



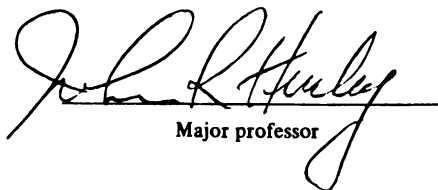
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ADULT SIBLINGS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS' CHILD REARING
CONDUCT

By

Vernita Annette Marsh

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

Department of Psychology

1991

ABSTRACT**ADULT SIBLINGS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARENTS'
CHILD REARING CONDUCT****By****Vernita Annette Marsh**

Exploring variations in how siblings perceive their parents' child-rearing behavior, 26 adult brother or sister trios separately described each parent's child-rearing conduct on Siegelman and Roe's (1979) Parent Child Relations (PCR-2) questionnaire. Including 15 African American and 11 White families, this intact-family grapevine sample exceeded the US averages in education and in size. Respondents rated their mother's conduct as more Loving and less Rejecting than their father's, fitting cultural stereotypes. African Americans described their parents as more Demanding than Whites, a finding confounded with differences in parental education and socio-economic status. Sister trios' parental ratings generally differed more than brothers. The findings suggest that in these families daughters perceived intrafamilial events more singularly than did sons. These daughter-son differences have implications for family-oriented research studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God, be all the glory and the praise for making all of this possible.

I am grateful for Dr. Hurley, chairman, for his patience, diligence, and guidance. Appreciation is also extended to the remanding committee members, Dr. Bertram Karon and Dr. Clarence Winder.

A special note of thanks is due to Ms. Tanya Carson, M.A., for her valuable assistance in the successful completion of my thesis.

This author wishes to express appreciation to all of those who made the completion of this thesis possible. Finally, I would like to especially thank my family and friends who provided encouragement, prayers, and support in the assistance of this study.

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INTRODUCTION

This study addresses the similarities and differences in how adult siblings from the same family perceive their parents' child-rearing behavior. The apparent dearth of prior research in this area makes an exploratory study interesting and useful. There have been, of course, studies of how siblings perceive each other and how parents perceive their children. But this author was only able to locate only one study (McCrae & Costa, 1988) that compares directly how siblings perceive their parents. Much of the early literature regarding family members' interpersonal perceptions seemed dominated by parents' descriptions of their children. Perhaps, this was indicative of our society's view that children's thoughts and opinions were relatively unimportant, especially as they related to parental authority. Only within the last fifty years has our culture taken children's rights, thoughts, and feelings more seriously, especially with regard to such issues as physical and sexual abuse. The present study's goals are congruent with the more modern perspective on the value of children's thoughts and feelings.

This topic is of particular interest since this author has three sisters and one brother. Although, all have the

same parents and came from the same household, all of the children seem to view their parents differently. This phenomenon appears to occur in other families including the Roosevelts. In My Parents: A Differing View, James Roosevelt (1976) noted how his perceptions of his parents, Franklin and Eleanor, differed sharply from those of his younger brother, Elliott. Although Elliott portrayed both negative and positive aspects of his parents, James perceived Elliott as depicting their parents much more favorably than he himself had in another book, As He Saw It, (Roosevelt, 1946). Not surprisingly, James also regarded his own view as being more accurate.

Potential benefits of studies on how children perceive their parents include being able to make more confident statements about the consistency of siblings' views of their parents and perhaps a more accurate picture of the child-rearing orientation of parents. The research literature also suggests that the consensus of peers sometimes provides a more accurate description of the individual than do self-reports (Nisbett & Smith, 1989; Small & Hurley, 1978), and this may extend to children's perceptions of their parents. Zuckerman, Barrett, and Bragiel (1960) noted that parents' verbal descriptions of their own conduct are likely to differ from their actual behavior. Differences between children's views of their parents may also reflect variations in parental treatment of different children.

Favored children may well be treated differently than their siblings, or a child favored by one parent may be disfavored by the other parent. The findings could also reflect differences in the temperaments of children that resulted in their differing perceptions of the same parental behavior. Furthermore, another likely contributing factor is the fact that the family is an evolving system, in that the events experienced by one child may never be encountered by another due to differences in time, age, sex, etc. Thus, a combination of factors will likely influence the present findings.

This study may also yield birth order effects (Konig, 1963; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1979). The literature suggests that there are personality differences among siblings related to their birth order positions (Ernst & Angst, 1983). The findings may also have implications for parenting. Should it be found, for example, that older siblings commonly perceive their parents as more restrictive than later siblings, new parents might be advised of this as they rear their first child.

My survey of the literature published in prominent archival periodicals such as Child Development and Developmental Psychology during the past decade (1979-1989), revealed no pertinent research studies in that period. I also surveyed Psychological Abstracts for possible references and found only one study in the past decade.

Additionally, I consulted Michigan State University faculty from the Department of Psychology in such sectors as Developmental and Clinical (both Adult and Child and Family tracks) without learning of any other applicable studies. Furthermore, I have consulted both Dr. Anne Roe and Dr. Marvin Siegelman concerning this topic without learning of any additional works.

This study's main concern is how one perceives others, particularly how siblings perceive their parents. Interpersonal theories are largely concerned with how individuals perceive one another or themselves with respect to the central dimensions of love and status (Brown, 1965; Carson, 1969). Commonly used to describe interpersonal behavior, these two prepotent dimensions have also been designated as Dominance-Submission and Love-Hate (Wiggins, 1982). It has been noted that the Love-Hate or Accepting-Rejecting dimension of this central duo appears to influence how people perceive each other more than the "status" dimension (Hurley, 1976). Adams (1964) described this affiliative dimension as a measure of one's "acceptance or rejection of the other" (p. 195). Foa (1961) similarly regarded "acceptance-rejection" as the principal dimension underlying interpersonal variables. While the Love-Hate axis may also be described as the acceptance or rejection of others, the Dominance-Submission dimension has been considered to address the measure of acceptance or rejection

of oneself (Adams, 1964). In addition, Foa (1961) maintained that it is this dimension that concerns the actions of both the social and emotional aspects of the subject "toward the self" (p. 350).

Several inventories and questionnaires addressing interpersonal behavior have identified very similar dimensions as Power-Weakness and Affiliation-Hostility (Leary, 1957); Control-Affiliation (Lorr & McNair, 1966); Control-Autonomy and Love-Hostility (Schaefer, 1965a); Dominance-Submission and Love-Hate (LaForge & Suczek, 1959). Wiggins's (1982) review of the literature cited Leary's system as the prototypical interpersonal model and noted subsequent models were generally patterned after it.

These dimensions have often been given alternative labels having essentially similar meanings. Other variables commonly found pertinent to how people perceive one another include "ambitious, dominant, gregarious, extraverted, warm, agreeable, unassuming, ingenuous, lazy, submissive, aloof, introverted, cold, quarrelsome, arrogant, and calculating" (Wiggins, 1979). Factor analytic studies of such variables have generally found that they may be effectively subsumed by the two principal dimensions (Conte & Plutchik, 1981).

Perhaps the best known instrument for exploring child-rearing attitudes is Schaefer and Bell's (1958) Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI). Employing Likert scales and encompassing 23 variables, this 115-item

questionnaire measures parental attitudes toward children, each assessed by five items. Unfortunately, the PARI has shown serious limitations. Becker and Krug (1958) criticized it for exclusively addressing maternal attitudes. However, Kadushin, Rose, and Sobel (1967), after revising each item validly, had fathers complete the PARI.

It has been noted that responses to the PARI are strongly influenced by a tendency to agree with its items or an "acquiescence" response set (Becker & Krug, 1965). Additionally, it has been recognized that the items of the democratic-attitude factor were opposite to the authoritarian-control, yet failed to correlate, suggesting that many parents regarded democratic and authoritarian attitudes as equally appealing. This plainly conflicts with how these measures should correlate. Another finding associated with the authoritarian-control factor was that it correlated negatively with extreme scores. This also was contrary to expectations.

Also noted was the PARI's general failure to identify significant differences between the expressed attitudes of parents who behaved divergently toward children (Kadushin et al., 1967; Zuckerman et al., 1960). These parental conduct differences included the following: parents wanting children versus those not wanting children; parents choosing to institutionalize a Mongoloid child versus keeping the child at home; parents who continued treatment with a child

psychiatric clinic versus those parents who discontinued prematurely. Additionally, it has been recognized that the parent's education, age, and number of children may influence the PARI scores, as this instrument includes no control for these variables (Becker & Krug, 1965; Zuckerman et al., 1960).

Becker and Krug's (1965) PARI review concluded:

that the bulk of evidence suggests that the PARI does not predict much very well . . . It has served as an important stepping stone, but difficulties inherent in its design and structure suggest that it would be more profitable to work toward new approaches (p. 329).

Perhaps the PARI's greatest drawback is that it was designed to provide data about how parents viewed their own child-rearing practices, rather than how children perceived their parents.

Developed at about the same time as the PARI, Roe and Siegelman's (1957) Parent-Child Relations (PCR) questionnaire seems better suited for the present study because it was developed to assess the behavior of parents toward their children as viewed by the children. The original Parent-Child Relations questionnaire (PCR I) has been revised from 130 questions to 50 questions and identified as the PCR II (Siegleman & Roe; 1979). It has four versions for the same-sex (son-father; daughter-mother)

and opposite-sex (son-mother; daughter-father) parents and children. Thus, each child was required to complete separate forms for the same-sex and opposite-sex parent. Each form had 50 items, ten each for the categories of Loving, Rejecting, Casual, Demanding, and Attention.

PCR II has two major bipolar dimensions denoted as Loving-Rejecting and Casual-Demanding that closely parallel the central Love-Hate and Submission-Dominance dimensions, respectively. The Loving dimension was best described as providing much attention and care to others, being warm and affectionate, and administering nonpunitive discipline. Rejecting persons were characterized as being cold, aloof, hostile, and showing very little regard for the thoughts and feelings of others. Casual persons were described as being relatively permissive, easy-going, laid-back, and nurturing of others, but not to the extent that it was burdensome to the nurturer. Demanding persons were characterized as overly punitive, restrictive, and as making unreasonable requests of others. The final dimension of the PCR-II is a unipolar Attention scale describing parental behavior as spoiling and showering the child with gifts.

Given the many problems of the PARI, the most prominent research instrument used for parental attitudes, an alternative was sought. The PCR II appeared more appropriate for the present study. For my research purposes, the PCR II, unlike the PARI, can address

children's perceptions of their parents. Additionally, the PCR II's major dimensions seem to be generally representative of the realm of interpersonal relations instruments. Thus, its Loving-Rejecting and Casual-Demanding dimensions correspond well with the two central dimensions of many other interpersonal studies.

The PCR II was selected for present purposes because a suitable instrument for assessing individual's perceptions of each parent was critically important. All three dimensions provided by the PCR II were investigated: Loving-Rejecting, Causal-Demanding, and Attention. The Loving-Rejecting and Casual-Demanding dimensions parallel those identified by several other studies (Adams, 1964; Leary, 1957; Rohner, 1975; Schaefer, 1961). Rohner (1975) focused on the central dimension identified as Acceptance-Rejection which appears similar to the PCR II's Loving-Rejecting scale. Adams (1964) described the two principal dimensions of interpersonal behavior as Affection-Hostility and Dominance-Submission. These closely parallel Roe and Siegleman's (1964) Loving-Rejecting and Casual-Demanding measures. Similarly, Love-Hostility and Power-Weakness were characterized by Leary (1957) as the two primary dimensions. Schaefer (1961) similarly denoted the major dimensions of parent-child behavior as Love-Hostility and Autonomy-Control.

The PCR II's three measures were selected because factor analytic studies suggested that they are psychometrically sound. For samples of about 250, internal consistency estimates of the primary Loving-Rejecting factor ranged from .91 to .95. The second strongest factor was identified as Casual-Demanding and its internal consistency coefficients ranged from .85 to .90. Weaker than the others and more peripheral to the central dimensions of interpersonal conduct, the Attention factor had internal consistency coefficients ranging from .75 to .81. It was included in the present study in the interest of comprehensiveness.

Four judges' ratings of each PCR II item provided support for these scales' validity by concurring that these items best-fitted the categories exemplary of Roe and Siegelman's dimensions. Support for the "'factorial validity' which refers to the extent to which a given scale measures general or common factors" (p. 5), was shown in Tables 11, 12, and 13 of the PCR II Manual (Siegelman & Roe, 1979). The factor loadings for sons (Table 11), daughters (Table 12), and both sons and daughters (Table 13), were substantial on the bipolar measures of the Loving-Rejecting (averaging about .92) and Casual-Demanding (averaging about .87) factors. The unipolar scale, Attention, also was shown to have a significant factor loading (averaging about .94). Tiboni's (1976) study revealed high correlations between the

PCR II ratings of mothers by both themselves and their sons, providing further validation support.

McCrae and Costa (1988) investigated adult siblings' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing behavior by using the PCR-II. These authors' also correlated the siblings' perceptions of their parents with personality measures. The authors concluded from their study that parental behavior had little influence on the child's personality.

In some respects, the present study is an extension of McCrae & Costa's (1988) work. This research attempted to investigate more intensively how same-family siblings perceived their parents' child-rearing behaviors. Unlike McCrae and Costa's sample, which included both same-sex and opposite-sex siblings from the same family, the present existing sample employed same-sex siblings exclusively.

The sample used in this work differs from McCrae and Costa's in that it utilized both blacks and whites siblings and that it also employed three instead of two siblings. Participants were required to be at least 22 years old since by then they will be more adult and less likely to still be under their parents' influence. Also, as one becomes more emotionally mature, his/her perceptions seem likely to become more stable. Thus, this work will examine more stable perceptions, which may also be more accurate.

It has been documented that females commonly behave more affectionately than males (Adams, Jones, Schvaneveldt, & Jenson, 1982; Coltrane, 1988), and that mothers are usually much more affectionate toward their children than are fathers (Adams et al., 1982; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Females also are more concerned generally about family issues than males (Blakemore, Baumgardner, & Keniston, 1988). Consequently, women seemed more likely than men to complete the PCR II inventory conscientiously and to respond to its items in fuller detail than men. Often first-time parents also tend to be overprotective and highly concerned about rearing children properly and it is not until they have had some child-rearing experience that they begin to slacken idealistic demands upon children (Ernst & Angst, 1983; Hoopes & Harper, 1987; Konig, 1963). Hence, it is probable that the oldest sibling will describe his/her parents as more restrictive than will the younger siblings. The Demanding and Rejecting scales have shared a similar relationship in many of the circumplex models (Freedman et al., 1960; Schaefer, 1959; Wiggins, 1979). Thus, it is likely that there will be a positive correlation between the Demanding and Rejecting scales found for siblings on the PCR-II ratings.

Each sex was included in this study. As mentioned earlier, same-sex children were recruited from individual families. The reason for selecting the same-sex

participants within each family was that often parents in our society typically treat male and female children differently, thus generating sex-linked perceptions of parents. Three siblings from individual families were selected as they provided a reasonable number of perceptions within each family, and yielded three differences among each trio on each variable versus the single difference generated by two siblings per family. In addition, interfamilial differences between same-sex and opposite-sex siblings seemed likely and were explored.

In this study twins or triplets were excluded both because their birth order differences are small and because their experiences with parents are apt to be more similar than those of siblings born a year or more apart. It is also critical for present purposes that both biological parents have resided with the participating siblings during the time of the child's rearing to avoid coloring the participant's perceptions with feelings of abandonment or rejection. Children are likely to have less accurate impressions of non-resident parents. Moreover, this implies that the parents should not have been separated for any substantial length of time during the child's maturation. It was equally important that the parents were living during the time of the completion of the PCR II form because the death of parents may have biased participants' responses.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were examined:

- I. Children will describe their mothers as significantly higher than their fathers on the PCR II's Loving scale.
- II. Within the present sample, the oldest sibling will describe her/his parents as significantly more restrictive on the PCR-II's Demanding scale than will the youngest.
- III. There will be a significant positive correlation between ratings of parents on the PCR II's Demanding and Rejecting scales.
- IV. Same-family sons' parental descriptions will be less rich and varied than those of same-family daughters, as indicated by lesser differences between their PCR II scores, considered separately for mothers and fathers.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

Seventy-eight participants representing 26 families were recruited exclusively from the author's acquaintances. From each family three same-sex siblings, at least 22 years of age, and having the same biological parents were included.

Procedure:

Participants were solicited by word of mouth and community contacts. Most of these contacts were sought through the author's affiliations with church organizations, MSU graduate students, family, and friends. All who agreed to participate were requested to complete the PCR II separately for their mothers and fathers. They were also requested to complete a brief form pertaining to the general life history of themselves and their family, addressing their siblings' ages, birth order, sex, race, and parents' marital status at the time of the rearing as a child. This history was to insure that siblings had the same parents and that their parents were both together at the time of child-rearing. Other information such as age, birth-order, sex,

and race seemed useful for the preliminary exploration of variables that might influence the differences of the siblings' perceptions. Upon completion of the PCR II forms, participants were asked to mail the completed materials to the researcher.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the present sample of 156 respondents' descriptions of their parents' child rearing practices on the scales of the PCR-II separately for their mothers and fathers. Using the t -test for correlated measures, adult siblings described these mothers as significantly higher ($p < .05$) than fathers on the PCR-II's Loving scale confirming hypothesis I. Paralleling this finding, fathers were also described as more Rejecting ($p < .05$) than mothers. Consistent with both of these findings, the respondents also perceived their mothers as providing more Attention ($p < .05$) than their fathers.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE HERE

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations for the older and younger siblings' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing practices and the results of related t -tests. These findings did not support the hypothesis that the older sibling would describe his/her parents as

significantly more Demanding than the younger sibling. It was surprising to find that the younger siblings tended to perceive their mothers as more Demanding than their fathers, while for the older siblings the reverse was true, although these differences were not significant. In another difference which fell short of statistical significance, the older siblings tended to indicate, on the Attention scale, that they had received more parental attention than did the younger siblings.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

All correlations among the five PCR-II scales are given in Table 3, separately for the ratings of respondents' mothers and fathers. Siblings' ratings revealed substantial agreement between mothers and fathers. This finding suggests that fathers and mothers are viewed to be similar in their child-rearing behaviors. It had also been predicted that a significant positive correlation would be found between the Demanding and Rejecting scales. This was confirmed separately for both mothers ($r = .30$; $p < .01$) and fathers ($r = .38$; $p < .01$). Consistent with this finding were the positive correlations between the Casual and Loving scales, (mothers $r = .03$; fathers $r = .22$). Both latter scales are polar opposites of the Demanding and Rejecting scales, respectively.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

As anticipated, same-family sons' parental descriptions were less varied than same-family daughters' on most PCR-II scales. Table 4 displays the mean differences and standard deviations among same-family trios of sons and daughters separately for mothers and fathers. Same-family daughter trios consistently described their mothers and their fathers with a greater mean difference on the Loving, Demanding, and Casual scales than did trios of same-family sons. Fathers' mean differences differed significantly on the Casual scale ratings for daughters. None of the same-family sons registered any significantly larger mean differences than same-family daughters.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Post hoc examination of these data revealed an interesting, but nonhypothesized difference. Black siblings ($n = 45$) perceived their parents as significantly higher ($p < .05$) on the Demanding scale than did white siblings ($n = 33$). The racial differences on the Demanding and Casual scales were directionally opposite, consistent with

these scales' polarity. That is, white siblings described their parents significantly higher ($p < .05$) on the Casual scale than did black siblings.

DISCUSSION

Nature of the Sample

Exclusively recruited from among the author's acquaintances, this unusual sample seems unlikely to be representative of the general population. One distinctive characteristic was the greater number of blacks ($n = 45$) than whites ($n = 33$). Another unusual feature was that the overall mean years of education for both blacks ($M = 14.4$) and whites ($M = 16.0$) exceeded that of the general population.

The criteria for inclusion were other atypical features. All respondents were at least 22 years old and were required to have at least two other same-sex siblings who also agreed to participate in this study. In addition, the sample was limited by the requirement that the siblings' biological parents must have resided with and reared them. These parents were also required to be currently living.

Compared to 2.3 children in the average American family and the typical broken home, it appears that this sample represented larger and more cohesive families. Furthermore, special attributes associated with large families likely influenced these siblings' perceptions of their parents.

Such attributes are unlikely to be applicable to smaller families.

A methodological limitation is that recollections of one's treatment from parents are likely to be biased (McCrae & Costa, 1988; Yarrow, Campbell, & Burton, 1970). These authors indicate that often children have selective memories, influenced by their most predominant experiences that they have encountered, thus forgetting others memories of child-rearing behavior that are not considered to be quite as prevalent. Furthermore, siblings' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing conduct may be softened because of needs to report favorable impressions (McCrae & Costa, 1988). By requiring that each sibling be at least 22 years old and that parents be currently living, this study attempted to reduce the effects of distorted siblings' reports.

The present research design had other advantages. For example, it recruited sibling trios, making the sample more inclusive than the vast majority of prior family studies which have typically included only one child's view (Armentrout & Burger, 1972; Cross, 1969; Hazzard, Christensen, & Margolin, 1983; Hower & Edwards, 1978; Schaefer, 1965b; Whitbeck, 1987) or the views of two children (Daniels, 1986; Daniels & Plomin, 1985; McCrae & Costa, 1988). The present data yields also more comprehensive information about siblings' perceptions than

the single difference possible from two children. In addition, by selecting only same-sex siblings from each family, this study eliminated the confound of presumed differences that are associated with opposite-sex siblings.

Review of the Findings

Gender was found to importantly influence the overall ratings of each parent as daughters rated their parents with significantly greater mean differences than sons (see Table 4). This difference held for most of the PCR-II scales. It is congruent with Blakemore et al.'s (1988) finding that women are generally more concerned about family issues than men. Given this, it appears reasonable to expect that women are more likely than men to complete the PCR II conscientiously and thoughtfully.

It was not surprising to find that adult siblings generally viewed their mothers as more Loving than their fathers (see Table 1). Several studies corroborate this finding (Adams, Jones, Schvaneveldt, & Jenson, 1982; Coltrane, 1988; Roe & Siegleman, 1963; Siegleman & Roe, 1979). Generally, it was noted that mothers were more affectionate toward their children than were fathers (Adams et al., 1982; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974). Adding support for this view was the further present finding that respondents rated their fathers as more Rejecting than their mothers. This result was also consistent with Siegleman and Roe (1979). The data above correspond to the traditional image

of fathers as the family disciplinarian. Fathers, therefore, are more likely to be seen as distant and Rejecting.

No significant differences were found between older and younger siblings' ratings of their parents (see Table 2). Contrary to expectations, the present older siblings did not perceive their parents as significantly more Demanding than the younger siblings. However, this observation is consistent with McCrae and Costa's (1988) finding of no significant correlations between siblings' age and the Casual-Demanding dimension of the PCR-II. A possible explanation for both sets of findings is that neither sample specifically included the eldest and/or the youngest sibling in each family.

According to the birth order literature, the oldest siblings have greater expectations placed on them by their parents than do younger siblings (Ernst & Angst, 1983; Hoopes & Harper, 1987; Konig, 1963; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1970). If only the eldest and the youngest sibling in each family had been selected, it is conceivable that the findings might have supported the hypothesis that older siblings would have described their parents as more Demanding than their younger siblings. However, the design of this study made it impractical to select only the oldest and the youngest siblings.

Confirming previous findings, an additional result was

that a significant positive correlation for both mothers and fathers was found between Rejecting and Demanding ratings by siblings (See Table 3). Earlier studies (Freedman et al., 1960; Schaefer, 1959; Wiggins, 1979) have shown a similar relationship between these scales.

Although not hypothesized, it was also noted that black and white siblings' perceptions of parents differed significantly on the Casual-Demanding dimension. Black siblings perceived their parents as more Demanding, while white siblings perceived their parents as more Casual. This statistical difference indicates possible racial differences in parenting styles, which may conceivably be independent of socioeconomic and educational factors.

Implications of Findings

The results indicate that there are both consistencies and differences in same-family siblings' views of their parents' child rearing behavior. The similarities of siblings' perceptions of their parents may actually parallel the parents' behavior. The intersibling differences may be ascribed to parental variations in their treatment of siblings. Whitbeck (1987) suggested that children's perceptions of their parents' child-rearing practices derive from the child's personality development, which is heavily influenced by parental treatment. Nonetheless, some findings have led researchers to argue that there is little evidence that parental behavior contributes to the child's

overall personality (Daniels & Plomin, 1985; McCrae & Costa, 1988, Scarr, Webber, Weinberg, & Wittig, 1981). These writers contend that children are minimally influenced by their parents' child-rearing practices, and that such other factors as environmental influences and genetics have greater influence on the child's personality (Daniels, 1986; Daniels & Plomin; McCrae & Costa; Scarr et al.,). Methodological complexities of these prior works contributes to the impression that the evidence cited to support this viewpoint is less than persuasive.

The present study's central contribution is documentation of the role that gender differences play in perceptions of parental child-rearing practices. As hypothesized, daughters' parental ratings were generally more varied than sons'. Also noted were the expected ratings of mothers as more Loving and less Rejecting than fathers. Further research in parental descriptions of children is needed to verify the finding of greater mean differences for daughters than sons. If validated, the findings would suggest that females' perceptions of familial issues may be a richer data source than is provided by males' parallel views. Additionally, future sibling studies might want to stress the importance of studying daughters and sons separately.

An interesting present finding was the existence of racial differences found in siblings' perceptions of

parents' child-rearing practices. McCrae and Costa's (1988) results suggest that persons who tend to limit their range of experiences are likely to have parents who were more demanding than parents who were more casual. Generally, American blacks encounter greater cultural restrictions (fewer educational opportunities, fewer financial resources, etc.), tending to limit their range of experiences as compared to whites. Thus, in the present study, black parents' average educational level was 10.9 years compared to 14.4 years for whites. Consequently, it is plausible that black parents would actually be more demanding, contributing to the black siblings' perceptions of parental treatment as more Demanding.

Another possible factor influencing such perceptions is that these black parents had received much less education than their children. Because of their desire to see their offspring achieve in ways unavailable to themselves, black parents may demand that their children obtain more education than the parents had received. It is interesting to note that the average educational difference between black parents and their children ($M = 3.5$ years) is significantly greater than the difference in education between white parents and their children ($M = 1.6$ years). Again, it is likely that the wider educational discrepancies between black parents and their children suggests that black parents

may push their children harder to acquire more education than they did.

Recommendations

Considering the paucity of empirical research in this area, extension of the present study seems desirable. A parallel study utilizing both son and daughter trios from the same-families would plainly be informative, although implementing such a design would be very difficult. Subsequent research should employ larger samples to increase the reliability of the findings.

While this study documents differences in siblings' perceptions of their parents, the determinants of these differences remain unclear. Possible factors that seem relevant are parental differential treatment across siblings and temperamental differences between siblings. In addition, the family participating as an evolving unit is likely to influence the child-rearing of siblings over time. Future investigations could examine possible factors that contribute to these differences.

Since this study revealed significant findings concerning racial differences between siblings' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing behavior, the further exploration of such racial differences might also be useful. Thus, subsequent studies would need to include both blacks and whites. Future studies also need to closely monitor or

control for socioeconomic and educational factors that might influence these racial differences.

With few exceptions, previous studies have focused on parents' perceptions of their own childrearing practices; it now seems timely to take children's perceptions more seriously. It might well be profitable to compare parents' perceptions of their child-rearing practices with their adult children's reports of these practices. An ideal research design might include both parents' self-reports and external observers' accounts of children from birth to preadolescence. Following such observations, once the siblings reach the age of 22 years, both parents' and adult siblings' descriptions of these parenting styles could be compared to earlier observations. One might find that siblings' perceptions may indeed be a closer measure of parents' actual parenting skills than the parents' self-reports. At present, this issue remains a matter of conjecture.

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Table 1

PCR-II Descriptive Statistics and Related t-tests for 156
Respondents' Mothers and Fathers

	<u>FATHERS</u>		<u>MOTHERS</u>		<u>DIFFERENCES</u>	
<u>PCR II</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Loving	26.12	7.76	31.04	6.05	4.42	.000 ^a
Rejecting	19.09	6.55	15.99	5.39	-3.23	.001
Casual	19.04	5.04	19.49	4.44	.59	.278
Demanding	28.36	6.76	27.03	5.58	-1.36	.089
Attention	18.56	4.50	21.99	4.61	4.69	.000

^aThe single-tailed significance test was used only for this hypothesized difference.

Table 2

Perceptions of Older versus Younger Siblings of their Mothers and Fathers and Related t-tests for Correlated Measures

MOTHERS

	<u>Older (n = 52)</u>		<u>Younger (n = 52)</u>		<u>Differences</u>	
<u>PCR-II</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Loving	31.23	5.75	30.77	6.50	.27	.40
Rejecting	15.96	5.12	15.69	5.30	.19	.43
Casual	19.88	4.38	19.04	5.28	.63	.27
Demanding	26.69	4.46	28.35	6.56	-1.06	.15 ^a
Attention	22.85	2.68	21.38	6.10	1.12	.14

FATHERS

	<u>Older (n = 52)</u>		<u>Younger (n = 52)</u>		<u>Differences</u>	
<u>PCR-II</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
Loving	26.77	6.52	25.38	8.91	.64	.26
Rejecting	19.38	6.37	19.50	7.11	-.06	.48
Casual	19.08	4.71	19.85	5.41	-.55	.29
Demanding	29.38	5.58	28.00	9.03	.79	.23 ^a
Attention	18.92	3.87	17.65	3.87	.95	.17

^aUsing the one-tailed significance test.

Table 3

Pearson Correlations Among PCR-II Scales Separately for Mothers (above diagonal) and Fathers (below diagonal);
N = 156.

<u>Scales</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
1. Loving	(.53**)	-.25*	.34**	-.82**	.03
2. Demanding	-.27*	(.42**)	.07	.30**	-.55**
3. Attention	.35**	.05	(.56**)	-.29**	.35**
4. Rejecting	-.80**	.38**	-.21	(.58**)	.03
5. Casual	.22	-.45**	.25*	-.06	(.41**)

Note: Correlations between participants' ratings of their mothers and fathers are given in parentheses on the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. two-tailed significance test
 ** $p < .01$. two-tailed significance test

Table 4

Mean Differences, Standard Deviations, and Related t-tests
Among Trios of Same-Family Daughters or Sons in Ratings of
Their Mothers and Fathers on the PCR-II Scales.

Mothers of Trios					
	6 Sons		20 Daughters		Differences
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>
Loving	5.06	4.17	7.40	5.14	-1.98 ^a
Demanding	5.89	4.48	5.83	3.90	.05
Attention	5.28	2.91	4.38	3.64	1.08
Rejecting	5.22	4.12	4.88	4.56	.30
Casual	5.39	2.90	4.73	3.73	.79
Fathers of Trios					
	6 Sons		20 Daughters		Differences
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>
Loving	4.28	3.71	6.75	6.01	-2.10 ^a
Demanding	5.06	3.96	6.98	4.97	-1.70 ^a
Attention	5.00	3.13	4.80	3.70	.23
Rejecting	4.39	4.15	5.07	4.29	-0.78
Casual	3.50	2.60	4.80	3.54	-1.70 ^a

^ap < .05 by the 1-tailed significance test

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Name_____ 2. Age_____
3. Address_____
4. Phone # ()_____ 5. Birth Date_____
6. Highest Grade or Degree Completed_____
7. Rank the order in which you were born. 1st____ 2nd____
3rd____ 4th____ 5th____ 6th____ 7th____ 8th____ 9th____
10th____ 11th____ 12th____ 13th____
Other_____
8. Please name your siblings that are participating in
this study.

9. Religion _____ 10. Race_____
11. Sex_____
12. Father's Occupation_____
13. Highest Grade or Educational level Completed by Father

14. Mother's Occupation_____
15. Highest Grade or Educational level Completed by Mother

16. Did you reside with both biological parents from birth
to about age
of 18?_____
17. Are both of your biological parents now living?_____
18. If not which parent is deceased?_____ Date of
Death_____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA		
<u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Siblings' Age	33.2 years	8.8
Siblings' Education	15.1 years	2.1
Black Siblings' Education	14.4 years	2.6
White Siblings' Education	16.0 years	2.0
Parents' Education	12.4 years	3.1
Mothers' Education	12.3 years	2.7
Fathers' Education	12.5 years	3.2
Black Parents' Education	10.9 years	3.3
White Parents' Education	14.4 years	3.0
		<u>N</u>
Families		26
Black Families		15
White Families		11
Daughter Trios		20
Son Trios		6
Females		60
Males		18
Siblings		78
Black siblings		45
<u>White Siblings</u>		<u>3</u>

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