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SIX CHILD REARING DIMENSIONS COMMON TO BOTH FATHERS AND MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

Evidence is presented to show that six child rearing dimensions are common to both fathers and mothers. To do this the Child Rearing Practices Questionnaires (CRPQ) was factored separately for fathers (n = 169) and mothers (224), and the factor structures compared. A rationale for the labels of these factors is given. The factors are (1) Punishment versus Reason; (2) Promotion of Dependence-Independence; (3) Rules and Regulations; (4) Spouse Involvement; (5) High Use of Rewrds (6) Preference for Younger Children. The final stages of development of the CRPQ are briefly described.

INTRODUCTION

Early History and Origins of the Child Rearing Practices Questionnaire

Researchers in the area of child rearing practices have struggled for decades to develop reliable and valid instruments that measure child caretaker behavior. Thus in the 1940's we find the Fels Parent Behavior Rating Scale being used extensively even though factor analyses suggested that this instrument essentially only covered two dimensions of child rearing (Baldwin, *et. al.* 1945, 1949; Roff, 1979). Shaefel *et. al.* (1958, 1959) developed a parental attitude research instrument (PARI) which also was based on a two-factor model. In addition to only tapping two dimensions the PARI has also been criticized for its poor predictive power and acquiescent response set bias (Becker & Drug, 1965).

In sharp contract to these two dimensional approaches to the measurement of child rearing Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) made available their data which were based on scores of variables in the child rearing sphere. Milton (1958), using factor analytic techniques, extracted seven factors from the Sears *et. al.* data. Minturn *et. al.* (1964) using some of the same variables as Milton also found that a seven factor solution best fitted his data. Since Minturn did not request any congruence data concerning his seven factors with Miltons' seven, Dielman *et. al.* (1971) adapted the original Sears instrument and attepted to check its structure wiht those found by Milton and Minturn. In a further study Dielman *et. al.* (1972) performed a cross validation check on the structure and compared the cross validated factors with those of Milton and Minturn. The instrument that survived these cross validation checks was named by Dielman the Child Rearing Practices Questionnaire (CRPQ).

Data base for the final version of the CRPQ

Because of its substantial research history and demonstrated cross validation success, the CRPQ was selected as the instrument of choice to measure child rearing practices in a wide variety of studies in the early 1970's. During this period the CRPQ factors were shown to be related to such variables as school achievement, child personality, motivational factors, family attitudes, cognitive style and sex role preferences (e.g., Barton, Dielman, & Cattell, 1977; Dielman, Barton, & Cattell, 1973; Edgerton, 1976). A result of many of these studies being carried out by Dielman and his associates was that a large amount of data onthe CRPQ items was collected in one place. It was this data "bank" that served as the basis for the final factor analysis, which in turn formed a basis for selecting items for the final form of the CRPQ.

METHOD

Subjects

The total number of mothers who provided CRPQ data was 224 and the number of fathers was 169. These people were the mothers or fathers of children tested during a series of studies in the early '70s. The total number of children was 311 (169 sixth graders and 142 seventh graders) and since all mothers and fathers were invited to participate it can be seen that about two thirds of mothers did so just over half of the fathers. All the children came from a large junior high school in a rural town in Illinois. Socioeconomic status ranged from upper middle class to lower class in about equal proportions.

Procedure

Separate factor analyses for mothers andd fathers were conducted on the CRPQ items. A Scree test and the Kaiser-Guttman unity rule suggested a 15 factor solution for the mothers and an eleven factor solution for the fathers. Oblique solutions (PROMAX) indicated relatively low intercorrelations among the factors and thus to save space these correlations will not be reported in detail. The factors were tentatively labelled and used as variables in several analyses (e.g., Barton, Dielman, & Cattell, 1974). Brief descriptions of the factors can be found in such articles as the one just mentioned. The titles of the factors are as follows:

Mother Factors

1. High punishment — low reason.
2. Low use of rewards and praise.
3. High behavioral control.
4. High warmth — free expression of of aggression.
5. Demonstrative affection.
6. Inadequate behavioral control.
7. Promotion of dependence.

Father Factors

1. Early authoritative discipline.
2. High use of reward and praise.
3. Promotion of independence.
4. Preference for older children.
5. High use of reason.
6. High use of physical punishment.
7. Spouse involvement.
8. High behavioral control (Authoritarian).

8. Rules and regulations.
9. Spouse involvement.
10. Low family adjustment.
11. Inadequate role adjustment.
12. Mother's lack of self-confidence.
13. Preference for older children.
14. Strict discipline.
15. Early authoritative discipline.

9. Demonstrative affection.
10. Rules and Regulations.
11. Encouragement of academic success.

The next question was to examine the factor structure of the mother and facther data in an attempt to either a) arrive at a reduced number of factors common to both mother and father analyses, which have been found to be useful in previous studies (e.g. in predicting school achievement, personality dimensions, etc.); b) construct separate questionnaires for mothers and fathers; 3) arrive at some combination of a) and b).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps one of the best methods to estimate the degree of equivalence or similarity of two factors structures is to calculate congruence coefficients. The size of these congruence coefficients is a direct function of the degree to which two factors load the same items i.e., are equivalent factors and measure the same dimension. However, in the case of the CRPQ, when we compare the mother and father data, although indeed (or at least the case will be made later) both mothers and fathers score highly on several items on any given factor, in addition both tend to load "extra" items. These extra items are similar in content to the items which load highly for both fathers and mothers. Because of this mixture of common and unique items, it was felt more appropriate to identify common factors for fathers and mothers on the basis of the qualitative nature of the items rather than rely on a more quantitative congruence coefficient approach.

Six factors were found common to both the mother and father data. Table 1 is presented as evidence that a) the labels of these six factors do indeed reflect the nature of the item content and b) these six factors are common to both father and mother data.

Factor (1) was labelled "punishment versus reason" since the items with high loadings concerned themselves with the differential merits and effects of punishment or reason in controlling child behavior. Thus a parent receiving a high score on this factor tended to believe that physical punishment works much better than reasoning with children. A parent receiving a low score tended to believe that reason was preferable to punishment.

Factor (2) loads items that all seem to involve the degree to which parents should or should not encourage the child to "stand on his/her own feet." This factor has been labelled "promotion of dependence-independence" since this term has been used by other researchers in the past, however "autonomy-control" would also be acceptable. A high score indicates a parent who encourages a chid to be around the parent and intervenes in many child affairs. A low score indicates more freedom or autonomy on the part of the parent.

Factor (3), "Rules and regulations" loads on items that all reflect the degree to which parents have a set of rules for child behaviors such as play, table manners, fighting, arguing, obedience, etc. A high score indicates that the parents have a range of rules and regulations for acceptable child behavior whereas a low score suggests a lack of such a structure.

Factor (4), "Spouse involvement" was labelled such because all items concern themselves with the relative involvement of the mother versus the father in a whole variety of roles e.g., rule maker, discipliner, etc. A high score indicates that the father is more involved that the mother, a low score that the mother is most involved.

Factor (5), "High use of rewards" is so labelled because the high loading items reflect the degree to which parents use rewards to change and reinforce child behaviors. A high scoring parent gives many rewards for desired child behaviors whereas a low score indicates that few or no rewards are used.

Factor (6), has been labelled "preference for younger children" but in addition to items concerning preferred age of children this factor also loads items which involve reasons for these preferences. Thus a high scoring parent not only prefers younger children but tends to do so because "they are fun to cuddle and take care of." The low scoring parents, as well as preferring older children does so because the young child is "too much trouble" and the older child more "grown up." To maximize objectivity the label does not contain this affective component but it should be remembered when any interpretations are made of findings involving this factor.

On the basis of the data in table 1, a final version of the CRPQ was constructed with ten items per factor. The motivational distortion items from the 16 PF were also included and thus the final instrument contains eighty items and takes less than 30 minutes to complete. The CRPQ is now available in published form and standardization data is being collected (Dielman & Barton, 1981).

Table 1

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT FACTOR LABELS AND CONSISTENCY OVER MOTHER AND FATHER DATA*‡

FACTOR (1). Label: Punishment versus Reason

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
Always use reason with child	*.43*	*.56*
Child usually understands 'reason'	*.24*	*.51*
Always works to use reason	*.56*	*.58*
Strict punishment for fighting just to fight	–	*.21*
Very effective to punish child by taking privileges	*.25*	*.25*
Strong physical punishment if child shouted	*.51*	*.36*

Child's behavior requires daily spanking	.78	.79
Child requires physical punishment often	.74	.84

FACTOR (2). Label: Promotion of Dependence-Independence

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
Normal for child to "hand on" and follow mother around	.23	--
Child should always fight back	.36	.32
Let child settle own fights	.29	.37
Child is too independent	.33	--
Always went to child when cried	.49	--
Parents should stop fights only if physical danger	--	.47

FACTOR (3). Label: Rules and Regulations

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
No rules concerning marking on walls, furniture, etc.	.44	.33
Children can be noisy almost anytime	.24	--
Child doesn't listen when told to stop	.41	.42
Don't expect child to obey commands	.25	.41
Child talks back	.47	--
"Sassing" permitted from child	.52	--
No steps taken if child strikes parent or shouted	.31	.28
Do not allow child to play in house	--	.54
Good table manners expected, no praise	--	.26

FACTOR (4). Label: Spouse Involvement

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
Father is person who should always punish	.34	.43
Father should decide children's rules	.62	.58
Father does all the disciplining	.68	.54
Father is best in deciding child's rules	.49	.44
Father decides rules concerning children	.83	.69
Spouse thinks afection to children is important	.23	--
Husband takes no part in family life	.42	--

Table 1 — continued

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT FACTOR LABELS AND CONSISTENCY OVER MOTHER AND FATHER DATA*‡

FACTOR (5). Label: High Use of Rewards

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
Child is always praised for doing what he is told	.41	.39
Child is always praised for behaving nicely in play	.51	.62
Child receives a reward for good behavior regularly	.81	.66
Great value in giving rewards for good behavior	.73	.70
Regular system of rewards, candy, etc.	–	.54
Good behavior at the table always praised	.52	.45
Giving rewards spoils the child	.73	–

FACTOR (6). Label: Preference for Younger Children

Item Content	Factor Loadings	
	Mother's analysis	*Father's analysis*
Likes age 6-8 best in chlidren	.24	.76
Likes older age because child is more 'grown up'	.88	–
Like age 6-8 least.	.80	–
Dislike younger age because too much trouble	.55	–
Likes age less than 2 years best	–	.71
Kids less than 2 are fun to cuddle and take care of	–	.65

*Signs (+ or -) of factor loading omitted for clarity.
‡Missing values indicate that this item had a higher loading on another factor.

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