PARENTAL STRESS, PARENTAL ATTITUDE, AND
PRESCHOOLERS' ACADEMIC, SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY

DISSERTATION

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By

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This study investigated the relationships among the variables of parental stress, parental attitude, and preschoolers' academic, social and emotional maturity. The purposes of the investigation were to measure the relationship between parental stress and parental attitude, and to determine whether parental attitude and parental stress differed in their ability to predict preschoolers' behavioral maturity.

The subjects for this study were 91 children between the ages of four and five years enrolled in 20 formal preschool educational programs and the primary caretaker parent of each child. The participating families included biological, step, adoptive, single and divorced families.

Abidin's Parenting Stress Index was used to measure parental stress experienced by the primary caretaker parent. Hereford's Parent Attitude Survey was used to measure parental attitudes toward child-rearing. Kim, Anderson and Bashaw's Behavioral Maturity Scale was used to measure children's behavioral maturity as observed by the preschool teachers.

A canonical correlation revealed a statistically
significant relationship between parental stress and parental attitude. The parent's lack of confidence in the parental role, the parent's belief that children should be seen and not heard, and a parent-child relationship of suspicion and deceit contributed significantly to parental stress.

Although a significant relationship was found between parental stress and parental attitude, a multiple regression analysis showed only parental stress was predictive of the child's behavioral maturity. Since parents' parental attitude and parental stress were found to account for only a small portion of the preschoolers' behavioral maturity, other variables must contribute more significantly to their behavioral maturity. Additional research using path analysis may permit a better understanding of the causal network and directionality of the relationships among these variables. Longitudinal research is also recommended because of the dearth of valid information concerning the long-term effects of these variables.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The family is the primary social unit for a growing child. Family members are the first people with whom the baby interacts and the people who most affect the baby during the important early period of life (Corsini & Manaster, 1982). Because, developmentally, human beings are among the most dependent of all creatures at birth, someone must nurture and care for them if they are to survive. As children begin discovering themselves, others, and the world at large by trial and error, their first impressions of the world are predicated upon contact with and through other people, usually the family members. These early impressions develop into rules about life which individuals use to help them understand, predict, and manage their world (Sweeney, 1981). Therefore, to understand children's academic, social, and emotional maturity in both the home and school setting, these complex reaction patterns and individual outcomes must be considered from this relational perspective of the family.

Personality, that is, lifestyle, emerges gradually, uniquely, and as a whole (Adler, 1918; Dreikurs, 1964). Theorists and researchers in the field of child development
have indicated that the pre-school years are of tremendous significance in terms of the child's personality development (Butler, 1969; Dinkmeyer & Mckay, 1973; Hess & Shipman, 1971; Kohlberg, 1971; Ware & Garber, 1972). There is also much importance attached to the mother's, or primary nurturant figure's, influence on the lifestyle development of the child (Adler, 1927). The child's capacity for human responsiveness is developed early in life in relation to a nurturant figure (Adler, 1929). The child who is not welcomed by a nurturing parent fails to develop a normal capacity for sharing and caring about others and is most likely to be a selfish, hostile, problem child (Jenkins, Heideman & Caputo, 1985).

Well adjusted children usually come from homes where a wholesome relationship exists between parent and child and where the parents' attitude toward them is favorable (Cole, Shaw, Steneck, & Taboroff, 1957). White (1974) concluded from his study of the effect of parental education on parental attitudes that the home and parental attitudes are the most significant influences on the intellectual and emotional development of the child, particularly during the preschool years. Kaluger and Kaluger (1984) also stated that parents must be responsible for the basic development of the child in emotional, social and personal matters. Studies by Medinnus and Curtis (1963), Hoffman (1960), Hurley (1965), and Watson (1957), have yielded additional
support for the importance of parent-child relations in human development.

Although parenting is considered to be one of the most challenging roles an adult must fulfill (Dreikurs, 1948), little or no attention is generally given to preparing individuals for the role of parent. Abidin (1983), from his clinical experiences with and concerns about parental stress, has pointed out that parenting is one of the most challenging yet potentially stressful roles of adulthood. The amount of stress experienced in the parenting role appears to be dependent upon many factors, including the family's particular situation, the parent's personal attributes and values, and characteristics of the child or children (Abidin, 1982; Brooks, 1981; Miller & Myers-Walls, 1983). Abidin (1983) stated that characteristics of the parent which may limit parental functioning such as unhappiness, feeling of guilt, or a perceived lack of competence may also contribute to parental stress. Patterson (1980) also emphasized that excessively stressful characteristics of the child have been identified as major factors contributing to parenting stress. The research of Griest, Forehand, Well, McMahon (1980), Lafiosca (1983), Mash, Johnson (1982), and Springer (1986) indicated a strong relationship between parental stress, parental anxiety, and children's behavior.

Research which examined parental attitudes, parental
stress, and the maturity of young children was not found in the literature. Therefore, based on the belief that the first five years of life are significant in the development of children and that parents are key figures in that development, examination of the relationships among these variables will provide some understanding of whether the parental attitude and the parental stress of the primary nurturer are related to young children's maturity.

Synthesis of Related Literature

Although no research was found that specifically examined the relationships among parental stress, parental attitude, and the academic, social and emotional maturity of children ages four and five, there are a number of research studies and articles that are tangentially related to some aspects of this study. This related literature is presented in three sections: (a) parental stress; (b) parental attitudes; (c) children's maturity.

Parental Stress

Abidin (1982) stated that specific sources of parental stress may be related to personal characteristics of the child which prevent the child from meeting parental or community expectations, or characteristics of the parent which limit parental functioning and contribute to feelings of inadequacy or failure, or stressful situational
circumstances outside the parent-child relationship. The birth of a child into a family is generally acknowledged to be a particularly stressful event because the parent role is added to the spouse role. In a study designed to measure the dimensions of stress in early parenting by Weinberg and Richardson (1981), the researchers employed an individual differences multi-dimensional scaling method to identify four dimensions of stress for the purpose of investigating the dimensions of stress associated with a particular event in parenting. They found that the manifestation of a major problem with a child was the most significant stressor. Also, immediate problems with children (like difficulty getting the child to bed) were judged to be more negative stressors than long-range problems involving financial burdens and in-law difficulties.

Griest, Forehand, Wells, and McMahon (1980) examined differences between nonclinic children and their mothers and behavior-problem clinic-referred children and their mothers. One of the findings of their study, that maternal depression was the best predictor of clinic parents' perceptions of their children, gives support to the commonly accepted viewpoint that one of the sources of parenting stress and anxiety is children with abnormal behaviors.

In another study of clinical and nonclinical populations of parents, 70 mother-child pairs, 40 of whom were clinically referred to a developmental evaluation
clinic and 30 of whom were teacher-identified as being well-adjusted children working up to their potential, were evaluated (Lafiosca, 1983). The mothers of these children completed a self-report battery consisting of the Parenting Stress Index, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, and Behavior Problem Checklist. Clinic-referred mothers reported significantly more stress, anxiety, and children's behavior problems than did their non-clinic referred counterparts.

The relationship among the factors of parental stress, marital adjustment, life event stress, and behavior problems of children was examined by Springer (1986). The subjects for her study were 60 mothers and their children from the North Texas metropolitan area selected from a clinic population and a population of children identified by their teachers and parents as non-behavior problems. Children in her study included an equal number of males and females ranging from 4.0 to 11.11 years of age. Springer found that mothers who had children with behavior problems had a significantly higher level of parenting stress than mothers of children with no behavior problems. This increased level of stress was related both to characteristics of the child and to the parent's own personal characteristics. Those mothers who experienced high levels of parenting stress did not experience significantly less satisfaction in their marriage nor did their children experience significantly
more stressful life events.

Mash and Johnson (1982) examined parental perceptions of child behavior, parenting self-esteem and mother's reported stress for 40 families with a hyperactive child and 51 families with normal children. The researchers found that mothers of hyperactive children experienced higher stress levels associated with both their own feelings regarding the child's problem and with child characteristics. They further found strong, positive relationships between the degree to which the parent assessed the child's behavior as deviant and stress levels in the parents. This relationship was stronger for mothers than for fathers. Parents with a hyperactive child were found to have lower parenting self-esteem and to see themselves as less competent than did parents of normal children.

The effects of mentally retarded, chronically ill, behavior-disordered and healthy children on mothers were examined by Cummings, Bagley, and Rie (1978). All of the mothers had the common demographic characteristics of intact family status, natural mother of the child, affected child in the age range of 4-12, socioeconomic status in the upper-middle to upper-lower range. The mothers completed a battery of self-administered tests including the Shoben Parental Attitudes Inventory, Self-Acceptance Scale of the Berger Acceptance Inventory, Sentence Completion Test, and Family Drawing Task. Mothers of mentally retarded,
chronically ill, and behavior-disordered children were found to have significantly lower self-esteem, less interpersonal satisfaction, higher levels of psychological discomfort, and more social alienation than mothers of healthy children. The results of this study supported the common clinical observation that having a child deficient in adaptive competence or health is a psychologically stressful experience for mothers (Patterson, 1980).

**Parental Attitude**

To build a strong self-concept, according to Dinkmeyer and Caldwell (1970), the child needs (a) to be loved and accepted unconditionally, (b) to have security to be safe and relatively free of threat, (c) to belong, to be part of the group and to feel identification and acceptance, (d) to be recognized, to gain approval, to feel significant and accepted for the way in which the child functions, and (e) to be independent, to take responsibility and to make adjustments. Parents are the child's primary nurturant figures and, according to Adlerian theory, provide the family atmosphere that is the expression of parental attitudes which influence the child's sense of competence, security, and belonging (Corsini & Painter, 1984).

Several studies indicate that the parent's attitudes have an effect on the children's academic achievement. Andersland (1967) examined the relationship between parental
rejection and adolescent academic achievement with 200 mothers and their eleventh grade adolescents and found lacking agreement between the two parents' academic expectations of the child to be related to poor academic achievement. Teichman, Collnitz, and Gohler's (1975) study of the effects of high parental demands for achievement on children showed high expectation parents thought their low achieving children were not using their abilities nor making enough effort. The unrealistic demands of the parents were not based on the mental abilities or the development level of their children. In these high stress situations created by parents, children developed neurotic symptoms. Unrealistically high parental demands did not produce higher academic achievement in most of the children.

Parental acceptance or rejection has been shown to affect the ego strength of children. Walsh (1968) examined the relationship between the behaviors of 38 children between 6 and 8 years of age in a temptation situation and their parents' rejecting attitudes. The study found that children who displayed natural curiosity toward forbidden toys had mothers who had accepting attitudes toward child behavior and could communicate well with their children. Rejecting, non-communicative mothers who believed children should be obedient and have few rights of privacy had children who were rigidly controlled and never touched a forbidden toy when left alone. Jourard and Remy (1955)
stressed that if children perceived that their parents viewed them negatively or rejected them, they may exhibit psychological insecurity, behave disobediently, or behave delinquently.

Bargona (1964) studied authoritarian and permissive parental attitudes and children's behavior and concluded that there was a negative correlation between parental authoritarian attitudes and parental acceptance of the child. Children of one authoritarian and one permissive parent had the least degree of spontaneity, belongingness, and friendliness.

Ausubel, Balthazar, Rosenthal, Blackman, Schpoont, and Welkowitz (1954) in a study of 40 fourth and fifth grade children drawn from two elementary schools found that perceived parental attitudes were important factors in development of the child's ego structure. They found that children who perceived their parents as rejecting were less independent and less able to postpone immediate gratification than children of more accepting parents. Rejective parental behaviors included disavowal of responsibility, neglect, lack of patience, criticism, humiliation, lack of affection, lack of consideration of the child's needs and wishes, and physical separation from the child.

The influence of parental behavior on the development of internal as opposed to external control orientations
was examined in a study completed by Scheck, Emerick, and Assal (1973). A strong degree of perceived parental support was found to be strongly related to an internal locus of control. A study by Lang (1969) revealed that if parents exercised all of the control of children, the children would believe that responsibility for their behavior was external to themselves. These children learned that outcomes were not of their own behavior but rather the result of luck or caused by another person such as their parent or other authority figures. These children tended to develop an external locus of control.

Cofer (1973) investigated the relationship between the depressive personality and the perception of parental attitudes, feelings, and reactions. The subjects were 48 women who had previously been hospitalized in a psychiatric clinic because of depressive symptoms. Cofer concluded that depressive prone women saw their mothers as markedly more critical of them than did the comparison group of non-depressed women.

To investigate the relation of parent attitude to juvenile delinquency, Jenkins and Boyer (1970) undertook a study of the statistical data of 1500 cases provided by the Institute for Juvenile Research in Chicago. Results indicated that inadequate mothering and maternal rejection produced a specific juvenile behavioral pattern characterized by overt or covert hostile disobedience,
quarrelsomeness, physical and verbal aggressiveness, vengefulness and destructiveness.

Children's Maturity

Behavioral maturity has been variously defined and described at different stage levels for children. In every culture there is a process of behavioral development in which the individual moves from an unskilled and uncultured stage to a condition of effectiveness and harmony as a member of society. Therefore, the degree of a child's maturity can be defined as the level of significant behavior attained at a given age (Kim, Anderson, & Bashaw, 1967). The family is the first social reality, a reality from which individuals interpret, perceive, conclude, and generalize to the rest of the world. Thus, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired in the family of origin greatly influence the individual's capacity for functioning in situation outside the family (Adler, 1927; Dreikurs, 1964; Thomas & Marchant, 1983). The belief that family environment and parent-child relationships are influential in the children's development and adjustment to life is evidenced by a large number of studies. Yallow, Rubenstein, Pedersen, and Jankowski (1972) found that both the variety and amount of animate and inanimate stimulation provided in the home were important predictors of the child's cognitive development. The style of interaction of parent
and child (Bee, Van Egeren, Streissguth, Nyman, & Leckie, 1969), and the overall conditions of family life circumstances, stresses and emotional support (Wyler, Masuda, & Holmes, 1971) have all been shown to be related to eventual cognitive outcomes for the child.

Bee, Barnard, Eyres, Gray, Hammond, Spietz, Snyder, and Clark (1982) examined 193 basically healthy working class and middle class mothers and their infants in a 4-year longitudinal study which focused on the relative potency of several groups of variables for predictions of intellectual and language outcome during the preschool years. The major result of the study indicated that the assessments of mother-infant interaction and general environmental quality were among the best predictors at each age tested, and were as good as standardized measures of child performance at 24 and 36 months in predicting IQ and language.

Martin (1983) examined the role of certain family environment variables (demographic characteristics, maternal perceptions, and maternal beliefs) in the development of the child's self-perceptions from a sample consisting of 50 mother-child pairs in kindergarten. Data were collected within 3 months of the child's entry into kindergarten. The study found that children's perceptions of their competencies and the degree to which children believed they are accepted by parents and peers influenced their
performances in the school setting. Stollack, Messe, Michaels, Buldain, Catlin and Paritee (1982) examined the relationships between parental interpersonal perceptual style (IPS) (the extent to which they are biased in their perceptions of children's behaviors) and the adjustment of their children and the parent-children interactions. Parent's IPS was found to be related to interaction between them and their 5- to 7-year-old child. For example, the less negatively biased the father was, the more likely the child was to openly display antagonistic behavior toward his or her parents. Fathers' IPS was found to be related to the teacher's and peer's assessed level of psychosocial adjustment of their own third grade child; fathers of problem children tended to be more negatively biased in their perceptions than were fathers of either adequate or highly adjusted children.

Blum (1959) found that in a sample of 17 children with ages ranging from 48 months to 63 months and their parents, the children's relative rigidity-flexibility patterns were positively related to the same variable in their parents. Cross (1966) compared the family interdependence of high and low conceptualizing boys from 182 families in the eighth through twelfth grades of a public school, and found that the parents of high conceptualizing boys were more nonauthoritarian and more likely to grant autonomy. The parents of the high conceptual level boys also were more
warm and accepting. Parents of high curiosity boys differed significantly from parents of low curiosity boys in respect to fostering more independence, less seclusiveness, and less use of harsh punishment. Wade's (1968) investigation of the influences of the environment on intelligence and creativity in a population of 105 tenth grade students from upper-middle class schools, suggested that no intellectual development is independent of psychological support in the home.

In summary, the literature indicates that parents with significantly more stress and anxiety do have children with more reported behavior problems, and that having a child deficient in adaptive competence or health is a psychologically stressful experience for parents. The literature also indicates that parental attitudes, family environment, and parent-child relationships are influential in the children's development and adjustment to life. Research which has examined the relationships among parental stress, parental attitude, and young children's maturity was not found to be reported in the literature.
References


CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES

This chapter presents the definition of terms and hypotheses and describes the subjects, instruments and procedures for the collection of data used in this study.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have restrictive meanings for this investigation.

1. The Primary Caretaker Parent - the biological, adoptive, or step parent of the child who knows the most about the child or spend the most time with the child.

2. Parental Stress - the score a parent obtains on the Parenting Stress Index that is related to personal characteristics of the child which prevent the child from meeting parental or community expectations, or characteristics of the parent which limit parental functioning and contribute to feelings of inadequacy.

3. Parental Attitude - the score a parent obtains on the Parental Attitude Survey that regards parent-child relations and child-rearing practice. The five areas of parental attitude measured by this survey are confidence in the parental role, causation of the child’s behavior,
acceptance of the child's behavior and feelings, mutual understanding, and mutual trust.

4. **Preschooler** - a child between the ages of four and five years and who is enrolled in a formal preschool educational program in the North Texas area.

5. **Child's Academic, Social and Emotional Maturity** - the score each child receives from his or her teacher on the Behavior Maturity Scale. Academic maturity reflects persistent, independent, and responsible behavior. Social maturity refers to participation, leadership, and friendliness. Emotional maturity describes respect for others and self control.

**Hypotheses**

1. There will be no significant relationship between measures of parental stress and parental attitude.

2. When controlling for parental stress, parental attitude will make a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavioral maturity.

3. When controlling for parental attitude, parental stress will make a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavioral maturity.

**Subjects**

The subjects for this study were 91 children enrolled in 20 formal preschool educational programs and the primary
caretaker parent of each child. There were 50 male and 41 female children, between 4 and 5 years of age. There were 14 male and 77 female primary caretaker parents of the participating children. Their ages range from 23 to 46 years. The participating families included biological, step, adoptive, and single or divorced families. The children were enrolled in four different types of preschools, university-related, private, public and church-related in the North Texas area.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used in this study. The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) (Abidin, 1983) was used to measure levels of stress experienced by the chief caretaker parents, the Parent Attitude Survey (PAS) (Hereford, 1963) was used to measure parental attitude, and the Behavior Maturity Scale (BMS) (Kim, Anderson, Bashaw, 1967) was used to measure children's academic, social, and emotional maturity as observed by their preschool teachers.

The Parenting Stress Index (PSI) (Abidin, 1983) is a screening and diagnostic tool to identify the magnitude of stress in the parent-child system (Abidin, 1983). The PSI was developed largely as a result of Abidin's work in the area of parent education and his consulting experiences in a pediatric setting in 1977. The original 151 test items for the PSI were developed from a literature review and
clinical judgement based on practice. After a pilot test for readability, format, and administration, a panel of six professionals rated each item for relevance of content and adequacy of construction. After additional field testing, the instrument was used with several populations of parents for norming purposes. The final instrument contains 101 items with 95% of those items directly related to research (Loyd, 1983).

The 101 items of the PSI are divided into two domains, Child Domain and Parent Domain. The Child Domain contains 47 items and measures qualities associated with children that make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting role. The subscales of the Child Domain are Child Adaptability, Acceptability of Child to Parent, Child Demandingness, Child Mood, Child Distractability, and Child Reinforces Parent. The Parent Domain is comprised of 54 items related to dimensions of parent functioning. The subscales are Parent Depression, Parent Attachment, Restrictions Imposed by Parental Role, Parent Sense of Competence, Social Isolation, Relationship with Spouse, and Parental Health. The subscales of the Child Domain and Parent Domain indicate sources of stress emanating from one of these two areas and further presents, through elevated scores on various subscales, a more complete picture of the exact area or areas of the parent-child system that create the stress. Additionally, there is an
optional scale that provides a measure of stress that may exist outside the parenting role or parent-child relationship that is included in the Parent Domain. The response mode is a 5-point Likert-type scale with answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with a possible high score of 505.

Scoring on the PSI yields a total stress score that is obtained by combining the total scores on the Child and Parent Domains. These two domain scores, obtained by adding all the subscale scores in a given domain, indicate the magnitude of stress in the parent-child subsystem (Abidin, 1983). A score of 122 or more on the Child Domain is associated with children who display qualities that make the parenting role very difficult. On the Parent Domain, a score of 153 or more suggests that the sources of stress are related to dimensions of the parent's functioning. The overall experience of parents who earn high Parent Domain Scores is that of being overwhelmed and inadequate to the task of parenting (Abidin, 1983).

Concurrent and construct validity were established for the PSI using several criterion measures. Lafiosca (1983) found significant correlations ($p<.001$) between the Child Domain of the PSI and the Child Behavior Problem Checklist (Quay & Peterson, 1979) and the Parent Domain Score and the State-Trait Anxiety Scale ($p<.001$) ($r=.68$). Zakreski (1983) found PSI scores for Child Domain, Parent
Domain, and Total Stress Scores significantly correlated ($p<.001$) with the Bayley Infant Development Scale ($r = .42$ at three months versus $r = .66$ at six months).

Loyd (1983) reported reliability coefficients for each subscale, for each domain, and for the total score on a sample of 534 parents. The alpha reliability coefficients ranged from .62 to .70 for the subscales of the Parent Domain. The reliability coefficients reported for the two domains were .89 & .93, and the reliability coefficient for the Total Stress Score was .95. Test-retest reliability was .82 for the Child Domain, and .71 for the Parent Domain, .65 for the Parent Domain and .65 for the Total Stress Scores after one year (Loyd, 1983).

Loyd (1983) reported 17 studies that found that the PSI discriminated between groups with different characteristics by significantly different patterns of scores on the PSI. Zimmerman (cited in Loyd, 1983) found 10 of the 20 scores on the PSI to differ significantly between a group of mothers of children with cerebral palsy and a matched control group of mothers of children with no known psychological or physical difficulties. Nearly all of the significant differences were found in the Child Domain indicating that certain characteristics of the child were major factors contributing to overall stress in the parent-child system. The only Parent Domain scores which were different were those directly related to the child's
problem, e.g., Social Isolation. Greenberg (cited in Loyd, 1983) in a replication of Zimmerman's study found that the PSI discriminated between a clinical sample of parents of mentally retarded children and a comparison group of children with normal intelligence. The Greenberg and Zimmerman findings suggested that the PSI is sensitive to specific sources of stressors.

Lafiosca (1983) found that the PSI correctly identified 100% of the parents of the normal children (N=70) in her study and 60% of the parents of the children (N=70) who attended a child development clinic when the 90th percentile of the PSI Total score was used as a cutoff. Significant mean differences were found for the total score, for the two domain scores, and for 11 of the 15 subscales. Upshus (cited in Loyd, 1983) also found that a cutoff score at the 90th percentile was useful for screening infants with developmental problems. He was able to identify 89% of the 26 children evidencing developmental delay using that cutoff score.

Factorial validity of the PSI was investigated by three factors analytic analysis. A sample of 534 mothers served as the subjects. The sample included mothers of clinic-referred children as well as mothers of a wide range of normal children as would be represented in a well-care clinic. The pattern of factor loadings reported supports the notion that each subscale is measuring a moderately
distinct source of stress. Two studies have used the PSI to measure pretest posttest differences. Lafferty (cited in Loyd, 1983) found that parents who completed a parent education group had a significant decrease in PSI Child Domain, Parent Domain and Total scores compared to the control group. Plough (cited in Loyd, 1983) used the PSI to determine the effectiveness of brief parent consultation (1 to 8 sessions) in a pediatric practice for mothers of children aged 0 to 10 years who reported experiencing difficulty in child care. A significant decrease on the PSI was found following consultation.

The Parent Attitude Survey (PAS) (Hereford, 1963) (see Appendix A) was used to measure the child rearing attitudes of parents. The five areas of parental attitudes measured by this survey are confidence in the parental role, causation of the child's behavior, acceptance of the child's behavior and feelings, mutual understanding, and mutual trust. The items in the Confidence Scale deal with the parent's uncertainty about handling children, feelings that the parent has more problems than most parents, and that being a parent requires sacrifice and suffering (Hereford, 1963). The Causation Scale is concerned with the parent feeling that it is impossible to change a child from already determined ways of behaving and deals with natural or inherent causations as contrasted to parental or environment influences. The Acceptance Scale measures the parent's
hesitation to accept the child's behavior and developmental changes and deals with parental acceptance or rejection of the child's feelings and behavior, needs for affection, self-expression, and aggressiveness. The Understanding Scale is concerned with parent-child communication, working together, and sharing feelings and attitudes. The Trust Scale contains items dealing with parents' feelings that children are extensions of themselves and are not individuals and should not be trusted (Hereford, 1963).

The PAS has a total of 77 items. There are five scales containing 15 items each, and two items are included as set breakers to reduce the tendency of individuals to mark the undecided category. All answers are marked Strongly Agree (A), Agree (a), Undecided (U), Disagree (d), or Strongly Disagree (D) (Hereford, 1963).

The scores range from -30 to +30 on each subscale. A high score on the Confidence Scale would indicate that the parent feels sure of parental role, adequate to meet the demands of parenthood, and unconcerned about the difficulties of parent-child relations while a low score would indicate that the parent feels inadequate, unsure, and has the belief the individual could not be a good parent. A high score on the Causation Scale reflects that the parent believes parent-child interaction, environmental influences, and parental behavior and attitudes determine the child's behavior while a low score indicates that the
parent believes behavior is inherited or predetermined. A high score on the Acceptance Scale shows that the parent has a permissive attitude towards the child's feelings and behaviors while a low score shows that the parent has rejective attitude. A high score on the Understanding Scale presents the parent's belief in the importance of sharing and communicating attitude, feelings, and problems while a low score indicates the parent's belief that children should be seen and not heard. A high score on the Trust Scale would indicate that the parent respects the child as an individual and believes the child can be trusted while a low score presents a parent-child relation of suspicion and deceit (Hereford, 1963).

To determine item selection in the development of the scales, five judges were asked to classify 200 items, approximately 40 for each scale, into each attitude area to which they felt it most closely pertained. No item was adopted unless at least three of the judges agreed on its placement. Through this method 25 items for each area were selected. The 125 items became the preliminary form of the attitude scales.

A product-moment correlation coefficient was obtained between each item and its total scale score, with a standardization group of 72 parents used as subjects. The 15 items with the highest correlation coefficients in each of the five areas were used in the final version of the PAS.
The split-half reliability computed for the five attitude scales ranged from .68 to .86 (Johnson, 1976). The split-half reliability coefficient for the PAS was .80, which is satisfactorily accepted for attitude measures (Hereford, 1963). Interscale correlation coefficients ranged from .33 to .62, all positive. Hereford (1963) reported, "The correlation coefficients were high enough to indicate that all the scales were measuring related parent attitudes, but not so high as to suggest duplication" (p. 57).

The **Behavior Maturity Scale** (BMS) (Kim, Anderson, & Bashaw, 1967) (see Appendix B) assesses children's academic, social, and emotional maturity. Although the BMS is a research instrument, an extensive study of an original subject pool of 500 American second grade children, from teacher observation, was used to develop the scale. The Academic Factor reflects persistent, independent, and responsible behavior. The Social Factor refers to participation, leadership and friendliness. And the Emotional Factor describes respect for others and self control (Kim, Anderson, & Bashaw, 1967). The BMS is composed of a total of 18 items, six items each in the Academic, Social, and Emotional factors. Each answer is marked on a five-point scale. Total scores ranging from 18 to 90 are the sums of the three factor scores. A high score would reflect that the child is behaviorally functioning at a high level.
of academic, social, and emotional maturity. Conversely, a child scoring low on this scale would reflect a low level of behavioral maturity.

The original form of the Behavior Maturity Scale had 42 items selected by elementary school teachers who judged each item on two points: (a) Could the item be used in valid judgment of classroom behavior? (b) Could the item be used without embarrassment to the teacher, the child, or his family? The criterion for acceptance of an item was set at 75% agreement on the validity and adequacy of the item for classroom teacher rating. A detailed process of factor analysis and elimination of items resulted in the final 18-item, three-factor form which is reported to have high factorial validity ($r = .62$ to $0.78$).

Concurrent validity of BMS was reported in a study of the relationship of the factor scores to ability and achievement (Kim, Anderson, & Bashaw, 1967). Among cross-set correlations between this scale and other sets, the correlations were low to moderate with intelligence variables ($r = .46$) and standardized achievement variables ($r = .57$) and moderate to high with grades obtained in school subjects ($r = .69$). A further study was completed by Anderson, Bashaw, Johnson and Findley (1968) on a population of 170 students in an experimental pre-primary school in which the sample of students was stratified on sex, intelligence, socio-economic status, and race. There were
58 three-year-olds, 56 four-year-olds, and 56 five-year-olds. Data was analyzed by age group. The study indicated that the same three factors are obtainable with four-year and five-year-olds. The Interpersonal and Emotional Factors also emerged in analyses of data with three-year-old children but the Academic Factor lacked definition at that age level.

Normative and partial validity were reported following rating of the 18 items by 293 teachers (Anderson, Bashaw, Kim, & Leton, 1969). The subjects for the validity study consisted of 293 teachers enrolled in summer courses in a College of Education. The teachers used a seven-point scale to rate all of the 18 items with regard to characteristics first of Desirability, then Importance, then Frequency, and lastly, contribution to maturity. As indicated by the teacher's ratings of the items in relation to four characteristics, the lowest mean ratings on any item using a seven-point scale was 5.11 and many rating means were above 6.00. Indeed, 82% of the teachers rated five points or above reflecting positive attitudes toward these items. The results of this study indicated that the BMS items reflected behavior that was appropriately related to maturity in the development of young children. The use of the BMS insured the availability of concrete behavioral data from teachers for children's academic, social, and emotional maturity at school settings.
Collection of Data

Permissions were obtained from the 20 preschool directors to include their schools in the study (see Appendix C). The directors of the 20 preschools involved in the study provided a list of the children between the ages of four and five years enrolled in the schools, a total of approximately 450 children. The parents of these four- and five-year-olds children in each school then received a sign-up sheet (see Appendix D) and a letter explaining the purposes and the significance of the study (see Appendix E).

The 109 parents who agreed to participate in the study returned the sign-up sheets with the requested information including the child's name, the parent's name, home address and telephone number. The prospective participants were contacted by telephone. During the telephone call, the detailed procedures of the study were explained and questions regarding the study were answered. The date, time, and place for the researcher to deliver the questionnaires to the 109 parents at the various schools was set during the call.

Brown envelopes were hand-delivered to parents by the researcher or the teachers at each preschool. As each volunteer parent arrived, she or he was given an envelope of materials to complete within a week. The envelopes included a notation that the forms were to be completed by
the primary caretaker of the child, a consent form (see Appendix F), a personal demographic sheet (see Appendix G), directions for completing the questionnaires (see Appendix H), the instruments (PSI & PAS), and a notice (see Appendix I) informing them of the time, date and place the researcher would be at the preschool to collect the completed questionnaires in person. Tests were placed in the envelopes in random order to reduce or equalize the possible influence one test might have on the participant's responses to the other tests. Subjects wanting a copy of the results of the study could use the index card included in the envelopes to place their names and addresses, indicating that they would like to be mailed a copy of the completed abstract.

Three days following the delivery of the questionnaires, postcards (see Appendix J) printed in advance with individually typed names and individual signature were sent to all parents involved in the study reminding them of the date, time, and place for the collection of the completed instruments. Sixty parents returned the questionnaires by the deadline date.

Two days following the date for collection of data, a follow-up letter (see Appendix K) was sent to 49 parents who had not returned the questionnaires. Fifteen questionnaires were returned after the first follow-up letter. Three days later, a second follow-up letter was
sent to 34 parents who had not returned the questionnaires. After the second follow-up letter, six more questionnaires were returned. Three days later, other ways of collecting data such as self-addressed envelope with stamp, telephone call, and home visit were used to attempt to collect data from the remaining 28 parents who failed to return the questionnaires. As a result of these final data-collection efforts, 10 more questionnaires were returned.

Although 109 parents signed up to participate, only 91 of them returned their questionnaires to the researcher. All of the instruments returned met the criteria for the study. No additional follow-up procedure was attempted with the remaining 18 parents because the minimum number of 85 questionnaires required for the study had been obtained.

The teachers of the children whose parents agreed to participate in this study were asked to rate the children's academic, social, and emotional maturity on the BMS. A letter explaining the purposes of the study, instructions for rating children, and the time and place to return the completed rating data was sent to them at the same time the envelopes containing instruments to be completed were delivered to the parents (see Appendix L). A training session was held in each nursery school for those teachers involved in the study to teach them how to use the instrument properly for rating their students, and to remind them to be cautious in interpreting the rating results of
their students. The issue of confidentiality was also discussed in the session. Twenty-one teachers from 20 different schools were involved in the ratings. All data for the study was gathered within a nine-week period.

Upon receipt of the PSI, PAS, and BMS, the answer sheets were transferred to the worksheets for computer scoring and analysis at the computing center in the North Texas State University.

Limitations

It is recognized that the findings in this study may not be broadly generalizable because of the possible bias of a volunteer sample. Volunteer subjects are likely to be a biased sample of the target population since volunteers have been found in many studies to differ from nonvolunteers (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1975). Appropriate caution should be utilized in making generalization to samples drawn from populations different from the one used in the present study. Correlational coefficients of this study cannot be used to determine cause-and-effect relationships, although they may be used to explore or predict relationships among those variables (Borg & Gall, 1983).
References


CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the analysis of data, the findings of this investigation, discussions of related findings, and recommendations based upon the findings.

Analysis of Data

Hypothesis 1 was tested using a canonical correlation to determine the relationship between parent's scores on the two subscales of the Parental Stress Index and the five subscales of the Parental Attitude Survey. The .01 level of significance was used as a basis upon which to judge statistically significant findings for the canonical correlation.

Hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested by the multiple linear regression technique to determine the degree of linear dependence of the child's behavioral maturity, as measured by the total score on the Behavior Maturity Scale, on the independent variables of parental stress level and parental attitudes. The .05 level was established as the level of significance.

Demographic Information

Ninety-one primary care-taking parents, representing
91 children in this study completed demographic sheets and all questionnaires. The demographic data are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Numbers and Percentages of the Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Types</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>74.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfamily</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single or Divorced</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex of Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age of Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years old</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years old</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex of Caretaker</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>84.61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range in ages for the caretakers was 23 to 46 years with a mean of 31.10. Fourteen male primary caretakers from four different types of families participated in this study. As males assume childcare responsibilities, it is important to use the term "the chief caretaker of the child" rather than focusing singularly on the mother as the caretaker.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be no significant
relationship between measures of parental stress and parental attitude. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the scores on the Parent Domain and Child Domain Subscales of the Parenting Stress Index.

A score of 122 or more on the Child Domain is associated with children who display qualities that make the parenting role very difficult. On the Parent Domain, a score of 153 or more suggests that the sources of stress are related to dimensions of the parent's functioning (Abidin, 1983).

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the scores on the Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust Subscales of the Parent Attitude Survey. The scores range from -30 to +30 on each subscale (Hereford, 1963).

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for the Subscale Scores on the PSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Domain</td>
<td>121.13</td>
<td>24.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Domain</td>
<td>102.77</td>
<td>20.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the Subscale Scores on the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>7.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>12.08</td>
<td>7.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>15.81</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presents the overall canonical correlations obtained between the Parent Domain and Child Domain Subscales scores of PSI and the Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding and Trust Subscale scores of PAS.

Table 4

Overall Canonical Correlation Analysis of the Subscales of the PSI, and the Subscales of the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical Variable</th>
<th>Canonical Correlation</th>
<th>Squared Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>.444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wilks Multivariate Test was used to test the significance of Canonical Correlation Coefficients between the two sets of variables. The results of this test are shown in Table 5.
Table 5

Wilks Multivariate Test of Significance for the Subscales of the PSI and the Subscales of the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Approx F</th>
<th>Hypoth DF</th>
<th>Error DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.489</td>
<td>7.216</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>168.00</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The canonical correlation coefficient for canonical variables is significant at the .01 level; therefore, Hypothesis 1 is not supported.

However, because there is a significant relationship between parenting stress and parenting attitude, Tables 6 and 7 show the standardized coefficients for the dependent variables of the PSI subscales, and the standardized coefficients for the independent variables of the PAS subscales.

Table 6

Standardized Coefficients for the Dependent Variables
Parent Domain and Child Domain Subscales of the PSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical Variates</th>
<th>Canonical Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Domain</td>
<td>.5664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Domain</td>
<td>.5127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Standardized Coefficients for the Variables Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding and Trust

Subscales of the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canonical Variates</th>
<th>Canonical Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>-.7907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>-.1558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.1311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>-.4186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.1822</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The $F$-value of the Wilks Multivariate test of significance exceeded the .01 level of significance, therefore, univariate $F$-tests were used to determine the relationship between each of the subscales of the PSI and the subscales of the PAS. The results of the separate univariate $F$-tests on the Child Domain and Parent subscales of the PSI are summarized in Table 8. Predictor variables are the five subscales of the PAS.

Table 8

Univariate $F$-Tests on the Child and Parent Subscale Scores of the PSI with 5, 85 D.F.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Square Mul. R.</th>
<th>Hyp. MS</th>
<th>Error MS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSI Child</td>
<td>.393</td>
<td>2907.96</td>
<td>253.93</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI Parent</td>
<td>.402</td>
<td>4516.77</td>
<td>394.67</td>
<td>11.44</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 9 and 10 contain the results of the Backward Elimination Procedure using each of the subscale of the PSI as the dependent variables and the five subscales of the PAS as the independent variables. The T-value and the associated P obtained by Backward Elimination Procedure indicate which of the parental attitude variables relate to the Child Domain and Parent Domain of the Parental stress.

Table 9

Beta Weights, T-Value, and Significance for the Child Domain Subscale of the PSI and the Subscale of the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta Weights</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>-.4466</td>
<td>-4.959</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>-.1517</td>
<td>-1.251</td>
<td>.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>-.0014</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>-.2925</td>
<td>-3.248</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.0193</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Beta Weights, T-Values, and Significance for the Parent Domain Subscale of the PSI and the Subscale of the PAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta Weights</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>-.5609</td>
<td>-6.048</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>-.0053</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.1440</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>-.2414</td>
<td>-2.616</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.2359</td>
<td>2.567</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the Backward Elimination Procedure show that the Confidence in the Parental Role and Mutual Understanding subscales of the PAS make a significant contribution to the Child Domain Subscale of the PSI. And the Confidence in the Parental Role, Mutual Understanding, and Mutual Trust subscales of the PAS make a significant contribution to the Parent Domain subscale of the PSI.

Hypothesis 2 stated that when controlling for parental stress, parental attitude will make a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavioral maturity.

Hypothesis 3 stated that when controlling for parental attitude, parental stress will make a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavioral maturity.

Table 11 shows the mean and standard deviation of the Behavior Maturity Scale.

Table 11
Mean and Standard Deviation for the Total Score on the BMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>67.90</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To test Hypotheses 2 and 3, the SPSS Test Method within the Multiple Regression Procedure which tests the unique contribution of a variable or set of variables was used to find the contribution of Confidence, Causation, Acceptance, Understanding, and Trust Subscales of the PAS as a set to the prediction of behavioral maturity over and above the subscales of the PSI. The SPSS Test Method was also used to find the contribution of Child Domain and Parent Domain of the PSI as a set to the prediction of behavior maturity over and above the PAS. Table 12 presents the results of the SPSS Test Method. The dependent variable is children's behavior maturity.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAS Subscales</td>
<td>5,83</td>
<td>638.21</td>
<td>.5981</td>
<td>.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI Subscales</td>
<td>2,83</td>
<td>1698.22</td>
<td>3.9787</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PAS variables are not significant at the .05 level indicating that when controlling for parental stress, parental attitude does not make a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavioral maturity. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.
The variables of Parenting Stress are significant at the .05 level of significance showing that when controlling for parental attitude, parental stress makes a unique, significant contribution to the prediction of children's behavior maturity. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 13 presents the Beta Weights, T-Values, and significance of the variables of Parenting Stress and Parenting Attitude in the regression equation.

Table 13
Beta Weights, T-Value, and Significance for the Full Model Variables in the Regression Equation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta Weights</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Domain</td>
<td>.1829</td>
<td>1.133</td>
<td>.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Domain</td>
<td>-.4418</td>
<td>-2.757</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>.1588</td>
<td>1.067</td>
<td>.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>-.2208</td>
<td>-1.410</td>
<td>.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.0554</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>.0170</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.0662</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>.645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 shows that Child Domain of the PSI is the only variable that significantly contributes to the children's behavior maturity. Table 14 shows that when using Backward Elimination Procedure, the Child Domain of the PSI was still the only variable showing significance in the regression equation.
Table 14

Beta Weights, T-Value, and Significance for the Full Model Variables in the Regression Equation Using Backward Elimination Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta Weights</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Domain</td>
<td>.1525</td>
<td>1.064</td>
<td>.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Domain</td>
<td>-.3307</td>
<td>-3.306</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>.0619</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causation</td>
<td>-.0822</td>
<td>-.704</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.0674</td>
<td>.618</td>
<td>.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>-.0247</td>
<td>-.219</td>
<td>.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.0845</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 shows the correlations among the variables of parenting attitude and children's behavior maturity.

Table 15

Correlation of the Subscale Scores on the PAS and the Total Scores of the BMS, N = 91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conf</th>
<th>Caus</th>
<th>Accept</th>
<th>Unders</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Behavior Maturity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conf</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caus</td>
<td>.591</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.604</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.689</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unders</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.604</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>.477</td>
<td>.689</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Maturity</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 shows the correlations among the variables of
parenting stress and children's behavioral maturity.

Table 16
Correlation of the Subscale Scores on the PSI and the Total Scores of the BMS, N = 91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child Domain</th>
<th>Parent Domain</th>
<th>Behavior Maturity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Domain</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>-.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Domain</td>
<td>.717</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Maturity</td>
<td>-.313</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

This study examined the relationship among parenting stress, parenting attitude, and preschoolers' behavior maturity and found that although a significant relationship exists between parental stress and parental attitude, only parental stress is predictive of the child's behavioral maturity. The parent's lack of confidence in the parental role, the parent's belief that children should be seen and not heard, and a parent-child relationship of suspicion and deceit were found to contribute significantly to parental stress in this study.

The finding that a significant relationship exists between parenting stress and children's behavior, supports the contention that reducing parenting stress would be an important step in helping children and families
The significant relationship between parenting stress and parenting attitude found in this study indicates that changing parenting attitudes could be an effective way to work with parents to reduce levels of stress. Abidin (1983) stated that parents lacking confidence need much emotional support as they receive parenting education because they have a tendency to feel overwhelmed by the problems of their children, and these feelings may be intensified by parenting education. It is critical that parenting education be taught to ensure that the specific needs of parents for changing parenting attitudes and reducing parenting stress are met. For example, parents who feel inadequate, unsure, and believe they could not be good parents need specific help to feel sure in the parental role, adequate to meet the demands of parenthood, and less concerned about the difficulties of the parent-child relationship. Parents who believe that children should be seen and not heard can be helped to learn how to communicate their feelings and problems. Parents who see children merely as extensions of themselves, not as individuals in their own right can learn that children are unique individuals and can be trusted.

The finding that parenting attitude is not significantly related to children's behavioral maturity
disputes the research findings of Andersland (1967), Martin (1983), Stollack, Messe, Michaels, Buldain, Catlin and Paritee (1982), and Wyler, Masuda, and Holmes (1971) that parental attitudes are influential in the children's development and adjustment to life. Although this finding contradicts most research in the area of parental attitudes and child's behavioral maturity, it seems to be in agreement with the Adlerian viewpoint that adults provide the atmosphere within which children make their own decisions about how they will approach life tasks. Children have the creative power to decide what to do with their lives within the limits of heredity and environment (Corsini & Manaster, 1982). This belief in the creative power of an individual (Adler, 1930; Ansbacher, 1983; Corsini & Manaster, 1982) is one possible explanation for the lack of a significant relationship between parental influence and children's behavioral maturity. In addition, the timetable differences of children's natural maturity development (Elkind, 1981; Gesell, 1940; White, 1975) could contribute to the non-significant finding of this study. Preschool children represent a wide range of academic, social, and emotional maturity.

The researcher would like to posit another explanation which might account for the nonsignificant findings. Although the instruments which were used in this study showed a great deal of promise in other studies reviewed,
they might not have been as effective in soliciting meaningful responses from the unique population studied in this investigation (Borg & Gall, 1983; Ferguson, 1981).

Another explanation for the lack of significant relationship could be generated from the processes in which teachers rate their children. This rating consisted of the teacher's evaluation of the overall maturity of the child in the classroom setting. The disadvantage of this teacher-rating method was the lack of assurance that all the teachers used the same frame of reference in measuring adjustment, even though guidelines for evaluating maturity in the classroom setting had been made clear in the instructions issued to them (Hereford, 1963). Some teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the forced distribution (each answer is marked on a five-point scale), as they were reluctant to assign the lower ratings to any of the children in their classes.

The score on the BMS can range from 18 to 90 with a mean of 54. A score of 69 or more would indicate a strong feeling on the part of the teacher that this child is very mature (White, 1977). The mean of BMS on the sample in this study is 67.90 with a standard deviation of 15.22. The higher than average ratings may reflect the teacher's expressed reluctance to assign lower ratings to the children.

Failure to find a significant relationship between parenting attitude and preschoolers' behavior maturity may
be related to the length of time children spend in the preschool. The children who were involved in this study spent most of their time in preschools interacting with their teachers and peers. The time they interacted with their parents was much less than the time they spent in the preschool settings. The importance of teacher and school influence could be another factor which might be significantly related to preschoolers' behavior maturity.

Corsini and Manaster (1982) stated that the creation of the lifestyle is affected by environment, especially the family and parent. But, it is unlikely that all parents can be reached and sufficiently taught in parenting education so that all children have the opportunity of developing their lifestyles in a faultless environment. The best opportunity for remediating faulty lifestyles of children therefore is through the schools.

Adler (1930) also addressed his position regarding the importance of children's education. Adler (1930) stated that an educator's most important task is to see to it that no child is discouraged at school, and that a child who enters school already discouraged should be able to regain confidence in self through the school and the teacher.

The importance of school influence may reveal the important role teachers quietly play in the lives of children and help us to recognize the value and the specialness of teachers. Teachers have a special opportunity
to help develop human potential and consequently a better society.

The significant relationship between Child Domain of the PSI and children's behavior maturity revealed the sources of parenting stress related to children's behavior maturity are the characteristics of the child which make it difficult for parents to fulfill their parenting role. These characteristics are associated with the child's inability to adjust to changes in the physical or social environment, the child's possession of those physical, intellectual and emotional characteristics which do not match the parent's hoped-for child, the child's overdemandingness which the parents feel placed upon them, the child's depression displayed as frequently cries and showing no signs of happiness, the child's many behaviors found in the Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity, the child's failure of being a source of positive reinforcement for the parents (Abidin, 1983).

The characteristics of the parent which limit parental functioning are other sources for parenting stress, according to Abidin (1983). These characteristics including parent's depression, parent's attachment, parent's sense of competence, social isolation, spouse relationship, or health are not found significantly related to children's behavior maturity. An explanation for the lack of significant relationship between these variables may be
related to Elkind's statement (1981) that how a child responds to stress depends upon several different factors, including the child's perception of the stress situation, the amount of stress the child is under, and the availability of effective coping mechanisms. Thus, how a child respond to stress is, in part, an individual matter. The stress that will cause one person to fall apart will strengthen another person's resolve. Predicting the responses of children to stress is not an easy matter.

Since the parent's parenting attitude and stress level seemed to account for only a small portion of the preschoolers' behavior maturity, other variables must contribute more significantly to preschoolers' behavioral maturity. Additional research using path analysis may permit a better understanding of the causal network and directionality of the relationship among parental stress, parental attitude, and behavioral maturity. Longitudinal research should also be conducted, because there is a dearth of valid information concerning the long-term effects of these variables.

According to the results of this study, child counselors who are concerned with helping children who are experiencing adjustment difficulties or behavioral immaturity should be advised to work directly in a counseling relationship with the preschoolers rather than depending completely on the parenting education or adult
counseling. Children often do know what they want and are capable of weighing alternatives and of acting on the decisions they make. If counselors approach each child client as competent, then the counselor will be more likely to accord the child his or her right to be taken seriously (Long, 1981).
References


APPENDIX A

PARENT ATTITUDE SURVEY
PARENT-ATTITUDE SURVEY

Instructions

On the following pages are a number of statements regarding parents and children. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement in the following manner:

- Strongly Agree: --cross out letter "A"
- Agree: --cross out letter "a"
- Undecided: --cross out letter "u"
- Disagree: --cross out letter "d"
- Strongly Disagree: --cross out letter "D"

For example: if you strongly agree with the following statement, you would mark it in this way:

Boys are more active than girls  \xrightarrow{\text{A}} a u d D

This survey is concerned only with the attitudes and opinions that parents have; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Work just as rapidly as you can -- it is your first impression that we are interested in. There is no time limit.

REMEMBER . . . . . . . . . . . A = Strongly Agree
a = Agree
u = Undecided
d = Disagree
D = Strongly Disagree

1. Parents have to sacrifice everything for their children.  A a u d D

2. Parents should help children feel they belong and are needed.  A a u d D

3. Taking care of a small baby is something that no woman should be expected to do all by herself.  A a u d D

4. When you come right down to it, a child is either good or bad and there's not much you can do about it.  A a u d D
5. The earlier a child is weaned from its emotional ties to its parents the better it will handle its own problems.

6. Most of the time giving advice to children is a waste of time because they either don't take it or don't need it.

7. It is hard to let children go and visit people because they might misbehave when parents aren't around.

8. Fewer people are doing a good job of child-rearing now than 30 years ago.

9. With all a child hears at school and from friends, there's little a parent can do to influence him.

10. If a little girl is a tomboy, her mother should try to get her interested in dolls and playing house.

11. The earlier a child is weaned from its emotional ties to its parents the better it will handle its own problems.

12. If children are quiet for a while you should immediately find out why.

13. It's a rare parent who can be even-tempered with the children all day.

14. Psychologists now know that what a child is born with determines the kind of person he becomes.

15. One reason that it is sad to see children grow up is because they need you more when they are babies.

16. The trouble with trying to understand children's problems is they usually just make up a lot of stories to keep you interested.

17. A mother has a right to know everything going on in her child's life because her child is a part of her.
18. Most parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children.

19. A child may learn to be a juvenile delinquent from playing games like cops and robbers and war too much.

20. There is no reason why a child should not learn to keep his clothes clean very early in life.

21. If a parent sees that a child is right and the parent is wrong, they should admit it and try to do something about it.

22. A child should be allowed to try out what it can do at times without the parents watching.

23. It's hard to know what to do when a child is afraid of something that won't hurt him.

24. Most all children are just the same at birth; it's what happens to them afterwards that is important.

25. Playing with a baby too much should be avoided since it excites them and they won't sleep.

26. Children shouldn't be asked to do all the compromising without a chance to express their side of things.

27. Parents should make it their business to know everything their children are thinking.

28. Raising children isn't as hard as most parents let on.

29. There are many things that influence a young child that parents don't understand and can't do anything about.

30. A child who wants too much affection may become a "softie" if it is given to him.
31. Family life would be happier if parents make children feel they were free to say what they think about anything.

32. Children must be told exactly what to do and how to do it or they will make mistakes.

33. Parents sacrifice most of their fun for their children.

34. Many times parents are punished for their own sins through the bad behavior of their children.

35. If you put too many restrictions on a child, you will stunt his personality.

36. Most children's fears are so unreasonable it only makes things worse to let the child talk about them.

37. It is hard to know when to let boys and girls play together when they can't be seen.

38. I feel I am faced with more problems than most parents.

39. Most of the bad traits children have (like nervousness or bad temper) are inherited.

40. A child who misbehaves should be made to feel guilty and ashamed of himself.

41. Family conferences which include the children don't usually accomplish much.

42. It's a parent's duty to make sure he knows a child's innermost thoughts.

43. It's hard to know whether to be playful rather than dignified with children.

44. A child that comes from bad stock doesn't have much chance of amounting to anything.

45. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible.
46. There's a lot of truth in the saying, "children should be seen and not heard."

47. If rules are not closely enforced children will misbehave and get into trouble.

48. Children don't realize that it mainly takes suffering to be a good parent.

49. Some children are so naturally headstrong that a parent can't really do much about them.

50. One thing I can't stand is a child's constantly wanting to be held.

51. A child's ideas should be seriously considered in making family decisions.

52. More parents should make it their job to know everything their child is doing.

53. Few parents have to face the problems I find with my children.

54. Why children behave the way they do is too much for anyone to figure out.

55. When a boy is cowardly, he should be forced to try things he is afraid of.

56. If you let children talk about their troubles they end up complaining even more.

57. An alert parent should try to learn all his child's thoughts.

58. It's hard to know then to make a rule and stick by it.

59. Not even psychologists understand exactly why children act the way they do.

60. Children should be toilet-trained at the earliest possible time.

61. A child should always accept the decision of his parents.
62. Children have a right to activities which to not include their parents.

63. A parent has to suffer much and say little.

64. If a child is born bad there's not much you can do about it.

65. There's no acceptable excuse for a child hitting another child.

66. Children should have a share in making family decisions just as grown-ups do.

67. Children who are not watched will get in trouble.

68. It's hard to know what healthy sex ideas are.

69. A child is destined to be a certain kind of person no matter what the parents do.

70. It's a parent's right to refuse to put up with a child's annoyances.

71. Talking with a child about his fears most often makes the fear look more important than it is.

72. Children have no right to keep anything from their parents.

73. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job.

74. Some children are just naturally bad.

75. A child should be taught to avoid fighting no matter what happens.

76. Children don't try to understand their parents.

77. A child should never keep a secret from his parents.
APPENDIX B

BEHAVIORAL MATURITY SCALE
### BEHAVIORAL MATURITY SCALE

*(Pre-School Form)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Number</th>
<th>A F Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Number</td>
<td>S F Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Number</td>
<td>E F Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Number</td>
<td>Total Score</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student's Name**

Age: ___ Years ___ Mouths ___

**Teacher's Name**

Date _______________________

**Observer's Name (If not teacher)**

School ______________________

**Observer's Comments:**

---

**By**

Tung Ho Kim

Research & Development Center
in Educational Stimulation
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia
1. The child can play alone for a period of time without requiring supervision.
never 1 2 3 4 5 always

2. The child returns to a task unfinished from previous day and develops it.
never 1 2 3 4 5 always

3. The child carries activities to completion.
very rarely 1 2 3 4 5 very often

4. The child carries out brief individual assignments in school without supervision.
never 1 2 3 4 5 very often

5. The child looks at books on his/her own initiative.
very rarely 1 2 3 4 5 very often

6. The child enjoys books.
not at all 1 2 3 4 5 very much
7. The child enjoys group activities.
   very little 1  2  3  4  5  very much

8. The child makes friends quickly and easily.
   never 1  2  3  4  5 definitely

9. The child takes part in games.
   never 1  2  3  4  5 very much

10. The child takes initiative at play or in the classroom.
    never 1  2  3  4  5 always

11. The child is friendly toward other people.
    not friendly at all 1  2  3  4  5 friendly always

12. The child assumes group leadership for a given activity.
    never 1  2  3  4  5 always
13. The child's remarks about others are kind; that is, he/she does not say things to hurt other's feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not kind</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very kind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. The child reacts properly to the teacher's approval or disapproval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very poorly</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>properly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. The child is inclined to sympathize rather than laugh at those in difficulty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>laughs at them</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>sympathizes with them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. The child remains calm when he/she can't get what he/she wants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. The child can lose a toy to another child with grace (fair play).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>never</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>properly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. The child knows how to take turns at talking and in the use of facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>very poorly</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

PAGE THREE SUBTOTAL

Copy subtotals here page 1

page 2

page 3
APPENDIX C

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY
To Whom It May Concern:

Ching-Hui Hwang has my permission to conduct the research for her study titled, "The Relationships Among Parental Stress, Parental Attitude, and Preschoolers' Academic, Social, and Emotional Maturity" at the ____________.

June __, 1987
APPENDIX D

SIGN-UP SHEET
Sign-up Sheet

If you decide to participate in this study, please fill out this information sheet.

Child's Name: ______________________
Parent's Name: ______________________
Home Address: ______________________
Home Phone: ______________________
Dear parents:

I am a doctoral candidate of North Texas State University in the process of studying parent-child relations. I am especially interested in finding out the relationships among parental stress, parental attitude, and child's behavioral maturity in the school setting.

Your participation in this study would help me to better understand the role of the parent-child relations in the development of important early years of child's life, and will ultimately benefit parents as well as children. If you agree to be a part of this research, you will be asked to fill out some questionnaires that will require approximately one hour of your time. Your responses will be completely anonymous in order to protect your identity and to satisfy research requirements. A copy of the completed abstract of this research is available to you if you request one.

Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ching-Hui Hwang
Doctoral Candidate
North Texas State University
APPENDIX F

NOTICE OF CONSENT
Notice of Consent

I understand that I am voluntarily participating in a research project and give my permission for the collection and use of the information. I understand that, as a parent, I will be asked to complete the Parenting Stress Index and the Parent Attitude Survey, and the classroom teacher will complete the Behavior Maturity Scale rating my child's behavior. I give consent to these investigational procedures. I understand that the information is completely confidential and anonymous. The investigator is interested in finding out the group information rather than the individual result. A special identification code will be put on the questionnaire rather than the child's name. I further understand that I may withdraw my child at any time. I have read a clear explanation of the procedures and the purpose of the study. I voluntarily consent to the procedure.

Date: __________________

Parent: ________________
APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET
Demographic Data Sheet

Please complete the following information:

1. Present Age of Child ___

2. Type of Family (Please check on):

___ A. Biological family (family with both biological parents currently living together in a marriage relationship who have not been divorced or remarried since the birth of the child).

___ B. Stepfamily (family that has been expanded by the addition of a stepparent and/or stepchild/children in a remarriage relationship.

___ C. Adoptive family (family with both adoptive parents currently living together in a marriage relationship who have not been divorced or remarried since the adoption of the child).

___ D. Single parent or divorced family (a parent in the process of obtaining a divorce, or legally divorced without being remarried, who has biological child/children living in the same household).

___ E. Others. (Please describe: ______________________)

3. Please list Ages of other children living in your home.

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

4. Present Age of Mother ____ Present Age of Father ____

5. Father's Occupation ____________________________

Mother's Occupation ____________________________
APPENDIX H

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE
Instructions for Completing Questionnaire

This envelope contains two instruments for you to complete. There are no right or wrong answers; only answers that reflect your feelings and perceptions. This information will assist us in better understanding parental stress and parental attitudes. Each questionnaire includes a test administration booklet and an answer sheet. If you have questions or need assistance, please call me at 565-2066 (office) or 382-5170 (home).

Please be sure to:
1. Fill out two answer sheets completely.
2. Complete both questionnaires.
3. Complete the short demographic data sheet.
4. Complete the notice of consent.
5. Place all answer sheet, test booklets, information sheets, and notice of consent back in the envelope.
6. Return the envelope to the investigator.

If you wish to receive the results of the complete study, please place your name and address on the 3 by 5 card provided and return it to the investigator.
APPENDIX I

NOTICE FOR COLLECTING DATA
Notice for Collecting Data

Time: _________________________________

Date: _________________________________

Location: _______________________________
APPENDIX J

REMINDER FOR DATA COLLECTION
Reminder for Data Collection

Dear __________:

Please remember that (__________) is the deadline for you to return the completed questionnaires concerning the study of parental stress and parental attitudes.

I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your willingness to participate in our effort to learn more about parent and child relations.

Thank you,

Ching-Hui Hwang  
Doctoral Candidate  
North Texas State University
APPENDIX K

FOLLOW-UP LETTER
June __, 1987

Dear ______________,

Last week, two questionnaires seeking your opinion on parental stress and parental attitude, the important considerations among parents today, were sent to you. If you have already completed and returned them to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, I would appreciate your doing so soon. Because they have been sent to only a small, but representative sample of parents, it is extremely important that yours also be included in this study if the results are to accurately represent the opinions of parents from this nursery school.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ching-Hui Hwang
Doctoral Candidate
North Texas State University
APPENDIX L

NOTICE TO THE TEACHERS OF NURSERY SCHOOLS
June ____, 1987

Dear __________,

I am asking for your help.

Your assistance is needed in a study conducted through North Texas State University. This study is investigating the relationships among parental stress, parental attitude, and children's academic, social, and emotional maturity in the school setting. In order to obtain this valuable information, we are asking for your perceptions on the following behavior rating scale. The student whose name appears at the top of the Behavioral Maturity Scale has been enrolled in your class semester. We are interested in your perceptions of this student's behavior.

The Behavioral Maturity Scale is composed of 18 items, six items each in the Academic, Social, and Emotional factors. Each factor is rated on a five-point scale. Section I of this scale, the Academic Factor, reflects the child's persistent, independent, and responsible behavior. Section II, the Social Factor, refers to participation, leadership, and friendliness. Section III, the Emotional Factor, describes respect for others and self-control.

Your answers to the statements on this scale will be confidential, and we are not asking for your name on the scale; therefore, your answers will be totally anonymous.

If you would like to know the results of this study, please indicate on the 3 by 5 card provided and return it together with the Behavior Maturity Scale through the Director of your school to Ching-Hui Hwang at Counseling Education Dept. of North Texas State University within one week.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ching-Hui Hwang
Doctoral Candidate
North Texas State University
REFERENCES


Ware, W., & Garber, M. (1972). The home environment as a predictor of school achievement. Theory into Practice, 11, 190-195.


