PARENTS' ATTITUDES, PREFERRED CHOICE OF PARENTING STYLE AND PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AS PREDICTORS OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR WITH THEIR CHILD

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study was concerned with the relationship between parents' self-reports concerning three parental constructs; child-rearing attitudes, perceived personal competence, and preferred choice of parenting style; and the observed behaviour of parents with their child. A multiple regression was performed to determine which combination of the identified constructs had the greatest predictive validity in terms of parental behaviour. Finally, a t-test was utilized in order to ascertain if parents who had attended a parenting course differed from parents who had never attended a parenting course.

Parents' attitudes toward child-rearing were measured by the Parent Attitude Research Instrument developed by Schaefer and Bell (1958). Tyler's (1978) Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence Scale was utilized to assess parents' perceived sense of competence. A Parenting Styles Inventory developed by the researcher in collaboration with a colleague was employed to determine the preferred choice of parenting style. Each measure categorized general responses into three parenting styles: democratic, autocratic, and permissive.

Parents' behaviour was assessed by observing parents' involvement in a play task with their child. Data relating to specific parental behaviour was collected by videotaping this interaction. Participation in the play task was videotaped in order to provide a descriptive account of the parents' particular parenting style. A Behaviour Observation Rating Scale formulated by the researcher was used in rating and categorizing parenting behaviours during the videotaped interaction. In addition,

parental behaviour was rated on the Empathic Behaviour Scale developed by Stover, Guerney and O'Connell (1971). Specific behaviours were categorized into democratic, autocratic and permissive styles of parenting.

Parents of children between the ages of three and five years volunteered to participate in this study. Data was collected from eight fathers and 22 mothers. Parents completed the written measures (Parent Attitude Research Instrument, Parenting Styles Inventory, and Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence) in two groups. One group of 16 parents completed the measures prior to engaging in the play task with their child. A second group of 14 parents filled out the measures following participation in the play task. Individual sessions were scheduled for each parent and child to participate in the play task. Videotapes of the play task were rated independently on the Behavioural Observation Rating Scale and the Empathic Behaviour Scale.

Parents' responses to the written measures were correlated with ratings on the behaviour rating scales. The Parenting Styles Inventory yielded significant correlations for the choices of autocratic and permissive styles of parenting and related autocratic and permissive parenting behaviours as rated on the Behaviour Observation Scale. Significant negative correlations were found between the choices of democratic and permissive styles of parenting and the observation of autocratic behaviours. There were no significant correlations between the choice of a democratic style of parenting and actual parenting behaviour.

No significant correlations were found between parents' self-reported attitudes and their ratings on the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. A significant correlation was found between one subscale of the Parent Attitude Research Instrument and the total rating from the Empathic Behaviour

Zero-order correlations did not yield any significant correlations between parents' self-reported attitudes and their ratings on the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. A significant correlation ($p < .05$) was found between one subscale of the Parent Attitude Research Instrument and the total score of the Empathic Behaviour Scale. This correlation implied that parents who report a more rejecting attitude exhibit a low level of empathy when interacting with their child.

Positive correlations ($p < .05$) resulted between parents' perceived sense of competence and the occurrence and frequency of democratic parenting behaviour.

Consideration of the maximum combination of the measures of attitude, competence and choice of parenting style which would have the greatest predictive validity in terms of parental behaviour did not contribute any significant relationships. A t-test analysis found few differences between parents who had attended a parenting course and parents who had not taken such a course.

This study supports the conclusion that parents' self-reported attitudes toward child-rearing and perceived level of competence cannot be considered valid predictors of parenting behaviour. There is evidence that a preferred choice of parenting style is a significant single predictor of parenting behaviour specific to the styles of autocratic and permissive parenting. Democratic parenting behaviour does not appear to be related to parents' self-reports of attitude or preferred parenting style. Parents who have attended parent courses do not seem to be different from other parents in the interest of this study.

Examiners: [redacted]

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CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Parenting, as used in this study, is described as the knowledge, attitudes and practices directing people in their roles as parents (Hurlock, 1972). Coopersmith (1967) states a belief that parents have the strength and power to enforce their demands and to establish the limits and framework within which their children function. For children, parents assume the position of nurturing, benevolent authorities who are able to define rights and privileges, establish limits to freedom, and generally lay the foundation for their child's future independence. The behaviour of parents influences not only the present parent-child relationship but the whole future life of the child (Dreikurs, 1953).

Several characteristics of the parental role are thought to have relevance for any consideration of parent-child interactions. Three specific factors are considered by the researcher to be related to parental behaviour: the attitudes and beliefs held by parents, the knowledge parents have of various parenting styles and their preferred choice of style, and the perceptions held by parents of their personal competence. It is a matter of speculation as to which, if any, of these factors, has a strong relationship to the behaviour of parents with their children.

Society is in the process of making parenthood a highly self-conscious, self-regarding affair (Titmuss, 1954). In doing so, it is adding heavily to the sense of personal responsibility among parents. Knowledge of those factors which have the greatest relationship to parental behaviour would increase the awareness of both the helping professional and parent. The awareness gained could result in a more responsible and focused approach to establishing and maintaining positive parent-child

relationships.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if parents' attitudes about parenting, preferred choice of parenting style and perceived personal competence correlate with their actual parenting behaviour. The relationship among the three parent constructs (attitudes, choice of parenting style, and perceived competence) was examined to determine which, if any, combination was best able to predict parental behaviour.

Schaefer and Bell (1958) claim that the development of measures of parent constructs which are relevant to their role performance permits prediction of parental behaviour with their child. The degree of correlation between attitudes, choice of parenting style, perceived competence and parental behaviour provides information from which inferences can be generated concerning the reliability and validity of these constructs in predicting parental behaviour.

This study was concerned with the relationship between what parents say and think about their behaviour with their child, and how they actually do interact with their child. Parents have a choice regarding how to respond in a given situation. The way the parent responds determines the nature of the interaction with their child (Combs, Avila and Purkey, 1978). Interactions are characterized by a number of behaviours which can be categorized into distinct styles of parenting (Becker, 1968). Categorization of parent constructs and behaviours into parenting styles provides a means of determining the correlation between parent behaviours and parents' reports of how they interact with their child.

To date, studies which have concentrated on assessing constructs such as attitudes, preferred parenting style and perceived competence

have failed to examine these constructs in relation to direct observation of parent behaviour. In addition, there has been little emphasis on determining the maximum relationship among parent constructs which would be most effective in predicting parent behaviour.

Prediction of parent behaviour based on the examination of single constructs and the lack of a measure which assesses and categorizes observed parental behaviour have limited the scope of previous studies.

This study extended the present understanding of parental behaviour by assessing the relationship of three parent constructs to observed behaviour of parents and by categorizing these constructs and behaviours into distinct parenting styles. As well, this study examined the maximum relationship among the three constructs to determine the combination which has the greatest predictive validity.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The parent-child relationship has been subject to critical analysis by researchers in the social science professions. Research in education, psychiatry and counselling psychology has provided confirmation that a vital aspect of parenting is the style in which a parent interacts with his/her child. Helping professionals involved with parents must often speculate or try to predict how a parent interacts with a child in the day-to-day life of the parent-child system. Parents themselves are frequently uncertain about how or if their thoughts and attitudes relate to their behaviour with their child. The literature was selected and reviewed for the following purposes: (a) to examine the relationships between attitudes, knowledge, perceived competence, and behaviour, (b) to focus on aspects of attitudes, knowledge, competence, and behaviour which are relevant to parenting and parenting styles, (c) to document concerns regarding using the parent constructs of attitudes, perceived competence, and knowledge as predictors of parent behaviour, and (d) to summarize the system of classifying parent behaviour employed in this study.

Relationship Between Parents' Knowledge of and Preferred Parenting Style and Behaviour

In recent years parents have been presented with an array of advice and factual statements about the "best" way to raise children. Parents are increasingly turning to experts in child development for guidance regarding the "right" way in which to raise their child and to behave in interaction with their child. Many parent education programs have been established with the goal of sharing knowledge and skills on parenting

with those parents in need. Fine (1980) contends that parent education, through information and skills imparted, does aim at achieving some behaviour changes on the part of the parent. Parent education is considered to be an activity using educational techniques in order to effect change in parent role performance (Brim, 1965). Parents who lack knowledge, information, or experience are assumed by parent educators to be engaged in maladaptive parent behaviours (Freeman, 1975). In addition, it is presumed that people, if made aware of effective parenting styles, will be capable of applying this information to their situation in order to evoke change (Freeman, 1975). There are few studies which report correlations between a parent's factual knowledge of child development and his role performance, nor the relation of parental knowledge to characteristics of their children (Brim, 1965). An assumed sequence of events has been viewed as follows (Brim, 1965): (a) changes in a parent's factual information (knowledge), (b) subsequent changes in attitudes and beliefs, and (c) manifested changes in overt actions.

Brim (1965) questions the validity of the assumption involved in this view of the causal sequence. A parent may indeed state a preference in parenting styles based on information obtained and never demonstrate this choice through overt action with their child.

Endres and Evans (1968) evaluated the effects of parent education programs on knowledge, attitudes, and overt behaviour of parents. Three randomized groups of fourth grade children and their respective parents comprised the experimental, placebo, and control groups (N = 90). Parents in the experimental group were involved in a series of eight study discussion meetings held at two-week intervals, each lasting two hours. Six topics were the focus of meetings: (a) feelings of security and ad-

equacy, (b) understanding self and others, (c) democratic values and goals, (d) problem-solving attitudes and methods, (e) self-discipline, responsibility, and freedom, and (f) constructive attitudes toward change. Parents in the placebo group attended three meetings, spaced a month apart. The topics included a travelog of Africa, unusual hobbies, and Christmas decorations. Parents in the control group received no treatment. At the completion of the education program a Parent Education Evaluation Instrument was employed and results indicated that parents who participated in parent education study-discussion groups manifested greater knowledge than those who did not.

The Parent Attitude Research Instrument was utilized to give information relevant to the parent-child relationship, dominance of parent, warmth and permissiveness of parents, parents' encouragement of child's self-expression and independence. Results indicated that there were no significant differences in attitudes toward child-rearing among the parents of the experimental, placebo, and control group. Two facets of overt parent-child interpersonal relationships were observed: parents' conversations with their cildren and parents' joint activities with their children. No significant differences between the groups were found for the amount or nature of parent-child conversation and activity.

The authors conclude that, although participation in a parent education program should effect changes in a parent's factual knowledge, awareness of parenting style alternatives, and overt behaviour, there is an absence of conclusive evidence supporting the supposition that parent behaviour changes as a result of parent education.

Chilman (1964) studied the effectiveness of parent education with low income families. He concluded that the programs surveyed offered minimal

evidence that parent education was effective in altering behaviour of low income parents. In this survey no attempt was made to assess the parents' actual behaviour with their child following the programs.

The efficacy of any program which provides parents with knowledge cannot only be judged by the substance proferred participants and their stated acceptance of same, but rather the degree to which actual role performance is affected; that is, the nature of parent behaviours (Harman & Brim, 1980). Knowledge gained from education programs often enables the parent to state a preferred choice of parenting style (e.g., parent may prefer the concept of democratic parenting to other styles of parenting). However, is this informed choice an indicator of subsequent behaviour with their child? It is quite possible for a person to be inconsistent if he does not know what direction to take to reach his goal (Deutsch, 1950). A situation in which the individual is unable to anticipate the consequences of one's behaviour, may result in behaviour which is inconsistent. Deutsch (1950) believes that it is possible to assert that the major portion of inconsistency between a person's awareness of concepts and his behaviour results from a lack of knowledge on how to be consistent. Consistent behaviour can be seen as an effective skill of putting knowledge to use in relation to a goal (Deutsch, 1950). Skillful social action may require more than the correct intent and unpracticed knowledge.

Parent education programs have offered the most accessible route to evaluating the effects of knowledge concerning alternate parenting styles on parental behaviour. As evidenced by research to date, there is a need for further work in correlating parents' awareness and choice of parenting style with observed parental behaviours.

Relationship Between Parental Attitudes and Behaviour

Assessment of parental behaviour determinants requires that we question the impact of attitudes on parental behaviour. Do skills essential for effective parenting consist of behavioural expressions of certain attitudes and values? If so, is it possible to develop skills or behaviours that are not entirely consistent with such attitudes and values? Only if it is assumed that attitudes constitute a predisposition toward action can recorded attitudes serve as indicants of behaviour (Gerhart & Geismar, 1969). Attitudes are defined in this study as evaluative feelings of pro or con, favourable or unfavourable, with regard to particular objects; the objects may be concrete representations of things or actions, or abstract concepts (De Fleur & Westie, 1963).

Many investigators make the broad psychological assumption that since attitudes are evaluative predispositions they have consequences for the way people act toward each other. Wicker (1969) states that attitudes are seen as precursors of behaviour, as determinants of how a person will actually behave in his daily activities. There is often an expectation of attitude-behaviour consistency, that an attitude is an intervening variable operating between stimulus and response and can be inferred from overt behaviour. Deutscher (1966) expresses a concern that conclusions from social research which are primarily based on verbal responses are guiding social action programs, which are primarily concerned with overt behaviour. He asks:

> Can we assume that if we are attempting to alter behaviour through a training program, an educational campaign, or some kind of information intervention, a measured change in attitude in the "right" direction results in a change in behaviour? (Deutscher, 1966, p. 250)

Wicker (1969) located several empirical research studies on attitude-

behaviour relationships. The 30 studies investigated met the following criteria: (a) the unit of observation is an individual, (b) at least one attitudinal measure and one behavioural measure toward the same object must be obtained for each subject, (c) the attitude and behaviour must be measured on separate occasions, and (d) the overt behavioural response must not be merely the subject's retrospective verbal report of his own behaviour. These criteria provide a stringent test of attitude-behaviour relationships but are compatible with the assumption that attitudes have consequences for behaviour outside of a testing situation. Based on this review Wicker concluded that it is more likely that attitudes will be only slightly related to overt behaviours than that attitudes will be closely related to actions. Several of the studies suggested that attitude-behaviour consistency may be greater when the overt behaviour is assessed in advance of the attitude measurement (Bellin & Kriesberg, 1967; Fendrich, 1967; Green, 1954). There were also a number of studies in Wicker's review in which behavioural measures preceded attitude assessment and which show inconsistency (Dean, 1950; Freeman & Aatov, 1960). Only two of the 30 studies used direct behavioural observation of subjects. In the remaining studies the overt behaviours measured were behaviours assumed to be related to the attitude object. For example, in a study of maternity ward patients' attitudes toward breast-feeding, the overt behaviour was the success of breast-feeding judged from the amount of breast milk taken by the infant (Newton & Newton, 1950). Obviously, several contributing factors could account for the poor or good intake of the baby. Control of extraneous variables was missing in several of the reported studies.

La Piere (1934) stated that all measurement of attitude by the ques-

tionnaire technique proceeds on the assumption that there is a mechanical relationship between symbolic and non-symbolic behaviour. La Piere argues that there is no necessary correlation between speech and action, between response to words and to the realities they symbolize. Although La Piere's research was conducted several years ago, it is still acknowledged as a valid and reputable study in the area of attitudes vs. actions (De Fleur & Warner, 1969). The research conducted by La Piere does not involve parents; however, the generalizability of the results in terms of parental attitudes and behaviour is of relevance in this study. In studying the relationship between attitudes and action La Piere spent a period of one month travelling with a Chinese couple. During that time 66 hotels, auto camps and tourist homes, as well as 184 restaurants and cafes, served the Chinese couple without apparent hesitation. Only one establishment refused to accommodate the couple. Six months following their travels La Piere sent a questionnaire to each of the 250 establishments. With each questionnaire was an accompanying letter professing to be a special and personal plea for a response. Two types of questionnaires were used. Both asked, "Will you accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment?" In one of the questionnaires the question was inserted among similar queries concerning Germans, French, Japanese, Russians, Jews, Armenians, Negroes, Italians, and Indians. Completed replies came from 81 restaurants and 47 hotels. Only one establishment stated that they would serve a Chinese person. La Piere concluded that it cannot be assumed that attitudes can be conceptualized as integrated habit sets which will become operative under specific circumstances.

Further research is needed to verify or dispute various assumed

sources of influence on overt behaviour. Such research may lead to the identification of factors or kinds of factors which are consistently better predictors of overt behaviour than attitudes (Wicker, 1969).

Relationship Between Parental Competence and Behaviour

Tyler (1978) has reported three investigations of students completing high school or entering college to determine if a configuration of psychosocial competence exists. A second objective of Tyler's research was to investigate whether the behavioural attributes of psychosocial competence constitute a component of that configuration and are related to individual differences in functioning. The configuration held across three samples indicated a strong relationship between self-attitudes and behavioural attributes. Determining the relationship of parental competence to parent interaction may help to identify how parents' feelings about their ability to effectively fulfill their parenting role affects their role performance.

Mondell and Tyler (1981) studied the relationship of parent psychosocial competence to parent interaction behaviours. Parents and children (23 pairs) participated in a joint problem-solving/play session with observers rating the parental behaviours in the interactions; child responses were not specifically studied. Individual psychosocial competence was defined as a configuration of characteristic attributes that function to sustain each other and promote enhanced coping and personal effectiveness. Tyler outlined the characteristic attributes as: perception of the self as causally important in one's life; a moderate degree of optimism and interpersonal trust, and an active coping style. Parental competence was investigated as a factor relevant to differing styles of parent problem-solving/play behaviour with children. Parents possess-

ing higher degrees of competence were expected to interact with their child in the following ways: (a) treat the child as a capable problem-solver, (b) provide more indirect solutions and offer fewer physical intrusions and fewer commands, (c) show more warmth and delight, (d) provide more verbal and non-verbal signs of approval, and (e) collaborate with child in determining problem-solving strategies. The degree of parental competence was determined through self-report questionnaires completed one week preceding the actual observed problem-solving situation. Competence was measured by a combination of the Rotter (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, the Rotter (1967) Trust Scale, and the Tyler (1978) Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence Scale. Questionnaires were scored following the observation sessions. Interaction behaviour was measured by global ratings and frequency counts. Global ratings consisted of five-point rating scales: the degree to which the parent treated the child like a capable problem-solver, communicated feelings or was affectively involved with the child, provided guidance and modelling of problem-solving skills. Non-verbal frequency counts, taken during the session, included acts of physical intrusions into the child's problem-solving attempts, approval gestures (warmth contingent on successful problem-solving), and disapproval gestures. Verbal frequencies (spoken indirect solution suggestions, suggestions in question form, suggestions in command form, approval comments) were rated separately from non-verbal behaviours. The researchers found that more competent parents interacted with a different, consistent set of behaviours. They treated their child as being more capable and resourceful, showed generally warm and positive feelings, provided a more conducive context for learning problem-solving skills and allowed the child to ex-

perience a sense of trust and self-efficacy. The less competent parent group met their children's actions and appeals with parental authoritarian control, suggesting little faith or interest in the child's ability to solve problems. Mondell and Tyler concluded that parent competence attributes are significant variables relating to parent behaviour and their styles of interaction.

Bellinski and Cook (1982) studied mothers' perceptions of their competence in managing selected parenting tasks. Mothers in this study reported high levels of competence in their roles as parents and stated that they had few problems in dealing with any concerns of parenting. The researchers did not actually observe mother-child interaction; rather, they relied on the mothers' self-reports regarding their competencies and their perceived role performance.

Hill, Raley and Snyder (1982) studied the effects of group intervention with parents of psychiatrically hospitalized children. The researchers declared that no systematic investigations have been conducted to determine the impact of group intervention on the parents' self-esteem, attitudes and knowledge about child development and child-rearing. This study involved subjects who were participating in a clinical program for parents of children admitted for in-patient treatment at a psychiatric training and research facility. The clinical program was experimental and looked at the effects of the program on parent functioning in areas of self-esteem, attitudes toward children, knowledge regarding child development and child-rearing techniques. The parent group program consisted of two series of twelve sessions each. All group sessions emphasized educative and supportive functions. The first half of each session was devoted to didactic presentations; the second half of each session was

given to sharing of parents' experiences and concerns. The second of the two series of sessions involved a recapitulation of thematic material from the first phase, this time in greater depth with an emphasis on home assignments and more contribution from group members. Results of this study suggest that although parents' involvement in their child's psychiatric treatment enhances the maintenance of behavioural and attitudinal changes following discharge, only a small portion of this variance can be attributed to the acquisition of new parenting skills. Rather, the authors suggest it is the renewed or new-found sense of competence in their role that allows parents to engage in parenting behaviours already accessible in their behaviour repertoire but long since relinquished in despair and frustration. Further validation is required before parents' perceived competence may be considered as a reliable and accepted predictor of parent behaviour. Studies to date have supported the proposition that perceived competence is correlated with parental behaviour. However, research specific to this area has been minimal and in need of substantiation.

Classification of Parental Behaviour

Becker (1964) has developed a model including three dimensions: warmth vs. hostility, restrictiveness vs. permissiveness, and calm detachment vs. anxious emotional involvement, which are important to consider when looking at parental behaviour. These dimensions were generated from a wide range of variables pertaining to aspects of parent behaviour.

The warmth vs. hostility dimension is defined at the warmth end by the following variables: accepting, affectionate, approving, child-centred, frequent use of explanations, high use of reasons in discipline.

The hostility end of the dimension is defined by opposite characteristics.

The restrictiveness vs. permissiveness dimension is defined at the restrictive end by: strict enforcement of demands, obedience, modesty behaviour, noise control, control of any aggression to peers or aggression to parents. The permissive end of the dimension is defined by opposite characteristics.

Anxious emotional involvement vs. calm detachment is defined at the anxious end by: high emotionality in relation to the child, protectiveness, treating the child like a baby. The calm-detached parent displays opposite characteristics.

Specific parental behaviours can be categorized into distinct parenting styles which are defined by various combinations of these three dimensions of parent behaviour.

The democratic parent is high on the dimension of warmth and low on the dimensions of restrictiveness and anxious emotional involvement (Becker, 1964). The permissive or indulgent parent is high on the dimensions of warmth and anxious emotional involvement and low on the dimension of restrictiveness. A neglecting parent who fails to supervise the child can be thought of as a variety of permissiveness combined with detached hostility. The autocratic parent is high on the dimensions of hostility and anxious emotional involvement and low on the dimension of warmth.

Becker and associates (1962) provided statistical evidence implying that there is a strong tendency for parents who behave in a certain manner (e.g., democratically, autocratically, permissively) in one area to be so in other areas of child-rearing. The degree to which behaviours represent a repetitive behavioural configuration depends upon whether or not the situation is within the common behavioural context of the indiv-

idual and takes place under usual social circumstances (Tittle and Hill, 1967).

For the purpose of this study, the behaviours were categorized according to the variables identified with democratic, autocratic and permissive parenting styles. It was assumed that the behaviours noted in each parent-child interaction were typical of the manner in which the parent interacts with the child in similar circumstances in the home or community setting.

Specifically, the traits attributed to each of the parenting styles are as follows (Becker, 1964; Hurlock, 1972; Guerney, Stover & DeMerritt, 1968):

Autocratic parenting style

- parent enforces strict rules and regulations to enforce a desired behaviour.
- techniques used by the parents include punishment for failure to come up to expected standards; little or no recognition, praise, or other signs of approval when the child meets the expected standards.
- discipline ranges from reasonable restraints on the child's behaviour to rigid restraints that provide little freedom of action.
- parents gain control through external force in the form of punishment.
- criticism of child is verbalized or strongly implied; parent preaches/lectures as a means of teaching the child new information.
- parent assumes leadership role in all decision-making.
- parent is directive and instructive in problem-solving situations.

- parent deprives child of opportunities to learn to control his/her behaviour.

Democratic parenting style

- parent employs explanation, discussion, and reasoning to help the child understand expectations held for him/her.
- parent shows a willingness to follow the child's lead or allows the child the option to take the lead in the decision-making process.
- parent emphasizes the educational aspect of discipline rather than the punitive.
- punishment is never harsh; it is used only when there is evidence that the child willfully refused to do what was expected of him.
- parent rewards the child with praise and encouragement when behaviour meets expectations.
- parent gives the child verbal recognition and acceptance of feelings and behaviour.
- parent considers the child to be able and responsible in age appropriate activities.

Permissive parenting style

- parent employs little or no discipline.
- parent sets no limits or boundaries on the child's activities; child is permitted to make his own decisions and act on them in any way he wishes.
- parent does not assume the role of educator in guiding the child into socially accepted patterns of behaviour.
- parent may give the child marginal attention; parent is often involved in his/her own independent activity that interferes with

attention to the child.

- parent may be over-attentive and comply with all demands of the child without discussion or question.
- parent may fail to attend to the child's apparent needs due to overinvolvement in own role.
- parent employs persuasion or pleading in an attempt to convince a resistant child to change behaviour.
- parent will threaten child with punishment but not follow through if child's undesirable behaviour persists.

Summary Review of the Literature

In final summary, a review of the research lends support to and confirms the researcher's concern that there are many untested assumptions regarding the various determinants of parent behaviour. Although research has been conducted on the influence of the knowledge of parenting styles on parent behaviour, the studies rely on the use of pre-and post-tests to measure the influence of knowledge of alternate parenting styles on behaviour. Most of the studies are simply descriptions of various programs with little attempt to measure the success of the programs in making changes in parents' actual behaviour with their children. Many research designs have been the before-and-after type, some measurement being made at the beginning of a parent education program and repeated at the conclusion with any changes being attributed to the parent education program. There is a need to determine if the parents' choice of parenting style, based on the knowledge of alternatives, actually correlates with parent behaviour.

Research on the relationship between attitude and behaviour has been more thorough in the attention paid to the actual behaviour of the indi-

vidual as it relates to a stated attitude. The findings of Wicker's (1969) review of empirical research indicate that a closer look must be taken at various parent attitudes and how they do relate to behaviour. Knowledge of this relationship would benefit parents and helping professions in their search for meaning and change in the parent-child interaction. Studies which focus on the relationship of attitudes and parent behaviour often do so in the context of making change in an attitude with the assumption that a changed attitude results in changed behaviour. The purpose of this study is to focus on whether or not this relationship exists. A consistent thread throughout the review of the literature is the apparent need for direct observation of the parent-child interaction to substantiate or refute the claims that attitude, perceived competence, and preferred parenting style are related to the actual behaviour of parents with their children. Classification of parent behaviours according to Democratic, Autocratic and Permissive parenting styles has been recognized as a practical, valid means of analyzing parent-child interaction.

In the present study both parents' statements concerning attitudes, personal competence, and choice of parenting style, and data from direct behavioural observation of parents and their children were considered. In order to fully describe the predictive power of parents' attitudes, preferred parenting style, and perceived competence on parental behaviour several questions were considered.

The primary research question of this study is: What is the predictive power of parent attitudes, perceived competence, and preferred choice of parenting style on parental behaviour? More specifically:

1. Is there a correlation between parents' self-reported attitudes towards child rearing and their style of parenting in an ob-

served interaction with their child?

2. Is there a correlation between parents' self-reported preference for a particular parenting style and their style of parenting in an observed interaction with their child?
3. Is there a correlation between the behaviour attributes specific to parents' self-rated level of personal competence and their actual behaviour in an observed interaction with their child?

The secondary questions of this study are as follows:

1. Which constructs (attitudes, preferred choice of parenting style, perceived competence) are the most valid predictors of parental behaviour?
2. What is the maximum relationship among the constructs which has the greatest predictive validity in terms of parental behaviour?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Subjects

This study was conducted with parents of pre-school children from three local pre-school programs. A total of 30 parents volunteered to participate in response to a letter distributed to the pre-school programs (Appendix A). Complete data were collected on eight fathers and 22 mothers. Although both mothers and fathers were included in the sample they were not necessarily of the same couple. Each parent's pre-school child was involved in a videotaped play-task session with the participating parent.

Parents participating in this study met the following criteria: (a) they had a pre-school child between three and five years of age, (b) the child had no physical or mental handicaps, and (c) the parent and child would be available for participation in the month of July, 1983.

Previous involvement in parent education programs was considered to be an important variable in this study: 18 out of 30 parents reported this experience. See Table 1 for characteristics of the sample.

Design

A correlational design was followed in examining the relationships between three parent constructs (attitude, preferred parenting style, and perceived competence) and parenting behaviour.

Zero-order Pearson-product moment correlations were used to determine the relationship between the ratings from the observed parenting behaviour with the scores on each of the three constructs: attitudes about parenting, preferred choice of parenting style, and perceived competence

Table 1

Characteristics of Parents and Children and Family Size of Sample

(N = 30)

Variable		Number	Proportion
Parents			
	Sex		
	female	22	73%
	male	8	27%
	Age		
	26 - 30	3	10%
	31 - 35	15	50%
	36 - 40	6	20%
	41 - 45	6	20%
	Education		
	High School	9	30%
	Post-Secondary	16	53%
	Graduate	5	17%
	Parenting Course		
	Yes	18	60%
	No	12	40%
Children			
	Sex		
	female	19	63%
	male	11	37%
	Age		
	3	13	43%
	4	8	27%
	5	9	30%
	Birth Order		
	1	18	60%
	2	7	23%
	3	3	10%
	4	2	7%
Number of Children in Family			
	1	5	16%
	2	14	47%
	3	8	27%
	4	0	0%
	5	3	10%

in their parenting role.

Multiple correlations estimated the maximum relationship among the three parent constructs; attitudes, preferred parenting style, and perceived competence; which most validly predict parenting behaviour.

A t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between those parents who had previously participated in a parent education program and those who had not.

Measures

Parents' attitudes, preferred choice of parenting style and perceived competence were assessed and evaluated individually using three instruments: the Parent Attitude Research Instrument, the Parenting Styles Inventory, and the Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence.

Parent Attitude Research Instrument (Schaefer & Bell, 1958). The PARI was used to measure parental attitudes. Attitudes are established by means of a self-report on beliefs or opinions about child-rearing practices. Coopersmith (1967) supports the use of PARI as a useful measure in studies concerned with the examination of parenting styles and child-rearing practices. PARI involves 80 items taken from 14 scales describing the attitudes and behaviours about child-rearing. The 80 items are categorized into three units corresponding to factors underlying dimensions of parent attitudes: democracy-domination, acceptance-rejection, indulgence-autonomy (Appendix B). Four response alternatives are permitted: strongly agree, mildly agree, mildly disagree, and strongly disagree. The internal consistency reliability coefficients, based on three studies of mothers' scores, ranged from .54 to .85 (N = 100) and were considered by Schaefer and Bell (1958) to be satis-

factory. Test-retest reliabilities calculated for a group of 60 women after a three-month delay were generally good for most of the scales (range r = .44 to r = .78). Reasonable evidence of the PARI's concurrent validity was documented in a review of the PARI by Becker & Krug (1965). PARI has been criticized concerning its predictive validity in regard to actual behaviour of parents (Becker & Krug, 1965). However, it was unclear as to whether the difference between attitudes and behaviour was due to deficiencies in the PARI or in the behavioural measures, or a demonstration of discrepancy between behaviour and attitudes.

In many studies utilizing the PARI, behaviour data to be correlated with parental attitudes were drawn from interviews with the mother but there was limited observation of parent-child interaction (Gerhart & Geismar, 1969). Gerhart and Geismar (1969) suggest that PARI scores have more relation to direct assessment of behaviour.

In this study the PARI was one of three instruments used to assess parental constructs. The use of different measures for obtaining information on parenting styles provides corroboration that is unavailable if PARI is the only source of information (Coopersmith, 1967).

Parenting Styles Inventory. The Parenting Styles Inventory was developed by the researcher in collaboration with a doctoral candidate at the University of Victoria who has experience and expertise in the area of parent-child relationships. The format of the PSI is such that the parent responds to ten situations describing parent-child interactions. Following each description of a parent-child interaction the parents are asked to choose one of three possible responses. The parent is to select the response which indicates how they would respond to their child in that particular situation (Appendix C). The choice of responses implies

their preferred choice of parenting style.

The responses for each situation are based on three distinct parenting styles. For each situation there is a response which exemplifies an autocratic style of parenting, a democratic style of parenting, and a permissive style of parenting.

A major theme in current parent education literature is the importance of dealing effectively with children and their demands for equal participation in decision-making and problem-solving. The critical nature of the parent-child relationship makes it mandatory to recapture the ability to influence children, to turn the autocratic role of boss into the democratic leadership of a guide (Dreikurs & Grey, 1968). Knowledge about parent practices is often directed at improving communications and establishing democratic relationships between the generations. In retreating from an autocratic style of parenting, many parents adopt a permissive approach. Failure to make rules and establish consistent controls often indicates a failure to understand basic requirements for effective parent-child relationships (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1973).

It is assumed that parents' preferred choice of responses depicting autocratic or permissive styles of parenting indicates a general lack of knowledge or unacceptance of current theories of effective parenting. A consistent choice of responses depicting a democratic parenting style would indicate a knowledge and acceptance of the widely held belief that democratic parenting is the most effective means of establishing and maintaining a positive parent-child relationship.

The responses to the Parenting Style Inventory were tallied according to the categories of autocratic, democratic, and permissive parenting styles. A score out of 10 was given for each category. The score

on each category was then correlated with the scores from the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale and the Empathic Behaviour Scale.

Prior to utilization by the parents, the Parenting Styles Inventory was distributed to six persons at the University of Victoria to be evaluated for content validity. Each of the six persons has experience and knowledge in the area of parent-child relationships and alternative parenting styles. The six raters were asked to verify that the behavioural responses to the situations given in the inventory constituted valid behavioural criteria and were related to the concepts of autocratic, democratic and permissive parenting styles as documented in the review of the literature. Comments made by the raters reflected similar concerns. Changes based on these comments were incorporated into the inventory as necessary. Reliability was estimated by administering the Parenting Styles Inventory to six parents of pre-school children, waiting a period of three months, and readministering the test to the same group. The scores on the parents' tests were correlated and a stability coefficient of .92 was established.

Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence (Tyler, 1978). The BAPC is a measure of a three-dimension conception of coping styles. Tyler (1978) considers three dimensions of competence:

1. self attitudes: the competent person maintains at least a moderately favourable self-evaluation, thinks he's causally important in his own life, and views himself as responsible when effects do and do not correspond to his desires.

2. world attitudes: a competent person maintains a stance of moderately optimistic trust as a basis for developing a pattern of constructive interaction with the world.

3. behavioural attributes: behavioural attributes are the implementing and fulfilling set of components; the competent person is characterized by an active coping orientation, realistic goal-setting, and a capacity for enjoying success.

Each item of the BAPC is designed to assess an individual's general approach or style (coping stance, self-maintenance) in that person's interpersonal functions at some point in the individual's ongoing approach to his(her) life's activities.

The BAPC was composed of form A and form B. Form A and form B yielded reliability coefficients of .84 and .86, respectively (Tyler, 1978). The reliability of the combination of form A and form B yielded an r = .92 (Tyler, 1978). Item validities indicate that 92% of form A item dimension total r's and 92% of form B item dimension total r's yield correlations significant at the .05 level (Tyler, 1978). Scores on forms A and B correlate .88 so that they are considered to be equivalent measures. Form B was developed for use in Tyler's study on adolescent psychosocial competence (Tyler, 1975) and is not used as an instrument to assess the competence configuration of adults. Form A contains the items designed to assess an individual's general approach to life coping style and is the form utilized in this study (Tyler, 1978) (Appendix D).

The BAPC does not have items that particularly pertain to parenting and perceived competence in that specific role. Tyler and Mondell (1981) employed the BAPC in studying the relationship of parental psychosocial competence to parent interaction behaviour with their children. As cited in the review of literature, Tyler and Mondell identified parental competence attributes which were reported to be significant variables

relating to parental behaviour and to their styles of interaction with their children. More competent parents tended to treat their children with greater respect for their resources and skills by offering more indirect solution suggestions and fewer commands. They expressed warmer affect by creating interactions filled with greater delight in the child, more acceptance gestures and less verbal disapproval. Competent parents encouraged their children to be in control of the situation and offered problem-solving strategies, not solutions.

The BAPC was used in the present study to measure each parent's perceived level of competence. The behavioural attributes of high and low competence parents outlined by Tyler and Mondell were used as the criteria by which behavioural observations were compared in determining if a parent's perceived level of competence was correlated with their behaviour. For instance, if a parent rated a high level of confidence on the BAPC, associated behavioural attributes outlined by Tyler and Mondell (indirect solutions, few commands) were compared to their actual behaviour to determine if there was a correlation between perceived competence and parental behaviour.

Play Task. The purpose of observing a task situation involving each parent and child was to determine which parenting style; autocratic, democratic, or permissive; was predominant in the parent's interaction with the child. The task given to the parent and child involved working on one of the two Playmobile toy kits. The kits contained small dolls with clothes and accessories appropriate to the theme of the kit. One kit pictured several children going on a ski and ice hockey adventure; the other pictured several persons going on a treasure hunt. The pictures on each box depicted the theme and provided clues as to the approp-

riate accessories and props to be assembled. The task required that the child recreate the theme depicted on the box cover or create his/her own story with the dolls and accessories. The parent was asked to assist when he/she felt the child required guidance.

This particular task was selected for four reasons. First, it allows for the measure of actual behaviour rather than paper and pencil reporting by the parent. Second, it presents the opportunity for a wide range of behavioural responses by the parent, from passive to active participation, and co-operative to instructive approaches to problem solving. Third, the toy was developed for children between three and ten years and, therefore, all children in the study would have had the potential of being successful with the task. Fourth, the nature of the task should be familiar to mothers, fathers, and the children; therefore, behaviours of the parents may be generalized to the everyday interactional patterns of the parent with his/her child.

Each parent and child were videotaped while working on the task. A pilot was run with a mother and her four-year-old son to ensure that the toy was appropriate to use for observation of a parent-child interaction.

The parents' behaviour with their children was evaluated according to two different measures: the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale developed by the researcher (1983) and the Empathic Behaviour Scale reported by Stover, Guerney and O'Connell (1971).

Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. The rater employed a record sheet to check the occurrence and frequency of pre-selected behaviours. The rating scale is a cumulated point rating scale. Each item on the scale acts as a separate indicator of one of three overall traits: autocratic parenting style, democratic parenting style, and permissive parenting style. There is

an equal number of possible behaviours in each of the parenting style categories (Appendix E). A time sampling procedure was used to observe the behaviour of each parent. Two five-minute intervals were used for observation. The five-minute samples were selected from the beginning to middle and end of each tape. The middle section of the tape was not viewed utilizing this observation measure. For each five-minute period the occurrence and frequency of specific behaviours on the scale was noted. A preliminary observation was conducted with a mother and her four-year-old son to ensure that five-minute time intervals would secure representative time samples of the target phenomena.

The rater was familiar with the form and the specified behaviours so that behaviours displayed by the parent could be easily identified and noted. A global rating for each category of parenting style was done for each parent.

The Behaviour Observation Rating Scale was assessed for inter-rater reliability for the purpose of indicating the clarity of structure, focus, and procedure of the recording system, and as a measure of observer bias or ambiguity of observed events. The researcher and one other rater observed a total of nine tapes and independently rated identical five-minute samples for each tape on the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. The scores given by each of the raters were correlated and are summarized in Table 2.

The scale was distributed to the six persons given the Parenting Styles Inventory. The judges were asked to state if, in their opinion, the specific behaviours listed in the scale constituted valid behavioural criteria and were related to the concepts of autocratic, democratic, and permissive styles of parenting as defined in this study. Revisions to the scale were made in response to comments from the judges.

The subscores (occurrence, frequency and global rating) tallied for

Table 2

Inter-rater Reliability Coefficients for

Behaviour Rating Scales

(N = 9)

Behaviour Rating Scales	Pearson product correlation (r)
Behaviour Observation Rating Scale	
Democratic occurrence	.61
frequency	.21
overall	.50
Autocratic occurrence	.54
frequency	.90
overall	1.0
Permissive occurrence	.61
frequency	.71
overall	.91
Empathic Behaviour Scale	.93

each category of parenting style were correlated with each of the predictor variables (attitude, perceived competence, preferred parenting style) to determine the relationship between observed parental behaviour and parents' response to the instruments assessing their attitude, perceived competence and preferred parenting style.

Empathic Behaviour Scale. This scale was developed by Stover, Guerney and O'Connell (1971) as a measure of adult empathic behaviour in relation to children. Five-point scales are used to rate three aspects of empathy: communication of acceptance, allowing the child self-direction, and involvement of the parent. The scale is bipolar with the highest level of parents' empathic behaviour at one extreme and the least empathic, highest self-involvement evidenced at the other extreme (Appendix F). In this study the researcher rated two five-minute segments of parent-child interactions to obtain a subtotal score of each of the subscales. The five-minute segments from each tape were selected from the middle of the tape and from the middle to end of the tape.

Intercoder reliability for six pairs of coders rating mother-child play sessions of 20 to 30 minutes each, was reported to be high for each of the three scales ($r = .80$). Construct validity is evidenced in that all scales were successful in demonstrating pre-post changes for mothers trained to be more accepting, to allow more self-direction and to show more involvement with their children.

The Empathic Behaviour Scale was employed in this study as a further measure of parent-child interaction. The manner in which a parent communicates with a child is a component and an indicator of the style of parenting practiced by a parent. The behaviour of each parent as measured by the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale coupled with a rating of

each parent's interaction pattern provided a more comprehensive data base for determining the most prevalent parenting style employed by the parent.

The criteria signifying a high level of empathy in the Empathic Behaviour Scale closely approximate those characteristics which, in this study, define a democratic style of parenting. Those interaction patterns which are at a low level on the empathy scale parallel the type of interaction common to the autocratic style of parenting as defined in this study. Finally, the mid level responses on the Empathic Behaviour Scale represent elements of the permissive style of parenting outlined in this study.

The total score from the Empathic Behaviour Scale was correlated with each of the predictor variables (attitude, perceived competence, preferred parenting style) to determine the relationship between parents' observed pattern of interaction with their child and their response to the instruments assessing parents' attitudes, perceived competence and preferred parenting style. Inter-rater reliability for the Empathic Behaviour Scale was assessed for this study. The researcher and one other rater observed a total of nine tapes and independently rated two identical five-minute samples for each tape. The scores given by each of the raters were correlated and are summarized in Table 2.

Procedure

The written tasks (Parent Attitude Research Instrument, Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence, Parenting Styles Inventory) were completed by 16 parents two weeks prior to the videotaped play task. The remaining 14 parents participated in the play task two weeks prior to completing the written tasks. The written and behavioural tasks were counterbalanced to minimize any possible order effects.

The parents met in the groups of 14 and 16 to complete the Parent Attitude Research Instrument, Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence, and the Parenting Styles Inventory. The researcher explained each instrument to the parents. The researcher remained in the room with the parents in order to be available for questions or clarification. The items took approximately 50 minutes to complete.

The play-task sessions were scheduled on an individual basis. For the behavioural observation a videotape unit was set up in a quiet room at the university. Each parent and child was greeted by the researcher and the first few moments were spent putting the parent and child at ease. The child was shown the pictures on the boxes of two playmobile toys and asked to select one of the toys to play with with his/her parent. The child was informed that he/she could create the theme of the playmobile as shown by the picture or develop a unique story. The parent was instructed that the child was to work on the task; the parent was to help in any way he/she felt necessary. The parent and child were seated at a table to participate in the play-task. The videotape equipment was explained to both. The researcher left the room so that the parent and child would feel more relaxed in their interaction. The researcher remained outside of the room, but nearby to ensure availability to the parent. The parent and child were asked to leave the task after a 15-minute period. Each parent was asked to refrain from disclosing the content or procedure of the study to any other parent who may have also been participating in the study.

Two five-minute segments of video were randomly selected and rated on the Behaviour Observation Scale. This procedure was repeated for rating on the Empathic Behaviour Scale. An attempt was made to view the

beginning, middle and conclusion of each tape for rating on one of the two behaviour scales.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research questions of this study were concerned with the relationships between parents' self-reports (attitudes, parenting styles, and competence) and their style of parenting in an observed interaction with their child. Videotaped observations of parental behaviour were rated on two scales: the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale and the Empathic Behaviour Scale. The Behaviour Observation Rating Scale categorized specific behaviours into democratic, autocratic, and permissive styles of parenting. The Empathic Behaviour Scale yielded one total score. The data concerning the correlations between the measures of parental constructs (Parenting Styles Inventory, Parent Attitude Research Instrument, and Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence) and the behavioural ratings of each of the three parenting styles (democratic, autocratic, and permissive) are reported in Tables 3, 4, and 5. Table 3 also reports the correlations between the measures of parental constructs and the total score on the Empathic Behaviour Scale. The results are discussed according to each of the constructs; attitude, preferred choice of parenting style, and competence; as they relate to the behavioural ratings in each category of parenting style and the score obtained on the Empathic Behaviour Scale. Results from the t-test performed determine if any significant differences existed between parents who had attended parenting courses and those who had not. The t-test results will be reported and discussed with the results of the zero-order correlations.

Relationship Between Preferred Parenting Style and Behaviour

The first research question asked if a correlation existed between parents' self-reported preference for a particular parenting style and their parenting behaviour. Correlations between parents' preferred parenting style, measured by the Parenting Styles Inventory, and behavioural ratings in the categories of democratic, autocratic and permissive styles of parenting are reported in Table 3. In terms of the zero-order correlations reported here there was no significant correlation between the parents' self-reported preference for a parenting style and the occurrence, frequency or overall ratings of democratic parenting behaviour. There was a weak negative correlation ($r = -.30$) between the self-report of a permissive style of parenting and the frequency of observed democratic behaviour. This correlation would indicate that those parents who rated themselves as more permissive displayed fewer democratic behaviours. Stronger correlations were found between self-reported preferences for democratic and autocratic styles of parenting and the occurrence and frequency of observed autocratic parenting behaviour. Those parents displaying an autocratic style of parenting in an observed interaction reported a preference for an autocratic parenting style ($r = .49$) and those parents favouring a democratic style of parenting displayed fewer autocratic behaviours ($r = -.41$). A weak negative correlation existed between a choice of a democratic parenting style and the overall autocratic behaviour rating. Overall autocratic behaviour ratings had a weak positive correlation ($r = .30$) with the choice of an autocratic parenting style.

Considering the marked differences between the characteristics and behaviours attributed to democratic and autocratic parenting styles, it

Table 3

Correlations Between Parents' Self-Reported Preference for a Particular Parenting Style and Ratings of Parenting Behaviour

(N = 30)

Behaviour Ratings		Parenting Styles Inventory		
		Democratic Parenting Style	Autocratic Parenting Style	Permissive Parenting Style
Behaviour Observation Rating Scale				
Democratic	occurrence	.263	-.166	-.124
	frequency	.146	.110	-.296
	overall	.229	-.205	-.042
Autocratic	occurrence	-.353*	.434**	-.069
	frequency	-.405*	.489**	-.077
	overall	-.259	.258	.019
Permissive	occurrence	0	-.414*	.463**
	frequency	-.159	-.323*	.584**
	overall	.018	-.364*	.385*
Empathic Behaviour Scale		.195	.389*	.206

* significantly different from 0 at $p < .05$.

** significantly different from 0 at $p < .01$.

is not surprising to find significant negative correlations between the choice of a democratic style of parenting and the existence of a general pattern of autocratic behaviour. This correlation may be predicted particularly in a laboratory setting where the parents may be more aware of their behaviour with their child and thus more cognizant of behaving in a fair and democratic manner.

There was a significant correlation ($r = .39$) between the choice of an autocratic style of parenting and the total score on the Empathic Behaviour Scale. A high score on the Empathic Behaviour Scale is indicative of a low level of empathy. It appears that a parent who chooses an autocratic style of parenting does not allow their child self-direction, communicate acceptance to their child or positively involve themselves with their child. This portrayal conforms with the outlined characteristics of an autocratic parenting style given in the literature review.

In terms of permissive behaviour there were significant negative correlations ($r = -.42$, $r = -.32$, $r = -.36$) between the choice of an autocratic parenting style and the occurrence, frequency and overall rating of permissive behaviour. Strong significant correlations were found ($r = .46$, $r = .55$, $r = .38$) between the choice of a permissive style of parenting and the occurrence, frequency and overall ratings of permissive behaviour. Autocratic and permissive styles of parenting differ considerably in their characterization. The findings that parents choosing an autocratic parenting style engage in few permissive behaviours concur with the documentation that the two parenting styles are widely divergent and rarely blend with each other. The choice of a permissive style of parenting seems to be a significant indicator of

permissive parenting behaviour.

From this consideration of zero-order correlations it would appear that there are no strong correlations between a parent's choice of a democratic style of parenting and their actual parenting behaviour. This finding may indicate that (a) parents are not totally committed to the concept of democratic parenting and thus do not behave in a democratic manner, (b) parents prefer the democratic style of parenting but do not know how to apply and integrate the concept in their interactions with their child, (c) the measure of the concept of democratic parenting and the behavioural criteria for democratic parenting may need to be more specific and measurable to ensure that proper identification and representation of democratic behaviour is being made. The relatively low inter-rater reliability for the observation of democratic behaviour would support this suggestion.

The choice of an autocratic parenting style seems to be a better indicator of the occurrence and frequency of autocratic behaviour. The correlation between the choice of an autocratic style of parenting and the total score on the Empathic Behaviour Scale would also indicate that autocratic parents behave as they report they will. An inference could be made that autocratic parents believe more strongly in their approach to parenting and therefore act upon their choice of parenting style. It may also be that the concept of autocratic parenting and autocratic behaviours are more accurately represented and depicted and thus easily identified by parents and observers.

Permissive parenting behaviour is strongly associated with the choice of a permissive style of parenting. The researcher would speculate that the choice of a permissive style of parenting is a "middle-of-

the-road" approach to parenting. It denies the control and authority of autocratic parenting behaviour and shys away from the responsibilities inherent in the democratic style of parenting. Permissive responses and behaviours could be interpreted as the safe alternatives in the choice of and behaviour of parenting. This neutrality may account for the high correlation between choice of permissive parenting and permissive behaviour. Another explanation is that those parents who choose a permissive parenting style feel strongly that it is the most effective way of behaving with their child.

Data for parents who had attended a parenting course and those who had not were considered separately (Table 4). It was thought by the researcher that those parents who had attended a parenting course may be more aware of their behaviour and therefore have a high degree of correlation between self-reports and behaviour than those who had not attended a parenting course. It was also anticipated that those parents who had attended a parenting course would choose the democratic style of parenting more frequently. Both groups of parents scored highly on the choice of democratic parenting ($r = 1$); there was no significant difference in their behaviour. The only significant difference noted in terms of choice of parenting style was in the area of permissiveness. Those parents who had attended a parenting course chose a permissive style of parenting more often than those who had not. This was a modest difference and not statistically significant. Again, there was not a significant difference in the behaviour of the two groups. It would not appear that attendance at a parenting course significantly influences parents' choice of parenting style nor their subsequent behaviour.

Table 4

Comparison of Parents' Self-Reports and Behaviour Ratings on the Basis of Attendance at Parenting Courses

N = 30

Measure		Correlation with Attendance at Parenting Course Yes = 1 No = 2	Means Score Parenting Course	Means Score No Parenting Course	t value
Parent Attitude Research Instrument					
Democratic-Domination		.292	33.1	38.6	.116
Acceptance-Rejection		.020	50.1	50.5	.915
Autonomy-Indulgence		-.369 *	75.7	72.5	.044 *
Parenting Styles Inventory					
Democratic Parenting Style		.0	6.0	6.0	1
Autocratic Parenting Style		-.314 *	1.55	2.66	.091
Permissive Parenting Style		-.351 *	2.44	1.33	.057
Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence		.035	30.1	30.6	.848
Behaviour Observation Rating Scale					
Democratic	Occurrence	-.084	5.83	5.41	.659
	Frequency	-.114	5.11	4.50	.547
	Overall	-.263	3.22	2.66	.159
Autocratic	Occurrence	.292	3.72	4.83	.117
	Frequency	.315 *	3.70	7.0	.096
	Overall	.262	2.94	3.58	.162
Permissive	Occurrence	-.123	1.44	1.08	.518
	Frequency	-.128	1.05	.666	.501
	Overall	-.095	1.77	1.58	.618
Empathic Behaviour Scale		.283	15.6	17.6	.129

* significantly different from 0 at $p < .05$.
** significantly different from 0 at $p < .01$.

Relationship Between Parental Attitudes and Behaviour

The second research question focused on the relationship between parents' self-reported attitudes toward child-rearing and their parenting behaviour. Correlations between parents' self-reported attitudes toward child-rearing, measured by the Parent Attitude Research Instrument, and behaviour ratings are found in Table 5.

Zero-order correlations did not yield any significant correlations between parents' self-reported attitudes and their ratings in any of the categories of the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. There were some weak relationships identified which were not statistically significant. A weak correlation ($r = -29$) existed between the subscale of acceptance-rejection and the occurrence of democratic behaviours. This negative correlation implies that those parents having a high rejection score would display few democratic behaviours. A weak positive correlation ($r = .29$) was found between the subscale acceptance-rejection and the frequency of autocratic behaviours. This finding suggests that those parents having a high rejection score would present more autocratic behaviours. An autocratic behaviour pattern was also negatively correlated ($r = -.28$) with the autonomy score on the subscale autonomy-indulgence. This result indicates that parents who behave in an autocratic manner consider autonomous behaviour in children to be an important component of child-rearing. A weak negative relationship existed ($r = -.28$) between the acceptance-rejection subscale and the frequency of permissive behaviours. Further, a weak positive relationship was found between the autonomy-indulgence subscale and the frequency of permissive behaviours. These results suggest that those parents who behave in a permissive manner reported attitudes which are considered to be accepting and indulgent in

Table 5

Correlations Between Self-Reported Attitudes Toward Child-rearing and Ratings of Parenting Behaviour

(N = 30)

Behaviour Ratings		Parent Attitude Research Instrument		
		Democracy/Domination	Acceptance/Rejection	Autonomy/Indulgence
Behaviour Observation Rating Scale				
Democratic	occurrence	.038	-.284	.084
	frequency	.080	-.104	-.021
	overall	-.031	-.141	.104
Autocratic	occurrence	.033	.171	-.277
	frequency	.253	.288	-.047
	overall	.001	.081	-.044
Permissive	occurrence	-.147	-.104	.068
	frequency	-.053	-.277	.249
	overall	.008	-.090	.086
Empathic Behaviour Scale		.099	.379 *	-.227

* significantly different from 0 at $p < .05$.
** significantly different from 0 at $p < .01$.

terms of child-rearing practices.

From this review of zero-order correlations, no strong associations between parents' self-reported attitudes toward child-rearing and their parenting behaviour were apparent. The weak and statistically insignificant correlations cited suggest that parents who behave in an autocratic manner have attitudes which are more rejecting and less indulgent. Parents behaving permissively have indulgent and accepting attitudes towards child-rearing.

A significant positive correlation ($r = .38$) was found between the acceptance-rejection subscale of the PARI and the Empathic Behaviour Scale. This correlation implies that parents who report a more rejecting attitude exhibit a low level of empathy in their interaction with their child.

Generally, the parent attitudes as measured by the PARI do not seem to be valid predictors of parent behaviour. As with the Parenting Styles Inventory, it would appear that autocratic and permissive characteristics are most often correlated with associated behaviours.

Attendance at a parenting course made a significant difference in only one area of the attitude measure. Parents who had attended a parenting course had more indulgent attitudes than those parents who had not attended a course. On each of the three subscales (acceptance-rejection, democracy-domination, autonomy-indulgence) of the PARI both sets of parents scored in the middle range of the continuum and their scores varied minimally. Due to the restricted range of scores it is difficult to determine the degree of influence which can be attributed to attendance at a parenting course.

Relationship Between Parental Competence and Behaviour

The third research question was directed at the relationship between those behavioural attributes which are specific to parents' self-rated level of personal competence and the parents' behaviour. The scores on the Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence were correlated with the ratings of parent behaviour. These correlations can be found in Table 6.

The only correlations of any significance were found to be with the occurrence and overall ratings of democratic behaviour on the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. Positive correlations ($r = .36$, $r = .24$) existed between the score on the BAPC and democratic behaviour. These correlations suggest that parents who perceive themselves as competent (and have the attributed parental characteristics) exhibit democratic behaviour with their child.

Parents' perceived personal competence as assessed in this study does not appear to be a valid predictor of parent behaviour. Possible explanations for this finding will be discussed in the following section.

There was little difference between parents who had or had not attended a parenting course. Both groups of parents scored in the middle to high range of the continuum. Again, due to the closeness of the scores it was difficult to assess the impact that a parenting course may have had on parents' perceptions and behaviour.

Predictive Validity of Combining Measures of Parental Constructs; Attitudes, Competence and Preferred Parenting Styles

To answer the two secondary questions, correlations between combinations of the measures of the three parental constructs and each of the behavioural ratings were computed and analyzed to determine their pre-

Table 6

Correlations Between Parents' Self-Rated Level of Competence and Ratings of Parenting Behaviour

(N = 30)

Behaviour Ratings		Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence
Behaviour Observation Rating Scale		
Democratic	occurrence	.357 *
	frequency	.295
	overall	.237 *
Autocratic	occurrence	.011
	frequency	-.028
	overall	-.116
Permissive	occurrence	-.179
	frequency	-.147
	overall	-.124
Empathic Behaviour Scale		-.169

* significantly different from 0 at $p < .05$.
** significantly different from 0 at $p < .01$.

dictive validity. A multiple-regression approach was used whereby the relative contribution of adding the second-best predictor to the best predictor is determined. The procedure is meant to follow a step-wise sequence from best to worst predictor, providing information about the amount of variance in the behavioural ratings accounted for at each step. For the step-wise sequence the multiple-regression employed in this study only utilized those individual measures of parental constructs which had already been identified in the zero-order correlations. The correlations of individual measures did not reach the required level of significance ($p < .05$) for consideration in the multiple-regression sequence. The multiple-regression was valid only with those measures of parental constructs which were significant on their own at $p < .05$. In the computation of the multiple regression two measures were noted as valid predictors of parental behaviour. The measures specified were the same as the single measures identified in the zero-order correlations. Those identified were the autocratic and permissive components of the Parenting Styles Inventory. A preferred choice of an autocratic style of parenting was the best predictor of the occurrence, frequency, and overall rating of an autocratic parenting behaviour. The preferred choice of a permissive style of parenting was the best predictor of the occurrence and frequency of permissive parenting behaviour. There was no best single predictor or combination of predictors for democratic parenting behaviour. These findings suggest that no differences existed in the predictive validity of each of the measures of parental attitudes and competence. Consideration of the low values of the correlation coefficients supports the conclusion that the lack of difference can be attributed to the low predictive power of both these measures. These

results conflict with previous reports on the Parent Attitude Research Instrument. Schaefer and Bell (1958) reported findings which would indicate that parents' behaviour can be predicted from scores based on the PARI. The authors of the PARI (Schaefer & Bell, 1958) also state that the combination of PARI with other measures of parental constructs should increase its predictive validity. The results of this study do not support this statement. They do support Becker and Krug's (1965) concern that the PARI has poor predictive validity in regard to the actual behaviour of parents.

The researcher would speculate that the PARI may require updating, in terms of terminology and the ascribement of parental roles, to allow for greater personal identification by the parents. The PARI seems to have high social desirability characteristics which may affect the responses chosen by parents and thus help to minimize the relationship between parents' stated attitudes toward child-rearing and their behaviour with their child.

Use of the Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence in the prediction of parental behaviour has been limited to date. The BAPC may have greater predictive validity if the content was more specific to parents and their sense of competency in their parenting role. The significant correlation between scores on the BAPC and the occurrence and overall rating of democratic parenting behaviour supports Mondell and Tyler's (1981) findings that parents with a high competence score exhibit behaviours which are characteristic of a democratic style of parenting. The findings of this study do not support Mondell and Tyler's (1981) findings that less competent parents display autocratic parenting behaviours.

It would appear that in this study the parents' preferred choice of parenting style as measured by the Parenting Styles Inventory is the most valid predictor of parental behaviour. However, the PSI does not have predictive power in terms of democratic parenting behaviour. Perhaps the behavioural criteria for democratic parenting needs to be more specific and measurable. It seems apparent to the researcher that an assessment of what constitutes democratic parenting dispositions and behaviours is in order.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, parents' preferred choice of parenting style as measured by the Parenting Styles Inventory was the only predictive construct which provided a strong correlation with the behaviour of parents as rated by the Behaviour Observation Rating Scale. The predictive validity of preferred parenting style was limited to the prediction of autocratic and permissive behaviours based on the choices of style parents preferred on the PSI. The choice of parenting style did not correlate significantly with a democratic parenting style and therefore a preferred choice of democratic parenting cannot be considered as a valid predictor of democratic behaviour.

The choice of an autocratic style of parenting correlated with the total score on the Empathic Behaviour Scale. Neither the choice of a democratic style of parenting nor a permissive style of parenting correlated significantly with the ratings on the EBS.

The results of this study indicate that parents' perceived sense of competence cannot be considered a valid predictor of parental behaviour. Scores based on the Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence Scale correlated significantly with the occurrence and overall rating of democratic behaviour. There were no other significant correlations between the Behaviour Observation Scale or the Empathic Behaviour Scale and perceived competence of parents.

None of the subscales measuring parents' attitudes toward child-rearing provided a strong correlation with behaviour ratings on either the BORS or the EBS.

A multiple-regression approach which considered the best combinations of predictors had no significant contribution for predicting the style of parenting behaviour.

A t-test analysis found very few significant differences between those parents who had attended a parenting course and parents who had not attended such courses. Very generally, parents who had attended a parenting course reported more indulgent attitudes regarding child-rearing and behaved in a more permissive and empathic manner with their children. The means scores indicated, however, that both sets of parents had similar scores on all measures and were generally in the middle range of the continuums. The parallelism of the two sets of scores and the restricted range of scores minimizes the significance of any differences and reduces the degree of interpretation one can make regarding the consequences of attending a parenting course.

In general, this study, supported by previous studies, found evidence that parents' self-reported attitudes towards child-rearing are not useful as valid predictors of parental behaviour. Support was also found for considering a parent's perceived sense of competence in predicting the existence of democratic parenting behaviour. Results of this study indicate the parent's preferred choice of parenting style is the best single predictor of autocratic and permissive parenting behaviours. It is the researcher's feeling that more exacting criteria are required for assessing and identifying characteristics of a democratic parenting style before it can be concluded that this style of parenting cannot be predicted from any measure of parent attitude, desired parenting style or parental competence. Cross-validation on data for other parents, together with an increase in sample size are warranted to assess the reliabil-

ity of these results.

Limitations

These conclusions should be considered in light of the following limitations.

The setting in which the study was conducted was not a natural one for the parent or child. Parents may not have behaved the same in a research situation as they may in their home environment. As well, the child's behaviour may have been different from that at home and, therefore, evoked unanticipated responses from the parent. Thus, the unnatural setting may have limited the accuracy of the results obtained in terms of actual behaviour. However, in many situations where the parent-child interaction is of concern, information sought about this interaction is done in an unnatural setting (e.g., hospitals, educational programs, intake interviews for clinics). Therefore, even in a setting which is unfamiliar to parents and their children, it is important to be able to assess if information received from the parent is of value in predicting their behaviour with their child.

A second limitation of this study was the lack of consideration of the characteristics of the child. Of importance in this study was the predictive value of parents' stated beliefs in regard to their behaviour. It would be of value in another study to investigate the impact of the child on the parent and how the child's influence affects the parent's behaviour.

An added consideration is that the children observed may have been nervous and uncertain in a new and strange setting. Anxiety may have exaggerated their dependency on their parents. Again, it is the behaviour of the parents which was of importance and the consistency between a stated and behavioural demonstration of one type of parenting style.

A factor which was not explored in this study was the relationship be-

tween spouses and the influence one may have on another in determining if attitudes, choice of parenting style and perceived competence are predictors of their behaviour. It may be that one parent has attitudes and beliefs which would indicate that they are in favour of a democratic parenting style; however, because of strong beliefs on the part of their spouse they raise their child in an autocratic style. The spousal relationship and the influence it has on parent-child interaction and parenting style is important and a topic which would be worthy of study in and of itself.

The private attitudes revealed under test conditions such as those in this study may never be expressed in the more normal situations of everyday life. A given attitude may not affect behaviour if there are social barriers to the expression of the attitude. A parent may have held the attitude that autocratic parenting is an effective style of dealing with children. However, due to the popularity of the concept of democratic parenting, the parent may have claimed to support a democratic parenting style but interacted in an autocratic manner with his child.

The parent behaviours observed in this study were specific to a play-task situation and cannot be considered representative of all parent behaviours. Conclusions drawn from the results of the study cannot be generalized beyond the scope of a play-task situation involving a parent and child.

Implications

The results from this study have implications for both future research and program planning for all parents.

Future research. Further investigation and development of a measure of parental attitudes toward child-rearing may result in a measure which considers the changing roles of mothers and fathers and the social implications of such changes. There are presently more current attitude measures than

the Parent Attitude Research Instrument. These measures are often developed for specific education programs and measure changes in attitudes over time rather than provide a general baseline assessment of parent attitudes toward child-rearing.

The understanding of the effects of perceived competence on parenting behaviours could be extended by determining more specifically the relationship between a poor sense of personal competence and parenting behaviours. At the present, it appears that a high level of perceived competence is associated with characteristics of a democratic style of parenting. A relationship between a low level of competence and parenting behaviour has not been verified or substantiated by research findings.

Further research in qualifying the traits of and orientation to a democratic parenting style would possibly help to identify democratic behaviours. Clearer criteria for recognizing democratic behaviours may increase the accuracy in determining if there is a relationship between measures of attitude, competence and preferred parenting style concerned with democratic parenting and actual parenting behaviour.

Program planning for parents. It would appear that any persons planning programs involving parents need to place more emphasis on individual parents' responses to day-to-day events and actual observation of parent-child interactions rather than relying solely on written self-reports of parents' beliefs or intentions. It seems reasonable that each parent should be actively involved in exploring their values and the personal significance of their chosen parenting style before any program or intervention is initiated in the hopes of evoking change. This exploration would involve time and energy but would ultimately reduce the possibility of maintaining or changing patterns of parenting which have little personal meaning for the parent.

This study has implications for parents and anyone involved with parents and their children. An understanding of what parental constructs best predict behaviour would enable parents and professionals alike to tap those resources most effective in producing or maintaining behaviour which is of benefit to parents and children in their relationship with each other.

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APPENDIX A

Letter Sent Home to Parents

Dear Parent,

I am a graduate student in the faculty of Education--specifically, the area of Counselling Psychology in Education. I am currently involved in research concerned with parenting styles and parent-child interaction.

During the month of July, 1983 I will be conducting a study focused on parents and their pre-school child. I would like to request your participation in this study. The time commitment would be approximately two hours. Your participation would be strictly voluntary and confidential.

If you have a child between the ages of three and five who does not have a serious disability or medical condition and you are willing to participate in this research study, please contact:

Janice Waddell
Education Department
Psychological Foundations
University of Victoria
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2
phone (between 6 & 8 p.m.): 479-0785

or return this form with your name, name of spouse if living with you, phone number and address to your child's pre-school.

Please contact me if you would like further information before considering your participation. I would appreciate your response prior to June 25, 1983.

Sincerely

Janice Waddell

APPENDIX B

Schaefer and Bell's Parent Attitude Research Inventory

SURVEY OF PARENT ATTITUDES

Instructions

The questionnaire. Indicate your opinion by drawing a circle around the "A" if you strongly agree, around the "a" if you mildly agree, around the "d" if you mildly disagree, and around the "D" if you strongly disagree. If you have any ideas which you feel should be included jot them down at the end. We would appreciate having them. Others who have given us their ideas say that it is best to work rapidly. Give your first reaction. If you read and reread the statements, it tends to be confusing and time consuming.

There are no right or wrong answers, so answer according to your own opinion. It is very important to the study that all questions be answered. Many of the statements will seem alike but all are necessary to show slight differences of opinion.

	Agree		*Disagree*	
1. Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents if they feel their own ideas are better.	A	a	d	D
2. It's best for the child if he never gets started wondering whether his mother's views are right.	A	a	d	D

	Agree		*Disagree*	
3. Parents should adjust to the children some rather than always expecting the children to adjust to the parents.	A	a	d	D
4. Parents must earn the respect of their children by the way they act.	A	a	d	D
5. Children would be happier and better behaved if parents would show an interest in their affairs.	A	a	d	D
6. Some children are just so bad they must be taught to fear adults for their own good.	A	a	d	D
7. Children will get on any woman's nerves if she has to be with them all day.	A	a	d	D
8. One of the worst things about taking care of a home is a woman feels that she can't get out.	A	a	d	D
9. If you let children talk about their troubles they end up complaining even more.	A	a	d	D
10. There is nothing worse for a young mother than being alone while going through her first experience with a baby.	A	a	d	D
11. Most children are toilet trained by 15 months of age.	A	a	d	D
12. The sooner a child learns to walk the better he's trained.	A	a	d	D
13. A child will be grateful later on for strict training.	A	a	d	D
14. A mother should make it her business to know everything her children are thinking.	A	a	d	D
15. A good mother should shelter her child from life's little difficulties.	A	a	d	D
16. There are so many things a child has to learn in life there is no excuse for him sitting around with time on his hands.	A	a	d	D
17. Children should be encouraged to tell their parents about it whenever they feel family rules are unreasonable.	A	a	d	D
18. A parent should never be made to look wrong in a child's eyes.	A	a	d	D
19. Children are too often asked to do all the compromising and adjustment and that is not fair.	A	a	d	D
20. As much as is reasonable, a parent should try to treat a child as an equal.	A	a	d	D
21. Parents who are interested in hearing about their children's parties, dates, and fun help them grow up right.	A	a	d	D
22. It is frequently necessary to drive the mischief out of a child before he will behave.	A	a	d	D

23. Mothers very often feel that they can't stand their children a moment longer.	A	a	d	D
24. Having to be with children all the time gives a woman the feeling her wings have been clipped.	A	a	d	D
25. Parents who start a child talking about his worries don't realize that sometimes it's better to just leave well enough alone.	A	a	d	D
26. It isn't fair that a woman has to bear just about all the burden of raising children by herself.	A	a	d	D
27. The earlier a child is weaned from it's emotional ties to its parents the better it will handle it's own problems.	A	a	d	D
28. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible.	A	a	d	D
29. Most young mothers are bothered more by the feeling of being shut up in the home than by anything else.	A	a	d	D
30. A child should never keep a secret from his parents.	A	a	d	D
31. A child should be protected from jobs which might be too tiring or hard for him.	A	a	d	D
32. Children who don't try hard for success will feel that they have missed out on things later on.	A	a	d	D
33. A child has a right to his own point of view and ought to be allowed to express it.	A	a	d	D
34. Children should never learn things outside the home which make them doubt their parents' ideas.	A	a	d	D
35. There is no reason parents should have their own way all the time, any more than that children should have their own way all the time.	A	a	d	D
36. Children seldom express anything worthwhile; their ideas are usually unimportant.	A	a	d	D
37. If parents would have fun with their children, the children would be more apt to take their advice.	A	a	d	D
38. A wise parent will teach a child early just who is boss.	A	a	d	D
39. It's a rare mother who can be sweet and even tempered with her children all day.				
40. [Omitted.]				
41. Children pester you with all their little upsets if you aren't careful from the first.	A	a	d	D
42. A wise woman will do anything to avoid being by herself before and after a new baby.	A	a	d	D

	Agree		*Disagree*	
43. Children's grades in school are a reflection of the intelligence of their parents.	A	a	d	D
44. It is more effective to punish a child for not doing well than to reward him for succeeding.	A	a	d	D
45. Children who are held to firm rules grow up to be the best adults.	A	a	d	D
46. An alert parent should try to learn all her child's thoughts.	A	a	d	D
47. Children should be kept away from all hard jobs which might be discouraging.	A	a	d	D
48. Parents should teach their children that the way to get ahead is to keep busy and not waste time.	A	a	d	D
49. A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making family decisions.	A	a	d	D
50. The child should not question the thinking of the parents.	A	a	d	D
51. No child should ever set his will against that of his parents.	A	a	d	D
52. Children should fear their parents to some degree.	A	a	d	D
53. When you do things together, children feel close to you and can talk easier.	A	a	d	D
54. Children need some of the natural meanness taken out of them.	A	a	d	D
55. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.	A	a	d	D
56. One of the bad things about raising children is that you aren't free enough of the time to do just as you like.	A	a	d	D
57. The trouble with giving attention to children's problems is they usually just make up a lot of stories to keep you interested.	A	a	d	D
58. Most women need more time than they are given to rest up in the home after going through childbirth.	A	a	d	D
59. A child never sets high enough standards for himself.	A	a	d	D
60. When a child does something well we can start setting his sights higher.	A	a	d	D
61. [Omitted.]				
62. It is a mother's duty to make sure she knows her child's innermost thoughts.	A	a	d	D
63. I liked my child best when I could do everything for him.	A	a	d	D

APPENDIX C

Parenting Styles Inventory

For ease of reading, the pronoun "he" has been used in the following responses. Please consider "the child" your own son/daughter when responding to the situations given.

Parent No. _____

PARENTING STYLES INVENTORY

Situation 1: Your family is trying to decide on how to spend vacation time. There seems to be several choices of similar cost and feasibility. In this situation you would:

1. Discuss the alternatives with your spouse and tell the children about your decision.
2. Decide to go where the children wanted because vacation time is special for kids.
3. Discuss alternatives with all family members until an agreeable choice has been made.

Situation 2: The neighbours have complained that your child is riding his bike across their lawn. In talking to your child you would:

4. Tell the child that the neighbour is concerned that the lawn is getting ruined.
5. Tell the child that if he wishes to continue riding his bike he needs to find a way of keeping off the neighbour's lawn.
6. Tell the child that if you catch him once more riding on the lawn the bike will be taken away.

Situation 3: Your child is watching a television show which you feel is inappropriate. You would:

7. Tell the child to change the channel.
8. Tell the child you do not like the program.
9. Tell the child that if he wants to continue watching TV to find something more appropriate.

Situation 4: There's a special event that runs beyond your child's normal bedtime. Your child would like to stay up for the event. You would respond by:

10. Assisting the child to decide about staying up after you have talked about the consequences.
11. Deciding that this is a special occasion and you will let the child stay up.
12. Avoiding upset to the child by allowing him to stay up.

Situation 5: Toys and clothes are left all over your child's room. In this situation you would:

13. Clean up the child's room.
14. Send the child to his room to clean it up.
15. Ask the child what he can do to straighten up the room.

Situation 6: Your son's room has been left messy for the past week. You would like it to be kept tidy. In this situation you would:

16. Help the child to clean the room and ask him to try and keep it clean in the future.
17. Help the child to decide an appropriate time and way of keeping his room clean.
18. Tell the child that he is not allowed to play outdoors for a week unless he cleans his room immediately.

Situation 7: You are almost ready to leave the house and your preschooler is still dawdling over getting dressed. Your child has had his clothes for a half an hour and knows that you are in a hurry to leave. What would you do?

19. Dress the child without further discussion.
20. Help the child by making a game or race out of getting dressed.
21. Tell the child that he either gets dressed right away or goes to school in the clothes he is in.

Situation 8: An hour before supper your child approaches you, complaining of hunger. You are concerned that if your child eats now he will not eat dinner. In response to your child you would:

22. Offer the child a small snack with the understanding that dinner must be eaten in order to have desert.
23. Tell the child you would rather he didn't have a snack but allow him to have one if he persists in asking.
24. Tell him that he can't have a snack so close to dinner.

Situation 9: Your child and a playmate have had a disagreement. Your child runs to you upset because the playmate has taken his toy. You would handle this situation by:

25. Offering the child another toy to replace the one taken by his playmate.
26. Taking the toy away from both children.
27. Talking to the child about how he might resolve the conflict and leave him to do so.

Situation 10: You would like your preschooler to take part in setting the table for your evening meal. You feel this would be a good learning experience for him. In talking to your child about this new activity you would:

28. Tell the child that from now on he will be responsible for setting the table.
29. Tell the child that you would like him to help set the table and ask him what kinds of things he could do to help.
30. Tell the child that you would like him to help set the table and see what his reaction is.

APPENDIX D

Tyler's Behavioural Attributes of Psychosocial Competence Scale

PSYCHOSOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES SCALE

This is a questionnaire about some of the ways people handle their lives. Read each question. Then choose which alternative, a or b, is more characteristic of you, and answer accordingly. The task is to choose which of the two alternatives is more characteristic of you; i.e., which more closely describes how you act and feel. You may feel that neither alternative describes exactly how you feel and act; even so, choose the one of the two which you think is closer to what you are like.

For example:

1. a. When I am happy, I let everyone know.

   b. When I am happy, I keep it to myself.

Choose (a) if that more closely describes what you do when you are happy.

Choose (b) if that more closely describes what you do when you are happy.

Indicate your choice by marking the appropriate alternative (a) or (b) on the accompanying answer sheet.

Do not mark on this form. Mark only on the answer sheet.

1. a. I am very involved in trying to answer questions about who I am or want to be.

   b. I am interested in questions about who I am or want to be, but I don't consciously think about them often.

2. a. Managing to obtain my goals in life without getting upset is important but I don't focus on it a great deal.

   b. Managing to obtain my goals in life without getting upset is something to which I give considerable attention.

3. a. When I have to part with friends because I am going to move or make a change in my life, I hate to leave my old friends but can usually enjoy finding new friends.

   b. When I have to part with friends because I am going to move or make a change in my life, I usually get very upset over leaving my old friends and nervous when I think of making new friends.

4. a. I usually make a real effort to keep up close friendships.

   b. I like close friendships but I usually don't put a great deal of effort into making them work.

5. a. I master new tasks when they happen to come my way, but I don't usually enjoy it all that much.

   b. I tend to look for new tasks, and enjoy the challenge of mastering them.

6. a. I look for possibilities that will help me improve my career goals.

   b. I put forth some efforts to improve my career goals if I can, but I don't go much out of my way to look for anything special.

7. a. Pressure situations in my work sometimes make me upset.

   b. When I meet pressure situations in my work, I hang loose.

8. a. I don't give much conscious thought to planning my life in terms of what I can handle.

   b. I generally organize my life in terms of what I think I can handle.

9. a. I systematically follow a schedule of self-improvement.

   b. I find self-improvement is difficult to work at regularly.

10. a. Trying to make sense out of life generally makes me upset.

    b. Trying to make sense out of life doesn't particularly upset me.

11. a. I try to maintain a clear picture of my inner and outer strengths and limitations as a person; I figure I need to.

    b. I seldom review my inner and outer strengths and limitations as a person; it doesn't seem necessary.

12. a. I frequently rely on events and other people to direct my course.

    b. I generally follow my own course as a person.

13. a. I expect difficulties to pop up as I carry through on a job or assignment, so I go ahead without being particularly bothered.

    b. I expect difficulties to pop up as I carry through on a job or assignment, so I go ahead but it still bothers me quite a bit when they do.

14. a. I choose friendships that will not tie me down too much, and not get me all "tied up" inside.

    b. I tend to let friendships happen and don't concern myself much with them getting me tied down or "uptight."

15. a. I plan to seek out new friendships and to develop my capabilities for being a good friend.

    b. I hope to have new friendships and to develop my capabilities for being a good friend, but I probably won't work regularly at it.

16. a. If I can't seem to get along with people, I don't see any need to worry about it.

    b. If I can't seem to get along with people, I try to find out why, so I can do better in the future.

17. a. When something I do for fun works out okay, I sometimes can't enjoy it as much as I'd like to because I get too excited.

    b. When something I do for fun works out okay, I am able to relax and make the most of it.

18. a. In new situations, I look for the kinds of personal relationships that I want.

    b. In new situations, I usually let other people indicate what friendship possibilities they would like with me.

19. a. I value my independence; however, I often prefer to go along with others.

    b. I try to keep my independence as much as possible, even when I'm with other people.

20. a. As each new experience or phase of my life ends, I tend to move on to the next without looking back or much thought for the future.

    b. As each new experience or phase of my life ends, I try to reassess where I am and what I want out of life.

21. a. When I'm involved in something and begin to have setbacks, I may drop it unless it really matters to me to finish it.

    b. When I take on something I stick with it until it's finished.

22. a. When I do something really difficult, I generally don't feel it's worth all the effort and don't get much satisfaction out of it.

    b. I think it's fun to do really difficult things, even though I don't always get as much satisfaction out of it.

23. a. I follow my own course and ideas about love.

    b. Following my own course and ideas about love doesn't seem particularly important.

24. a. When I have a personal problem, I sometimes get upset before I reach a decision.

    b. When I have a personal problem, I usually work it out without getting very upset.

25. a. Life's victories and defeats offer me a time to re-evaluate myself, but sometimes, I still worry about the success of my future efforts.

    b. Life's victories and defeats offer me a time to re-evaluate myself, and I tend to take a look at myself fairly calmly.

26. a. I like being alive and I'm involved in living life to the fullest by putting something into it.

    b. Being alive is nice, but I'll probably get more out of life by taking it as it comes.

27. a. I often tell friends I'll do something, but then get worried that I won't carry through on it as well as I should.

    b. I often tell friends I'll do something, and I usually carry through on it without worrying about it.

28. a. Thinking about the work I have to do helps me to get it done without getting upset.

    b. I have to be careful not to think about all the work I have to do or I'll get worried and not get as much done.

29. a. I figure my life will be what I make of it, but even so I generally prefer to let things come to me first.

    b. I figure my life will be what I make of it, so I generally go out to meet life and make the most of it.

30. a. Although I like to meet new people, when I plan activities, I don't usually think about whether these activities will give me chances to meet new and different people.

    b. I often plan my activities so that there is a good chance of meeting new and different people.

31. a. When I've had a personal problem, I find that pulling it together, and putting it behind me is fairly easy.

    b. When I've had a personal problem, I find pulling it together and putting it behind me is fairly difficult.

32. a. I take it on myself to look around and search for the possibilities I can follow.

    b. I tend to let the world's possibilities come to me.

33. a. When I set out to accomplish a task and don't make it, I take time out to re-evaluate my strengths and limitations and adjust my goals accordingly.

    b. When I set out to accomplish a task, and don't make it, I take time out to re-evaluate my strengths and limitations and adjust my goals accordingly.

34. a. I usually arrange to set personal goals in my own way.

    b. Other people can generally help me when I think about personal goals so I usually seek their help.

35. a. When a friendship ends, I tend to look to other people to tell me what happened and whether I need to change.

    b. When a friendship ends, I usually look at it to see what happened and whether I need to change.

36. a. When I plan something for myself and carry through on it I feel good about myself and I try to express this good feeling in some way.

    b. When I plan something for myself and carry through on it, I feel sort of good about myself, but expressing the feeling isn't so important.

37. a. I tend to anticipate difficulties and problems in job situations so I can try to keep things moving smoothly.

    b. I try to see job situations through and keep things moving but I don't usually go out of my way to look for problems.

38. a. When I have had a blow up with someone close to me, I feel it's both people's fault so I don't see much use in putting myself through the wringer.

    b. When I have had a blow up with someone close to me, I figure it's up to me to take a close look at myself and how I relate to people.

39. a. To me the important part of any job or task is handling it my own way, as long as it is done correctly.

    b. To me most jobs and tasks are just work and it doesn't matter much whether I do it my way or someone else's.

40. a. I generally approach work and other tasks so that I can get them done without becoming worried or getting upset in the process.

    b. In my work and other tasks I get them done but in the process I tend to get involved to the extent that I am worried or upset.

41. a. In looking for work possibilities, it's important to me to find something in which I can be as independent as possible.

    b. In looking for work possibilities I don't particularly feel that I have to work independently.

42. a. I usually plan social activities easily and without getting upset.

    b. While planning for social activities, I tend to worry that things won't go "just right."

43. a. Once I take on a job or assignment, it doesn't really matter a great deal whether I carry through with it in my way.

    b. When I take on a job or assignment, it's important to me to carry through on it in my way.

44. a. I try to get things to come out, but I'm not always very creative about it.

    b. I tend to be somewhat creative about getting things to come out okay.

45. a. Carrying through on commitments--to myself, other people and on tasks--is part of life and I generally do it without worrying about it.

    b. Carrying through on commitments--to myself, other people, and on tasks--is part of life but I tend to get up-tight about seeing them through.

46. a. I plan to make the most of my life so I have thought out rather carefully what I want and I plan my life and carry out my plans as I go along.

    b. I hope to make the most of my life but I usually don't go out of my way to make plans or follow them closely.

47. a. When I have displeased others or myself, I figure it's up to me to put things back together.

    b. When I have displeased others or myself, I don't think it matters who puts things back together just so it gets done.

48. a. Many situations may yield new possibilities for personal growth, but I usually settle for what comes my way.

    b. In most situations I usually seek out people to get information that will help me in my development as a person.

49. a. When everything is going great, I enjoy it but I don't usually go out of my way to make a big deal of it.

    b. When everything is going great, I do all I can to make the most of the occasion and really enjoy it.

50. a. I generally think it's my responsibility to look for what I want in life.

    b. I want a good life for myself, but I think other people also have some responsibility for that.

51. a. I generally prefer to live my life as I go.

    b. I usually think ahead and organize my thoughts or ideas about future situations.

52. a. When I don't do as well as I expect at something, I pick out some other job without coming apart inside very badly.

    b. When I don't do as well as I expect at something, my disappointment sometimes makes it more difficult to figure out what else to do.

53. a. People usually make me nervous.

    b. I feel completely comfortable around people.

54. a. I'm not much for planning but I do like new tasks, new people, and new experiences when I encounter them.

    b. I enjoy new tasks, new people, and new experiences, so I'm planning my life to give me those things.

55. a. I generally don't get a real sense of satisfaction from doing a project unless I put some of my ideas into it.

    b. I generally feel good when I finish a project even if I have not put any of my ideas into it.

56. a. I look forward to opportunities to think about "who I am" or "who I want to be."

    b. When I think about "who I am" or "who I want to be," I get mixed up inside.

57. a. As long as my life is going along all right it doesn't really matter much whether I'm making all of the decisions.

    b. I get a real sense of satisfaction when I make my own decisions about my own life.

58. a. I look forward to the challenges of work, keep on top of it without getting upset, and enjoy mastering it. I fully expect to be busy most of my life and to enjoy it.

    b. My work has not done much for me but make me worry and doubt my capabilities; I expect to work most of my life but I don't particularly look forward to it.

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APPENDIX E

Behaviour Observation Rating Scale

BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION RATING SCALE

In the two observed five-minute time samples, please check the occurrence and frequency of each of the following behaviours.

BEHAVIOUR	OCCURRENCE	FREQUENCY
Parent used a sharp voice with child.		
Parent used a warm, friendly voice with child.		
Parent allowed the child to perform the task independently after giving a suggestion which had been discussed with child--may use teaching strategies.		
Parent gave a specific command to the child in relation to the task.		
Child involved in the task--parent intruded on task without apparent need.		
Parent made a suggestion to the child--child ignored or argued with parent--parent did not discuss suggestion further or react to child's lack of response.		
Child ignored a suggestion given by the parent and parent admonished the child for not accepting the suggestion.		
Parent made a request/suggestion to the child and praised the child for being a "good" boy or girl before the child had followed through on the request or suggestion.		
Parent encouraged child by praising him for an action completed.		
Parent acknowledged a successful act when the child is in the process of completing the task (e.g., hug, pat on back, hmmm).		
Parent verbally criticized the child in relation to task performance.		

continued.....

BEHAVIOUR	OCCURRENCE	FREQUENCY
Parent shook head negatively or affirmatively while child was performing the task--parent did not follow through with any explanation or discussion.		
Parent shok head negatively or affirmatively while child was performing the task--parent discussed or explained action and collaborated with child.		
Parent gave child specific verbal encouragement for particular efforts made in relation to the task.		
Parent engaged in completing the task for the child when the child became frustrated or stated that he did not want to finish the task.		
Child left the task--parent requested that the child return to the task but did not follow through on request when child ignored same.		
Child was distracted from the task--parent observed distractiveness but made no effort to redirect child to task.		
Child made demands on parent--parent complied with demands without comment on the nature of the demand (e.g., child does not ask for assistance but demands that parent do as he wishes and parent complies).		
Child asks for direction or appears uncertain. Parent collaborates with child in decision-making re further steps in task completion.		
Child asks for direction or appears uncertain. Parent advises child as to further steps to take in task completion.		
Child asks for direction or appears uncertain. Parent remains uninvolved and child continues in a random approach in problem-solving.		

GLOBAL RATING SCALE

After viewing approximately ten minutes of the videotapes please rate, in overall terms, the degree of each parenting style observed.

AUTOCRATIC

Not at all		Somewhat		Markedly
1	2	3	4	5

What specific behaviours not noted on the behavioural checklist led you to this observation?

DEMOCRATIC

Not at all		Somewhat		Markedly
1	2	3	4	5

What specific behaviours not noted on the behavioural checklist led you to this observation?

PERMISSIVE

Not at all		Somewhat		Markedly
1	2	3	4	5

What specific behaviours not noted on the behavioural checklist led you to this observation?

APPENDIX F

Empathic Behaviour Scale

EMPATHIC BEHAVIOUR SCALE

1. *Communication of Acceptance*

The first dimension, the verbal expression of acceptance-rejection of the child by the adult, is the major element in the communication of empathic feeling. This dimension is one considered by Rogers (13) to be one of the necessary conditions for therapeutic personality change. It does not usually occur in a large degree in general, spontaneous interaction between parent and child, but has been regarded as a measure of success in learning a therapeutic role (14, 15). Also, verbal acceptance of a child's feeling may be an important variable in explaining exceptionally positive or healthy adult-child relationships.

The scale ranges, as does each measure, from a high rating of one to a low rating of five. Each point on the scale is followed by typical responses obtained from codings of the direct observations of parent and child.

1. *Verbal Recognition and Acceptance of Feelings:* Examples: You're proud of how you fixed that; That makes you feel good; That made you angry; You feel better already; You're enjoying that; You really like smashing that.

2. *Verbal Recognition and Acceptance of Behavior Only:* Examples: You got it that time; You really stabbed him; You're getting a workout; Bam, Bop, etc.; You're hitting the mother doll.

3. *Social Conversation or No Conversation:* Examples: I'm not so good at building toys; Mary's been away most of the summer; Mothers aren't very good at that; These are nice toys.

4. *Slight or Moderate Verbal Criticism Stated or Strongly Implied:* Examples: That's cheating; The head you made is too big; You'll ruin the floor; That's not fair; You'll have to be more careful; Watch what you're doing; No, not that way.

5. *Verbal Criticism: Argumentative, "Preaching," Openly Rejecting Feelings or Behavior, Abusive Language:* Examples: It's not nice to feel that way; You're nasty; I'm talking to a dope; You're not so hot yourself; You're a fresh kid; You see, I told you to do it the other way.

2. *Allowing the Child Self-Direction*

Paralleling the specific verbal expression of acceptance is the behavioral willingness on the part of the adult to follow the child's lead—to allow the child self-direction in behavior rather than attempt to control his behavior. This subscale ranges very widely in the spontaneous interaction between parent and child (14) and thus would seem to have greater utility as a separate scale for developmental studies and for more commonly observed natural adult-child communication.

1. *Shows Willingness to Follow Child's Lead* (No indication to the contrary: i.e., there need be no verbal comment; *behavior* compliant with the child's directions or lead is sufficient.) Examples: You want me to do it for you; I'm supposed to pick them up (or simply moving to do so); You'd like me to play catch with you (or simply doing so at the child's request).

2. *Child Has Option for Lead-Taking.* (Choice genuinely left to the child but mitigated by direct or indirect suggestions; gives unsolicited praise; volunteers information; asks for information.) Examples: What shall we do?; What would you like me to make?; You did that right; Shall we pretend it (the phone) rings?; It's under the table; You can shoot this if you want; Good ("Good" reinforces a certain type of activity and therefore represents a degree of parental control).

3. *Takes Lead Without Giving Child an Option.* Unsolicited instruction on how to do or accomplish something; "teaching," praise accompanying a suggestion; questions with intent to guide the child. Examples: Play with what you have; You have to keep practicing; Maybe the best way is to take the crayons out of the box; Take your time and aim it; See if you can do it again just like that; Are you sure that's the way it goes?

4. *Directs or Instructs Child to do Something.* Initiating new activity when there has been no previous sign of inertia and/or resistance shown by the child. Examples: put the tinker toy away first; Why don't you paint something; Let's play with clay; You'd better put him back together; Don't squeeze water in there.

5. *Persuades, Cajoles, Demands, Pushes, Interrupts, Interferes in Child's Activity, Insists on New Activity.* Resistance by the child is implicit, or there is other involvement, or inertia, on the part of the child which the parent is seeking to overcome. Examples: You've got to play with something else now; You'd better give me one; You can't do that anymore; I told you not to turn out the lights; That's enough of that; No, take this one.

3. *Involvement*

This dimension of parental behavior may or may not contribute in a positive way. That is, involvement may be sympathetic or nonsympathetic, highly directive or appropriately supportive. It is a measure of the adult's attention to and participation in the child's activities.

1. *Fully Observant of Child's Behavior, Adult gives no indication of being unaware of the child's behavior;* More attention is given to the child than to other stimuli, such as the objects the child is using. (Such attention is not necessarily sympathetic or constructive.) The parent may be involved in a joint activity: e.g., role playing, games. He participates in an active way physically as well as verbally where it is appropriate.

2. *High Level of Attention.* Although not involved in anything other than that which also involves the child, the adult's concentration here is almost exclusively on activities *per se* rather than child's behavior. Joint activities, such as card playing and dart shooting, lend themselves to "2" scores when the parent is keenly interested in the game itself (e.g., the cards that turn up), without paying attention to the child's reactions and behaviors.

3. *Marginal Attention: The adult is involved in his own independent activity to a degree that interferes somewhat with attention to child.* No joint activity. Adult is preoccupied with own activities to the extent that he is not always providing company: e.g., briefly primping in a mirror, briefly attending to own attire, inspecting nails. The adult may occasionally remark spontaneously on the child's activity.

4. *Partially Withdrawn, or Preoccupied.* Adult may infrequently observe child's activity, but doesn't comment spontaneously. Adult may be so involved in his own role (e.g., in independent play) that he fails to attend to the child's apparent needs. He responds promptly, however, when alerted by the child.

5. *Completely Preoccupied, or Self-Involved, or Shut-Off.* Here the child is ignored and must repeat or prompt to get a response from the adult. The adult is completely absorbed with an independent activity or with his own thoughts for long periods, or engaged in prolonged self-grooming; seemingly unaware and uninterested in child's behavior.

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Title of Thesis/Dissertation

PARENTS' ATTITUDES, PREFERRED CHOICE OF PARENTING STYLE AND PERCEIVED COMPETENCE AS PREDICTORS OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR WITH THEIR CHILD

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JANICE WADDELL
Name (in block letters)

March 23, 1984
(Date)