

1980

# Media disinformation and interpersonal intervention among teenagers.

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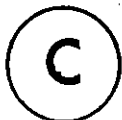
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MEDIA DISINFORMATION AND INTERPERSONAL  
INTERVENTION AMONG TEENAGERS

by



Holly Elizabeth Furtaw

A Thesis  
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of  
Communication Studies in Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Arts at  
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1980

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ABSTRACT

MEDIA DISINFORMATION AND INTERPERSONAL INTERVENTION  
AMONG TEENAGERS

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Holly Elizabeth Furtaw

## ABSTRACT

"Disinformation," a relatively new term in mass communication research, is related to the psychological theories of cognitive dissonance and discrepant information.

Previous research in these areas has concentrated on the acceptance rate of dissonant/discrepant information among subjects, virtually ignoring the variables involved in the decision.

The concept of this thesis is based on Solomon Asch's series of experiments which placed an experiment subject in a dissonant peer group situation, involving the peer group (and its influence) as a type of 'significant other.' The subject could maintain his/her own perceptions on the information or submit to the group 'pressure' (real or perceived) despite the fact that the subject believed the group opinion to be incorrect.

In modifying the Asch experiment this thesis developed as a test of a media source in the form of a popular young television character as a significant other versus an interpersonal source (a popular teacher) as a significant other. The experiment was devised so that the high school subjects would be forced to make a choice between accepting the

disinformation presented by the television character as fact or rejecting this disinformation on the basis of a casual interpersonal intervention by the teacher.

The thesis attempted to discover which psychological, sociological, demographic and other variables were involved as determinants in the selection process leading to the resolution of the dissonance created by the disinformation as presented by the television character, and the information presented by the teacher.

Experiment results show that the intervention of a popular, well-liked, interpersonal source, significantly reduced the percentage of students who accepted the media disinformation as presented by the television character.



DEDICATION

FOR MY PARENTS

Charles and Ethel Furtaw  
with love and many thanks.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the following persons who contributed to the successful completion of this project:

Robert Marchand, English Department Head, Vincent Massey Secondary School, Windsor, for assistance in providing the experiment subjects; Harold Crawford, the "teacher" in the experiment; the grades nine, ten and eleven students who served as subjects; Theo Hoffman, who aided in computer operations; Bryn Furtaw, coding and keypunching; Ethel Furtaw, proofreader; the thesis committee; and Pat Strongman, typist.

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## CHAPTER 1

### TELEVISION AND ITS YOUNG VIEWERS

#### Mass Media Use by Children and Adolescents

Researchers have monitored the use of the mass media from the days of the penny press through the heyday of radio. The inception of television expanded their horizons, and the mass media watchers lost no time in compiling volumes on the viewing habits of audiences world wide. Part of the constant audience research in Western society is due to the economics of the television industry. American firms continually survey home television sets throughout the United States and Canada to determine audience ratings (the proportion of viewers tuned into any one program out of the total potential viewing audience). These ratings are used to determine the advertising rate cards which, in turn, finance both network and local programming.

Other researchers have also been monitoring Western media habits for academic purposes. The academicians' interest in media usage is not financially motivated; rather, they are concerned with the effects of the seemingly omnipresent medium of television.

Much of the academic research has centered on the use

of television by children and adolescents and also the effects of the medium on those in these impressionable decades.

In Television in the Lives of Our Children, noted television researcher Wilbur Schramm notes that the child's first direct experience with the medium comes at the age of two years. By age three, Schramm reports, most children are regular viewers of television, developing favourite programs and heroes. Television is the number one medium of children of all ages through adolescence. By age nine, Schramm and his researchers estimate, ninety-six per cent of all American children are regular viewers of television.

While cautioning that there are very few average children, Schramm reports the following average viewing times, which represent a middle point of usage.

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>DAILY VIEWING*</u>
Preschool (3 yrs.)	.75 (45 minutes)
1st - 4th	2 - 2½
5th - 8th	3+ (peaks at 12 yrs.)
8th - 12th	2 - 2½

\*viewing is measured in hours

.1

Schramm also reported on program preferences by students:

Program Preferences of High School Students:

(1) Science Fiction

- (2) Westerns
- (3) Situation Comedy
- (4) Crime/Mystery
- (5) Popular Music

As early as 1951, academic researchers, such as Eleanor Maccoby, were eager to determine variables involved in television use by children. Maccoby sampled 622 children and their 332 mothers in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to determine the number of hours spent by the child with the new medium. She reported the average for the six to fourteen year olds was 2.4 hours for an average weeknight and 3.5 hours on a Sunday.

Interestingly, Maccoby found no difference between the viewing hours in households with new television sets and those which had a television for two years.

Further research by Maccoby in 1954 started the investigation into individual psychological and sociological differences and their role as determinants in the amount of television viewing. She found that the viewing hours (average) had remained relatively stable since 1951, but also that socio-economic status (SES), frustration level, and the treatment received from the mother were all influential in determining the number of hours spent watching television. In high SES homes a higher level of frustration in the child's daily life led to increased television viewing. Children from lower

SES homes were found to view television more frequently.

Maccoby also found that children who were treated in a "cold" fashion by their mothers watched one-half hour more television daily, than did those children who were treated "warmly" by their mothers.

A 1958 Des Moines, Iowa, study by William Baxter reported that students in grades 5, 7, 9, 11, averaged twenty-six hours of television viewing, per week. The weekly averages from Maccoby's studies were just under twenty-four hours per week.

Baxter also found that:

- (1) Teens spend a large portion of their leisure time with mass media.
- (2) Television is the dominant medium in their use of media.
- (3) Grade level reduces the individual medium time but does not reduce the overall time spent with mass media.
- (4) There is evidence of a decrease in newspaper and radio time after the inception of television.
- (5) There is little evident differences in viewing on the basis of sex.
- (6) Children and adolescents prefer entertainment programs with no differences on the basis of sex. Both males and females develop an appreciation of news, informational programming with age.



- (7) Preference in television viewing change with age. In 1958: For grades nine and ten; BOYS preferred westerns, adventures, mysteries, detective stories and comedies. GIRLS preferred variety and popular music programs. 3

These surveys by Maccoby and Baxter, as well as others, examined television in its early days. How do these studies compare with the use of media today in the light of the vast growth and development of the television industry?

A 1961 study by David Smith showed that children's number one use of television was still entertainment.

Lyle and Hoffman in *Television and Social Behaviour* (Vol II), noted that a 1970 census showed that 96% of all Americans have televisions. They went on to discuss and document comparisons of viewing between two 1959 studies and a 1970 study. Students in the 6th and 10th grades were asked to estimate their daily viewing hours.

	1959	1959	1970	
BOYS	2:45	2:12	3:03	HRS.
GIRLS	2:48	3:00	3:13	HRS.
	SAN	ROCKY	NATIONAL	
	FRANSISCO	MOUNTAINS		4

Lyle and Hoffman also reported on the median estimated viewing by 10th graders in 1970.

.1970

	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>	
WEEKDAYS	3:13	3:26	HRS.
SUNDAYS	5:38	5:40	HRS.
(pg. 149)			5

In addition, Lyle and Hoffman (1970) surveyed the favourite program preferences of the students:

PROGRAM PREFERENCES

<u>TYPE OF PROGRAM</u>	<u>% of N</u>
Adventure	20
Situation Comedy	9
Family	9
Crime	6
Cartoon	1
Music/talk/variety	13
Serial Drama	9
Education	1
Western	2
Game	7
Sports	2
Movies	6

---

n = 579

Leonard LoSciuto, in a national probability sample, reported a median viewing time of three hours and three minutes; up from the two hours and forty-seven minutes reported by the 1969 Roper study. These results are both for adults. Lyle and Hoffman (1970) indicate that 10th grade teenagers average above the median daily viewing time.

Lyle notes that girls in all age groups are higher viewers. While interpreting their results, Lyle and Hoffman suggest that there has been a levelling off of television viewing among young people - that the amount of their television viewing did not work as a predictor of mental ability, social class, parental conflict, or social isolation in 1970 as had been predicted in 1959 research. Leibert et al, in The Early Window, claim that age, race, socio-economic status, education level and intelligence all play a role in determining the number of hours spent viewing television. Greenberg and Dominick (1968), support Leibert's claim that social class differences influence TV viewing hours in the Project CUP (Communication Among the Urban Poor).

Alan Rubin's study of teenage television viewers (1977) sought to prove that "age is the one social category which has been found to be a rather consistent indicator."<sup>7</sup>

In his research, Rubin found that 146 thirteen-year olds reported watching an average of 3:48 hours daily, 131 seventeen-year olds surveyed viewed an average 2:13 hours daily.

Rubin also reported program preferences for thirteen and seventeen-year olds surveyed, scaling their preferences for program types from a low of zero to a high of three.

PROGRAM PREFERENCES

<u>TYPE OF PROGRAM</u>	<u>AGE</u>
Comedy	1.28
Adventure/Drama	1.02
Music/Variety	.13
Sports	.13
Children's	.10
Movies	.09
News/Public Affairs	.05
Daytime Serials	.03
Game Shows	.02
Educational	.01

AGES SURVEYED: 13 yrs. N = 146

17 yrs. N = 131

8

In Socialization Processes in the Family, researcher Cecilia von Feilitzen reports similar media use by Scandinavian youth. Von Feilitzen claims that viewing peaks around twelve years of age and that the ten to fourteen year old age group is the heaviest group of television consumers, viewing an average of fourteen hours per week. Von Feilitzen reminds the reader that Swedish television has only one daily hour of

"children's or teen's" programming and that the evening operation hours are limited. The adolescents in her study favoured entertainment programming, avoiding the news and public affairs programs. Von Feilitzen also found that age was an important determinant in the number of hours of television viewing. After 9:30 p.m., the nine to fourteen year olds registered the same amount of viewing (in hours) as did adults in similar, independent surveys.

But, as Alan Rubin points out, "television viewing is far more complex than just the number of hours of watching."<sup>9</sup> It is important then, to examine the motives behind media usage, the gratifications derived from mass media use and the role of the mass media in the lives of the young.

#### The Role of Mass Media in the Lives of the Young

Establishing the numbers of hours young people spend viewing television and examining their program preferences are both important aspects of mass media research. But they are essentially, superficial. In order to understand the full impact television has on children and adolescents, we must establish the role of television in these young lives. Once the medium's role is outlined we can probe more deeply into the psychographic, sociographic and demographic determinants involved in the interaction between the adolescent and television. These variables will lay the groundwork for

interpreting the underlying uses and gratifications which surface in the viewing hours and program preferences.

The fundamental aspect in the process of socialization is communication, on a personal or mass basis. Socialization is described as the process of being trained to fit into a social environment, into the society which acts as a reference group. Socialization entails the internalization and acceptance of the norms, values and mores of the reference group in which you find yourself.

Sociologist Tamotsu Shibutani explains that:

Socialization is the product of a gradual accumulation of experience with certain people, particularly those with whom we stand in primary relationships and significant others who are actually involved in the cultivation of abilities, values, and outlooks.

10

The actual process of socialization can be divided into two areas:

I PRIMARY SOCIALIZATION involves the primary reference group - the nuclear family and extended family unit. This would consist of parents, siblings, grandparents and relatives. The primary mode of communication within this setting would be interpersonal. This first reference group is responsible for the child's education in social roles and values. A child's first lessons in dealing with the appropriate social behaviours comes from this group.

II SECONDARY SOCIALIZATION includes socialization patterns set by others outside the primary reference group who are also

significant others in their relationship to the child or in their influence on the child. The secondary reference groups would include such traditional sources as the neighbourhood, peer group, church, recreational groups. The individuals in the position of significant other to the child include teachers, clergymen, neighbours, and adult group leaders (scoutmasters etc.).

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1966) found that:

communication played a key part in defining the roles that people expected to play in the pattern of social organization.

11

Assuming that this is the case, in modern society there exists a situation whereby the secondary socialization process is influenced; if not taken over by the enormous socialization powers of the mass media.

It has already been established by Mendelsohn, Merton and Kitt (1950), and Merton and Lazarsfeld (1948), that individuals do employ mass media as agents of socialization, the primary use being as a source of behavioural models.

Mass media play a primary role in shaping one's perception of the environment. Mills (1968) states:

The media not only gives us information, they guide our very experience. Our standards of credibility, our standards of reality, tend to be set by these media rather than by our own fragmentary experiences.

12

The mass media are rapidly approaching the role of status of "significant other." Television, being the most

predominant medium in the lives of the majority of North Americans will have the most influence on viewers of all ages and psychological profiles.

Television's influence seems to be the strongest on those who have unhappy interpersonal relationships or who are isolated. Various research studies (Schramm 1961, Riley and Riley 1951, Pearlin 1959) all indicate that people who do not have healthy interpersonal relationships seek out more mass media entertainment, and with greater frequency than do those with healthy interpersonal relationships. So the psychological variables of self-esteem and healthy interpersonal relationships surface as determinant in the amount of influence of mass media.

The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Violence in the Media

the mental health and development of the child viewer are more vulnerable to the negative and positive influences of television viewing, precisely because a child is more sensitive to his environment than is an adult. .13

Children are very impressionable and often see television as reality up to the age of twelve (Gerbner and Gross, 1974; Hawkins, 1977). These findings correspond with the developing intellectual levels noted by child psychologist Jean Piaget. Hawkins (1977) found that children who were heavy television viewers (4+ hours per day) showed a heavy television bias in their perception of reality. The results



may be partially explained by the age and level of cognitive development of the children being tested, but the effect is there - that television viewing tends to influence the perceptions of reality in the child's mind. This provides us with the question - Is television's influence that strong on adolescents?

Television influences its younger viewers in many ways. In Educational Broadcasting Review, Timothy Meyer notes that:

recent long term studies by Bronfenbrenner indicate that the parental and family influence in the development and socialization of children is steadily decreasing, while the influence of peer groups and television is rapidly increasing. 14

Meyer reports that by the age of five to eight, responding children were already spending 2.5 to 3 hours daily viewing television. This viewing and subsequent testing led Meyer to the conclusion that the television "medium seem to be effective in . . . popularizing verbal expressions and individuals." 15

Based on the documented evidence of television's role in socialization and its influence on viewers the first hypothesis is that:

#### HYPOTHESIS I

Heavy television viewing will lead to a higher degree of acceptance of disinformation as presented by a television character.

This leads to the development of a second hypothesis, based on the influence of television characters, as noted by Meyer:

## HYPOTHESIS II

A HIGH degree of identification with the main character of "Good Times" (JJ) will lead to increased frequency of viewing for the program.

Further examination of the effect of the character identification factor leads us to a third hypothesis, and two related hypotheses:

## HYPOTHESIS III

Subjects who score high in character identification will be more likely to accept the disinformation presented by that character.

## HYPOTHESIS IV

Subjects who score high in teacher identification will be more likely to reject the disinformation presented by the television character.

## HYPOTHESIS V

Heavy "Good Times" viewers, regardless of their amount of television viewing, will be more likely to accept the disinformation presented by that program's main character.

Freud (1933) cited three major motivations for identification:

- (1) Narcissism
- (2) Goal-orientation
- (3) Aggression (to alleviate fear)

Media researchers, however, have attempted to link other motivations to the process of character identification.

Maccoby and Wilson (1957) based their character identification on liking the character; they also turned up some interesting data regarding SES as a determinant of character identification.

Their experiment matched low SES viewers to low SES heroes and high SES viewers to high SES heroes, but found that:

identification choice could not be predicted on the basis of the social class of the viewer.

16

Grant Noble, in Children in Front of the Small Screen, reports that:

- (1) Boys tend to identify with only male heroes.
- (2) Girls seem to identify with both male and female heroes.

17

Scandinavian researcher Cecilia von Feilitzen contends that the link between identification and the mass media has been overlooked for long enough:

Although psychologists have assigned a prominent role to identification in the socialization process, its relative importance to mass communication has not been clearly established.

18

Von Feilitzen, a researcher with the Audience and Programme Department of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, goes on to explain that although

we may assume with some certainty that identification with the content of mass media does not play as decisive a role in the socialization process as identification with parents or other nearby or more intimately related persons. . . most children make frequent identifications in their use of mass media.

19

The Scandinavian research conducted by von Feilitzen and Olga Linne, of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, found that:

the proportion of children who identify with persons and events portrayed on television is greater among children who view much television than among those who view very little

20

The research cited in these last two pages serve as a good basis for hypotheses four and five, cited previously.

High television users are hypothesized as being high in their use of the medium for identification. Von Feilitzen and Linne report that:

children whose relations to parents and playmates are less harmonious tend to seek models in the world of mass media to a greater extent than others

21

One must keep in mind here the observation of Mendolsohn that those with less than satisfactory interpersonal relationships use media to a greater extent. The Scandinavian research shows that unhappy interpersonal relationships influence the identification factor as well as the hours of viewing. Von Feilitzen and Linne also report that the degree of identification is also determined by the degree of perceived similarity.

Von Feilitzen and Linne make the following observations:

- (1) When children and adults are in the same scene, children most often identify with the children in the scene.
- (2) Wishful identification, which is based on the child's desire to be like the hero or heroine of a program, can influence the degree of identification measured.
- (3) Younger children identify with their own age group and with other children (vs adolescents or adults) most often.
- (4) Older children and adolescents not only identify less with children; they select those characters slightly older than themselves when they do.

22

Our interest in this study was to determine whether adolescents would identify with a television character who

was (a) older than them and, (b) black; as was JJ Evans, the main character in our taped program.

Blacks on Network Television: A Brief Overview

Since the program chosen as the basis for the experiment is centred on the lives of a black family, research into the role of blacks and viewers' reactions to blacks on television was necessary.

Hinton, Seegar, Northcott, and Fontes, in "Tokenism and Improving the Imagery of Blacks in Television Comedy and Drama: 1973" cite research which shows only three minor appearances by blacks during a monitored five hour period of network programs in 1965. They note that, by 1969, blacks on network television were commonplace.

The presence of blacks on television is not enough; according to Hinton et al, "the issue is no longer the absence of black faces, but the manner in which blacks are portrayed." (pg. 423).

Hinton et al, argue that the television roles of blacks are extremely important to the image of blacks in society, claiming that the

progress of blacks and other minorities is being hindered by the manner in which minorities are portrayed on television.

23

Would the presence of blacks on television influence the degree of identification in viewers? Maccoby and Wilson

(1957) found that socio-economic status, although it may influence the degree of identification, could not be used as a predictor in the identification process. What effect would the variable of race have on this process?

Bradley Greenberg, in a 1972 study on race identification, found that blacks watched more television and are more often viewers of "black star" programs. Previous research cited by Greenberg (including Clark/Clark, 1947; Morland 1958; Greenberg/Dominick 1970) showed that one third of the black children tested identified with white television characters, while only a trivial portion of white children sampled identified with a black character. Greenberg's further research (1972) showed that the percentage of black children who identified with a white television character had dropped slightly from 33% to 25%. More significantly, however, 43% of the white children studied reported some degree of identification, with at least one black TV character. The stars of "Julia", "Mannix", "Bill Cosby", and Flip Wilson" were most often reported as television people the child would most like to be like.

This later study by Greenberg shows that identification can and does occur between white children and black television characters. It was an important factor in this experiment, since the study tested the degree of identification between a predominantly white group of subjects and a black television character, to find documentation that such identification across racial lines does occur.

## CHAPTER 2

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF MASS MEDIA USAGE

#### Self-Esteem

The opinion an individual has of himself is clearly an important component of his behaviour. Probably the most important requirement for effective behaviour, central to the whole problem is self-esteem. Philosophers from time immemorial have recognized that the feeling of personal worth plays a crucial role in human happiness and effectiveness.

24

This quotation from Stanley Coopersmith, a renowned researcher in the area of self-esteem, serves to summarize the concept of self-esteem and its importance in the human psychological profile. The term self-esteem is used to describe "a positive or negative attitude toward. . . the self."<sup>25</sup>

The subject of self-esteem was first approached by psychologist William James and, according to Wells and Marwell "his writings are still standard reference for developmental discussions of self esteem."<sup>26</sup>

Wells and Marwell refer to Coopersmith's studies which establish three principal components of self-esteem:

- (1) Self-love
- (2) Self-acceptance
- (3) Sense of Competence

Self-esteem is, in essence, our concept of ourselves. Our own self opinion is an extremely important variable in the development of self-confidence and achievement potential. Stanley Baran notes that:

the individual's level of self-esteem, an important determinant of an individual's behaviour and, according to Rosenberg, the major "single anchorage point."

27

In the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Media Violence, researcher Baran furthered his study of self-esteem as a behavioural determinant, exploring the link between the level of an individual's self-esteem and his or her degree of modelling from television. Baran describes low self-esteem individuals as:

- (1) Field dependent individuals who tend to passively accept and conform to the influence of the prevailing field.
- (2) More susceptible to normative and informational social influences in making judgements. 28

In his experiment with seven to nine year olds, Baran tested the following hypothesis:

a low level of self-esteem would indeed be related to greater amounts of modelling from television.

29

In the experiment, two videotapes were used: one showed an adult engaged in pro-social activity, while the second showed the adult engaged in anti-social aggressive behaviour. Baran found that his hypothesis was only partially supported, however; the added variables involved in modelling



aggressive/non-aggressive behaviours may have influenced these results.

M. O. Tasch, in his modelling behaviour study, found that low self-esteem pre-school children did not have a high degree of modelling from an adult. Tasch made two significant discoveries in his experiment:

- (1) high self-esteem children are more likely to imitate verbal instructions. (A possible contamination here is that the high self-esteem children may be also higher in intelligence than the others.)
- (2) High self-esteem children were strongly attracted to the adult model, regardless of the model's behaviour. Low self-esteem children were not as attracted to the model.

30.

Based on these findings we can predict the following hypotheses with regard to self-esteem:

#### HYPOTHESES VI

Those subjects who score low in self-esteem will score a higher degree of character identification.

#### HYPOTHESIS VII

Those subjects who score high in self-esteem will score a higher degree of teacher identification.

Self-esteem, like other psychological variables, is difficult to measure accurately. The Roger and Dymond Scale (1954), is one of the most highly regarded scales for the evaluation of self-esteem levels. It was designed for adult subjects.

Stanley Coopersmith reworded several questions from this scale to facilitate testing of self-esteem levels in

children. Coopersmith also added several new measures to those from the 1954 scale. The resulting Self-Esteem Inventory (1967) was a fifty-item questionnaire, testing four areas involved in the development of self-esteem: peers, parents, school, and self. Each item had two options - "like me" or "unlike me." Coopersmith submitted the questionnaire to five psychologists who scored the items checked in a positive direction (as indicated by a "like me" response) as indicating high self-esteem or low self-esteem. The final version of the questionnaire was administered to one hundred and two children in the fifth and sixth grades, in a small Eastern city.

As a check on the accuracy of the self-reporting Self-Esteem Inventory, Coopersmith also designed and administered the Self-Esteem Behaviour Rating Form (BRF). Coopersmith tested the observable levels of self-esteem (as indicated by certain behaviour variables) in the children who were involved in the self-reporting test. He did this by administering "a 14 item, five point scale on behaviour presumed to be related to self-esteem."<sup>31</sup>

The childrens' teacher and the school principal were asked to independently rank the children according to the BRF scale. The principal was quite familiar with all but fifteen of the children, and the BRF for these cases were not included in the final correlations.

The correspondence between the self-evaluation questionnaire completed by the children, and the BRF as completed by

the teacher and principal was extremely high. In only eight of the eighty-seven cases was there a substantial difference in the levels of self-esteem reported by the student and the BRF evaluation of self-esteem.

The two part test served to reinforce the accuracy of the self-esteem measurements using the S-E Inventory and the BRF. Four items from this inventory were selected for the questionnaire used in this study.

#### Locus of Control

The literal definition of locus is locality. In psychological terms locus is used to describe the direction a person attributes to the forces which control his or her life. Locus can be internal (self-directed) or external (other-directed), depending on the psychological makeup of the person. E. Jerry Phares in Locus of Control in Personality quotes an ideal definition of locus as defined by Julian Rotter, one of the earliest locus researchers:

When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action . . . not being entirely contingent upon his actions . . . typically being perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of others . . . the forces surrounding him . . . we have labelled this a belief in external control. If the person believes that the event is contingent upon his own behaviour or his own relatively permanent characteristics we have termed this a belief in internal control. 32

Julian Rotter, in collaboration with Seeman, and Liverant compiled much of the early work on the role I-E locus plays in behaviour. The I-E locus concept was an integral part of the Social Learning Theory developed by

Rotter (1954). The SLT relies on the variables of expectancies and reinforcements. In order to measure the I-E direction of a person's locus

Liverant, Rotter and Seeman set about developing an I-E scale that would contain items from several areas - academic recognition, social recognition, love and affection, socio-political events, and general life philosophy. 33

The method of measurement evolved into a twenty-three item scale revised by Liverant, Rotter and Crowne. The new scale was an extension of the previous work by Phares (1957) and James (1957). The scale was called the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale, and has been used extensively with adults in locus of control studies.

If, as proven in numerous studies, locus is an important determinant in adult behaviour, does it follow that it will emerge as a significant variable in children? Stephen Nowicki Jr., and Bonnie Strickland investigated this question claiming that:

Considering the extensive body of research with adults, it seems appropriate to extend an investigation of the locus of control variable to children. There is ample reason to believe that this variable is a sign of significant influence on children's behaviour. 34

A study by Coleman et al, (1966) of nearly 500,000 U.S. children and teens has shown that:

a belief in destiny was a major determinant in school achievement . . . this pupil attitude factor had a stronger relationship to achievement than all other school factors together. 35

Since the Rotter I-E Scale was not suitable for children and adolescents, psychologists had attempted to design a scale or adapt the Rotter scale for this age group. Three prominent attempts to adapt Rotter's scale for children include: Bialer in 1961 (23 "yes-no" items); Battle and Rotter in 1963 (Picture test for I-E Control); and Crandall et al in 1965 (intellectual/academic achievement).

Nowicki and Strickland claim that:

each of these measures of a child's locus of control falls short in one way or another. Consequently, there is a clear need for a reliable instrument for researchers to use to study the effects of the generalized locus of control orientation of a child's behaviour. 36

To fill this void, Nowicki and Strickland developed their own forty-item scale based on "yes-no" responses. This scale can be used for all grades, one through twelve, although in the actual test situation, first and second grade children experienced some comprehension difficulties.

Over one thousand students in the third through twelfth grades completed the final version of the scale. The forty item scale was also subdivided into sub-scales of twenty items each for grades three to six and grades seven through twelve.

From their research and testing, Nowicki and Strickland conclude:

the locus of control dimension appears to be a variable of significant impact in relation to children's behaviours and the Nowicki-Strickland Scale appears to be an appropriate instrument for assessing this variable. 37

In our questionnaire we employed items from the Nowicki-Strickland I-E Scale, to determine the locus of control for the subjects.

Locus of control is an important element in the study of determinants. Generally, people who view a great deal of television are high in external orientation. The television medium is a unipersonal mode of communication.

Unipersonal refers to the process of passive viewing where there is no evidence of evaluation or interpretation of the material presented. It could be described as pure absorption. Television entertainment fare is one area or genre which can be classified as unipersonal.

The unipersonal media user is almost the opposite of those who operate primarily in the inter- or intra- personal modes. The unipersonal user is oriented towards preservation rather than growth and chooses an existing medium in the role of passive receiver, rather than using the medium's content for growth and development. While inter- and intra- personal users make use of the media primarily to expose themselves to educational and informative programming, the unipersonal viewers select entertainment.

The unipersonal user chooses television because it is easy access, low threat and the viewing experience can be totally passive. The unipersonal media consumer is externally motivated in their choice. Unipersonal communicators are not

master of their own fate, and often use television for vicarious self-actualization, since they themselves are usually not self-actualized.

Based on these psychological profiles we can predict that:

#### HYPOTHESIS VIII

Those subjects who score high in external control will score high in their degree of character identification.

#### HYPOTHESIS IX

Those subjects who score low in external control will score high in their degree of teacher identification.

#### Authoritarianism

Referring again to the unipersonal viewer discussed in the section on locus of control, we can expand this personality profile of the unipersonal viewer to include the dimension of authoritarianism.

High unipersonal communicators are conceptualized as being high in authoritarianism, generally operating in a close-ended mode, which allows for no feedback or two way communication.

The study of authoritarianism developed as a response to the quick rise of facism in Germany and Italy prior to the second World War. When emerging Nazi party leaders clamped down on research involving personality and political philosophy, two of the top social-psychologists in Germany,

T. Adorno, and Else Frenkel-Brunswik, fled to the United States, and joined the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley. Their research culminated in 1950 with the publication of The Authoritarian Personality, described as a "social psychological study of anti-democratic or authoritarian personality." <sup>38</sup>

The personality variable authoritarianism is made up of many components, namely, "facism, ethnocentrism, anti-sematism, anti-Negro facism, and political conservatism." <sup>39</sup>

Dogmatism is another variable often tested under "authoritarianism."

There is also a scale to measure prejudice in the personality, which is called the facism or F-Scale. Several items from this scale were used to measure the level of authoritarianism in the experiment subjects used in this study.

Two hypotheses based on authoritarianism personality traits are:

#### HYPOTHESIS X

High authoritarians will be the least likely to accept disinformation as presented by the television character.

#### HYPOTHESIS XI

Low authoritarians will be most likely to accept the disinformation presented by the television character.



Normally high-authoritarians could be expected to accept the disinformation as presented by a television character due to their high television orientation. However, in this experiment, the main character of the program, who presented the disinformation, was black. High authoritarians are also high in ethnocentrism and anti-Negro prejudice. This would override the usual high authoritarianism - high media acceptance relationship. The lower authoritarians, being more open minded, would more readily accept the disinformation from a black character.

## CHAPTER 3

### DISINFORMATION

#### Cognitive Dissonance, Discrepant Information and Coping Modes

The most noted psychological authority on cognitive dissonance, Leon Festinger, describes this phenomenon:

This theory centres around the idea that if a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, he will, in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent.

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This idea of consistency is central to the concept of dissonance. The normal psychological state is balanced. When cognitive dissonance occurs the scales are tipped and the psychological state becomes unbalanced. People will instinctively attempt to restore the imbalance. As Festinger points out:

(1) The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try and reduce or eliminate the dissonance.

(2) When the dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations where and information which would likely increase the dissonance.

41

Carter, Pyszka, and Guerrero re-iterate this final point in "Dissonance and Exposure to Aversive Information."

Dissonance, they note, "was viewed as an aversive stimulus to be reduced by one or another mode." (Pg. 37)

Carter et al also note that one experiencing such dissonance would seek to correct the situation:

the individual experiencing dissonance would expose himself to information consonant with his values 42

Social psychologist Solomon Asch conducted dissonance experiments at the University of Pennsylvania. The experiment is described in How Real is Real? by author Paul Watzlawick.

The subjects announce their answers in the order in which they have been seated in the room, and on the first round every person chooses the same matching line. Then a second set of cards is examined; again the group is unanimous. . . one person near the end of the group disagrees with the others. . . He looks suprised, indeed incredulous. On the following trial he disagrees again, while the others remain unanimous in their choice. The dissenter becomes more and more hesitant as the disagreement continues in succeeding trials. 43

The subject who disagrees with the others and becomes the dissenter is unaware that Asch and the other 'subjects' are giving incorrect answers at pre-arranged intervals throughout the experiment. As Watzlawick point out:

The dissenter is the only real subject of the experiment, and finds himself in a most unusual and disquieting situation: he must either contradict the matter-of-fact opinion of the group, and appear to be strangely confused, or doubt the evidence of his own senses. Unbelievable as it may seem, under the circumstances 36.8 per cent of the subjects chose the second alternative and submitted to misleading group opinion. 44

Asch reports that in future experiments, when the dissenter had at least one supporter among the group the percentage who submitted to peer pressure fell sharply.

In modifying the Asch experiment for this thesis the subject is exposed to information from a popular television character, and their teacher. The information given is not consistent, and as Alexis Tan explains, "Discrepant information is dissonance producing."

The experiment was designed to measure the way in which the subjects accepted or rejected the discrepant information.

Tan continues:

more attention should be given to alternative responses to discrepant information. If, in fact, people do not always avoid discrepant information, how do they cope with this information?

45

Tan explains a vital point in dissonance coping behaviour research which was an important element in this experiment:

when presented with a discrepant message, which in itself is potentially dissonance producing, the individual can attempt to maintain or restore balance by either changing one of his cognitions (eg. his original attitude or his evaluation of the source), or by ignoring the communication. The former strategy is often referred to as coping behaviour, since here, discrepant information is not avoided.

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It is the coping behaviour that was the main element in this experiment. The coping choices available for the subjects were:

- (1) To accept the disinformation as given by the television character; or
- (2) To accept the information as given by the teacher after the disinformation was received and act on it; or
- (3) To ignore both the television character's disinformation and the teacher's information and make a completely independent judgement based on their own perceptions of the event.

It was expected that in this case, personality variables would influence the choice, that certain personality types would accept the television character's disinformation while others would accept the teacher's information. What was not expected was the large number of subjects who made an independent judgement. These findings will be discussed in detail in further chapters.

#### Interpersonal Intervention

Much of the research conducted in the area of interpersonal intervention concerns the source-message orientation (S-M). John McDavid Jr. was one of the first researchers in this area. His 1959 research concentrated on the S-M orientation in interpersonal communications settings. Later researchers have explored this variable with relation to radio and television. Two media researchers, Vernon Stone and John Hoyt, have completed a substantial ~~body~~ of work on the role of source-message orientation in the field of mass communication.

Steiner (1966) and Stone (1969) both found that high authoritarian, low self-esteem females were more source oriented. Source orientation increased with the likeability of the source.

In later research, Stone (1969) replicated high authoritarian-high persuasion findings; however his experiment failed to show any relationship between self-esteem and persuasion, when the sources were persons of status, authority, or were considered "experts." But as Hovland, Janis and Kelley explain, it is

quite possible that persons of low self-esteem tend to be less influencable than others when the source is perceived to be unpopular or socially disapproved by the community even though such persons may be influencable when communications come from neutral or prestigious sources.

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Hoyt went on to study the influence of certain other variables on the source-message orientation. He found (1) likeability and, (2) physical presence<sup>48</sup> to influence the degree or orientation.

This would reinforce the concept of this paper that High teacher identification (and the presence of the teacher in the experiment) is a deciding factor in the acceptance or non-acceptance of the disinformation presented by the character. Hoyt also believed that further research was indicated, especially the relationship between source orientation and identification. Berkowitz and Lundy (1957) also

found likeability to be an important factor. They concluded, personality variables probably are among the factors determining the individual's acceptance of a particular group as a reference group

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Newcomb (1956) found that reward/reinforcement is a component of likeability and that perceived similarity is the most important factor in interpersonal attraction.

In the case of peer vs authority influence it was proven that low interpersonal confidence persons were more likely to be influenced by an authority figure.

There is another side to source-message orientation; comparing the influence of two differing sources, television and a significant other. Prasad, Rao and Shiekh (1978) tested the influence of mothers against television commercials: Prasad et al exposed eight to ten year old boys to various television commercials. Mothers were divided into two groups. Group one mothers were instructed to use "warm reasoning" to dissuade the child from the object of the commercial. A second group of mothers was told to use a "power assertive" approach when dealing with the child's request for a specific toy.

Prasad et al made the following observations:

- (1) Attractive commercials produced more toy selections by the boys than did those deemed unattractive; both types of commercials produced more toy selections than the non-advertised toys the child was exposed to.

- (2) Warm reasoning had the best success rate in changing the child's mind; dissuading him from the attractively advertised toy items.

50

In a similar type of study, Corder-Bolz and O'Bryant (1978) monitored the effect a teacher could have on television material. In 'Teacher vs Program' they report on thirty-one four year olds who watched television with an adult teacher. In the control group, the teacher sat impassively viewing with the children. In the experiment group the teacher played an active role, commenting on the program and pointing things out to the students. Corder-Bolz and O'Bryant describe the comments of the adult as being largely "interpretive" and conclude that:

the intervention caused significant increases in the amount of information learned; and number of positive attitudes formed.

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## CHAPTER 4

### EXPERIMENT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Four grade nine and ten English classes from a local high school were used as experiment subjects. Ages ranged from thirteen to seventeen. Intelligence ranged from slightly below to slightly above average. The school is located in a middle-class suburban area which, although predominately white, has recently become more stratified economically and racially. Occupations of the heads of households ranged from janitors to university professors.

The four classes were selected by the researcher and the English department head. The students were assigned to those classes solely on the basis of convenient timetabling. The teacher involved was very popular with the student body and enjoyed a good rapport with the students tested. The pupil-teacher relationship is an important determinant in the subject's acceptance or non-acceptance of the disinformation.

Over one hundred students participated in the study: seventy-four in the experiment group and thirty-two in the control group.

The students were told that they were participating in a University of Windsor study on television program preferences

among teenagers. The experiment was conducted in a regular class period on a Friday, in keeping with the teacher's past practices of scheduling special events on Fridays. The students were instructed to sign their questionnaires using birthdates, rather than names. This procedure was used for a variety of reasons: it may have led to a greater degree of truthfulness since confidentiality was insured. It also served as a method for matching pre- and post-exposure questionnaires. None of the students in any one class tested had the same birthdate and each questionnaire was successfully matched upon completion.

A pre-exposure questionnaire dealt with the following items:

- (1) Informational: television viewing habits, preferred genre, frequency of "Good Times" viewing.
- (2) Psychological: indices for the degree of character and teacher identification, high-low self-esteem, authoritarianism, internal-external locus.
- (3) Demographic: age, sex, race, occupation of head of household.

The students were then shown a specially edited videotape of the program "Good Times," a CBS situation comedy. The episode was selected for the following reasons:

- (1) It had been designed as an exercise in selective perception. Each of the five regular characters gave their own explanation, in flashback, on the same event. It was very suitable for editing to fit the experiment design.

- (2) It was far less costly and more credible to use a tape of an existing program than to attempt to execute a special videotape to suit the experiment. The recognition factor, and character identification, depended exclusively on using an existing program. Additionally, it was felt that a specially made videotape would impart "EXPERIMENT IN PROGRESS" to the subjects, and this was not desired.
- (3) The star of the program, JJ Walker, who plays JJ Evans, has a widespread appeal among teens. This appeal crosses racial lines. Many of his actions and expressions, such as 'DY-NO-MITE' are mimicked by teens. He was an instantly recognizable, familiar character.

The story line concerns the Evans family, a poor black, urban family, who live in subsidized housing in Chicago. The family unit consists of JJ, the eldest son; his sister, Thelma who is eighteen; a brother, Michael who is about sixteen. The father is dead and the children's mother is absent (and has been for a prolonged period of time) nursing an ailing family member. Living with the children are Willona, a neighbour and the mother's best friend and her young daughter Penny.

In the episode used we see JJ's version of an event in the Evans apartment.

A scenario follows:

- (1) As the camera fades in we see the Evans children and Penny frantically putting out a fire in the couch. They extinguish the fire and JJ sprays his sister Thelma's perfume around the room to mask the odour. The children cover the hole in the cushion with a slip cover.

- (2) Willona comes home from work. It takes her only a couple of seconds to notice the smoky perfumed smell in the apartment. She asks what has happened, and the children, naturally insist that there is nothing amiss. She sits down on the burned out couch to wait for an explanation and falls through the hole in the cushion.
- (3) JJ gives his version of the events that led to the burnt couch. We see, in flashback, JJ coming home from work with his new girlfriend, Mandy. They visit with the others while Thelma is busy getting the dinner ready. During the visit the following possible causes for the fire are shown:

- Mandy smokes a cigarette while sitting on the couch: possibly careless smoking
- JJ trying to impress Mandy, does some trick with a match as he lights her cigarette: playing with matches
- Thelma leaves the casserole dish on the couch while answering the phone: the dish is cold
- Michael works on a chemistry experiment with an alcohol burner on the coffee table near the couch

JJ concludes that it must have been Michael's alcohol burner that caused the fire. The tape ends here.

At this point in the experiment, the factor of interpersonal intervention was introduced. The teacher casually interjects a pre-written and memorized speech to the effect that JJ is wrong because, from the teacher's point of view, Michael's alcohol burner was a safe distance from the couch, and that Michael would be more careful. This statement was made just prior to the students filling out a post-exposure questionnaire.

The post-exposure questionnaire consisted of comprehension questions. The two pivotal questions used to measure the impact of the interpersonal intervention were based on the cause of the fire:

- a) The Fire was caused by . . .
- b) JJ blamed the fire on . . .

The answers were selected from the following multiple choice responses:

- 1) a hot casserole dish
- 2) careless smoking
- 3) showing off with matches
- 4) Michael's chemistry set
- 5) wasn't shown in the videotape.

The correct answer is number 5, "wasn't shown in the videotape."

It was hypothesized that some students would be influenced by JJ's version of the events leading up to the fire and would select his conclusion as the cause of the fire. It was also expected that certain students would be influenced by the teacher's and that a minority would select their own answer for the cause of the fire.

The post-exposure questionnaires were matched and stapled together immediately. The results were sealed in a manilla envelope which was marked with the experiment or control group number.

The responses were coded and key punched, and each respondent was assigned a group code and an individual case number. Of the one hundred and six completed, all were usable. They were key punched along with procedure and control cards using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) computer operation.

## CHAPTER 5

### EXPERIMENT RESULTS

#### Demographics

The one hundred and six subjects were made up of 64 females (60.4%), and 42 males (39.6%). The majority (42.4%) sampled were fifteen years old. Fourteen year olds accounted for the next largest group at 39.6% of the sample. The sample was 98% white.

To determine the socio-economic status, the subjects were asked for the occupation of the 'head of household.' There were six students who refused to answer (5.7%). Eighteen of the breadwinners (17%) had jobs which required less than high school education - janitors, truck drivers, handy-men. Forty-one of the breadwinners (38.7%) had jobs which required a high school diploma - policeman, real estate agent; or technical or apprentice training - plumbers, carpenters, tool and die setters. Forty-one (38.7%) had jobs which required a university education or other advanced training - bank manager, accountant, purchasing agent, university or college professor.

### Media Habits

Sixty-five percent of the subjects reported watching one hour of television before 6 p.m. (their classes end at three). Thirty students (28.3%) reported watching two hours daily after 6 p.m. Thirty-nine students (27.4%) reported watching three hours per evening, and thirty-one students (29.3%) reported viewing four or more hours per evening. The average viewing hours were 3.009 hours per evening.

Comparing these viewing reports to previous studies we find that the 3+ hours reported by the majority of our subjects is higher than the averages reported by Schramm (1961) and Maccoby (1954). The results are slightly under the average viewing times reported by Lyle and Hoffman (1970) and LoSciuto (1972).

However, if one is to report the total viewing for our subjects we must include the pre-6 p.m. hours. This means that the number of total hours of viewing adds up to an average of 4.36 hours per day, higher than any study previously quoted.

The mean number of viewing hours on the weekend averaged to 4.8 hours. Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported viewing 7+ hours on the weekend. Sunday viewing reported by Lyle (1970) was 5.38 hours for boys and 5.40 hours for girls. Our average weekend viewing for this study was lower, at 4.8 hours.

The program preferences reported by Baxter (1958), Smith (1961) and other researchers are evident in this table of the preferences for this study. Entertainment fare was the favorite/most watched.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS WHO REPORTED WATCHING THE FOLLOWING  
GENRES "OFTEN"

<u>GENRE</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Adult family	39.6
Family	35.8
Sports	35.8
Adventure	26.4
Animation	24.5
Crime	24.5
Music/Variety	22.6
Game	18.9
Talk	17.9
News	8.0
Documentary/political affairs	13.2
Medical	12.3
Soap Operas	11.3
Drama	9.4
Children's	4.7
Instructional	0.9
Religious	0.9
Panel	0.0



The subjects reported their "Good Times" viewing in terms of the following measures of frequency: often, occasionally, rarely, never.

Hypothesis one, predicting that heavy television viewers would be more likely to accept disinformation from a television character was not supported. The hours of television viewing were categorized as 'three hours or less' and 'four hours or more.' The median viewing hours reported by the subjects was used as the median dividing point between high and low viewing.

Hypothesis one crosstabulated with the cause of the fire to determine if any relationship existed between the amount of television viewing and the acceptance of disinformation.

The five responses to the question "The fire was caused by. . ." were:

- (1) a hot casserole dish
- (2) careless smoking
- (3) showing off with matches
- (4) Michael's chemistry set
- (5) was not shown in the videotape.

These answers were coded into three categories; responses one through three were coded as 'other'; response four as 'television' and response five as 'interpersonal.' It was believed that the teacher's influence would cause the students to select the correct answer. The teacher's remarks

were expected to influence the student to re-examine the scene shown in the videotape and realize that the cause was not shown. The  $x = 0.44897$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.7989$ .

The hours of television viewing were correlated with the frequency of "Good Times" viewing. The same categories for viewing hours were employed ( = 3 hours; = 4 hours). Frequency of "Good Times" viewing was categorized as "often-occasionally" or rarely-never," based on the frequency distribution found in the responses to the question.

It was expected that high television viewers would be the most frequent viewers of "Good Times." This was not evident, as the  $x = 0.55365$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.4568$ , indicates.

Hypothesis two, predicting that high character identification would lead to a higher frequency of "Good Times" viewing, was supported. In completing the section on character identification, the students were reminded that it was the character JJ and not the actor to whom we were referring.

Twenty-eight students said they had never watched "Good Times" while eight reported viewing the program often. Table II lists the frequency data collected.

The students were asked to respond to items concerning JJ, the main character of the "Good Times" program, and about their teacher, using a five-point Likert Scale which contained the following measures: 'strongly agree' 'agree' 'neutral' 'disagree' 'strongly disagree.'

TABLE II

## "GOOD TIMES" VIEWING FREQUENCY

CATEGORY LABEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Often	8	11.3
Occasionally	17	23.9
Rarely	28	39.4
Never	18	25.4
Missing cases: 3	71	100.0

There were six statements concerning JJ and six concerning the teacher. For the purpose of this study the six items were collapsed into an additive scale for each of these two individuals. Scale I measured the degree of identification with the television character, JJ. Scale II measured the degree of identification with the teacher. Possible scores ranged from 6 to 30. The median scores for the responses were used as the dividing point for high and low identification.

Scores for Scale I ranged from a low of 15 to a high of 30, with the median response of 21.167. Based on this, scores from 15 through 21 were classified as high character identification, while those scores which fell between 22 and 30 were classified as low character identification.

For character identification, there were twelve people in the study who reported that they were so unfamiliar with JJ that they could not respond. These answers were entered as missing data in the calculations on character identification. Twenty-seven students (36.5%) scored high in character identification, while thirty-five scored (47.3%) low in character

identification.

Teacher identification was determined in the same manner. The responses ranged from 7 through 30 with a median response of 16.167, which was used as the dividing point between high and low identification. Scores from 7 to 16 were classified as high in identification, while those scores which ranged from 17 to 30 were classified as low in identification. Forty students (54.1%) scored high in teacher identification, while thirty-four (45.9%) scored low in teacher identification.

The tables on the following page give the scores for the statements used as measurement items. For these tables, the responses were collapsed into agreement, non-agreement. These were comprised of the following categories:

"AGREE": 'strongly agree' 'agree' 'neutral.'

"DISAGREE": 'disagree' 'strongly disagree.'

Scale three measured the degree of authoritarianism, and was developed in the same manner as the two previous scales. The scores here ranged from 9 to 19 (lowest possible score being 5, and the highest possible score being 30). The median score was 13.278 which was used as the dividing point between high and low authoritarianism. The table for this follows the teacher and character identification tables.<sup>52</sup>

Of the seventy-four experiment group subjects, twelve had no response to the character identification items due to a lack of familiarity with the program and/or the character.

TABLE III

## CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Agree</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		N	%
	Freq- uency	Per cent	Freq- uency	Per- cent		
I like JJ.	52	70.3	22	29.7	74	100
I admire JJ.	34	45.9	40	54.0	74	100
I think JJ is very smart	35	47.3	39	52.7	74	100
JJ is usually right	32	43.4	42	56.7	74	100
I would like to be like JJ when I'm older	11	14.9	51	68.9	62*	83.8
JJ and I are similar in the way we think	12	16.3	50	67.5	62*	83.8

TABLE IV

## TEACHER IDENTIFICATION

I like my teacher	70	94.7	4	5.4	74	100
I admire my teacher	66	89.1	8	10.8	74	100
My teacher is usually right	67	90.6	7	9.5	74	100
My teacher makes me want to do well in school	64	86.5	10	13.6	74	100
My teacher knows more than my parents	43	58.1	31	41.9	74	100
I would like to be like my teacher when I grow up	32	43.3	41	55.4	73*	100

\* There were twelve missing cases for each of these statements

\*\*There was one missing case for this statement

TABLE V

## AUTHORITARIANISM

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
High Authoritarianism	39	52.8
Low Authoritarianism	35	47.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	74	100.0

These responses were coded as missing data. Twenty-seven students (36.5%) scored high in character identification, and thirty-five (47.3%) scored low in character identification.

The character identification scale was then cross-tabulated with the reported frequency of "Good Times" viewing. The result was  $\chi^2 = 7.84827$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.0198$ , indicating a significant relationship. Therefore we can state that high character identification resulted in an increased frequency of "Good Times" viewing.

Hypothesis three, predicting that the subjects high in character identification would be more likely to accept the disinformation as presented by the television character, was not supported. The breakdowns for high and low identification and the categories of response for the cause of the fire that were used for this correlation were the same as previously employed for the other hypothesis. The result was  $\chi^2 = 1.79870$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.7727$ .

Hypothesis four, which predicted that those high in teacher identification would score low in their acceptance of the disinformation received from the television character, was not supported. The result was  $\chi^2 = 0.29808$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.8615$ .

Again, the overwhelming majority of students in the experiment selected an answer other than the expected responses.

Hypothesis five, predicting that frequent "Good Times" viewing would result in an increased acceptance of the disinformation as presented by the star of the program. The resulting  $x = 3.81672$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.1483$  shows that the hypothesis was not supported.

The students who did select the character disinformation as the cause of the fire, although small in number, were all in the often-occasionally category of "Good Times" viewing frequency. The majority of the students selected, as mentioned earlier, a totally unrelated cause for the fire.

Hypothesis six, predicting that low self-esteem subjects would have a high degree of identification with the television character was not supported. The resulting  $x = 4.51636$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.01045$  evidences this.

Hypothesis seven, which predicted that the high self-esteem subjects would have a high degree of teacher identification, was not supported. The corrected  $x = 0.0$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 1.000$  shows that the relationship was not significant. Of the students who scored high in self-esteem, the majority were also high in teacher identification, but this also held true for the low self-esteem subjects. Overall, more students scored high in teacher identification than in character identification.

Hypothesis eight, predicted a correlation between low external control (locus) and high teacher identification.



It was not supported. However, of the thirty-eight students who scored low in external locus, 25 (65.7%) were high in teacher identification. Of the 36 subjects who scored high in external control (locus), 21 (58.3%) were low in teacher identification. The corrected  $x = 3.41461$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.0646$ .

Hypothesis nine, predicting a relationship between external locus of control and high character identification was also not supported. The  $x = 1.92089$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.3827$ , resulting in no significant relationship. The majority of the subjects who scored high in external locus of control (36 E) scored low in character identification (20 subject with character identification out of the 36 E = 55.5%). Among the students who scored low in character identification, the high-low character identification numbers were relatively even, with 16 of the 33 (48.4%) scoring high character identification and 15 out of 33 (45.4%) scoring low character identification. Seven low external and five high external respondents were part of the twelve students whose character identification answers were regarded as missing cases, due to their lack of familiarity with the program or the main character, JJ.

Hypothesis ten, predicting that high authoritarianism would influence the subjects to reject the disinformation presented by the television character, was not supported. The  $x = 1.87622$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.3914$ .

Hypothesis eleven, predicting that it would be low authoritarians who would be most likely to accept the television disinformation, was not supported. The same chi square results apply from hypothesis ten. Again, the majority of subjects selected answers which were neither influenced by the teacher or the character, which we shall examine in further chapters.

## CHAPTER 6

### INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

It was predicted at the outset of this experiment that subjects' responses to the statement "The fire was caused by. . ." would be influenced by the psychological and sociological factors previously discussed.

One factor which was thought to have an influence was the amount of daily television viewing (average). In the experiment the subject was asked to choose between the disinformation received from the television character, and the information received from the teacher. The choice made here would reflect the relative impact of the two modes of communication implicit in the choices: these being, mass communication (television character), and interpersonal communication (teacher). Would the amount of television viewed influence the respondent to accept more readily the disinformation coming from a television character, adding a television "bias" to the decision making process?

It was assumed that those people who viewed a substantial amount of television, four hours per evening or more (after 6 p.m.), would have a built in "bias" and would more

likely accept the disinformation from the television character. This acceptance would be due to the orientation with the source. The more time spent with the source medium (television), the higher the credibility of the person appearing within that source medium.

It was predicted that those people who viewed a large amount of television would be heavy viewers of the "Good Times" program. Being regular viewers of the program would increase the credibility of the character, and thus increase the acceptance of the disinformation given by him.

In the groups tested, the majority of the heavy television viewers were not 'regular' or 'frequent' viewers of "Good Times." This leads to the conclusion that those people who reported high viewing of "Good Times," since they were not overall high users of the medium, were selective in their choice of "Good Times." What reason(s) would they have for selecting this program when they were not high viewers of television in general?

To answer this question the relationship between character identification and frequency of "Good Times" viewing was examined. It was found that a greater degree of character identification lead to an increased frequency of "Good Times" viewing. Therefore, we can assume that those people who were regular viewers of the program were tuning in due to their identification with JJ, the main character. Would this

identification, being strong enough to encourage and result in increased viewing of the program, be a strong influence on the subject's acceptance/non-acceptance of the character's disinformation. The relationship was examined and found to be not significant. In other words, a higher degree of character identification did not result in an increased acceptance of the character's disinformation. What elements were involved in the character identification process which would result in this apparent dichotomy - character identification which was strong enough to result in an increased frequency of viewing of that particular program, and yet the same degree of character identification was not strong enough to influence the acceptance of the character disinformation.

The character identification statements were examined in order to ascertain the reason for the discrepancy. Both the character and teacher identification statements were broken down into three classifications: "likeability," "similarity" (which would be perceived or wishful), and "credibility"; as follows:

#### LIKEABILITY STATEMENTS

"I like JJ"

"I admire JJ"

"I like my teacher"

"I admire my teacher"

"My teacher makes me want to do well in school"

## SIMILARITY STATEMENTS

"I would like to be like JJ when I'm older"

"JJ and I are similar in the way we think"

"I would like to be like my teacher when I grow up"

## CREDIBILITY

"I think JJ is very smart"

"JJ is usually right"

"My teacher is usually right"

"My teacher knows more than my parents"

When examining the responses to the character identification items, it was found that the percentage of subjects who registered "agreement" with the "likeability" items far outnumbered those who registered agreement with the "credibility" and "similarity" items. We can conclude from these figures that, while the experiment subjects were familiar with the character JJ and registered their liking of him, this did not extend itself to any perceived or wishful similarity or credibility. It is possible that for this age group likeability was an important enough factor to influence the frequency of program viewing, but was not a strong influence in the decision to accept the character's disinformation. While the subjects liked and enjoyed viewing JJ, they did not respond to the disinformation he gave.

The teacher identification tables did not show such a variation in the numbers of subjects agreeing with the

"likeability" statements versus the "credibility" and "similarity" statements. (For the exact figures refer to Table III).

The credibility factor was probably the most crucial in terms of the acceptance/non-acceptance of the disinformation. Fully ninety percent of the subjects rated the teacher as "usually right" while only forty-three percent rated JJ as "usually right."

When the control and experiment group data was brought together, the responses from each group regarding the cause of the fire, were put through a chi square analysis. The resulting  $\chi = 6.14$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.5$  indicates that the percentage of subjects in the control group (who did not receive the teacher information) far outnumbered the experiment group subjects (who received both the television character disinformation and the teacher information) in their selection of JJ's disinformation as the correct cause of the fire.

The only variable which differed between the groups was the interpersonal intervention of the teacher in the experiment groups. As mentioned earlier the teacher intervened in a casual way, suggesting that JJ was wrong in his assessment of the cause of the fire and that the teacher had seen no evidence of Michael's carelessness in working with the chemistry set burner, as JJ had alledged.

As a built in check, the students were also asked to respond to the statement "JJ blamed the fire on. . . ." The possible responses were the same as for the question on the cause of the fire. Eighty-six percent of the subjects, overall, identified the cause as given by JJ, correctly.

This proves that the subjects had no difficulty in correctly identifying JJ's cause for the fire, that they were observant and aware of his reason for the fire. This also leads to the conclusion that, since the subjects were aware of JJ's cause for the fire, they were making selective decision not to accept the disinformation.

Upon finding out which of the two sources carried the most influence in the decision making process, the next two steps were to find out what, if any, personality variables were involved in the decision, and which of the alternative answers were the subjects influenced to select.

Such personality factors as self-esteem, locus of control, and degree of authoritarianism were measured for each respondent in the hope that a personality profile could be compiled for two groups of subjects: those who were influenced by the teacher and those who were influenced by the television character. It was hoped that discoveries in this area could be applied to further audience research, especially in the area of uses and gratifications theories.

Socio-economic status was also determined from the response to the question, "What does the head of the household do for a living?" The socio-economic status (SES)



results showed that only 17% of the subjects were in the same SES category as JJ. This may be the reason that subsequent crosstabulations involving SES and character identification, teacher identification, hours of television viewing and frequency of "Good Times" viewing, bore no significant results.

Looking at the answers selected as the cause of the fire proved interesting. The majority of the subjects chose an answer other than the response given by JJ and the answer which was assumed to be the result of the teacher's influence. It had been assumed that the teacher's remarks would influence the subjects to re-evaluate what they had seen on the videotape and conclude that there was no evident cause for the fire contained in the portions of the tape they viewed. The correct response to the questions "The fire was caused by. . ." was the final choice, "not shown in the videotape."

Perhaps since the students were evidently influenced by the teacher to reject the disinformation as presented by JJ, the teacher's intervention would have forced them not only to re-evaluate the videotape events in their own minds, but perhaps to come up with a plausible cause from what they had just seen. If this was the case, then the majority who selected the same cause for the fire were also reflecting the influence of the teacher. In other words, the teacher's

influence did not mean that the students would pick the correct answer or any answer in particular, but that they would select an alternative answer to the one given by the television character.

The response selected by a majority of the students was the first choice offered, and the most obvious choice based on a casual viewing of the tape. JJ's sister Thelma places a casserole dish on the couch when she answers the phone. The dish is removed from the couch shortly before the fire is discovered. However, the casserole dish is not hot, and could not be construed as the cause of the fire.

There are two give-away clues to this, which are shown in the tape: first, Thelma is seen putting raw vegetables into the dish, and second, she is seen handling the dish with no oven mitts or pot holders. Yet a majority of the students selected this as a cause of the fire.

From the data collected, there was no way in which to determine the reasons behind this selection.

Another factor which should not be overlooked here, is that students were exposed to the same television events as the character and the teacher. The students would, therefore, be able to draw from their own objective or subjective observations and conclusions in response to the question. This may partially explain the response concerning the casserole dish. The subject also could have

ignored the influence of both teacher and television character and made a totally independent judgement.

However, the chi square analysis between the control and experiment groups indicates that the interpersonal intervention of the teacher served to reduce significantly the acceptance of the character disinformation.

## CHAPTER 7

### CRITICISMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis delves into relatively new and untried hypotheses, speculations and concerns about the acceptance and rejection of televised disinformation, and the selection motivations involved in this process. The concept was brought together from a wide spectrum of research in psychology, sociology and philosophy.

As in the case when any study attempts to examine areas which, for one reason or another, have been overlooked by previous researchers, there is a great deal of work involved. After the study is completed and the results are in, one is in the position to examine the positive and negative aspects of the research. The most important thing to come from this critical evaluation of the work is a set of positive recommendations which, hopefully, will aid future researchers in their replication of the experiment; or to serve as the instigation for similar or follow-up studies and experiments on this topic.

Regarding future replication of the research presented in this thesis, I would make the following recommendations:

I believe that race and socio-economic status were two factors which stood in the way of higher character identification results, and higher character credibility. JJ's

environment was, perhaps, too foreign to the students tested, for them to regard him as a peer or a credible source.

To remedy this, I would suggest a selection of a subject sample which would be more representative of lower-class, black areas.

The study could be replicated as a lower-class, urban, racially mixed school, and the conclusions offered for comparison with these results.

A second alternative would be to mount a new study which would take in a far broader subject base, which would ensure a more diverse sample population (especially with regard to race and socio-economic status).

After the sample is chosen it may be advantageous to pre-screen and pre-select from a number of television programs, before deciding on one program or character to use in the testing. Character identification questionnaires could be completed for several popular characters; and the most popular character, in terms of identification, would be used in the final character vs teacher testing. There may be some problems, however, in finding an episode to use which would be well suited to the experiment design.

Pretesting and redefinition of the character/teacher identification scales is another possibility in achieving more significant test results. There may be a valid reason for the replacement of the evaluation of the respective

"smartness" of the teacher and character, with a statement designed to test the perceived "truthfulness" of each.

This latter change would involve the whole area of value judgement, which would be an interesting study in itself. The disinformation in this study was benign; in other words, there was no value judgement or evaluation made. JJ's disinformation described a supposed event, a cause for the fire. The replacement of this event-oriented disinformation with disinformation concerning smoking, or shoplifting for example, could determine the relative influence of the two 'significant others' in the formation of the subjects' value system.

The videotape in the experiment, should it be used again in a replication, should be edited to remove any misleading information concerning the casserole dish and its role in the cause of the fire. So many students selected this response as the cause of the fire, based on very little supporting evidence, that the scene should be deleted.

The final recommendation concerns the teacher selection. The teacher participating in this experiment was well liked and popular with the students. A replication with a less popular teacher may show significant differences in the rejection of the character disinformation.

The popularity question could be used as a central focus in a new study, zeroing in on testing various personality

pairings between character and teacher.

Teachers participating in the study could be subjected to the same personality testing as the students. Would matching or compatible personality profiles between teacher and student indicate that the student would be more likely to reject the character disinformation? The possibility exists.

Interpersonal approach is the final area which would be closely studied in subsequent experimentation. The teacher in this study was casual, and suggestive in his remarks. He was seen as offering alternate information rather than telling the students something. A different approach, in which the teacher maintained a hard line, authoritarian tone in his remarks may influence even more students to disregard the character disinformation.

FOOTNOTES

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- <sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 149.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 150.
- <sup>7</sup>Alan Rubin, "Television Usage, Attitudes and Viewing Behaviour of Children and Adolescents," Journal of Broadcasting 21:3 (Summer 1977): p. 355.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 362.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid. p. 366.
- <sup>10</sup>T. Shibutani, "Reference Groups as Perspectives," in Symbolic Interaction, eds. T. Manis and R. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967): p. 168.
- <sup>11</sup>M. DeFleur and S. Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication. (New York: David McKay and Company, Inc., 1966): p. 1.
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- <sup>13</sup>E. Rubinstein, "The TV Violence Report: What's Next?" Journal of Communication 24:1 (Winter 1974): pp. 84, 85.
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- <sup>15</sup>Ibid. p. 26.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid. p. 33.
- <sup>17</sup>Grant Noble, Children in Front of the Small Screen, (London: Constable, 1975): p. 39.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid. p. 40.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid. p. 40.
- <sup>20</sup>C. von Feilitzen and O. Linne, "Identifying with Television Characters," Journal of Communication 25:4 (Autumn 1975): p. 51.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid. p. 52.
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid. p. 54.
- <sup>23</sup>J. Hinton and others, "Tokenism and Improving the Imagery of Blacks in TV Drama and Comedy: 1973," Journal of Broadcasting 18:4 (Fall 1974): pp. 423-424.
- <sup>24</sup>Stanley Coopersmith, "Studies in Self-Esteem," Reprinted from Scientific American (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1968): p. 1.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid. p. 1.
- <sup>26</sup>L.E. Wells and G. Marwell, Self-Esteem, Sage Library of Social Research, Vol. 20 (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976): p. 14.

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- 50 V.K. Prasad, T.R. Rao, and A.A. Sheikh, "Mother vs Commercial," Journal of Communication 28:1 (Winter 1978): p. 96.
- 51 C.R. Corder-Bolz, and S. O'Bryant, "Teacher vs Program," Journal of Communication 28:1 (Winter 1978): p. 99.
- 52 The tables corresponding to and illustrating hypotheses three through eleven are shown in Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

TABLE 6

"TV Viewing Hours by Cause of Fire"

		CAUSE			
Frequency					
Row PCT					
Column PCT					
Total PCT		Other	Character	Interpersonal	Total
HOURS OF VIEWING (NIGHTLY)	3 HRS.	31	1	16	48
		64.6	2.1	33.3	64.9
		67.4	50.0	61.5	
		41.9	1.4	21.6	
Column	4 HRS.	15	1	10	26
		57.7	3.8	38.5	35.1
		32.6	50.0	38.5	
		20.3	1.4	13.5	
Total	Total	46	2	26	74
		62.2	2.7	35.1	100.0

CHI SQUARE = 0.44897, DF = 2, P = 0.7989

TABLE 7

"Character Identification by  
Frequency of 'Good Times' Viewing"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	Often-Occasionally	Rarely-Never	Total
	0 0.0 0.0 0.0	12* 100.0 26.1 16.9	12 16.9
HIGH CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION	11 42.3 44.0 15.5	15 57.7 32.6 21.1	26 36.6
LOW CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION	14 42.4 55.0 19.7	19 57.6 41.5 26.8	33 46.5
Column Total	25 35.2	46 64.8	71** 100.0

\* These 12 subjects had never viewed "Good Times" and as such had no character identification scores.

\*\* There were Three (3) missing cases.

CHI SQUARE = 7.84827, DF = 2, P = 0.0198

TABLE 8

"Character Identification by  
Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Disinformation"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	CAUSE			Total
	Other	Character	Interpersonal	
*	6 50.0 13.0 8.1	0 0.0 0.0 0.0	6 50.0 23.1 8.1	12 16.2
HIGH CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION	18 66.7 39.1 24.3	1 3.7 50.0 1.4	8 29.8 30.8 10.8	27 36.5
LOW CHARACTER IDENTIFICATION	22 62.9 47.8 29.7	1 2.9 50.0 1.4	12 34.3 46.2 16.2	35 47.3
Column Total	46 62.2	2 2.7	26 35.1	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 1.79870, DF = 4, P = 0.7727

\* These 12 subjects scored 0 on character identification because they had no prior exposure to "Good Times."

TABLE 9

"Teacher Identification by  
Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Disinformation"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	CAUSE			
	Other	Character	Interpersonal	Total
HIGH TEACHER IDENTIFICATION	26 65.0 56.5 35.1	1 2.5 50.0 1.4	13 32.5 50.0 17.6	40 54.1
LOW TEACHER IDENTIFICATION	20 58.8 43.5 27.0	1 2.9 50.0 1.4	13 38.2 50.0 17.6	34 45.9
Column Total	46 62.2	2 2.7	26 35.1	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 0.29808, DF = 2, P= 0.8615

TABLE 10

"'Good Times' Frequency by  
Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Disinformation"

		CAUSE				
		Frequency				
		Row PCT				
		Column PCT				
		Total PCT.	Other	Character	Interpersonal	Total
"GOOD TIMES" FREQUENCY	HIGH	14	2	9	25	
		56.0	8.0	36.0	35.0	
		32.6	100.0	34.6		
		19.7	2.8	12.7		
LOW	29	0	17	46		
	63.0	0.0	37.0	64.8		
	67.4	0.0	65.4			
	40.8	0.0	23.9			
Column	43	2	26	71*		
Total	60.6	2.8	36.6	100.0		

CHI SQUARE = 3.81672, DF = 2, P = 0.1483

TABLE 11

"Self-Esteem by Character Identification"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	*	High Character Identification	Low Character Identification	Total
HIGH SELF-ESTEEM	5 17.9 41.7 6.8	13 28.3 48.1 17.6	26 56.5 74.3 35.1	46 62.2
LOW SELF-ESTEEM	7 15.2 58.3 9.5	14 50.0 51.9 18.9	9 32.1 25.7 12.2	28 37.8
Column Total	12 16.2	27 36.5	35 47.3	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 4.51636, DF = 2, P = 0.1045

\* These 12 subjects had scored 0 on character identification as they had no prior exposure to "Good Times."



TABLE 12

"Self-Esteem by Teacher Identification"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	High Teacher Identification	Low Teacher Identification	Total
LOW SELF-ESTEEM	25 54.3 62.5 33.8	21 45.7 61.8 28.4	46 62.2
HIGH SELF-ESTEEM	15 53.6 37.5 20.3	13 46.4 38.2 17.6	28 37.8
Column Total	40 54.1	34 45.9	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 0.0 (Corrected), DF = 1, P = 1.0000

TABLE 13

"External Locus by Teacher Identification"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	High Teacher Identification	Low- Teacher Identification	Total
HIGH EXTERNAL	15 41.7 37.5 20.3	21 58.3 61.8 28.4	36 48.6
LOW EXTERNAL	25 65.8 62.5 33.8	13 34.2 38.2 17.6	38 51.4
Column Total	40 54.1	34 45.9	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 3.41461 (Corrected), DF = 1, P = 0.0646

TABLE 14

"External Control by Character Identification"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	*	High Character Identification	Low Character Identification	Total
HIGH	5 13.9	11 30.6	20 55.6	36 48.6
EXTERNAL	41.7	40.7	57.1	
LOCUS	6.8	14.9	27.0	
LOW	7 18.4	16 42.1	15 39.5	38 51.4
EXTERNAL	58.3	59.3	42.9	
LOCUS	9.5	21.6	20.3	
Column Total	12 16.2	27 36.5	35 47.3	74 83.7

CHI SQUARE = 1.92089, DF = 2, P = 0.3827

\* These 12 subjects scored 0 on character identification as they had no prior exposure to "Good Times."

TABLE 15

"Authoritarianism by  
Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of Disinformation"

Frequency Row PCT Column PCT Total PCT	Other	Character	Interpersonal	Total
HIGH AUTHORITARIANISM	24 61.5 52.2 32.4	2 5.1 100.0 2.7	13 33.3 50.0 17.6	39 52.7
LOW AUTHORITARIANISM	22 62.9 47.8 29.7	0 0.0 0.0 0.0	13 37.1 50.0 17.6	35 47.3
Column Total	46 62.2	2 2.7	26 35.1	74 100.0

CHI SQUARE = 1.87622, DF = 2, P = 0.3914.

APPENDIX B

EXPERIMENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Television Questionnaire

We are interested in your television viewing habits and attitudes about television programming. Please answer each of these questions. This is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. We are interested in what you think.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

DIRECTIONS: Please circle only one number for each question.

	<u>Number of Hours</u>						
1. On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch <u>before</u> 6 p.m.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
2. On an average weekday, how many hours of television do you watch <u>after</u> 6 p.m.?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
3. On an average <u>weekend</u> , how many hours of television do you watch?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+

4. When you watch television, which of the following types of programs do you most often watch?

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>RARELY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
DAY TIME SOAP OPERAS				
EG. Edge of Night				
Another World				
As the World Turns	1	2	3	4
ADULT FAMILY SHOWS				
EG. M*A*S*H*				
All in the Family				
Jeffersons	1	2	3	4

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>RARELY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
<b>FAMILY SHOWS</b>				
EG. Mary Tyler Moore				
Rhoda				
Happy Days	1	2	3	4
<b>MEDICAL SHOWS</b>				
EG. Marcus Welby M.D.				
Quincy				
Lifeline	1	2	3	4
<b>CHILDREN'S SHOWS</b>				
EG. Walt Disney World				
Sesame Street				
Mister Rogers	1	2	3	4
<b>DRAMA</b>				
EG. Emergency One				
The Waltons				
Best Sellers: Once an Eagle	1	2	3	4
<b>CRIME</b>				
EG. Kojak				
Starsky & Hutch				
Hawaii Five-O	1	2	3	4
<b>GAME SHOWS</b>				
EG. Name That Tune				
Let's Make a Deal				
Hollywood Squares	1	2	3	4
<b>PANEL SHOWS</b>				
EG. Firing Line				
Issues and Answers				
Meet the Press	1	2	3	4
<b>POLITICAL AFFAIRS/ DOCUMENTARIES</b>				
EG. 60 Minutes				
Documentary Showcase				
Jacques Cousteau	1	2	3	4
<b>TALK SHOWS</b>				
EG. Mike Douglas				
Dinah!				
Johnny Carson	1	2	3	4
<b>SPORTS</b>				
EG. NFL Football				
NBA Basketball				
American Sportsman	1	2	3	4

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>RARELY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
<b>RELIGIOUS</b>				
EG. The World of Tomorrow				
Rex Humbard				
Oral Roberts	1	2	3	4
<b>NEWS</b>				
EG. News at Noon				
Network News at 6 & 11 p.m.				
Evening News at 11 p.m.	1	2	3	4
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL</b>				
EG. Wall Street Week				
Yoga for Health	1	2	3	4
<b>ANIMATION</b>				
EG. Flintstones				
Pink Panther				
Spiderman	1	2	3	4
<b>ADVENTURE</b>				
EG. Battlestar Galactica				
Bionic Woman				
Six Million Dollar Man	1	2	3	4
<b>MUSIC AND VARIETY</b>				
EG. Donny and Marie				
Carol Burnett				
Midnight Special	1	2	3	4

Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about the television program "Good Times" and its main character JJ.

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>RARELY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
5. How often do you watch the program "Good Times"?	1	2	3	4

Please note that here we are talking about the character JJ, and not the actor portraying him.

Please circle only one number for each statement.

	<u>STRONGLY</u> <u>AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY</u> <u>DISAGREE</u>
6. a) I like JJ.	1	2	3	4	5
b) I admire JJ.	1	2	3	4	5
c) I think JJ is very smart	1	2	3	4	5



	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>
d) JJ is usually right	1	2	3	4	5
e) I would like to be like JJ when I'm older	1	2	3	4	5
f) JJ and I are alike in the way we think	1	2	3	4	5

Now we would like you to agree or disagree with these statements based on your relationship with your present teacher. THIS INFORMATION IS COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL, in other words; your teacher nor anyone at the school will ever see your answers.

Please circle only one number per statement.

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>
7. a) I like my teacher	1	2	3	4	5
b) I admire my teacher	1	2	3	4	5
c) My teacher is usually right	1	2	3	4	5
d) My teacher makes me want to do well in school	1	2	3	4	5
e) My teacher knows more than my parents	1	2	3	4	5
f) I would like to be like, my teacher when I grow up	1	2	3	4	5

Now we would like to ask your opinions on several different topics:

Please circle only one number for each statement.

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>
8. a) Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>STRONGLY AGREE</u>	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>NEUTRAL</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>STRONGLY DISAGREE</u>
b) If people would talk less and listen more, everybody would be better off	1	2	3	4	5
c) Most honest people admit to themselves, that they have sometimes hated their parents	1	2	3	4	5
d) People can be divided into classes, the weak and the strong	1	2	3	4	5
e) Every person should have complete faith in some supernatural power whose decisions he obeys without question	1	2	3	4	5

We would like to ask a few general questions. Please mark the statements according to how you usually feel. There are no wrong or right answers.

	<u>LIKE ME</u>	<u>UNLIKE ME</u>
9. a) There are lots of things about me I'd change if I could.	1	2
b) I'm proud of my schoolwork.	1	2
c) No one pays much attention to me at home.	1	2
d) Most people are better liked than I am.	1	2

Please select the answer which you personally believe to be more true. There are no right or wrong answers.

	<u>TRUE</u>	<u>FALSE</u>
10. a) Do you feel that when somebody doesn't like you, there's little you can do about it?	1	2
b) Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out anyway?	1	2

	<u>TRUE</u>	<u>FALSE</u>
c) Do you feel that when you do something wrong, there's very little you can do to make it right?	1	2
d) Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all?	1	2
e) Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen, they are going to happen, no matter what you try and stop them?	1	2

Please answer these final questions about yourself. CIRCLE.

AGE      10      11      12      13      14      15      16      17

SEX      Male      Female

RACE      White      Black      Other

What does the main breadwinner in the household do for a living?

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this section of the questionnaire. Please wait for further instructions.

POST-EXPOSURE TELEVISION QUESTIONNAIRE

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions refer only to the episode of "Good Times" which you just saw. Circle the answer you think is most correct.

1. The fire happened:
- 1) during dinner
  - 2) before dinner
  - 3) after dinner

2. The fire happened:
  - 1) before Willona came home
  - 2) before JJ came home
  - 3) before Thelma came home
  
3. The fire was in the:
  - 1) bedroom
  - 2) living room
  - 3) kitchen
  - 4) hallway
  
4. The fire destroyed part of the:
  - 1) curtain
  - 2) rug
  - 3) armchair
  - 4) couch
  
5. The fire was mostly:
  - 1) smoke
  - 2) flame
  
6. The fire was caused by:
  - 1) a hot casserole dish
  - 2) careless smoking
  - 3) showing off with matches
  - 4) Michael's chemistry set
  - 5) wasn't shown in the videotape
  
7. JJ blames the fire on:
  - 1) a hot casserole dish
  - 2) careless smoking
  - 3) showing off with matches
  - 4) Michael's chemistry set
  - 5) wasn't shown in the videotape
  
8. The children tried to cover up the smell by:
  - 1) opening the windows
  - 2) turning on the exhaust fan
  - 3) spraying room deodorizer
  - 4) spraying Thelma's perfume

9. The fire was discovered by:

- 1) Penny
- 2) Thelma
- 3) JJ
- 4) Michael

10. When Willona came home she first noticed:

- 1) the smoke
  - 2) the smell
  - 3) the damage
  - 4) none of the above
  - 5) a combination of the above
- 

Student Number Code \_\_\_\_\_

Group Code \_\_\_\_\_

#### VITA AUCTORIS

Holly Elizabeth Furtaw was born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada on April 27, 1954. She attended Glenwood Public School, where she was accelerated. After graduating from Vincent Massey Secondary School (Windsor) she enrolled at the University of Windsor. She earned a B.A. Honours 1975 (English and Communication Studies) in three years, maintaining a 'B' average. She was placed on the President's Roll of Scholars for the academic year 1972-73.

In 1976 she earned a B.Ed. (Elementary), and was placed on the President's Roll of Scholars for the academic year 1975-76.

After teaching for the Windsor Board of Education during 1976-77, she returned to full time study at the University of Windsor where she received her M.A. (Communication Studies) in 1980. During her post-graduate studies she maintained an 'A-' average in course work and received an 'A' grade for her thesis. In addition she worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of Communication Studies instructing radio-television production labs.

In extra curricular activities she served as reporter/co-editor for the graduate Crusader newsletter, and a member of the graduate Student Council. She was elected President

of the Graduate Student Society for 1978-79, the first woman to hold the office in the history of the society. She served as a member of the University of Windsor Board of Governors and other various committees during her tenure as President.

Most recently she served as a Canada Council Grant assistant researcher studying media coverage of the Canadian Federal Election.

She enjoys writing in her spare time and is currently researching material for an historical novel.