The Effects of Age, Gender, and Socio-Economic Status On the Ability of Children to Adapt to Classroom Situations

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Abstract

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This study investigated the effects of age, gender, and socio-economic status (SES) on the ability of children to adapt to classroom situations. Forty-eight children from three elementary schools, ages 8.0 to 11.11 years, and equally distributed between gender and SES served as subjects. The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1985) was administered to all subjects. The results of a factorial analysis of variance revealed significance. Similarly, F-tests measuring the relationships of age, gender, and SES to domain and subdomain scores yielded significance. On the basis of the results reported, the differences found due to the contribution of age to domain and subdomain scores can be accounted for as differences in maturity and motivation. Differences found due to the contribution of gender to domain and subdomain scores can be accounted for as differences in "sex role" demands made on boys and girls, as well as different standards for socialization. That is, there seems to exist differences in the behavioural expectancies of families and the community. From the analysis of the contribution of SES, different socio-economic class' demands can be reflected in maladaptive interpersonal behaviour. From these results we can state that age, gender, and SES are factors that are related to children's ability to adapt to classroom situations.

Résumé

Les facultés d'adaptation des enfants en milieu scolaires
selon l'âge, le genre, et le statut économique

Oded Nathan

Cette recherche a eu pour but d'étudier selon l'âge, le genre et le statut économique, les facultés d'adaptation des enfants en milieu scolaire. Quarante-huit enfants de 8.0 à 11.11 ans ont été selectionnés dans trois écoles élémentaires. Ils ont été répartis selon leur genre et statut économique. Chaque enfant a rempli le questionnaire Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, édition de classe (Sparrow et al., 1985). Après analyse à Analyse Factorielle de Variance ont donné des résultats significatifs. Egalement, des testes F mesurant la relation entre l'âge, le genre, et le statut économique ont rélevé des effets significatifs. Les effets dus à l'âge sont attribués à la maturité et la motivation des enfants. De plus, les effets dus au genre sont expliqués par les rôles masculins ou féminins imposés par la societé sur les enfants. Les différences de statut économique peuvent se traduire en comportements interpersonnels maladaptées en classe. En somme, il est possible d'affirmer que l'âge, le genre et le statut économique sont des facteurs qui peuvent influencer la capacité des enfants de s'adapter au situations en classe.

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Table of Content

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I

Introduction

In the last decade teachers have been increasingly faced with misbehaviour by children in the classroom (Kniveton, 1987). Although this has been considered primarily a problem in the secondary school setting, it is becoming more prevalent among younger children (Lawrence & Steed, 1985). Children as young as five and six have been found to display disruptive behaviours in the classroom. Thus, adaptive behaviour has developed as an area of study because of this trend.

According to Heber (1961), adaptive behaviour is defined as the degree to which the individual is able to function and maintain himself or herself independently, and the degree to which he or she meets satisfactorily the culturally imposed demands of personal and social responsibility. In addition, the manual for terminology and classification by the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) defines adaptive behaviour as the effectiveness or degree with which the individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his or her age and cultural group (Grossman, 1973). Yet, the available data from several studies (Lambert & Nicoll, 1976; Nihira, 1969a; Nihira, 1969b) provide no basis to conclude that adaptive behaviour is a single, unitary characteristic of individual functioning. The problem has come to be: how to develop adaptive behaviour and how to measure its occurence.

Measures of Adaptive Behaviour

Two ways in which adaptive behaviour can be measured are either by the Public School Version of the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD) Adaptive Behavior Scale

(Lambert, Windmiller, & Cole, 1975), or by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1985).

In the Public School Version of the Adaptive Behavior Scale (Lambert et al., 1975), adaptive behaviour is clustered into four domains; (1) functional autonomy (independent functioning, language development, economic activity, number and time concepts, and vocational activity), (2) social responsibility (self-direction, responsibility, and socialization), (3) interpersonal adjustment (destructive behaviour, anti-social behaviour, rebellious behaviour, untrustworthy behaviour, and psychological disturbances), and (4) intrapersonal adjustment (stereotyped behaviour, inappropriate manners, and unacceptable vocal habits).

The first two dimensions closely parallel the definition of adaptive behaviour as comprised of those attributes necessary for maintaining oneself independently and functioning in a personally responsible manner. The second two dimensions are associated with sociobehavioural adjustment factors that indicate the degree to which the individual will be able to meet the environmental demands of the school environment.

The Public School Version of the Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Lambert et al., 1975) provides data expressed as an individual's percentile rank compared with age and classification peers. The results are valuable for the dual purpose of (1) determining the child's level of adaptive behaviour as inferred from performance on the domains associated with the functional autonomy and social responsibility dimensions, and (2) evaluating the potential for successfully meeting environmental demands of regular and special education classrooms based on evidence of social-emotional maladaptation.

In addition, the AAMD Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Lambert et al., 1975) is comprised of

two parts. Part one is organized along developmental lines and is designed to evaluate an individual's skills and habits. Part two, on the other hand, provides measures of maladaptive behaviour related to personality and behaviour disorders. The Public School Version differs from the regular version in that only those items which could be tested in a public school setting and which met the test of appropriateness for administration by classroom teachers were retained. This resulted in the deletion of the Domestic Activity domain from Part One, and the Self-Abusive Behaviour and Sexually Aberrant Behaviour from Part Two.

Similarly, the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985) clusters adaptive behaviour into four domains; (1) communication (receptive, expressive, and written), (2) daily living skills (personal, domestic, and community), (3) socialization (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, and coping skills), and (4) motor skills (gross and fine).

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale (Sparrow et al., 1985) is well suited for evaluation and diagnosis of the mentally retarded because of comprehensive content and careful development and standardization. The norm-referenced data provide reliable and valid estimates of an individual's adaptive behaviour and ranking in comparison with a national normative group.

The Vineland is not limited to use with the mentally retarded, however. The Vineland is also recommended for use with individuals who have other handicaps, to determine levels of adaptive behaviour and the extent to which these handicaps affect daily functioning. An assessment of adaptive behaviour is necessary to obtain a comprehensive picture of a nonhandicapped person's abilities, as well.

In addition, the Vineland can be used in several ways to develop individual programs. The

scale indicates strengths and weaknesses in specific areas of adaptive behaviour; this information can be used to select the most suitable type of program for the individual and to pinpoint activities that should receive emphasis in the program. Also, the scale can be used to monitor progress during such a program and to evaluate its success at completion.

Factors Affecting Adaptability

Several reasons have been offered in an attempt to explain why misbehaviour in the classroom occurs. Ellis, Ray, and Coleman (1983) found vandalism related to the teacher/pupil ratio and the design of schools. Rutter (1981) has highlighted characteristics of institutions that are associated with delinquency. In addition, Kniveton (1986) found that the effect of family size was noted with children from large families imitating misbehaving peer models more than those from small. Studies (Lambert, 1979; Froming, Allen, & Underwood, 1983; Moore & Cooper, 1984) have found that factors such as age, gender, and socio-economic status (SES) are related to a child's ability to adapt to classroom situations.

One type of behaviour which has been found to increase both linearly and quadratically with age is altruism. Underwood, Froming, and Moore (1977) studied six to ten year olds and found a significant linear trend between age and altruism. That is, there is a tendency for donations to increase as a function of age. (According to Underwood et al. [1977], donations are defined as the level of "free-giving" a child demonstrated; that is, how much of the 25 pennies or M&Ms a child received for participating in the experiment did he or she voluntarily place in a jar which the experimenter told him or her was for other children.) However, they also reported a significant quadratic trend, in that first graders were more generous than either second or third graders. In fact, the children's behaviour was comparable to that of fourth graders.

The most widely accepted explanation of the age-donating relationship is that the norm of generosity is a socialized value; the older one gets, the more one becomes socialized to accept this norm and act accordingly. A second explanation of the age generosity relationship has been called "behaviour freeze" (Rosenhan, 1969). The notion is that younger children are more timid and less likely to initiate donating behaviours. As they grow older, children overcome their fear and donate more. A third explanation for this increase in generosity with age is that the items to be donated decrease in value as the child grows older (Froming et al., 1983).

With increasing age, children believe that one should give to others and that donating is something that makes the donor feel good (Cialdini, Baumann, & Kendrick, 1981). In addition, the subjective value of the items to be donated decreases with age, which might lead children to appear more altruistic. And finally, children increasingly endorse cooperative rather than competitive behaviours as they grow older (Froming et al., 1983).

In addition to these findings, it has also been found that good moods produce altruistic behaviour. Moore, Underwood and Rosenham (1973) found that induced moods affected generosity. Seven-to-eight-year-old children who had summoned a happy mood contributed significantly more pennies than control children.

Typically, bad moods depress altruism in children. This is interpreted to mean that unhappy children are trying to cheer themselves up by hanging onto as many of their assets as possible. Yet, a study conducted by Kendrick, Baumann and Cialdini (1979), however, indicates that other factors may moderate the effect of mood. If the children are tested for altruism in the presence of an adult, or can expect social reinforcement for donating, then sad children may actually donate more than neutral mood children. Sadness seemed to motivate children to perform

actions that would alleviate their sadness; such donations were especially large when adults were around because they expected the adults' praise to reduce their depression.

It has also been found that children who observe individuals being helpful are likely to show similar helpfulness than are children without such models (Grusec, 1972; Rushton, 1975). Adults who interact warmly with children and who model altruism are quite effective in influencing children's altruistic behaviour in real-life situations. The effect of modeled behaviour is likely to be greater when children see different people model varied altruistic behaviours in diverse situations (Perry and Bussey, 1984).

Rushton (1975) found that the effects of observing a generous model lasted beyond the initial experience. In an eight-week follow-up experiment, children donated anonymously not only to recipients to whom they had seen the model donate, but also to a new class of recipients.

Karylowski and Karylowski (1984) examined the independent and combined effects of prosocial modeling and moralizing on six and ten year old boys. The results yielded that observation of a helpful model was equally effective for six year olds and for ten year olds in producing the altruism in the same situation. The ten year olds, however, were also more likely to behave altruistically in similar situations than six year olds. Moralizing had little influence on prosocial behaviour in either situation.

In summary, Lareau (1987) argues that what teachers do to enhance young children's social and emotional functioning determines which social skills are learned; that is, whether children learn to be considerate or aggressive. Furthermore, she suggests that children construct understandings about peer relationships based on the specific organizational features of peer culture as well as the social-contextual demands of their environment. Thus, we see that the

quality of the adult-child interaction and child-child interaction has substantial impact on the young child's prosocial behaviours.

Although the Underwood et al. (1977) article has been well written, and the methodology is sound, several criticisms nonetheless exist. Froming et al. (1983) explain the age-donating relationship as being a socialized value; the older one gets, the more one becomes socialized to accept this norm and act accordingly. Yet, no sudden changes in socialization practices have been documented at this time, much less one that teaches children anti-social norms.

A second criticism of the Underwood et al. (1977) study relates to the socialization hypothesis. According to Froming et al. (1983), since the Underwood et al. (1977) study was conducted at a church-related school, there was heavy pressure to be altruistic. Frequently children would be asked by the teachers and principal (after being in the experiment) if they had been "good" and donated a lot of their pennies or M&Ms.

The Froming et al. (1983) study, on the other hand, was conducted in a public school where the norm of altruism was much less strongly emphasized and children were never questioned by staff about how "good" they had been. The means for the Underwood et al. (1977) study are one-and-a-half to two times greater than those obtained in the Froming et al. (1983) study. Thus, the socialization practices of the church-related school were clearly having an effect. However, the nonlinear pattern obtained in the two studies is the same. Thus, it can be said that something else, in addition to socialization, is important for the development of altruistic behaviour.

In addition, the Underwood et al. (1977) study can be criticized on the basis of Rosenhan's (1969) hypothesis. Assuming his hypothesis is tenable, young children should initiate

donating behaviours. Yet, the nonlinear aspects of the data from the Underwood et al. (1977) study would seem to make this hypothesis untenable. Young children did initiate donating behaviours, as was shown by significant quadratic trends.

The final criticism of the Underwood et al. (1977) study can be observed in terms of estimating the exchange rate of M&Ms and pennies; children showed a negative linear trend that was consistent with the amount donated. The rate of M&Ms per penny decreased with age. However, kindergartners showed the largest M&Ms-for-pennies exchange rate, but not the highest donation rate. Thus, children's estimation of the objective value of the objects to be donated do not covary with the pattern of generosity. This was further confirmed by analyses within age groups, which showed no correlation between estimates of the exchange rate and actual donation rates. In particular, it is unclear why first graders would value candy significantly less than second graders.

A second factor found to be related with children's ability to adapt to classroom situations is gender differences. Administering the Public School Version of the AAMD Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Lambert et al., 1975), Lambert (1979) found that gender differences existed at either ages 8-9 or 9-10 on the domains of independent functioning, number and time, vocational activity, self-direction, and socialization. In addition, gender differences were found for children aged 8-11 on the Responsibility domain of the scale. These differences were explained as differences in "sex role" demands made on boys and girls; that is, dependability in caring for personal belongings and conscientiousness in assuming responsibility are more characteristic of females than males. Similarly, on the domain measuring hyperactivity, males were found to score higher than females on both ages 8-9 and 10-11. These results were explained as differences in

behaviours which boys and girls acquire differentially as a result of different standards for socialization (Lambert, 1979). Therefore, these results reflect the behavioural expectancies of families and the community.

Having demonstrated that the scale was valid for differentiating adaptive behaviour levels, as inferred from SES status, Lambert (1979) was interested in determining whether one must conceptualize different standards for adaptive behaviour for boys and girls and for children from different SES backgrounds. The results of her study, using a large sample of regular and educably mentally retarded (EMR) pupils in California schools, suggest that there are common expectancies for independence and personal and social responsibility. The adaptive behaviour functioning of boys and girls and of children of different ethnic groups as reflected in scores for age groups on the Part One domains is similar. Yet, a criticism of her findings lies in the fact that the exception to this generalization was a significant contribution of sex to scores on the Responsibility domain, a score based on only two out of 56 items from among the items on the Public School Version. Lambert inferred that this result reflected different social demands made on boys than on girls, rather than different capabilities to develop a particular skill.

A second criticism can be levelled at Lambert (1979) with regards to her analysis of the differences in Part Two domain scores attributable to sex and SES. She found that either sex or SES was a significant contributor to some but not all domain scores. And furthermore, inferred that differences in environmental tolerance for affective or emotional responses to the school or community environment were a more reasonable explanation than the inference that girls and boys or children from different SES backgrounds were inherently different with respect to these emotional responses or behavioural deviations.

And last, Lambert (1979) concludes that the acquisition of adaptive behaviours reflected in teacher ratings on the Adaptive Behaviour Scale progresses similarly for boys and girls and for children from different SES backgrounds. The domain scores derived from teacher administration of the Public School Version of the Adaptive Behaviour Scale are valid for differentiating regular from EMR pupils.

A third factor shown to be related to a child's disruptiveness is their SES level. Moore and Cooper (1984) reported that schools serving lower socio-economic catchment areas reported more discipline problems than those in higher SES areas. Subsequently, Kniveton (1987) found that social class is related to the likelihood of children behaving aggressively.

A reason suggesting why lower-class and minority children's academic performance is lower than that of middle- and upper-class children is that intervention programs such as preschool education make some incorrect assumptions about the reasons minority children lack white, middle-class cognitive skills.

Cognitive competencies change in response to cultural demands. They do not simply change because people change their early experiences or childrearing practices (Kaplan and Manner, 1970). In fact, the reverse is also true. Socialization or childrearing practices, and even preschool education, are formulas invented by members of a society to ensure that their children will acquire the adaptive or instrumental competencies necessary to become competent, contributing adult members of their society (LeVine, 1974b; Fishbein, 1976).

The formulas consist of teaching children directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, the instrumental skills or competencies already existing in the population, because they are required by the cultural tasks of the members of the population. Parents do not invent

the knowledge, beliefs, skills, and behaviours they teach their children; these already exist. For example, the competencies that contemporary, middle-class parents teach their children, such as self-direction, initiative, independence, competitiveness, and certain cognitive and communication skills (Kohn, 1969; Leacock, 1969; Vernon, 1969; Connolly & Bruner, 1974), are not inventions of individual middle-class parents; rather, these are competencies that are adaptive to high-level, high-paying, middle-class occupations and social positions (Seeley, Sim, & Loosley, 1956).

We need to recognize different kinds of disadvantaged groups and their distinctive circumstances and disadvantages. First, some white people are disadvantaged because they are poor or because they are poor and live in rural areas. Second, there are others who are disadvantaged not only because they are poor or rural-poor, but also because they are minorities. Their minority status has some added disadvantages for human development and education. But there are also different types of disadvantaged minorities. Minority groups who are immigrant are usually more successful in school than minorities who are nonimmigrant, even though the two minority types face somewhat similar disadvantages, namely, poverty, parents with little or no formal education, parents with low-status jobs, little or no proficiency in standard English, a different cultural tradition, lack of mainstream childrearing practice or early experiences, and discrimination and barriers in adult opportunity structure (Gibson, 1983).

The differences in the school performance of the two types of minorities arise partly from differences in the quality of the relationship between the minorities and the dominant group and the consequences of that relationship. Disadvantaged immigrant minorities, although they may have other unmet needs, are not usually targets of intervention programs to facilitate their children's school success.

Disadvantaged nonimmigrant minorities are people classified as subordinate or caste-like minorities (Ogbu, 1978, 1984, 1985b). They are people who were initially incorporated involuntarily and permanently into society, and then relegated to menial positions. Special problems for caste-like minorities arise from the fact that under caste-like stratification (a) the minorities are largely excluded from the more desirable cultural tasks that demand and promote the cognitive and social competencies of the middle-class members of the dominant group; (b) generations of the minorities are relegated to menial cultural tasks that require and promote other non-middle-class competencies and different perceptions and interpretations of how one gets ahead in society; and (c) the minorities tend to respond to their subordination and exploitation by developing an oppositional social identity and an oppositional cultural frame of reference. As a result, the minorities may consciously or unconsciously develop beliefs, competencies, and behaviours that then make it difficult for them to learn things that they associate with their "oppressors," or to learn skills that they think make them act like members of the dominant group.

It appears that caste-like minorities perceive success in mainstream educational and economic institutions as something that depends on competencies derived from a white cultural frame of reference. It appears, too, that the minorities consciously or unconsciously interpret the acquisition of those competencies as incompatible with their sense of identity and security. Thus, for a black child to succeed academically, he or she must first submit to a process of socialization or reenculturation, which eventually alienates him or her from black culture and identity (Cary, 1976; Fordham, 1984; Boykin, 1986).

The cultural frame of reference of black and similar minorities is emotionally charged

because it is closely tied to their sense of collective identity and their sense of security. Therefore, individuals who try to behave like whites or who try to cross cultural boundaries or to act white in forbidden domains face opposition from their peers and probably from their community. Their peers construe such behaviour as trying to "join the enemy" (DeVos, 1967). Individuals trying to cross cultural boundaries may experience stress, what DeVos (1967, 1984) calls affective dissonance, because they share their group's sense of collective oppositional identity, a belief that may cause them to feel that they are betraying their group and its cause. They may also experience stress because they are uncertain about being accepted by whites, even if they succeed in learning how to act white (Ogbu, 1986a, 1986c).

Participant-observation studies of actual attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of black students show that blacks do not invest enough time and effort, do not persevere in pursuing their educational goals, and do not strive at test-taking. All of these behaviours entail acting white (Ogbu, 1984).

Preliminary studies of upper elementary school children and junior and senior high school students of lower SES or different ethnic backgrounds revealed that black students have classified the following attitudes and behaviours as white: speaking standard English, being on time, being serious about school, following standard classroom practices that enhance academic success, and even getting good grades or doing well on tests (Ogbu, 1984).

Ogbu (1974) states that because these students identify academic attitudes and behaviours, as well as academic success, as white, many intellectually able students do poorly in school because of the cultural dilemma they face. Thus, they resolve this dilemma by camouflaging their real academic attitudes and efforts to avoid peer criticisms and pressures, at the cost of academic

success.

Kniveton (1986) studied the relationship between social class and intelligence on misbehaving peer models in the classroom. Selecting forty boys aged six to seven-and-a-half years of age, he grouped them into one of four categories: middle class high, middle class low, working class high, and working class low. His results indicate that working class boys tended to imitate the misbehaviour of the peer model significantly more than the middle class subjects. Similarly, when boys of high and low intelligence were compared, there was no difference in the extent they imitated the misbehaviour of the peer model. This applied equally to middle class and working class boys. And last, in addition to there being no difference between groups when the intelligence levels of the two groups were both correlated with their respective misbehaviour scores, there appeared to be no relationship of any significance.

Several criticisms can be levelled against Kniveton's (1986) research. First, he does not state what criteria were used to differentiate social class levels. Similarly, he does not state what cut-off mark (score) was used to differentiate low from high intelligence children, but does point out that intelligence was measured by administering the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.

Research on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children attempt to assess it as a test instrument used in the measurement of psychological variables (Littell, 1960). Three areas of concern arise from the research concerning: (1) its inadequate framework, (2) it predictive validity, and (3) it use as a measuring device. Systematic investigation of the last seems warranted based on evidence that the scale reflects variables in addition to intelligence (i.e., the examiner-examinee relationship).

Neer, Foster, Jones, and Reynolds (1973), on the other hand, explored the relationship

between diagnosis of mental retardation and socio-economic status of the child. Thirty-one staff psychologists reviewed identical assessment data for three cases with the variable SES manipulated to include low, middle, and high socio-economic differentiations. Results of an analysis of variance indicated a significant difference supporting low SES and a resultant diagnosis of mental retardation versus a recommendation against such a diagnosis for the middle/high socio-economic cases.

Mercer (1974) criticizes the Neer et al. (1973) study on the basis that the results of an eight-year study of a large public school system's educational assessment and placement procedures indicated that a disproportionate number of minority group children assessed were placed in classes for the mentally retarded. She asserts that present classification procedures violate five basic rights of children: (1) to be assessed in an appropriate cultural context, (2) to be evaluated as a multifaceted person, (3) to have access to all possible educational options, (4) to avoid stigma via negative diagnostic labels, and (5) to have one's cultural identity and consequent self-respect. She further concludes that placement in classes for the mentally retarded should require IQ and adaptive behaviour scores at or below the third percentile on standardized tests.

Parental Involvement and Participation in Education

A method in which SES has been shown to differentiate an individual's ability to adapt to educational situations, and in turn do better in school, is through parental involvement in education (Marjoribanks, 1979; Epstein, 1984). In addition to increasing parental involvement, increasing parental participation in education has become a priority for educators who believe it promotes educational achievement (Trelease, 1982; Berger, 1983; Seeley, 1984; Robinson, 1985).

Yet, researchers who subscribe to the "culture-of-poverty" thesis state that lower-class culture has distinct values and forms of social organization, suggesting that lower-class and working-class families do not value education as highly as middle-class families (Deutsch, 1967). Connell, Ashendon, Kessler, and Dowsett (1982), on the other hand, argue that working-class parents are "frozen-out" of schools. And furthermore, schools have been accused of institutional discrimination, claiming that they make middle-class families feel more welcome than working-class and lower-class families (Ogbu, 1974; Lightfoot, 1978).

In addition, institutional differentiation is a crucial determinant of parental involvement in schooling (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Becker & Epstein, 1982). Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b) argues that schools draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of the society. He further maintains that the cultural experiences in the home facilitate children's adjustment to school and academic achievement, thereby transforming cultural resources into cultural capital.

This perspective points to the structure of schooling and to family life and the dispositions of individuals to understand different levels of parental participation in schooling (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1981). The standards of schools are not neutral; their requests for parental involvement may be laden with the social and cultural experiences of intellectual and economic elites. Bourdieu (1977b, 1981) does not examine the question of parental participation in schooling, but his analysis points to the importance of class and class cultures in facilitating or impeding children's or parents' negotiations of the process of schooling.

Family-school relationships are socially constructed and are historically variable. Home-school partnerships, in which parents are involved in the cognitive development of their children, currently seem to be the dominant model, but there are many possible types of family-school

relationships (Baker and Stevenson, 1986). As in other social relationships, family-school interactions carry the imprint of the larger social context; acceptance of a particular type of family-school relationship emerges as the result of social processes.

According to Lareau (1987), teachers interpret parental involvement as a reflection of the value parents place on their children's educational success. And, middle-class and working-class parents' aspirations differ only in the level of achievement they hope their children will attain (Lareau, 1987). Yet, although the educational values of the two groups of parents do not differ, the ways in which they promote educational success do. For example, in the working-class community, parents place the responsibility for education upon the teacher, whereas, in the middle-class community, parents see education as a shared enterprise and scrutinize, monitor, and supplement the school experience of their children.

Lareau (1987) found that parents who agreed with administrators' and teachers' definition of partnership appeared to offer an educational advantage to their children; parents who turned over the responsibility of education to the professional could negatively affect their children's schooling.

Generally, the evidence (Lareau, 1987) demonstrates that the level of parental involvement is linked to the class position of the parents and to the social and cultural resources that social class yields in society. By definition, the educational status and material resources of parents increase with social class. Working-class parents tend to have poor educational skills, relatively lower occupational prestige than teachers, and limited time and disposable income to supplement and intervene in their children's schooling. Middle-class parents, on the other hand, tend to have educational skills and prestige that match or surpass that of teachers. In addition, they also have

the necessary economic resources to manage the child care and transportation; the time required to meet with teachers and to hire tutors; and to become intensely involved in the children's schooling (Lareau, 1987).

Finally, more straightforward economic differences between middle-class and working-class parents are evident in their different responses to requests to attend school events. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, particularly those held in the afternoon, requires transportation, child-care arrangements, and flexibility at the workplace, all more likely to be available to middle-class than to working-class parents (Lareau, 1987).

The Role Of Family Life Upon Education

The literature on family life indicates that social class is associated with differences in social networks, leisure time, and childrearing activities (Bott, 1971; Rubin, 1976; Kohn, 1977). Middle-class culture provides parents with more information about schooling and promotes social ties among parents in the school community. This furthers the interdependence between home and school, in that parents use this information to build a family-school relationship congruent with the schools' definition of appropriate behaviour (Lareau, 1987). Working-class culture, on the other hand, emphasizes kinship and promotes independence between the spheres of family life and schooling (Lareau, 1987).

Although Lareau's (1987) article focuses on the differences in parental involvement in education from an economic perspective, she attempts to attribute lack of parental involvement as being solely related to the lack of resources. Therefore, several criticisms can be directed at her study.

First, it is important to stress that if the schools were to promote a different type of

family-school relationship, the class culture of middle-class parents might not yield a social profit. In other words, the data do not reveal that the social relations of middle-class culture are intrinsically better than the social relations of the working-class culture. Nor can it be said that the family-school relationships in the middle-class are objectively better for children than those in the working-class. Instead, the social profitability of middle-class arrangements is tied to the schools' definition of the proper family-school relationship.

A second criticism directed against Lareau's (1987) study lies in the fact that future research on parental participation in education should take as problematic the standards that schools establish for parental involvement in schooling, and should focus on the role of class cultures in facilitating and impeding compliance with these standards. In addition, research might profitably examine the role of social class in structuring the conflict between the universalistic concerns of the teacher and the pluralistic agenda of the parents (Waller, 1932; McPherson, 1972). Parents and teachers may be "natural enemies" (Waller, 1932) and may face enduring problems of negotiating "boundaries" between their "territories" (Lightfoot, 1978). Social class appears to influence the educational, social status, monetary, and informational resources that each side brings to that conflict.

A criticism of the culture-of-poverty thesis is that the need for more extensive research in the area of cultural capital has not been attended to. It would be particularly useful for future research to take into account historical variations in definitions of cultural capital. Family-school relationships have changed over time; what constitutes cultural capital at one point in time may not persist in a future period. Historical studies help reveal the way in which cultural resources of social groups are unevenly valued in a society; these studies help illustrate the dynamic

character of these value judgements. Historical work on definitions of cultural capital can also shed light on the arbitrariness of the current social standards.

In addition, research on cultural capital could expand its focus to include more social groups. Moreover, the concept does not overlook the importance of the role of the individual in constructing a biography within a social structure. Class provides social and cultural resources, but these resources must be invested or activated to become a form of cultural capital. Analyzing the role of cultural capital in structuring family-school relationships, particularly parental participation in education, provides a rich setting for analyzing the linkages between micro- and macro-levels of analysis.

Although Ogbu's (1984) research focuses on the relationship between SES and classroom adaptability from a sociological rather than psychological perspective, it is still inadequate because important factors which should be taken into consideration before any form of intervention is undertaken have not been considered. First, different populations and their distinctive features and needs should be recognized. More specifically, different types of minorities should be distinguished and their different needs for intervention identified. For example, minorities like Black Americans differ in many respects from immigrant minorities like Chinese Americans. Second, there should be continued vigorous efforts to enable black and similar minorities to have unimpaired access to jobs and other positions or cultural tasks requiring and promoting middle-class cognitive and social competencies and school success.

A third consideration for intervention consists in recognizing that the elimination of instrumental barriers in areas of jobs, wages, education, and politics will not necessarily automatically eliminate gaps in academic performance, because of influential factors or values

related to identity and cultural frame of reference. Since these factors are rarely recognized and taken into account by minority and majority reformers, they tend to persist after instrumental barriers are removed and thus perpetuate inequality to some extent. Therefore, these elements should be recognized as a part of the problem and taken into account in future reform policies and programs.

A fourth consideration is that a good understanding of the special forces - historical, structural, cultural, and psychological - that influence the academic orientation and behaviours of subordinate minority students should enable school officials and interventionists to design better programs to help minority students. For example, programs based on an understanding of the oppositional process can include ways to help minority students learn to separate the benefit of academic pursuits from the anathema of acting white.

Fifth, a good paradigm should not merely aim to balance assumed biological factors with factors of early experience. It should also consider the nature and meaning of early experiences for different groups of disadvantaged children, especially for subordinate minority children. And last, the subordinate minority community has an important part to play. It should find ways to help its children learn to stop equating academic pursuits with one-way acculturation into a white frame of reference. It should find ways to reward more visibly its children who are academically successful, so as to instill that academic success is one of its cultural values. On the whole, subordinate minorities should adopt a perspective on school learning similar to that of immigrant minorities, which is that academic success and associated attitudes and behaviours are not incompatible with ethnic identity and security; in fact, they can reinforce ethnic identity and security.

Chapter II

Importance of the Research

Although there is much research evidence to link age, gender, and socio-economic status separately with an individual's inability to adapt to classroom situations, the purpose of the present study is to look at the interactive relationship between age, gender, and socio-economic status on the ability of children to adapt to classroom situations. In light of previous empirical evidence, it is predicted that these factors should be significantly related to the construct of classroom adaptability. Classroom adaptability is defined as the performance of daily activities required for personal and social sufficiency (Sparrow et al., 1985), as determined by the classroom teacher.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant difference in the inter-relationship between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when age is controlled for?
2. Is there a significant difference in the inter-relationship between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when gender is controlled for?
3. Is there a significant difference in the inter-relationship between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when SES is controlled for?
4. Are there significant differences in the inter-relationships between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive

Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when age and gender are controlled for?

5. Are there significant differences in the inter-relationships between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when age and SES are controlled for?

6. Are there significant differences in the inter-relationships between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when gender and SES are controlled for?

7. Are there significant differences in the inter-relationships between age, gender, and SES in the degree of adaptability within the classroom, as measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition, when age, gender, and SES are controlled for?

Methodology

Subjects

Forty-eight children, 24 males and 24 females, from grades two to five with an age range of 8.2 to 11.7 years and a mean age of 9.7 years were recruited from three elementary schools. Selection of subjects was based on their age, gender, and socio-economic status (SES). Subjects were grouped into four age categories: 8.0 to 8.11 years, 9.0 to 9.11 years, 10.0 to 10.11 years, and 11.0 to 11.11 years. Similarly, subjects were grouped into three levels of SES: lower-class, middle-class, and upper-class. SES was determined on the basis of the subjects' combined parental income per year (Boyd, 1986). Males and females were included within each age group and SES level.

Tests

The test used in this study included the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom

Edition (Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1985 - see Appendix A). Adaptive behaviour was clustered into four domains; (1) communication (receptive, expressive, and written), (2) daily living skills (personal, domestic, and community), (3) socialization (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, and coping skills), and (4) motor skills (gross and fine).

Coefficient alpha was obtained as an estimate of the reliability of the Classroom Edition (Cronbach, 1951). This type of reliability estimate is obtained from administration of a single test and is based on the consistency of responses to all items in the test (Anastasi, 1982). Coefficient alpha reflects inter-item consistency, or the homogeneity of the behaviour sampled by the items.

Coefficient alpha was computed for each domain and subdomain of questionnaire A and E (two of the eight Classroom Edition questionnaires used in the standardization of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition [Sparrow et al., 1985]). Two of the forms, A and E, contained a substantially larger number of items than the other six forms and very closely approximated the final set of items that appear in the Classroom Edition Questionnaire Booklet. Therefore, only standardization subjects for whom Forms A and E were completed were used in the computation of coefficient alpha reliability estimates.

Coefficient alpha was obtained for each of the 10 age groups in the standardization sample. Coefficient alpha for children aged 3-0 to 3-11, 4-0 to 4-11, 5-0 to 5-11, and 6-0 to 6-11 was based on Form A. Because both Forms A and E were completed for subjects aged 7-0 to 7-11, coefficients were computed separately for each form, and the mean coefficient for the two forms was computed using Fisher's Z-transformation. Form E was used to compute coefficient alpha for the remaining age groups.

The reliability coefficients for the Adaptive Behavior Composite were computed using

Guilford's (1954) formula for the reliability of a composite. The formula included the coefficient alpha reliability estimates for each domain and the intercorrelation between each pair of domains.

For the communication domain, the coefficients range from .88 to .95 across nine age groups, with a median of .93. The daily living skills coefficients range from .92 to .96 (median = .95); the socialization coefficients, .91 to .96 (median = .94); and the motor skills coefficients, .77 to .84 (median = .80). In general, the coefficients for the domains are satisfactory for the interpretation of individual performance. The coefficients for the Adaptive Behavior Composite, ranging from .96 to .98 (median = .98), are excellent. On the other hand, the values for the subdomains indicate adequate reliability. The median coefficients range from .68 for the gross subdomain to .91 for the domestic and community subdomain.

Although the concept of construct validity is probably the most complex of all types of validity, it is the most meaningful to those who use and interpret scores from an instrument that measures human behaviour. Construct validation refers to the process of gathering relevant data in an effort to establish clearly what a test is measuring. That is, it is the extent to which a treatment is a representative instance of the underlying construct that is hypothesized to exist (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Moreover, it refers to the adequacy with which we understand and communicate the complexity of the so-called treatment package, particularly those components of it that will allow the observed effect to be replicated as another test of the underlying construct (McMillan and Schumacher, 1989). Construct validity is the most important type of validity (Messick, 1980).

For ages 3-0-0 through 5-11-30, the three daily living skills subdomains and the fine motor skills subdomain exhibited loadings of .50 or above on the first factor (analyses conducted

with the domain standard scores to confirm the underlying structure of the Classroom Edition and to determine the percentage of variance accounted for by the first principal component). Two socialization subdomains, play and leisure time and coping skills, formed the second factor. Although interpersonal relationships did not exhibit a significant loading on the second factor, it did exhibit its highest loading on this factor. The third factor consisted of two communication subdomains, expressive and written, and the community subdomain. The community subdomain exhibited its highest loading on this factor.

The first factor for ages 6-0-0 through 7-11-30 was formed by two daily living skills subdomains, personal and domestic, and by three socialization subdomains. The second factor consisted of the written and community subdomains, which include academic items. The expressive subdomain was the only subdomain that had a loading of .50 or greater on the third factor.

For ages 8-0-0 to 9-11-30, the first factor was formed by the three daily living skills subdomains. The second factor consisted of the expressive, written and community subdomains. Two socialization subdomains, interpersonal relationships and play and leisure time, had loadings of above .50 on the third factor; the coping skills factor had its highest loading on this factor.

Seven of nine subdomains had factor loadings of .50 or above on the first factor for ages 10-0-0 through 12-11-30. The coping skills subdomain had a loading of above .50 on the second factor, as did the receptive subdomain on the third factor.

Content validity, on the other hand, indicates that a scale adequately samples the universe of behaviours defining the constructs measured by the scale. Appropriate evidence of content validity, in turn, supports the construct validity of the scale (Fitzpatrick, 1983). The content

validity of the Classroom Edition is supported by the thorough procedures used in the development of the items.

The Classroom Edition, containing 244 items, provides an assessment of adaptive behaviour in the classroom. A representative sample of approximately 3000 students aged 3 years through 12 years 11 months provided the norms.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was given by the school principals and classroom teachers. A letter authorizing the study was presented to each school, verifying that the researcher was accredited by an educational institution, and was formally supervised (see Appendix B).

Instructions were given to each of the participating classes at each of the schools as a whole, at one time, in English (see Appendix C). The purpose of these instructions was to introduce the researcher, explain that he would join their class for a day, and generally explain what he would be doing. After these instructions were given, the teacher was asked to maintain the daily class curriculum, so that the behaviour of the children who were to take part in the study could be observed within the classroom setting. The entire study was conducted over a period of 12 days. Approximately one hour was required to test each child.

After the instructions were given, two boys and two girls were selected from each class to participate. This selection was based on the classroom teacher's perception of who they believed had the most difficulty adapting in class. That is, teachers were informed that the children whom they chose had to elicit behaviours in the classroom that would meet the criterion for classroom maladaptability, as defined by Sparrow et al., 1985. Parental consent forms (see Appendix D) were sent to the children's homes requesting permission to administer the Vineland

Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985).

The children who were chosen to participate in the study were informed (only during the classroom instructions) that they did not have to participate, and could withdraw from the study at any point, with no repercussions whatsoever, be it social or institutional. Similarly, the children who were used as subjects in the experiment were not previously told that they had been selected as subjects, so as to avoid any attempt to alter their behaviour. The experimenter sat at a table at the back of the class and observed the subjects' behaviours as they functioned within the classroom setting. That is, the experimenter observed each child in an attempt to assess his or her behaviours, in general. After a period of half-an-hour had elapsed, the experimenter rated each child on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985). Each classroom teacher assisted the researcher in rating the domains which he had no opportunity to observe, and completed the "Summary Observations to be Completed by the Teacher" sheet accompanying this scale.

After all the observations were concluded, the entire class was thanked and students were awarded their choice of either a sticker or hockey card. In addition, those children who were selected to participate in the study were told that they were previously selected.

Following the collection of data, a factorial analysis of variance was conducted. The purpose of this statistical procedure was to analyze the three independent variables (age, gender, and SES) together with each dependent variable (domain or subdomain scores). In analysis of variance, the variances of the groups and not the means are used to calculate a value that reflects the degree of differences in the means. In addition, F-tests were obtained which showed whether significant differences within age groups, gender, and SES backgrounds existed. Similarly,

Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc comparisons were employed in an effort to indicate those group means which were significantly different from each other. A summary of the contrasts used and their values is provided (see Appendix E).

11.0 - 11.11 years. Significant differences for gender ($p<.01$) were also found to exist. In addition, significant results were found for SES background. That is, results between low- and middle-class children and low- and upper-class children revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level.

Table 3 (see Appendix H, p. 87) summarizes the significance of the independent variables and the interaction of the independent variables to subdomain scores. On the receptive subdomain, only one significant finding was found, that of SES ($p<.001$). For the expressive subdomain, the data revealed significance for age ($p<.001$), SES ($p<.01$), and the interaction of age by SES ($p<.05$). The third subdomain measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985) is the written subdomain. On this subdomain, age was found to yield significance at the $p<.001$ level, age by SES yielded significance at the $p<.05$ level, and gender by SES revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level. For the fourth subdomain, the personal subdomain, age revealed significance at the $p<.001$ level, SES revealed significance at the $p<.05$ level, and the interaction of age by SES revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level.

In addition to these findings, there were five significant results on the domestic subdomain; that of age ($p<.001$), that of gender ($p<.001$), that of SES ($p<.001$), that of age by gender ($p<.05$), and that of age by SES ($p<.001$). Moreover, for the community subdomain, three significant findings were found; that of age ($p<.001$), SES ($p<.001$), and the interaction of age by SES ($p<.01$). In addition, on the subdomain measuring interpersonal relationships, SES revealed significance at the $p<.001$ level.

Play and leisure time is the eighth subdomain measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985). On this subdomain, SES was found to yield significance at the $p<.001$ level. In addition to these findings, the results on the coping

skills subdomain were found to reveal significance on the variables age ($p<.05$), gender ($p<.01$), and SES ($p<.001$). Measuring motor skills abilities, the gross motor skills subdomain was found to yield significance on the variables of age ($p<.01$), SES ($p<.001$), the interaction of age by gender ($p<.05$), and the interaction of age by SES ($p<.001$). The last subdomain on this scale measures one's fine motor skills abilities. Findings on this subdomain revealed significance for age ($p<.01$), and SES ($p<.01$).

Table 4 (see Appendix I, p. 89) summarizes the significance of contribution of variance to age, gender, and socio-economic status to subdomain scores. On the receptive subdomain, significant results at the $p<.01$ level were found to exist between children aged 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years, children aged 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years, and children aged 10.0 - 10.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years. Moreover, significant results for SES were yielded at the $p<.01$ level between low- and middle-class children and low-class and upper-class children, when gender, age, and gender and age were controlled for.

The second subdomain on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale -Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985) is the expressive subdomain. After analyzing the data, significant results at the $p<.05$ level were found to exist between the 9.0 - 9.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group. Similarly, significant results at the $p<.01$ level were found between age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11-year-olds, 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-olds, 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-olds, and 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-olds. In addition, differences among gender were found to be significant at the $p<.01$ level. When testing for SES differences, significant results at the $p<.01$ level were found between low- and middle-class children, low- and upper-class children, and middle- and upper-class children, when gender, age, and gender and age were controlled for.

On the written subdomain, differences among age groups were found to yield significant results at the p<.01 level between age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11 years, age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years, age groups 9.0 - 9.11 and 10.0 - 10.11 years, and age groups 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years. Significant gender differences at the p<.01 level were also found to exist. In addition, significant differences in SES were found to exist; that between low- and middle-class children (p<.01), that between low- and upper-class children (p<.05), and that between middle- and upper-class children (p<.01).

For the personal subdomain, significant results at the p<.01 level were found to exist between age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11 years of age, 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11 years of age, and 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years of age. Similarly, a significant result of p<.05 was found to exist between the age group 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 year olds. In addition, gender differences revealed significance at the p<.01 level. Significant differences in SES (p<.01) existed between low- and middle-class children and low- and upper-class children.

The fifth factor which is measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985) is the domestic rating. At the p<.01 level, significant difference in age existed between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11-year-old age group, the 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group, the 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group, the 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group, and the 10.0 - 10.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group. Moreover, a significance of p<.05 was found to exist between the 9.0 - 9.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group. Gender differences were also found to yield significant results (p<.01). Similarly, while testing for SES differences, two significant findings at the p<.01 level were found; that between low- and middle-class children, and that between low- and upper-class

children.

On the community subdomain, age revealed significance at five age groups when gender, SES, and gender and SES were controlled for. For children aged between 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11 years of age, children aged between 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11 years of age, and children aged between 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years of age, a significant result of $p<.01$ was found. Similarly, a comparison between age groups 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years of age and 10.0 - 10.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years of age revealed significance at the $p<.05$ level. Other significant findings were found when testing for SES differences. A significant result at the $p<.01$ level was found between low-class and middle-class children and low-class and upper-class children, when gender, age, and gender and age were controlled for.

Interpersonal relationships is the seventh subdomain on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985). In this subdomain, age revealed significance for children aged between 10.0 - 10.11 and 11.0 - 11.11 years of age ($p<.01$). Similarly, SES revealed significance when children from low-class and middle-class and children from middle-class and upper-class were compared ($p<.01$), and children from low-class and upper-class were compared ($p<.05$).

For the play and leisure time subdomain, age differences were found to yield significant results at the $p<.01$ level when children from age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11 years of age, children from age groups 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11 years of age, and children from age groups 8.0 - 8.11 years of age were compared. In addition, SES background yielded significance at the $p<.01$ level when children from low-class and middle-class were compared, and those from low-class and upper-class were compared.

Other significant results existed on the coping skills subdomain. When testing for age differences, three significant findings at the $p<.01$ level existed; that between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group, that between the 9.0 - 9.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group, and that between the 10.0 - 10.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group. In addition, a gender difference significant at the $p<.01$ level was found to exist. On the variable of SES, differences were found to exist at the $p<.01$ level between children from low-class and middle-class backgrounds, those from low-class and upper-class backgrounds, and those from middle-class and upper-class backgrounds.

On the gross motor skills subdomain, age revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11-year-old age group, 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group, and 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group. In addition, gender revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level. Moreover, SES revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level between low-class and middle-class children, low-class and upper-class children, and middle-class and upper-class children.

On the fine motor skills subdomain, the final subdomain measured by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985), age revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level at four groups; that between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 9.0 - 9.11-year-old age group, that between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group, that between the 8.0 - 8.11 and 11.0 - 11.11-year-old age group, and that between the 9.0 - 9.11 and 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group. In addition, gender revealed significance at the $p<.01$ level. Moreover, SES was also found to yield a significant result of $p<.01$ between low-class and middle-class children, low-class and upper-class children, and middle-class and upper-class children.

Chapter IV

Discussion and Conclusion

Results of Data

On the basis of the results reported, the significant differences found due to the contribution of age to both domain and subdomain scores can be accounted for as differences in children's level of maturity, motivation, and the demonstration of prosocial behaviours. That is, it can be said that older children are more mature with respect to classroom behaviours/manners, the level of motivation underlying their performance in school, and the degree to which they exhibit prosocial behaviours.

Parental demands for prosocial action from children strengthen their altruistic habits. Parents' insistence, however, that children behave prosocially and their expressions of moral outrage, anger, and indignation when children are unkind or aggressive appears to support the development of prosocial dispositions. While excessive power assertion generally appears to be negatively related to mature social behaviour, the use of minimal authority to obtain compliance with demands for mature, helpful, caring behaviour is positively related to the development of prosocial dispositions (Perry & Bussey, 1984).

Moreover, how children think about their social world appears to be strongly related to their tendency to behave in helpful, caring ways (Shantz, 1983). Children appear to consider social class, sex, age, friendship, degree of neediness, equity, deservedness, as well as contextual variables like publicness of the setting, in their judgments about whom to help (Payne, 1980; Youniss, 1980; Staub & Noerenberg, 1981). The extent to which children take such characteristics into account appears to change with age, and is also mediated by moral reasoning

(Eisenberg, 1983). Children from primary grades to high school were likely to consider characteristics of kinship, friendship and liking in reasoning about whom to help, though such differentiation diminished with increasing age (Eisenberg, 1983). Moreover, children whose typical level of moral reasoning was less mature evidenced greater differentiation than did children whose reasoning was more mature.

Another significant finding for age includes the fact that the most significant results for both the domains and subdomains existed between the 8.0 - 8.11-year-olds and the 11.0 - 11.11-year-olds. These results can be explained as differences in values children place upon a relationship. From the results found, it can be concluded that due to cognitive constraints, younger children tend to place value upon the physical characteristics of others, whereas older children tend to place value upon the emotional necessity of others.

Honig (1982) found that young children are more likely to share with and give help to popular, attractive, well-liked peers. Subsequently, older children were especially likely to behave generously toward a friend, if they feared that their relationship was threatened and if they viewed their generosity as a means of restoring their friendship (Staub & Noerenberg, 1981).

For the daily living skills domain, the differences found across age groups can be accounted for as differences in children's level of motivation in wanting to excel scholastically. Kagan (1971) found that high levels of activity and impulsivity tend to interfere with the development of behaviours conducive to cognitive and social development. Moreover, children with "fast tempos" (short attention span and impulsive) do not maintain an active involvement in hypothesis verification when confronted with a new event. They act quickly on the first hypothesis and go on to a new situation. Thus, these children's behaviours require strict

monitoring and tailoring, so as to be able to successfully adapt to "proper" classroom etiquette. Several methods which have been found to be successful in dealing with these children include positive reinforcement and time-out.

A second factor found to be significantly related to children's ability to adapt to classroom situations is gender differences. On the basis of the results reported, the differences found due to the contribution of gender to subdomain scores can be accounted for as differences in "sex role" demands made on boys and girls (Lambert, 1979). The domestic subdomain describes what household tasks the child performs, while the coping skills subdomain describes how the child demonstrates responsibility and sensitivity to others. Both of these subdomains describe behaviours which characterize roles of girls more than those of boys. However, one cannot generalize from these findings to state that there is a general bias on the scale. The subdomains on which there were differences attributable to gender reflect behaviours which boys and girls acquire differentially as a result of different standards for socialization. Therefore, the results reflect the behavioural expectancies of families and the community (Lambert, 1979).

A number of theorists (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Lyons; 1983; Noddings, 1984) have embraced Bakan's (1966) distinction, and have argued that the psychology of females and the psychology of males are profoundly different. Women, these theorists suggest, are more concerned about interpersonal relationships (Miller, 1976; Chadorow, 1978), and are more likely to subordinate achievement to an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Martin, 1985), and are more attentive to individual's needs and the potential hurt to people (Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983; Noddings, 1984). The same theorists suggest that males, in contrast to females, are more psychologically independent, and are more likely to subordinate interpersonal relationships

to achievement-related concerns, and more likely to appeal to abstract principles when resolving moral dilemmas (Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1987). The significant finding for gender on the coping skills subdomain aspires to the notion that males and females differ with respect to the manner in which they develop interpersonal relationships.

In terms of the contribution of SES, different socio-economic class' demands can be reflected in their maladaptive behaviour, which in turn influences ratings assigned to the items of the communication skills, daily living skills, socialization, and motor skills domains. The items on the communication skills domain include: what the child understands; what the child says; and, what the child reads and writes. Items on the daily living skills domain include: how the child eats, dresses, and practices personal hygiene; what household tasks the child performs; and, how the child uses time, money, the telephone, and classroom skills. On the socialization domain, items include: how the child interacts with others; how the child plays and uses leisure time; and, how the child demonstrates responsibility and sensitivity to others. On the motor skills domain, items include: how the child uses their arms and legs for movement and coordination; and, how the child uses their hands and fingers to manipulate objects.

These behaviours are ones which are expected to be elicited by a child who is well-adapted, yet, may also be regarded with differential tolerance by different SES groups (Lambert, 1979). Similarly, rebellious-type behaviours manifest in response to authority, diligence in following instructions, and punctuality are associated not only with the child's age, but also with the SES group to which he or she belongs (Lambert, 1979). Like gender, the same kind of argument can be offered to explain the effects of SES on domain scores. Different SES groups have different standards for some types of emotional behaviours which are, in turn, reflected in

the degree to which particular types of interpersonal, affective, or behavioural responses to authority, peers, and family are tolerated or supported (Lambert, 1979).

Results of Teacher Observation

The "Summary Observations to be Completed by the Teacher" sheet provided by the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale - Classroom Edition (Sparrow et al., 1985) provided teachers with an opportunity to describe the behaviour of the four most maladaptive children in their classroom. (These statements are in no way meant to be reflective of children of these age groups in general.)

For the 8.0 - 8.11 year old children, most teachers in this study have commented that these children find math and language arts to be difficult, have poor fine-motor coordination, and their written work tends to be large and sloppy. In addition, teachers have commented on these children's performance to include the fact that they can write cursively but choose to print, and furthermore, can write lengthier pieces of writing but are content with one or two short paragraphs.

Another factor which may lead to differences in performance between age groups is the fact that some teachers observe that younger children tend to have shorter attention spans, and tend to disrupt class more often than do older children. For example, teachers commented on these children by stating that in addition to the necessity for much positive reinforcement, these children also require "time-out" during class time whenever they misbehave. In terms of classroom disruptions, most of the teachers in this study have agreed upon the fact that younger children tend more often than not to start class arguments, emulate adults, ask personal questions that an adult would ask, yell-out "highly explosive" thoughts, and basically elicit rude behaviours.

In addition, these children are described as expressing much anger toward figures of authority, are defiant, and enjoy watching adults become angry. Moreover, teachers reported that the children they observed were found to be unable to control and/or channel their feelings correctly. A final finding which may be reflected in the significant differences between age groups is the fact that children of this age group are generally more energetic in the classroom than older children, and feel that they do not have to listen to the teacher.

For children aged 9.0 - 9.11 years of age, teachers have found that they too have difficulty in math and language arts. Specifically, the teachers stated that this age group's main drawback is the fact that they tend to be poor readers and/or writers, even though they possess good background information. Yet, due-to-the-fact that these children have been classified as having a polite, easy-going personality, they were found to benefit from remedial help. In addition, being exposed to high-interest, low vocabulary books has been found to be beneficial.

Children in the 10.0 - 10.11-year-old age group have generally been classified as being artistic, inquisitive, and alert. In addition, these children tend to perform well in math. Yet, these children have also been found to perform poorly in groups, antagonize peers, and tend to have volatile tempers. That is, children of this group require better social/coping skills. Thus, the significant result found for this group in the coping skills subdomain can be explained by the fact that these children understand and are capable of demonstrating responsibility and sensitivity to others, but chose not to.

In the last age group, 11.0 - 11.11 years of age, children were found to have a polite personality. In addition, these children were found to be socially perceptive, thus they possessed the best coping skills of the four age groups tested. Similarly, teachers stated that children in this

age group possessed a relatively higher sense of purpose and motivation to be successful in school, as compared to children in the other age groups. Thus, due to these significant findings, children in this group have been found to perform better in the classroom than children from any of the other age groups.

In terms of gender differences, teachers have commented that boys, more often than not, tend to elicit maladaptive behaviours in the classroom which are physical in nature (e.g., misbehave in class thus requiring "time-out"), whereas girls, more often than not, tend to elicit maladaptive behaviours in the classroom which are psychological in nature (e.g., enjoy watching adults become angry).

As for differences in SES, teachers have commented that the type of behaviours elicited by children are those which are common to a specific SES background. That is, children's behaviours tend to be congruent with the social class to which they belong. Thus, children of low-, middle-, and upper-class backgrounds tend to elicit behaviours which are seen as being acceptable in the social class to which they belong. Yet, an overlap in behaviours was observed by teachers, in that some children would elicit certain behaviours not congruent with their SES background. Similarly, teachers observed that non-congruent behaviours eventually became extinct.

Combined Intepretations

A pattern of similarity was observed between the significant results found in this study and the observations made by teachers. That is, teachers had observed certain behaviours to be prevalent among certain age, gender, and SES groups, and the results of this study confirmed their observations.

For the variable age, data from the study revealed significance in that older children were more mature with respect to classroom behaviours/manners, the level of motivation underlying their performance in school, and the degree to which they exhibited prosocial behaviours. Similarly, comparisons between the youngest and oldest children revealed the most significant differences.

In view of teacher observations, younger children were seen as performing scholastically at a level below that of which they were capable, had shorter attention spans than did older children, and expressed behaviours which were not viewed as being class-appropriate. Older children, on the other hand, were seen as being more willing to accept help, were found to be socially perceptive, and possessed a relatively high sense of purpose and motivation to be successful in school.

In terms of gender differences, the data revealed that behaviours elicited by boys and girls differ in part to the socialization practices accepted by the community in which they live. Moreover, boys and girls differ in terms of the formulation of interpersonal relationships. That is, communities (society) not only requires boys and girls to develop a repertoire of acceptable behaviours, but regulates these behaviours so that those which are seen as being male-oriented or female-oriented are ascribed to gender specificity. That is, certain behaviours are either supported or ignored in an effort to filter-out those behaviours which are not regarded as being gender-appropriate. In addition, the data revealed that girls tend to form interpersonal relationships on the basis of emotional concerns, whereas boys tend to form interpersonal relationships on the basis of achievement-related concerns.

Teachers observed that children, regardless of age or SES, tended to elicit maladaptive

behaviours in the classroom which differed in terms of origin. That is, boys' misbehaviour in the classroom was physically-natured, where as girls' misbehaviour tended to be psychologically-natured. These observations support the finding that certain behavioural patterns are gender-specific, and furthermore, are societly socialized as being acceptable.

Whereas the data for SES revealed that children's maladaptive behaviours were solely a product of the SES group they belonged to, teachers on the other hand observed that children mimicked the behaviours common to other SES backgrounds. That is, children would observe other children's behaviours and mimick certain behaviours they found to be novel. Yet, those behaviours seen as being uncommon to a SES group eventually became extinct. This can be explained be the fact that non-congruent behaviours were unsupported by peers, family, or the community, and were seen as being unacceptable or intolerable.

Limitations of the Study

Although research has been done in addressing this issue, and theories of why certain children have difficulty adapting to classroom situations, Meehl (1978) states that theories in the soft areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, counselling, social personality, community, and school psychology) are scientifically unimpressive and technologically worthless. In addition, he further states that theories within these areas never die, they just slowly fade away. On the other hand, in the developed sciences, theories tend either to become widely accepted and built into the larger edifice of well-tested human knowledge or else they suffer destruction in the face of recalcitrant facts, and are abandoned.

Yet, in fields like personology and social psychology, this seems not to happen. There is a period of enthusiasm about a new theory, a period of attempted application of several fact

domains, a period of disillusionment as the negative data come in, a growing bafflement about inconsistent and unreplicable empirical results, multiple resort to ad hoc excuses, and then finally people just sort of lose interest and pursue other endeavours. In summary, theories in soft psychology show a disturbing absence of that cumulative character that is so impressive in disciplines like astronomy, molecular biology and genetics.

Meehl (1978) lists several limitations which must be dealt with when doing research in the areas of soft psychology. One problem is that of choosing the correct unit of measurement. For example, there are questions in rating scales and in psychometrics in which disagreements persist about such fundamental matters as the necessity of a genuine interval or ratio scale for the use of certain kinds of sampling inference.

A second limitation is that of individual differences. More specifically, the fact that organisms differ not only with respect to the strengths of various dispositions, but, more common and more distressing for the researcher, they differ as to how their dispositions are shaped and organized. That is, some personal characteristics of children may contribute to their exhibiting maladaptive behaviours. These characteristics when combined with certain stimuli (e.g., social setting, family attributes, etc.) produce the effect of altering a previous behaviour so that it is now manifested as a maladaptive behaviour.

A third limitation of this study is that of polygenic heredity. For example, we assume that several totally different and unrelated polygenic systems influence a manifest trait-like introversion. Yet, introversion may be based in part on a unitary variable (Gottesman, 1963). However, as an acquired disposition of the adult-acculturated individual, it presumably results from a confluence of different polygenic contributors such as basic anxiety readiness,

mesomorphic toughness, garden-variety social introversion, dominance, need for affiliation, and so on.

A fourth limitation of this study is that of unknown critical events. For example, critical events in the history of personality development are frequently hard to ascertain. There is reason to believe that in some instances they are literally never ascertained by us or known to the individual under study. Thus, my research would have to compensate for such factors, since they are impossible to be completely recalled at will; that is, recalled by the subject upon demand.

Another limitation of this study is that of accounting for nuisance (extraneous) variables. That is, sometimes we cannot get sufficiently trustworthy measurements of these variables so as to "partial out" or "correct" their influence, even if we are willing to make conjectures about the direction of causality.

The sixth limitation of this study has been labelled feedback loops (Meehl, 1978). That is, a person's behaviour affects the behaviour of other persons, and the manner in which other people react ultimately affects how the first person will respond to the others' behaviour. In my field of research, I can postulate that the reason a child may develop maladaptive behaviours in the classroom may come as a result of the response(s) he or she received from others in the past. Thus, they modify their behaviour to deal with responses they have incurred form others.

A seventh limitation of this study is that of autocatalytic processes. That is, much of neurotic behaviours are autocatalytic, in that they are based on the cognitive-affective-volitional system. For example, children may demonstrate maladaptive behaviours as a means of not having to participate in a group activity, stating that the other children don't like them, or don't want them to participate. Yet, this may be only what the child thinks, and not what other group

members think. Since the child thinks in this manner, he/she will adopt behaviours which coincide with his/her thoughts, even though they may or may not be true.

A final limitation of this study is that which Meehl (1978) termed as context-dependent stochastologicals. That is, the statistical dependencies we observe are always somewhat, and often strongly, dependent on the institution-community-population setting in which the measurements were obtained. That is, does a certain behaviour occur only in certain situations under certain conditions, or is it independent of such factors? By studying the children's behaviours, I will be better able to determine whether maladaptive behaviours in the classroom occur as a result of certain situations, for example, being placed under certain circumstances, being asked to perform certain tasks, or being in the company of certain people.

Implications for Future Research

Although studies have focused on differences among age groups from the social learning perspective (Underwood et al., 1977; Froming et al., 1983), have attributed gender differences to social conditioning (Lambert, 1979) and the psychological differences among males' and females' patterns of responses to emotional needs of others (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983; Noddings, 1984), and have viewed differences in SES as being the result of class' ascription to social conditioning theories (Ogbu, 1974, 1984), the implications these factors place upon future research requires thorough revision.

As it is demanded that teachers disseminate an increasingly greater amount of information, they inevitably require more skills in being able to organize and teach a lecture within the same time period, or less, allotted several years ago. Thus, they are required to manage classroom operations in a fashion which permits little, if any, time to be dedicated to misbehaving children.

One explanation for this decrease in devotion to misbehaving children is the fact that teacher/student ratios have decreased in the last several years (Ellis, Ray, & Coleman, 1983), and there is an increasingly lower budget for hiring new or additional teachers.

As a result of modernization, teachers must invest a greater amount of time preparing lectures in an attempt to comply with the requirements of the classroom curriculum. This adds an additional burden in that they, themselves, must acquire both, a more in-depth knowledge of the materials to be covered as core information, and a general knowledge in fields not directly taught by them, but educationally related (e.g., computers).

Another factor requiring thorough revision is that of monetary inequality. As Lareau (1987) pointed out, middle-class and upper-class families have advantages which are unavailable to lower-class families. When coupled with social practices of the community in which they live, certain behaviours become engrained within a child's repertoire of behaviours, and are displayed as being adaptive or maladaptive within the classroom setting.

On the whole, if future research in the field of childhood adaptability in the classroom is to be conducted in a manner which is to be considered reliable and valid, both internally and externally, the method in which it is carried out should take into consideration not only observable factors (e.g., age, gender, SES, ethnic background, etc.), but unobservable factors as well (e.g., history, child's upbringing, community effects, etc.).

Conclusion

It was previously hypothesized that the interactive relationship between age, gender, and socio-economic status should be significantly related to the construct of classroom adaptability, as defined by Sparrow et al., 1985, and as determined by the classroom teacher. In view of the

results found for both domain and subdomain scores, it can be concluded that these factors, and the interaction of these factors are significantly related to classroom adaptability. Moreover, from the results yielded it can also be concluded that certain behaviours are more prevalent among certain age, gender, and SES groups. In conclusion, although teacher ratings for childhood adaptability are subjective in nature, age, gender, and SES are factors which are strongly related to the construct of classroom adaptability.

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Appendix A

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale

Appendix B

Letter of Accreditation

McGill

Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling

Faculty of Education
McGill University

3700 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H3A 1Y2

Tel.: (514) 398-4240
Fax: (514) 398-6968
Telex: 05 268510

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to introduce Mr. Oded Nathan, a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, who would like to conduct some research in your school for a brief time. His research proposal has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, McGill University, and I will be supervising the research.

Mr. Nathan is a responsible and conscientious young man, and I am willing to vouch for his integrity and ethical conduct without question.

Sincerely,

William M. Talley, Ph.D.
Director of Counselling Program &
Acting Chair

Appendix C

Classroom Instructions

"Good morning class, how are you today? It is very nice to meet all of you. Before I tell you why I am here, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Oded. Today your teacher was very kind to let me come here and join your class. Okay? Now I want everybody to listen to what I have to say. I will be watching you today, and after a while I will call one of you to come and answer a few questions. Only four of you will be lucky enough to be chosen. After you have answered the questions, you will be able to go back to your friends. After all four of you have finished answering the questions, I will have a surprise for each of you that your teacher told me you like. But if you don't want to answer the questions, you do not have to, and can stop any time you want. Do all of you understand this?"

Appendix D

Parental Consent Form

Parental Consent Form

I give permission to my child _____ to participate in a study of childhood adaptability that is being conducted by researchers from McGill University in conjunction with my child's school.

I am fully aware that my child will participate in a study that presents no risk, in any form, to him/her, and has been used extensively with children of the same age as my child. I understand that my child will be seen for one session of approximately 15-20 minutes in duration. The task shall involve him/her answering a short questionnaire. All instructions will be explained to my child prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

In addition, my child has the right not to participate in the study, and at any time, with no threat of repercussions, be it social or institutional, may terminate his/her participation in the study.

I allow access to my child's school file by the researcher so long as all information seen or gathered is treated and maintained in a strictly confidential manner.

In addition, all information on individual children collected in this study will be treated as strictly confidential. Results will be reported as group data such that confidentiality of each individual is maintained.

I understand that the researchers will be glad to answer any questions regarding the procedure of this study. If so desired, please call Oded Nathan, the project researcher at 731-3163, or Professor William M. Talley, the project director at 398-4240.

I read and have understood the above mentioned statements, and hereby grant permission, at my own free will, to my son/daughter to take part in this study.

_____ _____

Date Signature of Parent or Guardian

Appendix E

Contrasts and Values

CONTRASTS

AGE:	GENDER:	SES:
1-2	1-2	1-2
1-3		1-3
1-4		2-3
2-3		
2-4		
3-4		

VALUES:

AGE:	GENDER:	SES:
1. 8.0 - 8.11	1. MALE	1. LOW
2. 9.0 - 9.11	2. FEMALE	2. MIDDLE
3. 10.0 - 10.11		3. UPPER
4. 11.0 - 11.11		

Table 1 (Appendix F)

Significance of the Independent Variables and the Interaction of the Independent Variables to Domain Scores

	Independent Variables					
Domain	Age	Gender	SES	Age x Gender	Age x SES	Gender x SES
Communication	3		1			2
Daily Living Skills	3		3		3	
Socialization	1		3			
Motor Skills	3		3	2	3	

[1] F significant at p<.05

[2] F significant at p<.01

[3] F significant at p<.001

Table 2 (Appendix G)

Significance of Contribution of Variance to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status to Domain Scores

	Increment over Control								
Domain	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	G	S1	S2	S3
	G, SES, G + SES						A,S, A+S	A,G, A+G	
Communication		2	2	2	2		2	1	2	
Daily Living Skills	2	2	2				2	2	2	
Socialization	1	1	2		1		1	2	2	
Motor Skills	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	

[1] F significant at p<.05

[2] F significant at p<.01

[3] F significant at p<.001

Table 3 (Appendix H)

Significance of the Independent Variables and the Interaction of the Independent Variables to Subdomain Scores

	Independent Variables					
Subdomain	Age	Gender	SES	Age x Gender	Age x SES	Gender x SES
Receptive			3			
Expressive	3		2		1	
Written	3				1	2
Personal	3		1		2	
Domestic	3	3	3	1	3	
Community	3		3		2	

Table 3 (Appendix H - Con't)

Significance of the Independent Variables and the Interaction of the Independent Variables to Subdomain Scores

	Independent Variables					
Subdomain	Age	Gender	SES	Age x Gender	Age x SES	Gender x SES
Interpersonal Relationships			3			
Play and Leisure Time			3			
Coping Skills	1	2	3			
Gross	2		3	1	3	
Fine	2		2			

[1] F significant at p<.05

[2] F significant at p<.01

[3] F significant at p<.001

Table 4 (Appendix I)

Significance of Contribution of Variance to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status to Subdomain Scores

	Increment over Control										
Subdomain	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	G	S1	S2	S3	
	G, S, G + S						A,S, A+S	A,G, A+G			
Receptive			2		2	2			2	2	
Expressive	2	2	2	1	2		2		2	2	2
Written		2	2	2	2		2		2	1	2
Personal	2	2	2		1		2		2	2	
Domestic	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	
Community	2	2	2		1	1			2	2	

Table 4 (Appendix I - Con't)

Significance of Contribution of Variance to Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status to Subdomain Scores

	Increment over Control											
Subdomain	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	G	S1	S2	S3		
	G, S, G + S						A,S, A+S	A,G, A+G				
Interpersonal Relationships						2		2	1	2		
Play and Leisure Time	2	2	2					2	2			
Coping Skills			2	2	2		2	2	2	2		
Gross	2	2	2				2	2	2	2		
Fine	2	2	2	2			2	2	2	2		

[1] F significant at p<.05

[2] F significant at p<.01

[3] F significant at p<.001