

THE EFFECT OF LIKING CHILDREN ON YOUNG ADULTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREARING AND CHILDREN'S
BEHAVIOR

by

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B.A., Hollins College, 1986

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1988

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Attitudes have been widely studied in psychology and are believed to influence our expectations, perceptions, and behaviors (Mueller, 1986). In the area of child development, many studies have focused on specific childrearing attitudes (Dix & Grusec, 1985; Filsinger, 1981; Pumroy, 1966; Snyder & Patterson, 1986; Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986) and the attitudes of teachers and other adults regarding children's behaviors (Dix & Grusec, 1985). However, one seemingly basic attitude that has received little attention from researchers is an individual's tendency to like or dislike children. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people may vary markedly in their tendencies to like children. For example, how many times have you heard someone say, "I don't like kids" or "I love the little darlings" without referring to any one child in particular? The purpose of the present study was to further the development of a measure of the liking of children. Specifically, this study examined the relationship between individuals' scores on this measure and (a) their attitudes toward parenting and childrearing and (b) their perceptions of children's behavior.

Prior to describing the present study, a review of past research on adults' (typically, parents' and teachers') specific attitudes, attributions, and beliefs about children will be presented. This review will demonstrate how such perceptions may influence other important evaluations of and reactions to children. A case will then be made that an individual's general tendency to like or dislike children may, in a similar manner, influence his or her perceptions of childrearing and children's behaviors.

Factors that Influence an Individual's Attitudes Toward Children

Socio-economic status (SES) is one of the most frequently studied demographic variables associated with individuals' perceptions of children. Lower SES individuals are more likely than middle SES individuals to condemn children's behavior that is considered disrespectful to a parent or another authority. The lower a parent's social class position, the more likely he or she is to value conformity to external authority (Luster & Rhoades, 1987). This is believed to be a result of the parents' "working views" of the world: the blue collar worker must obey authority in order to survive economically, in contrast to the white collar worker who typically has more input into and control

over the job environment (Alston, 1979). Although there is some evidence that the difference between the perceptions of blue and white collar families has decreased over the last twenty years (Alwin, 1984), less educated parents may still be distinct in their view that aggression in children is acceptable and adaptive in various situations (Alston, 1979). Furthermore, it has been argued that social class may contribute more to parental values than do race, religion, national background, size of community, family size, birth order, or age of children (Kohn, 1977).

Other distinctions between lower and middle SES parents' perceptions of childrearing are associated with differences in their educational levels. For example, the more educated mother may view childrearing as especially problematic if she must switch her principal source of gratification from outside the family to within the family (Jaccoby, 1969). Furthermore, Alwin (1984) observed that well-educated parents may value self-directedness over obedience in their children. In contrast, the less-educated parents are more likely to emphasize obedience over independent thinking.

Parents come in two varieties--male and female--and "sex of parent" has also been found to influence attitudes toward one's children. For example, mothers tend to be less confident, to feel less in control of their children, and to perceive their children's behavior as more of an extension of themselves than do fathers (Frank, Jacobson, Hole, Justkowski, & Huyck, 1986). However, Chodorow (1978) found that mothers who forego or delay careers in order to care for their young children depend primarily on their competence as parents for their self-esteem. Advanced occupational status and greater marital harmony were also found to be associated with more confident parenting for both sexes.

Mothers and fathers may differ in their expectations of their children as well. In 1987, Dix and Reinhold found that fathers tend to expect more self-control from daughters than from sons, while mothers tend not to differentiate between the two sexes in their expectations for self-control. Later, both parents tend to encourage more sex-stereotyped behavior in their adolescent daughter.

The role an adult occupies in a child's life may also be important in determining his or her attitude toward the child. Alston (1979) reports that teachers

tend to rate misbehaviors which disrupt classroom activities as more serious than other misbehaviors. Teachers tend to emphasize social compatibility. Parents, on the other hand, rate moral transgressions such as lying and using foul language as more serious transgressions than disruptive, attention-seeking behaviors and as more deserving of intervention.

Another variable that has been found to be associated with an individual's view of children is that individual's prior caretaking experience. In homes with many siblings, learning to parent begins early and a comfortable familiarity with children may result. Over one million American teenagers babysit each year; a sample of adolescents' attitudes suggested that positive feelings about children is the most important motive for babysitting (Kourany & LaBarbera, 1986). Similarly, the more experience a woman has had with children, the smoother the bonding process may be (Fleming, Ruble, Flett, & Shaul, 1988). In an experiment assessing an adult's sensitivity to and accuracy in identifying an infant's cries, the amount of prior childrearing experience was associated with both the person's sensitivity and accuracy. Specifically, the more experienced individuals were better able than the less experienced individuals to

identify the emotion and circumstances behind the infant's cry. This was not delimited by gender since the non-traditional "househusband" was generally more accurate in his responses than was his working wife (Donate-Bartfield & Passman, 1985).

Childrearing experience may interact with other factors to affect parental attitudes. In one study (Ernhart, 1975), women who had delivered their first child as opposed to a later-born child displayed more authoritarian attitudes toward childrearing. Number of children may affect childrearing attitudes in yet another way. Rossi (1968) reports that an experienced parent may become more skilled in childrearing, but may enjoy later children less than their first-born. In another study (Ninio & Rinott, 1988) dealing mainly with the father's role in parenting, a positive relationship was found between the degree of involvement in an infant's care and attributions of social-cognitive competence to infants. For example, fathers who were relatively uninvolved in their infant's care tended not to realize that their child was proficient at imitation or smiling. It was also found that as a father became more responsible for his child's care, the father's opinions of his infant's

abilities became more accurate and more like the opinions of his wife.

Familiarity with the child may also affect an individual's perceptions of a child's behavior. Parents may modify their original perceptions and reactions toward their child because experience provides knowledge of what works and what does not work with a particular child (Miller, 1988). Parents must frequently assess what is going on in their children's heads-- why behaviors are occurring. If misbehaviors are a result of the situation (e.g., an older child forced the child to act), a parent may be unlikely to infer a personal disposition from the behavior (Dix, Ruble, Grusec, & Nixon, 1986). A behavior will be more likely to be attributed to a general disposition if that behavior is perceived to be typical of that child's uncoerced actions (Jones & Davis, 1965). Further, the actual act is often considered in the context of alternatives (Clifford, 1959). The perceiver asks him/herself, "What other actions were available to the actor?". If no alternatives are deemed possible, the individual action is unlikely to be attributed to a general behavior disposition. The adult who knows the child well also considers the problem-solving abilities of the child (Jones & Davis,

1965). Familiarity with a child provides an adult with more information and allows more accurate attributions to be made.

Certain aspects of the child's behavior also affect parents' perceptions. First, parents are more likely to punish acts of commission, rather than acts of omission (Dix & Grusec, 1985). That is, if a child "actively" misbehaves, the behavior is more likely to be seen as intentional and the child is more likely to be seen as cognizant of the inappropriateness of the behavior than if a child does something wrong by not acting. When the child does not offer aid to another person in distress, for example, the parent or teacher cannot know (and tends not to infer) that the child's lack of response was purposeful (Dix & Grusec, 1985).

Further, parents are more likely to respond negatively (i.e., with anger and punishment) when the child commits an act that violates values important to the child's socialization than when the wrongdoing is perceived as being unimportant to the child's moral upbringing. Parents generally do not feel the need to consider and evaluate their positive responses to a child's behavior to the same extent that they consider and evaluate their negative responses. For example, undeserved praise is typically not considered as

serious a "childrearing mistake" as is misplaced punishment (Dix et al., 1986).

In sum, various factors have been found to affect people's attitudes toward children. These variables include: the parents' socioeconomic status and educational level (Alwin, 1984; Kohn, 1967), the place an individual occupies in a child's life (Alston, 1979), the parents' problem-solving abilities (Shorkey et al., 1985), the gender of the parent (Chodorow, 1978), the adult's prior childrearing experience (Donate-Bartfield & Passman, 1985), the adult's familiarity with the child (Dix et al., 1986), and the child's particular characteristics and behaviors (Dix & Grusec, 1985). Next, literature will be reviewed that suggests that adult attitudes about and perceptions of children may be associated with other important childrearing attitudes and behaviors.

Adult Attitudes That May Influence Other Childrearing Attitudes and Behaviors

A particularly harmful characteristic of certain individuals is their tendency to physically abuse children. A belief set that may contribute to abusive behaviors is the unrealistically high expectations that some parents have concerning the capabilities of their young children (Azar, Robinson, Hekimian, & Twentyman,

1984). First, abusive parents have been found to lack knowledge concerning typical developmental milestones. For example, abusive parents may expect their children to walk or talk at an earlier age than does the non-abusive parent. The notion that abusive parents have unrealistically high expectations for their children was supported by clinical observation (Oates, Davis, Ryan, & Stewart, 1979), but not by carefully controlled research using maltreating, neglectful, and control mothers (Azar et al., 1984). Azar and Rohrbeck (1986) further explored the expectations of abusive parents. Their research assessed expectations concerning more complex chains of children's behaviors rather than expectations concerning single acts or particular developmental milestones. In this study, significant differences were found between abusive mothers and mothers who did not abuse. For example, whereas an abusive mother was likely to indicate that her five-year-old daughter was expected to do the family laundry, the non-abusive mother considered this task too difficult for a child of this age. Furthermore, when the abusive mother's unrealistic expectations were not met, she often became frustrated, hurtful, and neglectful in response to the child (Azar et al., 1984).

A second belief set of abusive parents is a tendency to attribute their child's behavior to a behavioral disposition rather than to an external cause. In essence, abusive parents tend to read too much into their children's behavior. For example, abusive parents are said to interpret certain age-appropriate behavior as "willful disobedience" or as intentionally opposing the parent (Helfer & Kempe, 1976). Although Rosenberg and Reppucci (1983) did not find a difference in attributions between abusive and non-abusive mothers, the bulk of research (as reviewed by Helfer & Kempe, 1976) has found that abusive parents are more likely than other parents to attribute a child's misbehavior or negative affect to a generalized disposition. This tendency to infer an internal state is especially striking when a previously identified abusive mother states emphatically, "See how mad she is," (p. 75) when viewing her just-born infant's grimacing face (Helfer & Kempe, 1976).

This tendency to attribute a child's behavior to a behavioral disposition has also been found to a lesser degree in non-abusive parents. Adults selectively attend to particular behaviors of children depending on the context, the adults' understanding of the task, and the adults' previous experience with children (Adamson,

Bakeman, Smith, & Walters, 1987). The external situation which contributes to a child's behavior is considered to be crucial by the impartial observer, especially since children tend not to have much power in their social environments (Dix & Grusec, 1985). Surprisingly, parents may frequently underestimate the impact of a situational context on a child's behavior. In one study (Dix et al. 1986), each parent read three stories about hypothetical children either misbehaving, failing to be altruistic, or behaving properly. Parents appeared to ignore constraints on children's behavior from external pressures. These parents viewed misconduct resulting from a lack of knowledge to be more intentional than it actually was because the adults equated self-control with effort, not ability. They, in essence, ignored the inability of the children to be able to handle the external pressures. This failure to consider circumstances may cause some parents to view their children's wrongdoing as more purposeful (and their children as less "ideal specimens") than do those parents who take situational pressures into consideration to a greater extent.

Another factor to be considered when judging a child's behavior should be that child's abilities and developmental stage (Dix & Grusec, 1985). A majority

of parents do not expect the younger child to foresee the possible outcomes of his or her behavior to the same extent as they do with an older child (Dix, 1985). Even though a child's behavior is mediated by knowledge and ability, some parents fail to take this into consideration when judging the child's behavior as either appropriate or inappropriate (Heath, 1977). When a group of parents observed various children in a laboratory situation, these particular individuals thought the behavior of older children was no more internal, stable across time, or generalizable across situations than was the behavior of younger children. These same individuals failed to attribute misconduct on the part of the younger child to a lack of self-control or knowledge of what is appropriate. The authors interpreted these as inappropriate attributions (Dix et al., 1986). Individuals who make inappropriate attributions may conclude that a particular misbehavior is representative of a child's personality when the behavior is, in fact, a result of a lack of knowledge, ability, or the skill to withstand environmental pressures. Because the parent or adult observer has labeled the child as possessing a "bad child," the child will be more likely to be punished or reprimanded than a child who has been labeled as a "good child," --

even if the two children were to behavior similarly at a later time.

The child's characteristics also influence the adult's behavior toward him or her. It is important to remember that parenting is an interaction--parents not only affect the child, but the child affects the parents (Parish, 1980). For example, an infant (e.g., a premature neonate) whose cries are particularly aversive may trigger especially quick responses and strong emotional reactions from a parent (Murray, 1985). In one intriguing study, expectant mothers were instructed to listen to infants' cries and rank them on an aversiveness scale. Each child was described by a list of adjectives prior to the women hearing the tape. A baby described as "atypical" produced stronger emotional reactions in the women (measured physiologically and by self-report) than a baby who was not so described (Frodi, 1987). Also, the child's gender may produce a myriad of sex-linked responses. In a laboratory study, parents who had only sons or both sons and daughters responded more quickly to the cries of distress of a strange child than did adults who had only daughters or no children at all. The parents with sons believed their worries over their sons' possible misbehavior caused them to be especially alert for

tragedy. They went on to state that they trusted their daughters more and felt that they were more responsible than their sons (Kronsberg, Schmaling & Fagot, 1985). In sum, the student of attitudes must not forget that reactions toward children are not made in a vacuum--perceptions of the aversiveness of a child's cry or the child's gender will likely affect the adult's reactions to that child.

Another variable affecting parents' likely reactions to children's behavior is the parents' approach to problem solving. In one study (Shorkey, McRoy, & Armendariz, 1985), the parents' problem-solving attitudes were found to be associated with the severity of their disciplinary techniques. Specifically, mothers who were more likely to use low intensity punishments (characterized by a lack of anger and harshness) scored significantly higher on problem-solving and rational beliefs scales than did mothers who scored lower on problem-solving measures. Shorkey and his colleagues (1985) suggest that some parents' ability to generate alternative disciplinary solutions may enable them to avoid using high intensity punishments. It is believed that a parent's choice of discipline reflects his or her underlying attitude toward children. For example, if a parent chooses to

employ reasoning as a discipline method, then this would appear to reflect the belief that children are capable of self-reflective thought. If the parent chooses punishment alone, however, this choice likely reflects the belief that children are neither particularly thoughtful nor able to control their own behavior (Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986).

Another variable on which parents differ from one another is the preference for either the internalization of norms or immediate compliance to instructions (Turner & Harris, 1984). Reasoning with the misbehaving child tends to promote the internalization of norms more so than does the use of a punishment-and-reward mode of discipline. If the parent prefers immediate compliance, he or she may choose a discipline method which does not encourage the internalization of norms (Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986).

More specific labels have been given to certain clusters of disciplinary methods. Authoritarian parents tend to emphasize external rather than internal control of the child. They rarely use verbal reasoning in discipline and tend not to provide a model of the type of cognitive behavior that promotes internalization of linguistic controls and verbal mediation activity--the definition of the democratic

parent. Linguistic controls and verbal mediation are synonymous with the mental "voices" which remind children of the rules of society in the form their parents have given them (Camp, Swift, & Swift, 1982). Cross-cultural research has shown that democratic families that allow the children to participate in family decisions but also hold parents as the final authority produce children with more extensive moral internalization than families in which the children are not allowed to take part in family decisions (Filsinger, 1981). In one relevant study, the preschool children of nonauthoritarian mothers scored higher on a test measuring value internalization than did the children of authoritarian parents (Camp et al., 1982). Thus, the parent's attitudes toward authority in the home are associated with their approach to discipline and the values they hope to impart to their children.

What the parent desires or expects from the child constitutes another set of attitudes that may affect their other reactions to the child. First, the parent may be concerned with either the prescriptive or the proscriptive aspects of behavior. As defined by Olejnik and McKinney (1973), the prescriptive rules emphasize doing good acts, while the proscriptive rules

of behavior emphasize avoiding misbehavior. For example, the parent concerned with the former rule would be especially likely to praise a child for good behavior while the latter would emphasize punishing the child for transgressions. The proscriptive parent is not likely to praise the child's good behavior, typically believing that "it is best to leave well enough alone". The mother who believes that babies can be spoiled by too much affection and praise will provide less of a supportive environment than a mother who believes praise is a good thing (Luster & Rhoades, 1987). Research (Olejnuk & McKinney, 1973) has shown that prescriptive and proscriptive parents may not differ markedly in their disciplinary choices. The distinction is rather one of value orientation and attitudes toward children. Prescriptive and proscriptive orientations do, however, affect how much attention and affection is shown to the child--again, an attitude influencing the parent's behavior.

Families as a whole have also been described according to the belief structure held by the group. The patriarchal family is delineated by traditional roles. In the patriarchal family, the father tends to see childrearing as the mother's duty and is relatively uninvolved with his children. Both parents tend to see

the child as more of an intrusion in the patriarchal family than in the egalitarian family. In the more egalitarian family, both parents tend to share parenting tasks and the child is generally viewed more favorably (Peery, Jensen, & Adams, 1986). In another study concerned with political attitudes, the predominantly conservative mothers were more inclined than liberal mothers to either dominate, reject, or indulge their children. Although education and social class may be a mediator of this political differentiation, it appears that even the political attitudes of parents may influence their attitudes and behavior toward their children (Boshier & Izard, 1972).

Finally, parents often tend to view their child's behavior as a reflection of their own self-worth (Frank et al., 1986). The more similar the parent perceives the child to be to him or herself, the less the child is perceived as a burden and the more positive the parent-child interactions tend to be (Schaefer, Bell, & Bayley, 1959).

In sum, this section of the paper has discussed several adult attitudes which have been found to be associated with other childrearing attitudes and behaviors. These attitudes include: unrealistically high expectations for the child (Azar et al., 1984;

Oates et al., 1979), the attitude that a child's behavior reflects an inner disposition (Helfer & Kempe, 1976; Rosenberg & Reppucci, 1983), the parents' perceptions of their child's abilities and development (Dix, 1985; Dix & Grusec, 1985; Dix et al., 1986), the parent's preconceived attitudes toward the child's gender and physical characteristics (Frodi, 1987; Kronsberg et al., 1985; Murray, 1985), the parent's perceptions of the ideal child (Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986), and the political beliefs of parents (Boshier & Izard, 1972). However, a cautionary note should be made. Although this section of the paper has suggested that parent's attitudes may affect their behavior toward their children, particularly in the matter of discipline, this is only an inference. Certainly, the implied causal relationship between attitude and behavior has not been proven. It may not only be the case that attitudes affect behavior, but behavior may also affect attitudes.

The research reviewed in this and the previous section has contributed greatly to our knowledge about adults' particular attitudes, attributes, and beliefs about children. However, attitudes such as authoritarianism and conservatism are very specific in their focus. An examination of the general attitude of

liking children may have broader implications for how adults perceive and react to children.

General Attitudes Toward Children

Attitudes, as shown above, have been widely studied in the area of child development. Although most studies have dealt with specific attitudes, only limited attempts have been made to examine the general liking of children. A favorable attitude toward children has been mentioned as a motive for babysitting (Kourany & LaBarbera, 1986) and as an aspect of traditional femininity according to the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974). In both cases, however, the general liking of children was assessed with a single questionnaire item.

The study most relevant to a general liking of children was one performed in the late nineteen sixties. Howard Moss (1967) gathered data from a group of women approximately two years before their children were born and then at intervals after their children were born. In the early data gathering session, the women were asked how they viewed infants in general. According to Moss (1967),

"the degree that the baby is seen in a positive sense assesses the extent to which the subject views a baby as gratifying, pleasant, and non-burdensome.

In discussing what she imagines an infant to be like she stresses the warmer, more personal and rewarding aspects of the baby and anticipates these qualities as primary" (p. 31).

When the baby was three weeks old and again, at three months, the mother's responsiveness to her child's distress was measured. Moss (1967) found that a mother's responsiveness was associated with her liking of infants as assessed two years earlier. As in the Kourany and LaBarbara (1986) and Bem (1974) studies, however, a standardized measure of liking was not used. Further, the focus of Moss's (1967) study was restricted to infants rather than to children more generally. Because of these concerns, the Barnett Liking of Children Scale (BLOCS) was developed to assess individuals' general evaluation of children. Development and Preliminary Testing of the Barnett Liking of Children Scale (BLOCS)

The purpose of this section is to describe the development and initial testing of a measure of liking of children. Although past research has focused on specific attitudes toward children, there is a need to study a general attitude that might be associated with a broad range of beliefs about children and

childrearing. The BLOCS was designed to be such a measure.

The BLOCS requires subjects to rate on a seven-point scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with 14 brief statements (see Appendix A). These items were constructed by the child development research group at Kansas State University and were carefully screened to minimize ambiguity. Further, the BLOCS was constructed so that an evaluation of children, rather than an evaluation of infants, was taking place. A general reaction to infants was avoided in our measure because of the suspicion that infants are perceived as helpless, cute, and inherently lovable by most individuals. Even if this suspicion was incorrect, it still seemed more socially acceptable for an individual to admit to a general disliking of older children than to the same evaluation of infants.

The scale includes ten statements of positive evaluations of children in various situations and performing several behaviors. Also, four items (numbers 3, 6, 10, and 13) were keyed in the negative direction in order to prevent an acquiescence response set.

In an initial investigation involving 93 undergraduates (46 males and 47 females), subjects were

asked to complete the BLOCS, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974), and a questionnaire inquiring about a variety of experiences and opinions considered potentially relevant to one's general attitude toward children. On the latter questionnaire, subjects completed a demographic sheet and rated the extent to which they agreed with various statements on a seven-point scale. A second group of undergraduates ($N = 46$; 27 males and 19 females) completed the BLOCS in two testing sessions (one week apart) and the Crowne and Marlowe (1960) Social Desirability Scale during the first session.

A principle components analysis of subjects' responses to the BLOCS revealed that the 14 items constitute a single-factor scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$). The test-retest reliability of the BLOCS was .91 and the correlation between scores on the BLOCS and the social desirability scale was low and insignificant ($r = .16$).

As expected, females reported a significantly greater liking of children than did males ($M_s = 80.66$ and 74.35 , respectively, $F(1, 88) = 4.53$, $p < .05$). Similarly, androgynous ($M = 81.19$) and feminine ($M = 83.56$) subjects, as determined by the Bem Sex Role Inventory, scored significantly higher on the BLOCS

than did their masculine ($M = 73.32$) and undifferentiated ($M = 71.19$) counterparts, $F(3, 88) = 5.75$, $p < .01$. Subjects from rural backgrounds, and those with a large number of siblings, also reported a heightened liking of children.

Numerous attitudes were found to be associated with the liking of children (correlations between scores on the BLOCS and ratings on the following attitudes ranged from .17 to .52, all $ps < .05$). First, a more favorable attitude toward children was related to a more favorable attitude toward having and raising children. For example, those who scored high on the liking of children scale tended to agree with statements such as "having children is more important than a career", "having children is more important than money", "having children is an important goal in my life", and "I am looking forward to being a parent". Liking of children was even related to the perceived attractiveness of pregnant women; that is, the individuals who scored higher on the BLOCS rated pregnant women as generally more attractive than did those individuals who scored lower on the BLOCS. In a similar vein, individuals who scored higher on the BLOCS were more supportive of employers providing paid

maternal and paternal leaves from work to parents of newborns than were those who scored lower on the BLOCS.

The results of the preliminary study of the BLOCS suggested that the liking or disliking of children may also be related to one's perception of children's behavior. For example, liking of children was negatively correlated with the belief that children take too much time and are too demanding. This appears to agree with Moss's (1967) finding that seeing infants in a positive light relates to viewing one's own baby as less burdensome and more gratifying.

Overview of Present Study

The preliminary research utilizing the BLOCS has thus demonstrated that individual differences do exist concerning the liking of children. Further, the liking of children was found to be related to other variables such as one's sex-role orientation and various attitudes relevant to children and childrearing. Although results of the preliminary study of the BLOCS appear promising, (a) the various attitudes about childrearing and perceptions of children's behavior were all assessed by single-item statements and (b) no assessment was made of subjects' perceptions of "real children." A logical "next step" in the development of the BLOCS was to examine the relationship between

subjects' scores on the BLOCS and (a) their beliefs about children and childrearing using a standardized attitude questionnaire and (b) their reactions to children presented in staged videotaped sequences.

This study was presented to subjects as two separate investigations conducted during a single testing session. During the "first" study, subjects were asked to complete the BLOCS, a filler scale, and a childrearing attitude questionnaire modified from Hereford (1963). During the "second" study, subjects were shown two videotapes, both depicting a male child acting alone. Whereas one child-actor engaged in some actions that might easily be interpreted as inappropriate or disobedient, the other child engaged in no obvious misbehaviors. After viewing each videotape, subjects completed a questionnaire that required them to rate the child and his behavior. The relationships between subjects' scores on the BLOCS and their (a) attitudes toward children and childrearing and (b) their perceptions of the child-actors were assessed.

In general, it was predicted that scores on the BLOCS would be positively correlated with scores on the Hereford childrearing attitude scale (i.e., liking of children was expected to be associated with more

favorable attitudes toward children and childrearing). The five subscales of this measure will be described in the Method section; specific predictions for each subscale were not made.

It was further predicted that those subjects who scored relatively high on the BLOCS would evaluate the child-actors in the "second" study more favorably than would those who scored relatively low on the BLOCS. Although it was anticipated that individuals who showed a relatively strong dislike for children would be particularly harsh in judging the behavior of the child who had engaged in some inappropriate or disobedient behavior, no specific predictions involving the two videotape conditions (i.e., "good" versus "bad" behavior videotapes) were made.

Method

A total of 146 Kansas State University undergraduates (73 males, 73 females) participated in this study in small groups.¹ General Psychology class credit was awarded to all participants. To obscure the connection that might have been made between the BLOCS and the videotape measures, subjects were told that they would be participating in two separate studies during a single session.

In the "first" study (conducted by a female experimenter), the subjects were instructed,

"The purpose of this first session is to gather data on some new scales that our research group is developing. These scales deal with attitudes toward children, parenting, and yourself. As you will recall, the sign-up sheet stated that you will participate in a second study immediately after this one. I ask that you remain seated during the break so that both experiments will run smoothly. The rationale for conducting two studies during a single session is that we have found more subjects are willing to sign up for an hour's credit than a half hour's credit. In the second study, you will be asked to watch some videotapes and complete reaction questionnaires. The second experimenter will give you more information about her study."

The subjects were then asked to sign the standard informed consent form. Next, subjects were asked to complete the BLOCS (see Appendix A), the Self-Esteem scale (see Appendix B), and a childrearing attitude scale adapted from Hereford (1963; see Appendix C). The Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) served as a filler task to obscure the true intent of the study. The Hereford scale consists of five attitude sub-scales

assessing: confidence in parenting decisions, belief in the modifiability of children's behavior, acceptance of the child as an individual, understanding of the child's needs, and trust of children.

After all of the scales had been completed, the debriefing reiterated that the purpose of the first session was to aid the researchers in developing some new scales. The subjects were thanked for their participation and told that the second experimenter would be with them shortly.

In the "second" study (conducted by a different female experimenter), all subjects were informed that, "Our research group here at Kansas State has conducted numerous laboratory studies involving young children of various backgrounds. Some of our recent investigations have studied "the effects of being alone" on children's behavior. We believe that this topic is more important today than ever before because of the high incidence of latch-key children and the decreasing size of the family in the United States. To further study this, we are going to ask you to watch two videotapes of children engaged in activities on their own. Subjects in this study will be viewing numerous tapes of children from our various studies. We have randomly

chosen two for you to watch today. We are interested in your perceptions of the children and their behavior and we ask that you view each tape carefully. We will ask you to complete a questionnaire after watching each child."

The experimenter then described the situational context of the first videotape²,

"The children in this situation were given the boring task of circling all of the letter E's on several typed pages. Each child was given instructions to work on the task for a period of fifteen minutes after which time the experimenter would return from her office on another floor. The primary purpose of this study was to determine how children handle themselves, while alone, in potentially frustrating situations. As you might expect, the children we studied reacted in different ways to this situation. As is true for all subjects in this study, you will be asked to watch a five to seven minute segment of the selected tape covering the last portion of the child's session. We have observed that these are generally the most frustrating moments for children placed in this particular setting. Please watch the videotape

closely as you will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of the tape."

The male child-actor on this silent tape was first shown working diligently on the given task. The child was seated at a table in an office. Behind the child there was a computer, a coat closet, a filing cabinet, a sink with cabinet, and a wall clock. The actor appeared increasingly bored with the task given him and he began to roam around the laboratory setting. He played rather roughly with the objects in the room and looked into the contents of the filing cabinets. Among the misbehaviors performed were: turning on the computer, banging on the computer keyboard, reading papers pulled out of the filing cabinet, putting those same papers back quite sloppily, and playing with the soap on the sink. Toward the end of the tape, he was shown glancing at the clock, apparently realizing that the experimenter was about to return, and quickly sitting down to resume the assigned task.

After viewing the videotape, the subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix D) concerning the child and his behavior. This questionnaire is composed of 22 words and phrases (e.g., likable, frustrated, deserving of praise) that are used commonly in describing young children.

Subjects were asked to circle a number from one to seven to indicate how well each term described the child-actor and his behavior. It was stressed that there are no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire and that we were simply interested in the students' opinions.

Next, the second tape was described to the subjects. The participants were told,

"This second situation was also one in which children were left alone. Children in this study were led to believe that they would be participating in a study of language development. Each child was told that the child scheduled before him or her had just begun the study. Thus, we had asked the child to remain in the waiting room for fifteen minutes until it was his or her turn to participate in the study. Actually, the real experiment was the observation of the child's behavior in the waiting room. Again, the primary purpose of this study was to assess the way in which children occupy themselves while alone. As you will soon see, there were toys and other materials available for the children in this situation. Each child was simply instructed to remain in the waiting room until called--children were told that they were

free to use any of the materials in the room while waiting their turn. Again, many children were observed in this situation. This particular tape was chosen randomly for your viewing. We ask that you watch this five to seven minute segment closely so that you will again be able to complete a questionnaire following the videotape."

This silent tape showed another boy playing alone and at his own pace. The child shown was creative and imaginative. He used his time well to explore and play with several of the toys available: a bowling game, a basketball game, toy cars, and a stuffed toy. The tape ended with the child selecting a paperback book and reading it diligently in a "waiting room" chair.

After both videotapes were viewed and both questionnaires were completed, the subjects were debriefed. The debriefing informed the subjects that, "Now that you have completed the attitude questionnaire, we can tell you more about this and the prior study. You were led to believe that you were participating in two unrelated investigations--that was not true. The first session of this study was not conducted merely to develop some new scales as stated earlier, but involved the further validation of a scale that we

have used before. This scale deals with the liking of children, the attitude of primary interest in this study. There was some additional deception involved in this study. At the outset of this session, I told you that there were many tapes of individual children participating in our prior studies when in reality there were only the tapes that we developed. These two tapes were created specifically for this research. In the first session, you completed three questionnaires. Of the three questionnaires, the first and third were crucial to this study and the second one was simply a filler scale that was included to obscure the true purpose of this investigation. The two critical questionnaires dealt with your attitudes toward children. The first questionnaire, the BLOCS scale, is a 14-item scale that measures the extent to which you like children and the other, the 66-item Childrearing Attitude Scale, measures various attitudes toward children and childrearing. One goal of this study is to explore the association between individuals' scores on the BLOCS and their scores on the childrearing measure. For example, we predict that the liking of children will be related to more understanding and confident attitudes toward

childrearing. The two videotapes you viewed in the "second study" were designed to explore the differences in the perception of children between those who score high and those who score low on the liking of children scale. For example, we expect that individuals who have more favorable attitudes toward children will rate the child-actors more positively on the list of adjectives than will those undergraduates who have less favorable attitudes towards children. Are there any questions? Thank you for your participation and please do not discuss this research with other students."

Results

The major results involved the relation between scores on the BLOCS and (a) attitudes toward children and childrearing as assessed by the modified version of the Hereford (1963) scale and (b) perceptions of children presented via videotape.

In the "first" study, females were expected to score higher on the BLOCS than males and to have more favorable attitudes about childrearing as assessed by the modified Hereford scale. Support was found for both of these expectations. Specifically, females ($M = 81.23$) scored significantly higher on the BLOCS than

did males ($\bar{M} = 72.02$), $F(1, 143) = 4.02$, $p < .01$.

Females ($\bar{M} = 111.54$) also scored higher than males ($\bar{M} = 102.07$) on the total Hereford scale, $F(1, 143) = 9.60$, $p < .01$.

The correlations between the BLOCS scores and scores on the Hereford childrearing attitudes subscales were computed separately for males and females. If the analyses had not been computed separately, any significant correlations might have reflected the fact that females scored higher than males on both indices rather than reflecting any actual association between the liking of children and attitudes toward childrearing.

Table 1 presents the correlations between scores on the BLOCS and the five Hereford subscales (and total scale) for males and females.

Insert Table 1 about here

As presented in Table 1, males' and females' scores on the BLOCS correlated significantly with their scores on three of the five subscales of the Hereford measure. Specifically, the greater the individual's liking of children, the more the individual (a) had confidence about his or her ability to raise children, (b)

believed that children's negative behaviors and characteristics are modifiable, and (c) understood children's need to express their feelings and opinions.

As discussed earlier, the purpose of the "second" study was to determine whether subjects' liking of children is associated with their ratings of children presented via videotape. Prior to conducting the critical analyses, some preliminary analyses were performed.

As noted in the Method section, subjects in Study Two rated the child-actor on each tape on 22 descriptors. To reduce the number of potential analyses, a factor analysis was performed on the responses to these descriptors. Because it seemed possible that different factor structures might emerge in response to the appropriate and inappropriate videotapes, separate factor analyses were performed on responses to these tapes. The decision was made to include on a particular factor only those descriptors that were common to the independent factor analyses. If a descriptor loaded on one factor in the Appropriate analysis, but on another factor in the Inappropriate analysis, this adjective was not included in either factor.³

The resulting four factors are presented in Table 2. Fourteen out of the twenty-two descriptors were included in the four factors. The Deceptiveness factor (Factor 1) was composed of the following descriptors: bad, deserving of punishment, deceptive, rebellious, and manipulative. The Likability factor (Factor 2) included likable, mature, attractive, happy, and deserving of praise. The factor labeled Noisiness (Factor 3) included loud and noisy. Finally, the Frustration factor (Factor 4) included the descriptors bored and frustrated. A subject's score for each factor was determined by simply adding up his or her score for each descriptor included on that factor.

Insert Table 2 about here

The presentation of the videotapes was fully counterbalanced across groups of subjects (see footnote 2). Nonetheless, to check for order (i.e., Appropriate behavior tape first and Inappropriate behavior tape second, or vice versa) and specific child-actor effects, preliminary tests on these variables were performed using the subjects' scores on each of the four factors.⁴ No consistent effects for either order or child-actor were found. Therefore, the critical set

of analyses were performed without including either order or child-actor as variables.

To incorporate subjects' degree of liking of children into the critical analyses, median splits were performed on their BLOCS scores. For males, the median split was between 72 and 73, resulting in 36 subjects falling in the low liking of children group and 36 subjects in the high liking group. For females, the median split was between 83 and 84, resulting in 38 subjects in the low liking of children group and 35 in the high liking of children group.

The factor scores for Factors 1 through 4 were then analyzed in a series of $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (Sex of Subject \times BLOCS: High versus Low Liking of Children \times Videotape: Inappropriate versus Appropriate Behavior) ANOVAs. The results for each factor will be presented in order.

For Factor 1, or the Deceptiveness factor, males ($M = 14.99$) rated the child-actors as significantly more deceptive than did the females ($M = 13.47$), $F(1, 141) = 6.70$, $p < .01$. As expected, the child performing appropriately was rated ($M = 10.01$) as significantly less deceptive than the child performing inappropriately ($M = 18.46$), $F(1, 141) = 276.77$, $p < .001$.

On the second factor, the Likability factor, main effects of Sex, BLOCS group, and Videotape were found, $F_s(1, 141) = 10.80, 6.62, \text{ and } 99.51$ respectively, $p_s < .05$. These main effects were qualified by significant interactions of Sex x BLOCS, $F(1,141) = 4.81, p < .05$, and BLOCS x Videotape, $F(1,141) = 5.59, p < .05$.

As presented in Table 3, the first interaction reflects the finding that whereas females' ratings of the child-actors' likability were not influenced by their BLOCS grouping, males in the low liking group rated the child-actors as significantly less likable than did males in the high liking group.

Insert Table 3 about here

As presented in Table 4, the second interaction reflects the finding that whereas subjects with high or low BLOCS scores did not differ in their ratings of the child on the inappropriate tape, subjects in the high liking group rated the child in the appropriate tape as significantly more likable than did subjects in the low liking group.

Insert Table 4 about here

On Factor 3, a marginal effect of BLOCS group was found, $F(1,141) = 2.83$, $p = .094$. There was a tendency for subjects in the low liking group ($M = 4.22$) to rate the child as noisier than did subjects in the high liking of children group ($M = 3.72$).

Finally, on Factor 4, a marginal effect of sex was found, $F(1,141) = 3.71$, $p = .056$. Females ($M = 9.40$) tended to rate the child-actors as more frustrated than did the male subjects ($M = 8.83$).

Discussion

In the "first" study, individuals' BLOCS scores correlated with their total Hereford scores and scores on three of the five subtests (confidence in parenting skills, belief in the modifiability of children, and understanding of children). The same pattern was found for both males and females. In general, these data support the hypothesis that a positive relationship exists between young adults' liking of children and a more favorable attitude toward childrearing.

Why was there an association between the BLOCS and these three particular subscales and not the other two (concerning "acceptance" and "trust")? The present data cannot answer this question; therefore, only speculations can be made. One reason that the acceptance subscale might not have been related to the

BLOCS is that it assesses, in part, knowledge concerning appropriate parenting behaviors rather than attitudes, per se. For example, the acceptance subscale inquires about such issues as when to toilet train, when to wean the child from the breast or bottle, and when to restrict the child's tendencies to want affection. Caretaking knowledge and expertise may be largely irrelevant to the attitude of liking children. Presumably, one could be indifferent toward children in general, yet be well educated as to the proper methods of childrearing.

The trust subscale taps, to a considerable extent, the individual's feelings concerning children thinking and acting in an independent manner. A sample item from the trust subscale (keyed in the opposite direction) is: "Parents have a right to know everything going on in their child's life because their child is a part of them". Apparently, the present subject's beliefs about how independent a child should be were not related to their liking of children. However, parental "trust" of children may have been an especially volatile issue for this college-aged sample because they, themselves, are in the process of gaining independence from their parents. Perhaps a study using somewhat older subjects would yield a significant correlation between the

liking of children and scores on the trust subscale because independence from parents may no longer be such an emotion-laden and personal issue.

There was some support for the contention that the extent to which an individual likes children is associated with his or her perceptions of children and their behavior. People who scored relatively high on the BLOCS rated the child-actors in "Study 2" as more likable, and tended to rate them as less noisy, than did people who scored relatively low on the BLOCS. The latter finding is particularly interesting because the videotapes which the subjects viewed were silent. Thus, individuals with relatively unfavorable attitudes toward children tended to rate the child-actors as especially "noisy" and "loud" even though they could not hear them.

The former finding, concerning the Likability factor, was qualified by two significant two-way interactions. First, those males who scored relatively low on the BLOCS rated the child-actors as significantly less "likable" than did either the two groups of females or those males who scored relatively high on the BLOCS. It may be the case that even those females with relatively unfavorable attitudes toward children (i.e., those in the low BLOCS group) may still

be sensitive to the fact that the children were placed alone in new and potentially difficult situations. This notion is supported by the finding that, on Factor 4, both groups of females tended to rate the child-actors as more frustrated and bored in the experimental settings than did the males. Perhaps the low BLOCS males were least likely to empathize with the children on the tape and to consider the situational constraints when judging their behavior.

The second interaction reflects the finding that whereas subjects with high or low BLOCS scores did not differ in their ratings of the child on the inappropriate tape, subjects in the high liking group rated the child in the appropriate tape as significantly more likable than did subjects in the low liking group.⁵ Clark and Isen (1982) have reported that when another person's behavior is clearly negative, the feelings of the observing individual do not markedly affect their judgment. It is only when the behavior of the other is ambiguous that the observer's affect comes into play. Extrapolating from Clark and Isen's (1982) findings to the present study, the extent to which individuals had generally favorable feelings about children (as assessed by the BLOCS) was seemingly irrelevant to their ratings of a child who

was clearly misbehaving. Individual differences in general feelings about children became more important in subjects' judgments when the child-actor's behavior was ambiguous (i.e., not clearly negative nor positive). In future research, it might be interesting to explore whether high and low BLOCS scorers differ in their ratings of a child engaging in a clearly positive behavior such as altruism or quick compliance to a parent's or teacher's request. In accordance with Clark & Isen's (1982) findings, it might be expected that high and low BLOCS scorers would again not differ in their perceptions of children engaging in unambiguous (positive) acts.

The primary goal of this study was to further the development of a measure of the liking of children. Specifically, this study examined and found some support for the notion that there is a relationship between individuals' scores on this measure and (a) their attitudes toward parenting and childrearing and (b) their perceptions of children's behavior.

A next step in the exploration of the general attitude of liking children would be to observe actual adult-child interactions. Such studies would help to determine whether relatively high BLOCS scorers interact differently with children than do relatively

low BLOCS scorers. A methodological advantage of these observational studies would be to avoid the use of self-report data (to date, all of the data concerning the BLOCS have been self-report). The age of the children involved in these studies may be an important variable as well. For example, high and low BLOCS scorers may differ more in their interactions with younger than older children. Both teachers and parents might be used in future studies because their feelings about and interactions with children presumably have a tremendous influence on children's lives. The antecedents of the liking or disliking of children are also important and, as yet, unexplored. Future research on the BLOCS should thus address not only how our general evaluation of children influences our interactions with them, but also the factors that may contribute to our tendency to like or dislike children.

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Author Notes

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to my major advisor, Dr. Mark Barnett, whose meticulous proofreading and limitless store of ideas has made this project possible. Drs. Phares and Griffit, as members of my committee were also most helpful. Also, I would like to thank the undergraduate members of the Kansas State Child Research Group who, although they seem to come and go, have been of immeasurable aid: Tiffany McMillan, Jane Grant, Jill Knust. My gratitude is also extended to the two boys, David Nichols and Damen Parker, who gave freely of their time in order to create the videotapes for this research. Many of the faculty of the Kansas State Psychology Department have been consulted for advice and I would especially like to thank Dr. Knight, Dr. Saal, and Dr. Shanteau for their analytic thoughts. Finally, I am most grateful to my husband, Kyle, whose proofreading and all-around support I could not have done without.

Footnotes

¹ One subject's data in Study 1 were incomplete; the data of a different subject in Study 2 were also incomplete. These data were excluded from that part of the analyses for which data were missing.

² There were two male child-actors who made videotapes; each was "featured" in both an appropriate and inappropriate behavior videotape. The videotapes are presented as the first and second tapes here, but were fully counterbalanced with regard to both the behavior of the actor (appropriate versus inappropriate) and the specific child-actor (child-actor 1 versus child-actor 2) during the actual experiment. Both children followed a script so that their performances would be highly similar. Subject groups were assigned to the following specific videotape conditions: Group 1 (Child 1, Appropriate behavior; Child 2, Inappropriate behavior), Group 2 (Child 1, Inappropriate behavior; Child 2, Appropriate behavior), Group 3 (Child 2, Inappropriate behavior; Child 1, Appropriate behavior), and Group 4 (Child 2, Appropriate behavior; Child 1, Inappropriate behavior).

Only male children were used as actors in this study for two reasons. First, the BLOCS statements do not refer to children by sex. We assumed that individual differences in the liking of children would, in general, tend to apply to both boys and girls. Certainly, future studies that utilize female child-actors would be useful to test this assumption. Second, we expected that the "misbehavior" displayed in the first tape would be seen as more believable coming from a boy than from a girl.

³ The author would like to thank Dr. Frank Saal for suggesting this approach and, generally, for his advice concerning the use and interpretation of factor analyses.

⁴ The author would like to thank Dr. James Shanteau for his advice concerning the proper procedures to test for order and specific child-actor effects.

⁵ For three out of the four factors, the child on the appropriate tape was rated more favorably than the child on the inappropriate tape. This suggests that the manipulation of the appropriateness of the child-actors' behavior across the two tape conditions was generally successful.

Table 1

Correlations Between Scores on BLOCS
and Hereford Childrearing Attitude Scale

<u>Subscale</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Confidence	.33**	.43**
Modifiability	.32**	.25*
Acceptance	.14	.18
Understanding	.23*	.35**
Trust	.05	.03
Total	.28**	.32**

p < .05*

p < .01**

Table 2

Factor Loadings of the Descriptors on the Child Rating Scale

	Factors							
	1		2		3		4	
	App	Inapp	App	Inapp	App	Inapp	App	Inapp
Factor 1								
bad	.79	.66	-.14	.06	.17	.13	.00	.09
deserving of punishment	.78	.58	-.16	-.16	.37	.14	.08	.04
deceptive	.56	.69	-.03	-.23	-.05	.02	-.13	.02
rebellious	.52	.61	-.20	-.12	.46	.41	.21	.02
manipulative	.41	.69	-.18	-.01	-.04	.10	.02	-.02
Factor 2								
likable	-.20	-.14	.76	.56	.02	-.15	-.10	.05
mature	-.35	-.38	.74	.60	-.09	-.04	.11	.05
attractive	.08	-.06	.70	.72	-.16	-.09	-.13	.09
happy	.04	.06	.52	.74	.19	-.06	-.39	.05
deserving of praise	-.27	-.26	.65	.70	-.03	-.08	.29	-.21
Factor 3								
loud	.18	.09	-.04	-.06	.87	.87	-.10	-.09
noisy	.17	.28	-.14	.08	.84	.82	-.02	-.01
Factor 4								
frustrated	.44	-.11	-.11	.05	.15	.24	.52	.59
bored	.35	.05	-.07	-.10	-.22	-.10	.56	.69

Table 2 (continued)

	Factors							
	1		2		3		4	
	App	Inapp	App	Inapp	App	Inapp	App	Inapp
Miscellaneous								
well-behaved	¹ -.57	¹ -.56	² .48	² .57	³ -.18	³ -.04	⁴ .22	⁴ .04
curious	.10	.03	.01	.11	-.21	-.14	.09	.68
angry	.26	.07	-.07	-.24	.32	.69	.07	.01
impulsive	.25	.23	-.26	-.26	.43	.22	.18	.31
conscientious	-.21	.03	.11	.21	.03	-.07	.64	-.02
obnoxious	.68	.49	-.18	-.21	.39	.56	.13	-.08
creative	-.11	.06	.17	.26	.06	-.05	-.07	-.19
intelligent	-.14	-.14	.81	.30	-.16	-.15	-.00	.14

Note. App refers to the appropriate behavior videotape. Inapp refers to the inappropriate behavior videotape. The descriptors are not listed here in the order of presentation, but in the order of their factor loading. The miscellaneous descriptors did not fall clearly on any single factor. The superscripts beside the miscellaneous descriptors indicate the factors on which these terms fell for either the appropriate or inappropriate tapes but not both. Eigenvalues are not included with the four factors because of this process of eliminating some adjectives from the original factors.

Table 3

Mean Scores on Likability Factor by
Sex of Subject and BLOCS Group

Sex of Subject	BLOCS Group	
	Low Liking	High Liking
Male	20.22 ^a	23.02 ^b
Female	23.45 ^b	23.67 ^b

Note. Means with different superscripts differ at $p < .05$ as determined by the Newman-Keuls test.

Table 4

Mean Scores on Likability by Videotape and BLOCS Group

Videotape	BLOCS Group	
	Low Liking	High Liking
Appropriate	23.47 ^a	25.94 ^b
Inappropriate	20.28 ^c	20.75 ^c

Note. Means with different superscripts differ at $p < .05$ as determined by the Newman-Keuls test.

Appendix A. The Barnett Liking of Children Scale(BLOCS)

Social Security Number _____ Sex: M F Age: _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling the appropriate number under each statement.

strongly disagree			neither disagree nor agree				strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

1. Watching little children play gives me pleasure.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

2. I enjoy getting to know a child.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. I do not like talking with young children.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4. I enjoy holding little children.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5. I feel happy when I make a child smile.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

6. I do not like being around children.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

7. I enjoy watching children play in a park.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

8. Time seems to go by quickly when I interact with children.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Liking of Children

65b

strongly disagree			neither disagree nor agree			strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. I like to listen to children talk to one another.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

10. Children are annoying.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

11. I enjoy trying to make a child smile.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

12. Children are likable once you get to know them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

13. It bothers me when children get loud and active.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

14. I like children.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Appendix C. The Hereford Scale

Social Security Number _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling the appropriate number under each statement.

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly
disagree | | Neither disagree
nor agree | | Strongly
agree |
-
1. When you come right down to it, a child is either good or bad and there's not much you can do about it. #

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 2. The earlier children are weaned from their emotional ties to their parents, the better they will handle their own problems.\$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 3. Giving advice to children is generally a waste of time because they often don't take it or don't need it.*

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 5. Fewer people are doing as good a job of childrearing now as they were 30 years ago. !

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Strongly agree

7. Children have a right to their own opinions and ought to be allowed to express them, just as parents express theirs. *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

8. If children are quiet for a while, you should immediately find out why. @

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. Psychologists now know that what a child is born with determines the kind of person he or she becomes. #

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

13. Parents have a right to know everything going on in their child's life because their child is a part of them. @

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

14. Most parents aren't sure what is the best way to bring up children. !

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly
disagree | | Neither disagree
nor agree | | Strongly
agree |
15. There is no reason why a child should not learn to keep his or her clothes clean very early in life. \$
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
16. If a parent comes to realize that a child is right and the parent is wrong, the parent should admit it and try to do something about it. *
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
17. A child should be allowed to try out what he or she can do at times without the parents watching. @
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
18. It's hard to know what to do when a child is afraid of something that won't hurt him or her. !
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
19. Most children are just the same at birth; it's what happens to them afterwards that is important. #
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
20. Playing with babies too much should be avoided since it excites them and they won't sleep. \$
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
21. Children shouldn't be asked to do all the compromising in a family without a chance to express their side of things. *
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
22. Parents should make it their business to know everything their children are thinking. @
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Strongly agree

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

25. A young child who wants too much affection may become a "softie" if it is given to him or her. \$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

26. Family life would be happier if parents made children feel they were free to say what they think about anything. *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

28. Parents sacrifice most of their fun for their children.!

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

30. If you put too many restrictions on a child, you will stunt his or her personality. \$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Strongly
disagree | | Neither disagree
nor agree | | Strongly
agree |
| 31. Most children's fears are so unreasonable it only makes things worse to let children talk about them. * | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. It is hard to know when to let boys and girls play together when they can't be seen. @ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Most of the bad traits children have (like nervousness or a bad temper) are inherited. # | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. A child who misbehaves should be made to feel guilty and ashamed of him/herself. \$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Family conferences which include the children don't usually accomplish much. * | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. It's a parent's duty to make sure he or she knows a child's innermost thoughts. @ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. It's hard to know whether to be playful rather than dignified with children. ! | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. A child who comes from "bad stock" doesn't have much chance of amounting to anything. # | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. A child should be weaned away from the bottle or breast as soon as possible. \$ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Strongly agree

40. There's a lot of truth in the saying, "Children should be seen and not heard." *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

41. If rules are not closely enforced, children will misbehave and get into trouble. @

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

43. Some children are so determined to do what they want that a parent can't really do much about them. #

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

44. One thing that I cannot stand is a child's constantly wanting to be held. \$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

48. Children should be forced to try things that frighten them. \$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

49. If you let children talk about their troubles, they end up complaining even more. *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Strongly disagree | | Neither disagree
nor agree | | Strongly agree |
50. An alert parent should try to learn all of his or her child's thoughts. @
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
51. It's hard to know when to make a rule and stick by it. !
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
52. Not even psychologists understand exactly why children act the way they do. #
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
53. Children should be toilet-trained at the earliest possible time. \$
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
54. A child should accept the decisions of his or her parents. *
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
55. Children have a right to activities that do not include their parents. @
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
56. A parent has to suffer a lot and say little. !
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
57. If a child is born bad, there's not much you can do about it. #
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
58. There's no acceptable excuse for a child hitting another child. \$
- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree		Neither disagree nor agree		Strongly agree

59. Children should have a share in making family decisions just as the grownups do. *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

60. Children who are not watched will get into trouble. @

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

62. It's a parent's right to refuse to put up with a child's annoyances. \$

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

63. Talking with a child about his or her fears most often makes the fear look more important than it is. *

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

64. Children have no right to keep anything from their parents. @

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

65. Raising children is a nerve-wracking job. !

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

66. Some children are just naturally bad. #

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Key: ! represents the Confidence in Parenting Skills Subscale; # represents the Belief in the Modifiability of Children Subscale; \$ represents the Acceptance Subscale; * represents the Understanding Subscale, and @ represents the Trust Subscale.

Appendix D. The Rating Scale for Videotapes

Social Security Number _____

Listed below are a number of words or phrases people commonly use in describing young children. For each term listed, please indicate on a scale from 1 to 7 how well each describes the child whom you just viewed on videotape. For example, circle the 1 below each word or phrase that is not at all descriptive of the child, and a 7 below each word or phrase that is very descriptive of the child. You should circle numbers between 2 and 6 when your attitude falls between these extremes-- using 4 as "somewhat descriptive of the child". Please make certain that you circle a number under every word or phrase.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all descriptive of the child			Somewhat descriptive of the child			Very descriptive of the child

1. likable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

2. intelligent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. mature

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4. bad

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5. attractive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

6. happy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

7. frustrated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all descriptive of the child			Somewhat descriptive of the child		Very descriptive of the child	

8. well-behaved

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

9. deceptive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

10. bored

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

11. curious

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

12. deserving of praise

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

13. manipulative

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

14. angry

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

15. loud

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

16. impulsive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

17. conscientious

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

18. obnoxious

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all descriptive of the child			Somewhat descriptive of the child		Very descriptive of the child	

19. creative

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

20. noisy

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

21. rebellious

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

22. deserving of punishment

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

THE EFFECT OF LIKING CHILDREN ON YOUNG ADULTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREARING AND CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR

by

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B.A., Hollins College, 1986

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1988

Liking of Children

Abstract

Attitudes have been widely studied in psychology and are believed to influence our expectations, perceptions, and behavior. In the area of child development, numerous studies have examined the antecedents and correlates of specific childrearing attitudes, such as those held by individuals who engage in child maltreatment and abuse. However, little is known concerning the development and influence of more general attitudes toward children. The purpose of the present study was to further validate the Barnett Liking of Children Scale (BLOCS), a 14-item measure that assesses the extent to which individuals have a favorable attitude about children.

The 145 undergraduate subjects (73 males, 72 females) were led to believe that they were participating in two separate studies. During the "first study", the subjects completed the BLOCS and a childrearing attitude measure. During the "second study", the subjects completed a reaction questionnaire after watching two videotapes in which a child played alone; two different child-actors appeared on the two tapes.

The greater the individuals' liking of children, the more the individual (a) had confidence about his or

Liking of Children

her ability to raise children, (b) believed that children's negative behaviors and characteristics are modifiable, and (c) understood children's need to express their feelings and opinions. Concerning the "second study", subjects with relatively high BLOCS scores rated the children on the videotapes as more likable, mature, attractive, happy, and deserving of praise than did individuals with lower BLOCS scores.

The primary goal of this study was to further the development of a measure of the liking of children. Specifically, this study examined and found some support for the notion that there is a relationship between individuals' scores on this measure and (a) their attitudes toward parenting and childrearing and (b) their perceptions of children's behavior. A next step in the exploration of the general attitude of liking children would be to observe actual adult-child interactions.