

COLLEGE STUDENTS' VALUES IN CHILD REARING AS RELATED  
TO THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR MOTHERS' CONTROL

by

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B. S., University of Utah, 1951

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A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

Although it is commonly accepted that an individual's early experiences within his family are of uppermost importance in the development of his personality, almost no systematic methods are available with which to measure the specific direction or extent of this influence. It is becoming increasingly clear that studying a growing individual's behavior from the standpoint of an outside observer is not enough. One needs to find ways of measuring and understanding the person's own inner view--to see things through his eyes. What each individual sees, feels, hears, and reacts to is the world or the environment which is real for that individual.

A theoretical frame of reference appropriate to this purpose is that of "personal" psychology summarized in Snygg and Combs (1949).

We need to observe behavior not from an outsider's point of view but from the point of view of the behavior himself.

One may theorize with Bronfenbrenner (1951) that each person's perception of interpersonal relations is perhaps the vehicle for the process of development of his personality, and also that perception, broadly defined, is the way in which the person structures the world and himself.

To study an individual's perceptions of interpersonal relationships within the family, a new type of somewhat non-directive semi-structured interviews seem to produce the kind of

data needed. Cannell and Kahn (Festinger and Katz, 1953) stress that, to an increasing degree, social science is demanding data which must be reported by individuals out of their own experience.

They state:

If the focal data for a research project are the attitudes and perceptions of individuals, the most direct and often the most fruitful approach is to ask the individuals themselves...The interview is especially adapted to the collection of data about attitudes and perceptions, beliefs, feelings, past experiences and future intentions ... An individual's past experiences and future behavior are virtually unobtainable by any other means.

According to the same authors the interviewer's technique is crucial. Rogers' (1949) view is that if the interviewer possesses (1) warmth and responsiveness, (2) a genuine interest in the respondent and acceptance of him as a person, (3) permissiveness in regard to expression of feeling and (4) freedom from any type of pressure or coercion, the respondent will feel free to express even those views which might be socially disapproved. Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) feel the interviewer must tread a fine line with respect to his responsiveness-- it is a cardinal principle of interviewing that the interviewer must attempt not to reveal his own attitude.

Another highly important factor is the design of the interview schedule. Merton (1956) described new methods of using and analyzing the semi-standardized interview. Questions are somewhat but not rigidly controlled as to wording and form. This method tends to encourage a free flow of expression. Merton also concludes that partially structured questions, followed if necessary by probing questions, are preferable to completely

structured questions in getting the desired free responses. A well-designed schedule should lead the respondent from item to item in a process that seems logical to him.

Accuracy of recording is imperative for correct analysis of data. Interviews have been recorded by such methods as memory write-ups, field ratings, verbatim note-taking and mechanical recordings. The latter has been found to be far superior. Payne (1949) reports:

In a comparison of mechanically recorded interviews with the interviewer reports written from memory immediately after the interview, 25% of the statements attributed by the interviewer to the respondent are clearly wrong.

It is desirable to obtain perceptions of individuals at different age levels. A few studies have attempted to deal with the attitudes of college age students toward their families, or toward family life. Ingersoll (1948) analyzed autobiographies written by college seniors to study the transmission of authority patterns from one generation to the next. Underwood (1949) interviewed college student fathers who were war veterans. She found that they expressed the newer ideas in child rearing but that their stated practices were traditional. McCord (1951) found college freshmen definitely lacking in their knowledge of concepts of family living taken from recent textbooks. Boys were especially lacking in an understanding of the emotional significance of child care. Carter (1954) studying a group of junior high school students discussed the influence of family on personality. His findings were that students who regarded themselves favorably were those who appeared to enjoy a positive

relationship with their parents. Itkin (1955) using Likert-type attitude scales tested junior college students and their parents to find the relationship between their attitudes in regard to one another. He found that those students who had a favorable attitude toward their parents tended to approve of the supervision regardless of dominant or submissive attitudes toward the child. The student having negative attitudes toward his parents regarded them as dominant regardless of the parents' attitudes.

An exploratory study was conducted by Aldous and Kell (1956) concerning child rearing values of mothers in relation to their children's perceptions of their mothers' control. The method employed was that of the semi-standardized interview. The interviews were tape recorded and typed protocols were made. These investigators hypothesized that mothers who held traditional middle class values would be seen by the students as having overly circumscribed their freedom. Mothers were considered to hold traditional values if 75 per cent or more of their values fell in that category. Findings supported the hypothesis.

Because of the findings of the Aldous and Kell study it was thought worthwhile to use a larger number of families in exploring differences between students who perceived their mothers as controllers and those who did not. For the purposes of the present study it was hypothesized that students will express child rearing values similar to those they perceive their mothers as possessing unless they perceive their mother's role as



that of a controller.<sup>1</sup> The objectives of the study were therefore to find: (1) values in child rearing expressed by a homogeneous group of college students, (2) these students' perceptions of their mother's role as a controller, (3) the relations of such perceptions to the similarity existing between their own values and those of their mothers.

#### PROCEDURE

The subjects of this investigation were students enrolled at Kansas State College as juniors in the academic year 1955-56. Names were obtained from the IBM registration cards in the office of the Registrar. Certain limitations on subjects were set up to make the group as homogeneous as possible. The limitations were that the students must (1) be living in the following counties in Kansas: Riley, Clay, Geary, Pottawatomie, Morris, Shawnee, Dickinson, Wabaunsee, Sedgwick, (2) be 21 or under, (3) have at least one other sibling in the family, (4) have lived away from home at least two years, (5) belong to the white race, (6) be single, and (7) have both parents living at home.

Explanatory letters (Appendix) were sent to all prospective subjects. The interviewer then made appointments by telephone.

Contacts were made with 47 students, 31 of whom were interviewed. Sixteen of the 47 were not interviewed because of the

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<sup>1</sup>Control...means any attempt to change the child's behavior to conform to the parents' values whether or not the child accepts those values.

reasons: (1) ten had no siblings,<sup>1</sup> (2) one married female student had not recorded her marital status on her IBM card, (3) one male student missed his scheduled appointment, and (4) four male students refused to be interviewed.

Interviews were conducted in a research office in a quiet building. The interviewer and interviewee, facing one another, sat by a desk in chairs spaced three to four feet apart. The interviews were mechanically recorded by means of a tape recorder placed on the desk within full view of the respondent. The microphone was on the desk within full view of the respondent directly between the two persons.

As each student left the room the investigator recorded impressions and statements made after the tape recording. In regard to ease of interviewing, the investigator was strongly impressed by the spontaneity of those students who said they were always able to talk everything over with their mothers. Only four students seemed tense and somewhat nervous. One boy seemed so at the beginning of the interview but relaxed as it proceeded. Over half of the students stayed and talked about themselves to the investigator following the interview. Five students left hurriedly, three of whom were on their way to class. Only one student noticeably talked more freely after the recorder was turned off. It was felt that he was possibly hesitant because of the tape recorder. One student's recording

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<sup>1</sup>No college records were available as to the number of siblings in each family.



was excluded from the study. It was felt she withheld information throughout the interview.

Family backgrounds were obtained from face sheets (Appendix) which the students filled out upon completion of the interview.

A semi-standard interview (Appendix) was used. The interview schedule contained both unstructured and semi-structured questions, similar to Merton's (1956) focused interview. Every effort was made to obtain free expression of feelings and values. The schedule was adapted from the student interview schedule used in the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station Project 341, which was completed 1954. The adapted interview schedule was pre-tested. Some questions needed clarification so a few minor changes were incorporated. Interviews were tape-recorded and typed protocols were made.

In order to correct possible typing errors, the investigator read transcripts while listening to the tapes. After eight transcripts were read this procedure was found to be unnecessary and was discontinued.

In regard to the validity of the interviews, at least partial validity was shown by the fact that most of the students did express their feelings rather freely. They were willing to express negative and somewhat anti-social attitudes.

The length of the interviews varied, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 50 minutes. The length of the typed protocols of the interviews ranged from 15 to 30 pages, the average being 23..

Child rearing values were defined as follows: Statements made by the students concerning desired behavior in children were considered to be these students' child rearing values. Statements referring to children's behavior desired by the mothers as perceived by the students, were considered to be the mothers' child rearing values.

The analysis of data was made by the interviewer and one other judge. Words, statements or phrases which referred to behavior desired by the student in his future children were underlined and considered his child rearing values. Students' child rearing values were determined independently by the interviewer and the judge, then jointly compared to find amount of agreement, which was 95.7 per cent.

The interviewer then underlined all words, phrases or statements which referred to child behavior desired by the mothers as perceived by the students and assumed these underlined words, phrases or statements to be the mothers' child rearing values.

In order to test the hypothesis, it was necessary to classify the students into two categories, those who perceived their mother's role as that of a non-controller and those who perceived her as a controller. The investigator read each transcript and collected statements indicative of the student's overall perception of his mother's role. The judge then reviewed the statements and agreed with the interviewer on 28 of the 30 role classifications. It was felt by both persons that several of the classifications were "borderline", that is, they fell near

the center of a continuum from the perception as controller to perception as non-controller. Later statistical analysis confirmed this viewpoint.

The investigator then compared each student's values with those of his mother as perceived by him to determine how many of his values were like those of his mother and how many were unlike or different.

Chi-square analyses were made to test the adequacy of the classification into the two groups, "controllers" and "non-controllers", and also the heterogeneity of each of the two groups. According to the null hypothesis, no difference would be found between the two groups as to the numbers of like and unlike values held by each group.

#### DATA AND DISCUSSION

Family backgrounds of the students were of interest.

Table 1. Number of children in families of respondents.

No. of families	:	Total no. of children
10		2
14		3-4
4		5-6
1		7-8

Table 2 shows: (1) that seven fathers and three mothers completed five to eight years of elementary school, (2) one to four years of college were completed by twelve mothers and only

nine fathers, and (3) three fathers and one mother completed one to four years of post graduate school.

Table 2. Education of the mothers and fathers.

Education	:	From 29	:	From 28
	:	replies	:	replies
	:	Fathers	:	Mothers
Elementary				
0-4 years				
5-8 "		7		3
High School				
1-4 years		7		7
Vocational				
1-2 years		2		4
College				
1-4 years		9		12
Post Graduate				
1-4 years		3		1

The occupations of the fathers ranged from business owner to manual laborer. Seven were professional or business owners, nine were farmers, ten were white collar workers, and four were manual or skilled laborers.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, this group of students came from a wide variety of family backgrounds, their parents' educations varying from the fifth grade to four years of post graduate study, and the number of children in the family varying from two to eight. Their fathers' occupations ranged from manual labor to the professions.

As previously stated the population was divided into two groups, those who saw their mothers as controllers and those who did not. A negative attitude accompanied the latter group

of students when they expressed ideas concerning their mothers' control.

When feelings such as resentment, rebellion, antagonism and hostility were expressed by the student toward his mother it was assumed that he perceived her role as that of a controller. Included in this group were those students who saw their mothers as repressing their desires, misunderstanding their wishes or allowing them very few opinions.

The following remarks were made by students who saw their mothers as controllers: "But, towards Mother, I just resented anything she told me to do or not to do always." Resentment was very prevalent among this group. Rebellious attitudes were definitely expressed. "...when Mother would get through with me I'd feel like telling her I hated her and leaving for good." Repression was expressed in various ways. "I always felt like we had a steel clip on..." "I felt at times like I'd like to talk back...but it wouldn't have helped...."

Table 3 has charted the non-control and control groups according to values like and unlike their mothers .

Typical of students who saw their mothers as non-controllers were remarks stating that their parents talked things over with the students, trusted, explained, and seemed to understand them. Following are statements made by students. "Mother didn't make me have to do it, you know. She probably did it in a way that I enjoyed doing it." "She never did watch me closely, she trusted me." Trust seemed to be very typical of this group.

Table 3. Students who perceived their mothers as non-controllers and controllers.

: Values like mother's : Values unlike mother's		
<u>Non-controllers</u>		
038	32	0
048	17	0
006	28	1
036	20	1
047	16	1
043	14	1
004	26	2
039	12	1
031	21	2
035	19	2
032	17	2
040	16	2
033	13	2
053	14	2
046	13	3
034	11	3
<u>Deviates</u>		
005	15	4
042	17	6
044	14	5
007	16	8
<u>Controllers</u>		
049	15	4
054	13	4
052	21	13
050	10	7
014	16	11
<u>Deviates</u>		
010	17	21
051	10	14
041	7	10
002	6	19
054	0	31



"Understanding in everything and if anything goes wrong she's always there to help straighten it out." "We were always given our decisions to make, which helps a lot, when you're growing up." "(They) tried to explain why and showed us their point of view, and just hoped that we did it." "We'd all talk it over and then we'd all decide what was best." "I wouldn't want to force anything on 'em because my folks never did." When the mother was understanding with the student all statements made by him definitely lacked feelings of hostility, resentment and rebellion.

#### DIVISION OF GROUPS

Establishment of control and non-control groupings found 20 students in the latter, 10 in the former. (Table 3) Students who saw their mothers as controllers varied considerably in the number of like and unlike values. Homogeneity chi-square of this group was far larger than chi-square at 0.1 per cent level of significance. Therefore, heterogeneity was prevalent in this group and erratic judgments were not uncommon. Heterogeneity was somewhat prevalent in the non-control group too, but according to the statistical analysis "not as radically so." The students within the "controller" and "non-controller" groups, respectively, were themselves quite different with respect to their proportions of values like or unlike their mothers. Individual differences would easily warrant this variance.

In each group individual differences were unique. An expla-

nation of individual cases in both groups will help to make the division more understandable and clarify why some students are more apt to accept their mother's values than others.

Half of the group who saw their mothers as controllers had more values unlike those of their mothers thus supporting the hypothesis. The evidence given by the students in the interview schedule showed clearly that those students who rejected all or most of their parents' values of child rearing had more negative feelings toward their mothers than those who had more like than unlike values of their mothers. This was true in all but two cases. A female student strongly resented her mother yet accepted more of her mother's values than she rejected. This student, a very prominent and well known girl on campus, may have felt hesitant about discussing her opinions in relation to her mother. Her interview was brief, especially in the area of child rearing. A male student didn't strongly reject his mother yet rejected more of her values than he accepted. This student laughed a great deal during the interview, seeming to enjoy it, but could have been nervous, therefore naming fewer values which were like his mother's. He may actually have wished to have values unlike her and for reasons which were not disclosed in the interview. It could have been due to upward mobility. He mentioned deriving great pleasure from nice clothing but his family didn't share his enjoyment. Both of these students contributed to the erratic pattern which existed in this group.

To show the difference in negative feelings in the "controllers" group between those students having more values like their

mothers' and those students having few similar values the following case material is presented.

#### Case 54

This student met all the criteria used in judging the mother's role as that of a controller. She resented her mother. Rebellion took the form of rejecting everything her mother said or did. Hostility was expressed when her mother showed any appreciation of her sister. She was most antagonistic toward her mother when asked to do a job.

Table 3 shows this student rejected all of her mother's values. Throughout the interview she reiterated resentment for her mother. Her mother nagged constantly and was extremely negative in her control, and when disciplining "sort of acted like a three-year-old throwing a temper tantrum...we'd just go upstairs and laugh. That's just all it meant to us when she'd do something."

#### Case 2

Qualifications used for judging the mother as controller were met by this student. She talked constantly about points of strain between her mother and herself. Throughout the interview she expressed her desire to be independent and her mother's efforts at repressing these desires.

To her, free expression in the family was desirable. In her family "instead of a matriarchal family like (mine)...guess the only other word is democratic....instead of having just

me, or my husband do it." Outright rebellion was demonstrated toward church and music lessons. Speaking of her mother she said, "She didn't like it if we ever rebelled against going to church....or quit taking music lessons...those were strong points ...I did stop going to church...I did stop taking music lessons." Antagonism was shown toward her mother. "When I'd come from some place...and she'd ask me questions...that bothered me an awful lot." Her mother used bribing and rewarding rather than reasoning. "My father reasoned and we responded to reason."

#### Case 41

This mother was strict, not consistent and somewhat radical. The student stating her child rearing values emphasized the importance of being consistent. She saw her mother as old fashioned.

In order to go some place she had to "fight so much" when her "friends were going about three times as much...and it didn't set very good." The discipline made her "real mad." She felt at times like "talking back...but it wouldn't have helped." Many times in this interview the student said she wished her mother had been a companion and had gone places with her. She resented her mother's lack of expression, never knowing what she was thinking or feeling.

#### Case 51

This student was a border-line case, deviating from the other four in the group. He accepted more of his mother's values than the previous three, however, he had more unlike than

like values. He did not show many signs of rebellion, but did resent the discipline. His mother was somewhat like a friend, helping him when he had "girl trouble."

When stating resentment about his mother's discipline he said, "I'd usually get hot under the collar about it right then, but I would always try to think it over before I really blew my stack." "I always wished I was older and in high school when I was in grade school and I don't know whether that had anything to do with it or not." Explanations were few. "She just told us to do it or else..." and "The one decision that my parents thought was best, why that's the one I accepted - or else!" If he was told to do something he "went ahead and did it in order to avoid the punishment which was inevitable."

#### Case 10

The mother of this student was seen as overly circumscribing the student's behavior. She felt that her mother was extremely over-protective and definitely did not care for the way she handled discipline problems, always rewarding or bribing, and usually with money.

The mother always solicitous of what her daughter was doing brought feeling of resentment. "I got a lot of criticism...I resented it." The mother was overly conscious of "neighbors' opinions." She impressed upon my sister and I - what will people think? That has just griped me way down deep ever since I can remember." "I was just told you just don't do those things." "Gripping" seemed to be a frequent method used by the mother to

get the child to cooperate. "I remember...I thought - well, I'd like to get out of this...ah...when she just griped to be griping, that bothered me and - I'd like to get away from it...that's one reason why I don't like to stay home for a whole summer.... you get tired out and...the little irritations become more frequent and you blow off the handle."

The remaining five students saw their mothers as controllers yet accepted more of their values thus having more like than unlike values. Feelings of resentment for this group are far less in quantity.

#### Case 14, (a borderline case)

This student saw his mother as a controller because she seemed to somewhat repress his desire. "Superiority that - age and status in the home and...I just knew there wasn't any way out." It seems the mother made little or no explanations. He stated, "Oh, I wouldn't have any idea of her reason and I probably thought it was pretty bad then." This boy did spend a bit of time with his mother doing "things" around the house.

#### Case 50, (a borderline case)

This student saw his mother as a controller because of a rebellious attitude toward his classes in high school which was the direct result of his "mother harping" at him to study. He was rebellious to the point, "where in school, I wouldn't pay attention in class. I was going to show them that I didn't have to study." He stated, "I've gotten closer as the years have gone (last year or so). There has been less disciplining



and more, I mean, adult relationship and give and take and that kind of thing." As this relationship increased his resentment decreased.

On matters concerning discipline he said, "I told her because I knew she'd find out any how, one way or the other." He wasn't given many choices when growing up concerning his family. "When they were going out in the evening and the kids were going along you just went along."

#### Case 52

Several factors could have accounted for more like than unlike values of the mother for this student. The mother was interested in education and encouraged him to join all active organizations, music, activities, sports. She was interested in his work, keeping a scrapbook of his accomplishments. On the other hand, he felt that his parents did not understand him when he was growing up and he couldn't understand their discipline.

"Mom and Dad were just a pair of old 'fuddy duddies' who didn't know what was coming off." He didn't like the discipline saying, "At times I resented it and naturally didn't think it was fair." He may have felt that his mother was over protective. She felt that her interest should be undividedly focused on the child and he stated that he "just wanted to get away and get out from under it all" when he came to college.

#### Case 45

This student deviates from the other four in this group.

She always resented her mother, was never close to her, and thought it was "fun to make her mother mad" at her. She would "stay mad at her for weeks" and "felt like running away many times." Her mother was sarcastic, which the girl disliked a great deal.

#### Case 49

This student was felt to be a borderline case. He expressed feelings of resentment, but had stated such gross feelings of resentment toward his father that it was difficult to tell if certain statements were directed at the mother. He stated, "If we wanted to do something, why, we thought that maybe she'd talk my Dad into it or something, why she usually would, if she thought it was all right, I mean, she would take our side and help us try to get the deal through." On the other hand, he stated, "It was fear to a certain extent about crossing them." He resented his mother slapping him and had always felt that he wanted more freedom. Again he stated, "When I was tempted to do something I always thought about what they would think about it or what they would do, at the same time."

Obviously, the group seeing their mothers as controllers was not homogeneous, but because of similarities, mainly resentment and lack of understanding, all were placed in this category.

The variance of negative feelings in the controller group was very likely one reason for variance of acceptance of parental values. It seems plausible to assume that frustration due to negative feelings toward the mother may have caused erratic

judgments by the students when stating values like and unlike their mothers'.

Child rearing values and acceptance of their mothers' child rearing values varied with each student. Table 4 illustrates this variance. Two pairs of student-mother child rearing values are presented for comparison, a student who shared 100 per cent continuity of like values with her mother and a student who shared no like values with her mother. The student who accepted all of her mother's values saw her mother as a non-controller; the student who accepted none of her mother's values saw her mother as a controller.

Upon closer inspection heterogeneity among the non-controllers presents quite a different picture. Table 3 shows four students at the lower end who make the difference between homogeneity and heterogeneity in regard to the total group. The investigator believed those four students were uniquely different from the rest for the following reasons:

Case 7, a female student, was a Child Development major in college. A great deal of her time was spent taking courses concerning methods of handling and rearing children. It would seem strange if she did not state child rearing values somewhat differently from her mother.

Cases 44 and 42, both female students, had taken courses in Home Economics where methods of child rearing were discussed and ideas were brought out which were bound to be somewhat different from those of their mothers.

Table 4. Comparisons of two pairs of mother-student child rearing values.

Student's statements of his mother's values	: :	Student's statements of his own values
<u>A student who perceived mother as a non-controller</u>		
Child should behave properly		Be as well behaved as possible
Child should always be polite and courteous		Stress manners
Go to mother with personal problems		Come to me with all their problems
Child is important member of family...have close bond		Have a pretty close family bond
<u>A student who perceived mother as a controller</u>		
Talk at child all the time to get him to do things you want him to do		Encourage child to be an individual
Tell child how he can do every thing otherwise he probably won't		Give them a chance to do things on their own
Ignore your own children when working with a group of children so they won't think you're showing favoritism		Give them encouragement
Needn't explain things to child, tell him "don't" and he should do as you say		More positive than negative approach

Case 55, a male student, came from a home where the father was a drunkard and the mother had all the responsibility of the family. Her judgments were often strained and violent due to over-work. The situation in this home was far different from those presented in the majority group. If this boy after coming to college did not change some of his values it would be very

surprising.

If the latter four students just discussed were excluded from the group of non-controllers homogeneity would result. The remaining students in this group had had no classes in the field of Home Economics. It was believed that their values, therefore, would not change as radically as the four cases just discussed. The remaining students in this group were majoring in music, journalism, geology, architecture, physical education and speech. Excluding the four students just discussed, the percentage of values like those of the mothers for this group were 99.92 per cent.

It was earlier hypothesized that college students would tend to state child rearing values similar to their perceived mothers' values unless they saw their mothers as controllers. As has been shown, there were very definite differences among the students, also within both groups differences were found, but when the over-all view was expressed students who saw their mothers as a controller or in a negative atmosphere had or tended to have more values unlike their mothers. There was no reasonable doubt that the gross groupings "controllers" and "non-controllers" had successfully divided the students in terms of values like and unlike those of their mothers.

## FINDINGS

1. According to the chi-square analysis there was no reasonable doubt that the gross groupings into "controllers" and "non-controllers" had successfully divided the students in terms of values like and unlike those of their mothers.

2. Students within the "controller" and "non-controller" groups, respectively, were themselves quite different with respect to their proportions of values like or unlike those of their mothers.

3. Students in the "controller" group tended to be more erratic in their like and unlike values than those in the "non-controller" group.

4. An increase of negative feelings toward their mothers was associated with a decrease in the numbers of child rearing values like those of their mothers.

5. Likewise a decrease in negative feelings toward their mothers was accompanied by an increase in child rearing values like those of their mothers.

6. The type of interview used appeared to be somewhat successful in eliciting students' perceptions of their own values and those of their mothers as they saw them.

7. These college students' knowledge of principles in child development was noticeably limited and points to the need for increased preparental education for college students.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Mrs. Leone Kell, Professor of Family and Child Development, under whose direction this study was done, for her guidance and constructive criticism; to Dr. Holly Fryer, Department of Mathematics, for his statistical analysis of the data; to Martha Garrett who assisted with the interviews; to Joan Aldous for her criticism of the pre-test, and to the students whose cooperation made possible the study.

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their children. Unpublished M. S. thesis, Kansas State  
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## APPENDIX

Kansas State College  
Manhattan, Kansas

Department of Family and Child Development

(Date)

Mr. (Miss)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The Department of Family and Child Development here at Kansas State College is doing a study of parent-child relations. This project is sponsored by the Kansas State College Agricultural Experiment Station. We are trying to find out the ways mothers and fathers bring up their children--this is where you can be of immense help.

Your part would be to let one of us interview you about your childhood. Everything you say will be of importance, therefore we hope you will answer all questions just as freely and completely as possible. And, of course, all information will be kept in strict confidence.

You probably are wondering how we got your name for this study. We are asking college juniors, who are single and not over 21 years old, to help us. Your name falls within this group and so we hope you will consent to the interview. Truly, it should prove as interesting for you as it is informative for us.

Within the next few days one of us will telephone you so that a convenient time for the interview may be arranged.

Your help with this part of the study will be greatly appreciated; and we would like to thank you in advance for the information you will be able to give us.

Sincerely,

Lucille Nelson  
Graduate Assistant  
Family and Child Development

(Mrs.) Leone Kell  
Professor of Family and Child  
Development and Family  
Economist, Agricultural  
Experiment Station

## FACE SHEET

County \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
Year Month Day

Ages of Brothers \_\_\_\_\_ Ages of Sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Your Father's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

If farmer, is farm owned \_\_\_\_\_ or rented \_\_\_\_\_?

Kind of farming \_\_\_\_\_ No. of acres \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's outside occupation, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's occupation before marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Your father's church membership \_\_\_\_\_ or preference \_\_\_\_\_

Your mother's church membership \_\_\_\_\_ or preference \_\_\_\_\_

Your church membership \_\_\_\_\_ or preference \_\_\_\_\_

Your father's education: \_\_\_\_\_ Your mother's education: \_\_\_\_\_  
(circle last year completed)

Elementary 1-6,7,8  
 High School 1,2,3,4  
 Vocational 1,2  
 College 1,2,3,4  
 Post-Grad. 1,2,3,4

Elementary 1-6,7,8  
 High School 1,2,3,4  
 Vocational 1,2  
 College 1,2,3,4  
 Post-Grad. 1,2,3,4

Check one of the following statements that best fits you:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am engaged

\_\_\_\_\_ I date around

\_\_\_\_\_ I am going steady

\_\_\_\_\_ I date very seldom

\_\_\_\_\_ (other) Describe \_\_\_\_\_



## STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Miss  
Hello, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_. Won't you sit down?

I would just like to say how much Mrs. Kell and I appreciate your taking the time and trouble to help us. I'd like to emphasize again that anything you say will be kept confidential. It will never be used in any way identifying you with it. Because anything you say is important and we want you to answer the question as fully as you can, I'm tape-recording what you say instead of writing it down. (Give impression of plenty of time). Now, before we get started, do you have any questions?

NOW THAT YOU ARE A JUNIOR, I IMAGINE IT SEEMS A LONG TIME AGO, BUT:

Girls 1. How did you come to decide to go to college? (Try to get influence of mother)

TEST HERE

How did your parents feel about your going away to school? (You and parents both felt you were able to take care of yourself away at college? Homesick? Parents come up to visit?)

Boys 1. By this time, I imagine you have pretty much decided how you want to make a living when you get through?

What is your major here in college?

What is your occupational choice?

Your father's occupation is?

1 A. How does he feel about your being a \_\_\_\_\_?

How does your mother feel about this choice?

How did you come to choose this occupation? (Mother's influence, if any)

1 B. (If occupation is same as the father's):

How long have you wanted to follow in your father's footsteps?

How would he have felt if you had selected some other occupation?

How well satisfied are you with your choice?

I IMAGINE SOMETIMES YOUR PARENTS FEEL THEY NEVER SEE YOU:

2. How often do you get home? Why?

Is it the same place you grew up? Size?

What do you do when you get home? (Note whether mentions spending time with mother)

(girl)  
Have you ever taken a (boy) friend home to visit your family?

Are you engaged? (If notice, leave out)

How long have your parents known your fiance(e)?

How do your parents feel about your fiance(e)? (Especially mother's feelings)

THE REST OF THE TIME WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP:

3. What are some of the things you remember about this period? (Plenty of time to talk--plenty of tape) Emphasize.

4. Tell me about some of the things you remember happening to you involving your mother. (Watch this).

5. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

How much older or younger were they than you?

How did you differ from them in your likes and dislikes--personality?

How did these differences affect the way your mother treated you?

6. When disputes arose between you and your (brothers) (playmates) how were they usually settled? (sisters) (rules)

7. When you were a child what (things) did your mother keep after you about (obeying) (doing) in early childhood? In adolescence?

Who saw to it that you did those things?

Which parent had most to do with the "dos and don'ts" in your family? (Differences in mother and father?)

Why do you feel this was so?

What were you supposed to do?

What things did you do that your mother seemed to dislike the most?

What things did you do that disappointed your mother?

On what occasions?

Why do you think she was insistent on your observing these rules?

---Is this what she said to you?

How closely were you supervised in (high school years) (grade school years)?

Who did most of the supervision?

How did you feel about this supervision? (Want more freedom)?

If you have children of your own, what behavior will you encourage?

What behavior will you forbid?

What do you believe your children could do that you would dislike the most?

How does this compare with the rules when you were growing up?

ON THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN YOU OR YOUR (SISTER)(BROTHER) WOULD BREAK A RULE

8. What kind of discipline did your mother use with you in grade school years?

In high school years? (Did understand "why" of rules)?

What were the occasions when you were disciplined?

Why do you think this was so?

How did your mother's methods differ from your father's?

What kind of discipline made you feel the worst in grade school years?

In high school years?

Why do you feel this was so? (Want to get more of "did they reason"--Might say did parents tell you so?)

How did she act when disciplining you?

When you were naughty how did you think your mother felt toward you?

After you had been punished how did your mother treat you?

How long did this last?

How did you feel toward your mother after being punished?  
(Want to run away)? How recently can you remember wanting to run away?

Why do you feel your mother disciplined you?

How did you feel about your mother's discipline?

What will you do with your children when they are (naughty) (disobedient)? (What do when not necessary to spank? Would do on all occasions?)

How does this compare with the ways you were corrected when you were growing up?

#### OF COURSE CHILDREN ARE NAUGHTY RELATIVELY SELDOM:

9. When children behave well should their parents show they are pleased? How?

What things did you do that especially pleased your mother when you were growing up?

How did she show it?

What things made her proud of you?

If you have children what do you think they could do that would please you?

Would you show that you were pleased? How?

SOME PEOPLE FEEL YOU SHOULD LET YOUR CHILDREN KNOW YOU ARE FOND OF THEM; OTHERS FEEL THAT THIS IS WRONG AND WILL HURT THE CHILD.

10. What do you think about this?

(If should let them know it) How should they show affection?  
(If wrong to show affection) Why do you think so?

In general how do you think your mother would feel about the question of showing affection to children?

How did she let you know (you were important to her) or (she was fond of you) while you were growing up?

On what occasions did you feel closest to your mother?

What does a good mother do? (Their idea of a good mother)

What does a good father do? (Similar)

What are the best ways to bring about good behavior in children?

SUPPOSE YOUR PARENTS WANTED TO GET YOU TO DO SOMETHING THEY KNEW YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO DO:

11. What was the best method to get you to do it?

Why was this so?

Did they use this method often?

Which one of your parents would be more apt to get you to do it?

Why was this so?

TO TAKE THE OPPOSITE SITUATION:

12. What generally happened in situations when you wanted to do something your mother did not approve of?

If you disagreed with your mother's decision then what would she do?

What would you do?

How often did such occasions arise?

13. When you got into your teens how were family decisions reached that affected you?

In your family, whose ideas were generally accepted?

I IMAGINE YOU REMEMBER OTHER THINGS ABOUT YOUR GROWING UP THAT I HAVEN'T MENTIONED:

For example, tell me some (more) things you remember happening to you involving your mother.

I have a sheet here for you to fill out---

THE THINGS YOU HAVE SAID HAVE BEEN VERY HELPFUL. I WANT TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR TAKING TIME TO BE INTERVIEWED.

COLLEGE STUDENTS' VALUES IN CHILD REARING AS RELATED  
TO THEIR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR MOTHERS' CONTROL

by

LUCILLE NELSON

B. S., University of Utah, 1951

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1956



Social science is increasingly demanding data that must be reported by individuals out of their own experiences. These demands have shown that few systematic methods were available for measuring individual's attitudes and perceptions. However, a new type of somewhat non-directive semi-structured interview seems to produce the kind of data needed. The interview, especially adapted to collecting data about perceptions and attitudes, is the most direct means and often the most fruitful way of obtaining information about the individual's past experiences and future behavior.

The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that college students will express child rearing values similar to those they perceived their mother as possessing, unless they perceived their mother's role as that of a controller.

Interviews were conducted with students concerning their future child rearing values and the child rearing values of their mothers. Subjects were 15 boys and 15 girls who were juniors in college, twenty years of age or under, single, and living away from homes. An adapted semi-standardized interview schedule was pretested and used. Mechanically recorded interviews were conducted with each student and typed protocols were made.

Analysis of data was made by the interviewer and one other judge. Child rearing values of the students, referring to their future children, and the mothers' child rearing values as perceived by the students were separately underlined and counts made. Child rearing values were considered to be words, phrases or statements which referred to desired child behavior.

To test the hypothesis students were classified into two categories, those who perceived their mother's role as that of a controller and those who did not. Statements were collected from each transcript that were indicative of the student's overall perception of his mother's role. Twenty students saw their mothers as controllers, ten as non-controllers.

The child rearing values of the mother and child were compared, in both groups, for similarity.

A chi-square analysis was done to test the adequacy of the two classifications "controllers" and "non-controllers" and also the heterogeneity of each of the two groups. According to the null hypothesis, no difference would be found between the two groups as to the proportional numbers of like and unlike values held by each group.

The findings of the project were:

1. According to the chi-square analysis there was no reasonable doubt that the gross groupings into "controllers" and "non-controllers" had successfully divided the students in terms of values like and unlike those of their mothers.

2. Students within the "controller" and "non-controller" groups, respectively, were themselves quite different with respect to their proportions of values like or unlike those of their mothers.

3. Students in the "controllers" group tended to be more erratic in their like and unlike values than those in the "non-controller" group.

4. An increase of negative feelings toward their mothers was associated with a decrease in the numbers of child rearing values like those of their mothers.

5. Likewise a decrease in negative feelings toward their mothers was accompanied by an increase in child rearing values like those of their mothers.

6. The type of interview used appeared to be somewhat successful in eliciting students' perceptions of their own values and those of their mothers as they saw them.

7. These college students' knowledge of principles in child development was noticeably limited and points to the need for increased preparential education for college students.

