research is required to gather more data regarding the effects of investment size on parenting since our limited sample size failed to generate significant results with regards to mothers. The same applies when it comes to the effect of the indicators of commitment on the authoritative parenting style and the tendency of parents to answer favorably to statements regarding a balance between response and demands leading to a plateau in our results. With this study however, we now have an understanding of an existing relationship between an individual's marriage and the parenting techniques he or she adopts. This in itself should be a stepping stone for educational, child, and parenting researchers to take into consideration the effect of a marital relationship on the children in the household. Also, qualitative research could be of use to gather data either by interviews and observation. Observation in particular can be beneficial if the effect of parenting on children's wellbeing is to be explored in future studies.

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Appendix A



NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

To : Dr Patricia Eid

From : Jocelyne Matar Boumosleh, PhD
Chair, IRB

Date: Feb 2nd, 2018

RE: Protocol Ref #: IRBSP2018_1_HH

Protocol Title: " The Relationship between Commitment to the Marital Relationship and the Parenting style in Parents of Lebanese Middle School Aged Children"

The above-mentioned research proposal was APPROVED following IRB Review for the duration of the protocol

- All changes or amendments to your protocol or consent form require review and approval by the IRB BEFORE implementation.
- If the research has been completed or if you wish to terminate the study, please notify the IRB via email at jboumosleh@ndu.edu.lb.

Sincerely,

Jocelyne Matar Boumosleh, IRB Chair

Ghazi Asmar, AVPRGS

A blue official stamp from Notre Dame University, identifying the Assistant Vice-President for Research & Graduate Studies.

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Appendix B



Zouk, Date

School's Principal

School Name

Lebanon

Subject: Letter of approval for Ms. Yara Awit research project in schools.

To whom it may concern,

This is to approve of Ms. Yara Awit conducting a research project involving parents of school aged children. We are seeking your collaboration for the recruitment of participants.

The purpose of the study is to understand how individuals are committed in their marital relationships, to explore parenting styles married parents use at home, and to understand the effect of relationship commitment on parenting styles.

The procedures that we are using involve parents of school aged children, specifically from elementary and middle school. The consent forms along with the questionnaires will be given to students along with an envelope to give to their parents at home. Parents will sign the consent form if they agree to participate in the study and fill out the two scales: Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire as well as the Investment Model Scale. They will slide the sheets into the envelope along with the consent form and seal it closed. No one other than the researcher and research assistants will have access to those sealed envelopes.

We are willing to modify our procedures according to your suggestions and preference and we look forward to collaborating with you on this project.

Please feel free to contact Ms. Awit or myself if you required further details or share any concern.

With my warmest regards,

Patricia Eid, PsyD, PhD

Assistant Professor of Psychology

Department of Psychology, Education & Physical Education

Faculty of Humanities

Notre Dame Univesrity - Louaize

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Appendix C



Asking for your collaboration and participation

You have been chosen to be part of a study on Parenting Styles. We would greatly appreciate your participation! In order to participate, you should:

- Be a parent of a child in elementary or middle school.
- Be married to the individual with whom you had that child.

Purpose: I am a student at Notre Dame University – Louaize supervised by Dr. Patricia. We are trying to understand what contributes to the best parenting and the efforts are putting in the education of your children.

Procedure: We will ask you to fill a questionnaire that will take a maximum of 20 minutes of your time. Of course, all your answers will remain confidential. That means they will ***NOT*** be shared with the school under any circumstance.

By participating you will:

- Learn about yourself, your relationship, and your family and help improve quality of family relationships through awareness.

If you have any questions regarding our study, please feel free to contact us. We are more than happy to answer any question that you might have!

Researcher: Yara Antoine Awit
 Department of Psychology, Education, &
 Physical Education
 Faculty of Humanities
 Telephone: +961 71 567 231
 Email address: yaawit@ndu.edu.lb

Leading researcher: Dr. Patricia Eid, PsyD,
 PhD
 Department of Psychology, Education, &
 Physical Education
 Faculty of Humanities
 Telephone: +961 9 218 771
 Email address: peid@ndu.edu.lb



Please return the section below with your child to the school



You and your partner are invited to participate separately. If one of you or both wish to participate, please indicate who is willing to do so we can send you the exact number of questionnaires.

Mother

Father

Name of child: _____ . **Class:** _____ .

Appendix D



Consent Form

Commitment and Parenting Styles

Under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Eid

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to understand how committed individuals are in their marital relationships and what type of parenting styles they use with their children at home.

Procedure: By agreeing to participate you will have to fill three separate sheets, a Socio - demographic questionnaire, questions discussing commitment aspects of your marital relationship, and questions discussing parenting practices you use at home.

Duration: The study will require about 20 minutes of your time.

Benefits and risks on the participant:

- Knowledge about yourself.
- Learning about how committed you are in your marriage.
- Being aware of the types of parenting styles you use with you children.
- Minimal uneasiness when replying to personal questions regarding commitment and parenting styles.

Voluntary Nature of the Study/Confidentiality:

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you are allowed to avoid any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name to this code will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, this list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report. No one will have access your information or identity aside from the researchers on the study.

If you have questions about the study, kindly contact:

Researcher: Yara Antoine Awit
 Department of Psychology, Education, & Physical
 Education
 Faculty of Humanities
 Telephone: +961 71 567 231
 Email address: yaawit@ndu.edu.lb

Leading Researcher: Dr. Patricia Eid, PsyD, PhD
 Department of Psychology, Education, & Physical
 Education
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 Telephone: +961 9 218 771
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Please sign below if you agree to participate:

Participant's signature

Date

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix E

Socio - Demographic Questionnaire (SDQ)

1. Are you a mother or a father?

1. Mother
2. Father

2. What is your age?

____ years.

3. What is your mother tongue?

1. Arabic
2. English
3. French
4. Other: _____

4. What is the religion in which you were raised?

1. Catholic (Non – Maronite)
2. Maronite
3. Orthodox
4. Protestant
5. Druze
6. Shite Muslim
7. Sunni Muslim
8. Other: _____.

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Brevet
2. High school graduate
3. Technical school training
4. College graduate (BA or BS)
5. Master's degree
6. Doctorate degree (MD, PhD, JD)

6. What is your current work situation?

1. Unemployed
2. Part time
3. Full time
4. Retired

7. What is your personal annual income in US dollars?

1. Under \$10,000
2. \$10,000 - \$19,999
3. \$20,000 - \$29,999
4. \$30,000 - \$39,999
5. \$40,000 - \$49,999
6. Above \$50,000

8. How many children do you have?

1. One child
2. Two children
3. Three children
4. Four or more children

9. What are their genders? Write male or female next to the corresponding order of children.

1st: _____
 2nd: _____
 3rd: _____
 4th: _____

10. What are their corresponding ages?

1st: _____
 2nd: _____
 3rd: _____
 4th: _____

11. What school does your child in elementary or middle school go to?

_____.

Appendix F

Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)

Instructions:

Below are statements regarding parenting techniques to use with your children at home that you will have to rate using the 1 - 5 scale below. Indicate your agreement with each item by making two ratings for each item; (1) rate *how often your partner* exhibits this behavior and (2) *how often you* exhibit this behavior with your child. Write the appropriate number on the two blank spaces preceding each statement with the first being for your partner and the second being for yourself.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Once in a while	About half of the time	Very Often	Always

	Partner	Myself
1. Responding to child's feelings or needs.	_____	_____
2. Using physical punishment as a way of disciplining our child.	_____	_____
3. Taking child's desires into account before asking the child to do something.	_____	_____
4. Stating: "because I said so", or "I am your parent and I want you to" when child asks why he/she has to conform.	_____	_____
5. Explaining to child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.	_____	_____
6. Spanking when our child is disobedient.	_____	_____
7. Encouraging child to talk about his/her troubles.	_____	_____
8. Finding it difficult to discipline child.	_____	_____
9. Encouraging child to freely express him/herself even when disagreeing with parents.	_____	_____
10. Punishing by taking privileges away from child with little if any explanations.	_____	_____
11. Emphasizing the reasons for rules.	_____	_____
12. Giving comfort and understanding when child is upset.	_____	_____

	Partner	Myself
13. Giving praise when child is good.	_____	_____
14. Giving into child when he/she causes a commotion about something.	_____	_____
15. Exploding in anger towards child.	_____	_____
16. Threatening child with punishment more often than actually giving it.	_____	_____
17. Taking into account child's preferences in making plans for the family.	_____	_____
18. Grabbing child when being disobedient.	_____	_____
19. Stating punishments to child and not actually doing them.	_____	_____
20. Showing respect for child's opinions by encouraging child to express them.	_____	_____
21. Allowing child to give input into family rules.	_____	_____
22. Scolding and criticizing to make child improve.	_____	_____
23. Spoiling child.	_____	_____
24. Giving child reasons why rules should be obeyed.	_____	_____
25. Using threats as punishment with little or no justification.	_____	_____
26. Having warm and intimate times together with child.	_____	_____
27. Punishing by putting child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.	_____	_____
28. Helping child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.	_____	_____
29. Scolding and criticizing when child's behavior doesn't meet our expectations.	_____	_____
30. Explaining the consequences of the child's behavior.	_____	_____
31. Slapping child when the child misbehaves.	_____	_____

12.	Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I would lose all of this if we were to separate.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	I feel very involved in our relationship- like I have put a great deal into it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14.	My relationships with friends and family members would be complicated if my partner and I were to separate (e.g. partner is friends with people I care about).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15.	Compared to other people I know, I have invested a great deal in my relationship with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Commitment

16.	I want our relationship to last for a very long time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17.	I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18.	I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19.	It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20.	I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21.	I want our relationship to last forever.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
22.	I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

