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Relationships between parents' Adlerian personality priorities and dimensions of family environment

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The University of Arizona, 1989
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS' ADLERIAN PERSONALITY PRIORITIES
AND DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

by

Susan Mary Fischer Olander

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SCHOOL OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER RESOURCES
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ABSTRACT

Adlerian theory of personality development cites personality priorities as beliefs that influence behavior. Priorities such as control and perfection, for example, are goals we strive for and act on. We determine our priorities early in life as means for accomplishing a sense of belonging. Since parents create the first interpersonal climate from which children learn to relate to others and life, this research investigates the part parents' personality priorities play in creating that family climate.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical basis for this research is Adlerian Psychology; specifically, personality development based on the tenets of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. Personality priorities and their effects on family environment were explored based on the concept of teleology—behavior having purpose and based on what we have come to believe will make us feel significant. Therefore, the assumption made is that personality priorities direct a specific course for parental behavior which, in turn, affects family environment. Although the need for this type of research takes into consideration the effects of family environment on child development, this is a supplementary consideration. This research will examine the relationship between specific personality priorities and variables of family environment.

Effective parenting and socialization depend on a number of factors including the family atmosphere or climate, which is influenced by parental interpersonal dynamics or lifestyles. Our lifestyles are the expression of what we have come to believe about life, or our priorities. We act on our priorities and establish relationships and family climate based on them.

The development of priorities is based on the Adlerian concept that one's behavior centers around a predisposed method for feeling
socially acceptable or having a sense of belonging. Literature written in other areas of social science such as sociology and social psychology, have substantiated the Adlerian concept of a central design for behavior in the exploration of values, attitudes and beliefs. For example, an attitude is described as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 112). A value is described as "a type of belief centrally located within one's belief system about how one ought or ought not to behave or about some end state of existence worth or not worth attaining" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 124). Kreitler and Kreitler, in their book Cognitive Orientation and Behavior (1976), state that self-reports of behavior might be interpreted as beliefs about the self that predispose one to respond in a manner congruent with that belief. These authors found that studies that report significant relationships between attitudes and behaviors typically sample (a) beliefs about self, (b) general beliefs, (c) beliefs about norms and rules, and (d) beliefs about goals, with greatest emphasis on beliefs about goals (Kreitler & Kreitler, 1976). To summarize, attitudes and values can be interpreted as beliefs, and beliefs direct behavior. Our behavior is based, in part, on our beliefs and goals, and we act as we believe.

Child rearing beliefs, values and practices are products of our personality, values and attitudes. They motivate our behavior unobstructed by awareness and cognition. Individual Psychology maintains that all reasoning rests on assumptions that, in turn, rest on values
and attitudes parents have developed in their early lives. Child rearing practices can be viewed as both causes and effects in that they are responsible, in part, for personality characteristics of the child, and they are themselves the products of a parent's original family atmosphere. We are looking at a parent to child developmental sequence whereby one attaches old attitudes, values, and interpersonal abilities to a new, vulnerable host. Parents' priorities determine how they and their children "should" behave; and, in many cases, do behave. Unless parents' priorities are challenged through re-education and awareness, they operate throughout life. Therefore, priorities affect parenting style which, in turn, affects family atmosphere, ultimately affecting child development.

It has been seen over and over again in the clinical setting that parental priorities affect family atmosphere and a child's personality development. Although this idea has long been an Adlerian concept, there is little formal research done on it due, in part, to a lack of instrumentation. A major obstacle has been the formation of an Adlerian life style scale. Through much research work done establishing construct validity of the priorities (Kefir & Corsini, 1974; Thorne, 1975; Thorne & Pishkin, 1975; O'Phelan, 1977; West & Bubenzer, 1978; Langenfeld & Main, 1983; Kopp, 1986; Wheeler, Kern & Curlette, 1986), Roy Kern (1986), has now developed a short, easy-to-administer scale.

Using the Lifestyle Scale (Kern, 1986) and the Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974), the major objective of the present investigation is
to study systematically parental personality priorities and their relationship to dimensions of family environment.

**Goals and Hypotheses**

A major goal of this research is to contribute to the area of Adlerian parent education and family counseling by gaining insight into the relationship between personality priorities and family environment. This relationship has been established clinically and published in Adlerian parenting material, but no known research efforts have been made to substantiate the relationships statistically. It is the intent of this investigation to contribute to the exploration of the influences of parental life style on family atmosphere. Information derived from this effort is intended for use as an exploratory tool in family counseling rather than basis for diagnosis of pathology.

Hypotheses for this research, in general, speculate on the relationships between five personality priorities (control, perfection, need to please, victim and martyr) and seven family environment dimensions (cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, organization and control). Specific hypotheses are enumerated in the methods section of this thesis.

**Assumptions**

The conceptual approach to parent-child relations and personality development from which this study proceeds, starts with the assumption that parental priorities dictate parenting behavior or style.
Definitions

Family Environment: The social-environmental characteristics of a family; environment, atmosphere and climate will be used interchangeably.

Personality Priority: A value, attitude and/or belief internalized and used unconsciously as a method of feeling and acting in order to obtain a sense of significance and belonging.

Rationale

The system in which the child develops will affect her personality development and style of relating to others both inside and outside the family. Behavioral patterns and interpersonal skills beneficial or detrimental to successful functioning in the "real world" are learned through the ongoing processes of family interaction. Some behaviors are reinforced, others extinguished, and the child comes to feel comfortable with her family's way of seeing the world and structuring interpersonal interactions. Some families' experiences will be more useful than others in helping the child to deal with specific extra-familial environments. The more secure, stimulating and healthy the family is, the better chance the child has for developing rewarding behavior patterns and interpersonal skills.

The rationale for studying parental personality and its relationship to family climate, can be found in the body of research exploring the effects of family environment on the development of the children in them. Specific research results pertaining to the effects of
family environment on the development of children are discussed in the literature review section of this thesis.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the Adlerian concept of personality development lays the ground work for the purpose of asking the questions about the relatedness of life style priorities and family environment. If priorities direct behavior in large part, it follows that parenting style and family environments are likely to be influenced as well.

The Fictional Goal

The quality of being directed toward a definite end or of having an ultimate purpose (teleology) characterizes Adler's philosophical position regarding personality development. Our purposes are our fictional goals by which all behavior can be related and explained. Fictional goals motivate a person to act from his own frame of reference (Ansbacher, 1956). A fictional goal is not necessarily in consciousness but is considered a guiding idea, a fabrication of the individual's own creativity based on both hereditary and environmental influences such as temperament, birth order and family atmosphere. Every person acts and suffers in accordance with his particular teleology. Our feelings of inferiority and insecurity are particularly accentuated when facing difficulties. Inferiority feelings stimulate us to move, act and behave in a particular manner, moving us toward our goal and a more comfortable feeling about ourselves.

In summary, the goal is the subjective causation of psychological
events, is created by the individual, is unconscious and serves as the basis for orientation in the world (Ansbacher, 1956). Movement toward a goal for the purpose of alleviating feelings of inferiority is referred to as a person's "lifestyle" (Ansbacher, 1956).

**Lifestyles**

The term "lifestyle" refers to a person's basic orientation toward life. The lifestyle is one's individuality or personality, his ego or sense of self (Ansbacher, 1956). The lifestyle expresses the central theme through which behavior can be understood and is a unifying principle of the person to which behavior is bound (Mosak, 1971). It commands all forms of expression: instincts, impulses, feelings, thought and behavior (Ansbacher, 1956). Behavioral expression of the goal, the lifestyle, is consistent because the goal is the root of all activity and is said to be a person's "priority".

A priority is the sum of a belief, attitude, value and goal. We may have one central theme or primary priority but we are usually a composite of several types (Mosak, 1979). In Adler's theory of personality development, he recognizes temperament, environmental factors and the individual's creative power but emphasizes the latter. He believes that "in the development of personality the inherited foundation is less significant that the acquired superstructure" (Dreikurs, 1948, p. 30). As Adler see's it, it's not what you are born with, but what you make of it. We are composites of our internalized life experiences and the interpretations we have applied to them. Our personality priorities direct us in self consistent, goal-directed and
purposeful behavior. Adler defines purposeful movement as a "continuous adherence to a self-consistent goal" (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 177). Adler's theory of personality development, specifically goal orientation, forms the basis for efforts by Adlerians in exploring personality priorities.

**Lifestyle Development**

"The nuclear family is society to the small child, and the child's efforts to find a place in this society influence how he creates his lifestyle" (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer & Sperry, 1987, p. 34). "Place" means a comfortable position in which one feel's a sense of belonging in his environment. From the time of birth, children react to external stimuli and also play an active role that influences their environment. This is particularly true of their social environment, meaning their family initially and eventually others outside the family. Children learn through trial and error what works in creating "their place" and what doesn't. Whatever seems to work they persist in, and whatever fails to influence the people around them does not. So each new experience is met with an ever-increasing backlog of experience. But the experience is not reality; their interpretation of it and the conclusions they draw from it are. Children actively create their personalities by persisting in what methods give them a sense of self esteem and rejecting those that don't (Ansbacher, 1956).

A child's abilities to problem solve and deal with life are very immature. In their efforts to deal with life, "children develop
safeguarding mechanisms and fictional solutions to problems" (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987, p. 32). Guided by fictional goals or priorities, children do the best they can to find for themselves a lifestyle that gives them a feeling of belonging and promises a greater sense of belonging for the future. Once set, the lifestyle becomes self perpetuating (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). The prototype of the lifestyle is well organized by four or five years of age. Unless challenged by a major experience such as therapy, the lifestyle will remain essentially the same throughout life (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987).

In summary, a person's law of movement is the way in which he looks at himself and the external world. It is the opinion which the child, and later the adult, has of himself and the world which provides direction to his thoughts, feelings and behavior and aims at overcoming feelings of inferiority. Our misinterpretations made in early childhood can dominate our development. The personality embodies the goal: the line of direction is established and the person becomes oriented. "By the time a child is five years old his attitude toward his environment is so fixed and mechanized that it proceeds in more or less the same direction for the rest of his life", and "the child will not perceive given situations as they actually exist, but under the prejudice of his own interests" (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 189). "Adler saw us as actor, creator, and artist of our life" (Corey, 1986, p. 48).
Compensation

In the course of life one receives impressions which he takes up, sifts, molds and distorts in accordance with his biased perceptions (apperceptive schema) and with a picture of the world at which he arrived very early in life (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). "A person's opinion of himself and the environment can best be deduced from the meaning he finds in life and from the meaning he gives to his own life, (his philosophy of life)" (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987, p. 197). Because we feel a need to compensate for inferior feelings about ourselves, we operate on the "only if" premise. For example, a child may conclude that "only if I am pleasing (or controlling, comfortable, good, right or competent) can I really belong". These faulty or mistaken judgments we make about our way of belonging become our guidelines for development, and establish our blueprints for the future. Therefore, early experience, no matter how traumatic, are not specifically causative of personality traits because each child determines for herself the significance of the experience (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). The Adlerian view is that infants establish a number-one priority within the first year of life, and it is along this guideline that they develop their personality (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). All aspects of the personality can be seen as movement in the direction of the final goal—perfection, need to please, control, victim and martyr for instance.

"Individual Psychology rests on a central belief that happiness and success are largely related to a social connectedness" (Corey,
The ideal we strive for is social interest—a way to belong and contribute to the larger group. A social and psychological adjustment of cooperation and contribution to the larger group (family and eventually society), is considered the most adjustment for getting along in life. How we perceive our place or how we belong involves having mistaken goals. The child's mistaken goals provide a source for self esteem and are sought out of a "craving for adequacy" (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 99). Because of insecurities, failures and helplessness, a child must construct a bridge into a more comforting world of security, satisfaction and comfort—a compensation for feelings of inferiority. "The fictional goal is, in many ways, a device of the individual to pull himself up by the bootstraps..." (Ansbacher, 1956, p. 97). The goals we pursue in compensating for feelings of inferiority are called our lifestyle priorities. Our priorities are pervasive, they influence our development and orchestrate our interpersonal relations with spouses, peers, relatives, parents, siblings and children.

In summary, we need to compensate with false goals because we have not been sufficiently integrated into cooperation as a social form which we experience first in our families of origin as the "family atmosphere". Instead we are taught to compete for a place in our families and larger social networks perpetuating feelings of inferiority and continued compensatory strivings toward superiority by chasing faulty goals.
Family Atmosphere

It is primarily during childhood that the family exerts an influence on the development of personality by providing the environment and setting that expose the child to a set of assumptions about life (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1973). The family atmosphere is the "prevailing climate" modeled by parents as a pattern of social living" (Christensen & Schramski, 1983, p. 6) and is "the means by which all social values as well as family values are transmitted to the offspring" (Thomas & Marchant, 1983, p. 22). Family members can recognize some of their values and goals at work in creating family climate but not others. Money, hard work, and education are values easily recognized; power, control, winning, and being right are values often unrecognized (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982). Parents express their system of beliefs and values and children incorporate these values as they subjectively interpret them or rebel against them (Sherman & Dinkmeyer, 1987). Consequently, one's sense of self, human relations, and how he relates to the world, emerges out of the family atmosphere (Sherman & Dinkmeyer, 1987).

As stated earlier, according to Adlerian theory our goals direct our behavior. Likewise, as parents our parenting style is directed by our goals affecting family atmosphere and child characteristics. For instance, consider the following clinical observations taken from Adlerian material:

Overprotection

In this atmosphere children are denied the opportunity to learn to
be responsible for themselves and their behavior. They often remain or become the "baby" (feeling small, weak, helpless, and irresponsible); are dependent, try to put others in their service, lack self confidence and may demand approval (Thomas & Marchant, 1983).

Suppressiveness
a front or facade; avoids frequent reprimands and disapprovals; may resort to daydreams and fantasies, and learns to avoid close relationships because of difficulty with intimacy (Thomas & Marchant, 1983).

Martyrdom
A martyring parent demonstrates for the child, the brutality of life and is generally pessimistic. The child may also maintain a pessimistic attitude about life and others; feels victimized by others; feels that life is unfair; becomes self-righteously critical of others, and tends to dominate and control others through weakness (Thomas & Marchant, 1983).

Authoritarianism
In this atmosphere, the parents require absolute and unquestioned obedience. The child becomes rebellious or conforming (he accepts or rejects the value), is inconsiderate of others, is quarrelsome, unpopular, emotionally unstable, and is very sensitive to blame and praise (Thomas & Marchant, 1983). He is polite, respectful, proper but shy and timid; is often unable to solve problems without the help of an authority (external locus of control); lacks creativity, spontaneity, and resourcefulness; may resort to passive-aggressive strategies such as lying and stealing; and frequently is "out of
In this atmosphere, the child experiences constant parental coercion: supervision, direction, and redirection—an endless stream of anxious reminders (Thomas & Marchant, 1983). The parent always wins and is always right (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982). People who value control may do so with logic, temper, charm, tears, dependent behavior, stubbornness, resistance and avoid feelings to keep people at a distance. They fear humiliation, the unexpected, being wrong and they avoid embarrassment (Dinkmeyer, McKay, Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & McKay, 1987). They are frequently perfectionists. Controllers force submission and agreement by others and more than likely, produce conflict (Manaster, 1983).

The children do not develop self-direction but rely on external direction; they may assert independence passively by dawdling, daydreaming, forgetting, and procrastinating (Thomas & Marchant, 1983); they may become controllers themselves by rebelling, trying to win and be right, creating power struggles between parent and child (Mosak, 1973); they may feel anxious, seek revenge, and feel like life is unfair (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1982).

Based on this information it is hypothesized that high Control scores will be significantly related to high scores on the Conflict, Organization, Achievement Orientation, and the FES Control variables; and low scores on Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Independence.
Perfectionism

In this atmosphere the child experiences a demanding parent who withholds approval until a task is completed to meet her high standards (Thomas & Marchant, 1983). Perfectionism can also be a goal for those needing to feel superior in order to feel a sense of belonging. Superiority is the faulty goal and perfectionism is the means.

The child becomes overly serious and overly preoccupied with material, intellectual or social achievement; strives endlessly for constant and absolute success; has an intense fear of failure and mistakes; always feels he could have done better and tries to be better; he becomes discouraged in his efforts to live up to his parents' high standards feeling he is "never good enough" (Thomas & Marchant, 1983). Perfectionism manifests discouragement in that the child believes mom can always do it better (Dreikurs, 1964).

Based on this information it is hypothesized that high scores on the Perfectionist variable will be significantly related to high scores on the Achievement Orientation variable.

Need To Please

People who have a "pleasing priority" believe they must always have approval of others. They can't bear rejection and feel guilty saying no. This type must be liked by everybody, and feel others should appreciate what they do for them. Parents with a high need to please tendency, overindulge their children and are unable to assign them responsibility (Dinkmeyer, McKay, Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & McKay, 1987). The children may grow up to be selfish, self centered, feel
incompetent, have low aspirations for themselves, and are likely to have poor social relations. In other words, they develop characteristics of what Adler calls a "getter" (Mosak, 1959).

Based on this information it is hypothesized that high scores on the Need To Please variable will be significantly related to low scores on the Conflict and Achievement Orientation variables.

In summary, Adler's theory of personality development and the part priorities play in directing behavior, forms the basis for studying the effects of parental priorities on family environment. We act on beliefs we have come to rely on as making us feel significant, and this behavior, the lifestyle, self perpetuates. One's lifestyle priorities can be considered compensations for feelings of inferiority that become guidelines for social and emotional development.

The set of assumptions that the child is first exposed to, is that set held by her parents. These assumptions about life make up the family atmosphere. The child either incorporates or rejects these assumptions thereby influencing the way in which he relates to the world. Since interpersonal relations are first experienced, in most cases, in the family of origin, an investigation of how personality priorities affect family environment is being pursued.

Influences on Family Environment

What are some of the associations seen in research done on family climate? In general, families of delinquent or uncontrollable adolescents are described in research as scoring lower on cohesion,
espressiveness, and independence and higher on conflict and control (Fox, Rotatori, Green, & Fox, 1983; Malin, 1981; Tyerman & Humphrey, 1981). These families emphasize strict rules and rigid discipline to cope with disruptive teenage behavior where cohesion and expressiveness might be more adaptive (Kogan, 1980).

In abusive families, the abusive parent saw less family cohesion and expressiveness and more conflict than parents in nonabusive families (Perry, Wells, & Doran, 1983). Not surprisingly, these are the items comprising the Relationship Dimension of the Family Environment Scale. It is interesting that this Relationship Dimension appears consistently in much of the research reviewed in this section as a significant dimension representative of varieties of troubled families.

Families with one or more members in counseling or psychiatric treatment have been found to be less cohesive and expressive and higher on conflict than those not in counseling. The distressed families also tended to put less emphasis on independence and achievement than the nondistressed families (Billings & Moos, 1983; Oxenford & Nowicki, 1982; Scoresby & Christensen, 1976).

Alcoholic patients entering a residential treatment facility and their family members tended to report less cohesion, expressiveness, and organization, and more conflict than the normative sample. They also reported less emphasis on independence (Filstead, McElfresh, & Anderson, 1981).

In a study of the influence of parental child-rearing attitudes and values on the family climate, Ollendick, LaBerteaux, and Horne
(1978) found that mothers with democratic, egalitarian child-rearing attitudes reported more cohesion and less family conflict and control than mothers with hostile-rejecting and authoritarian attitudes, who reported less emphasis on expressiveness and more on achievement.

How does family environment affect the ability to cope with family crises? Most studies in the area of children's adjustment to divorce link adolescent adjustment more to the quality of family relationships than to parental marital status. For example, Slater and Haber (1984) found that high family conflict was related to lower self-esteem, greater anxiety, and low internal control among high school students in both intact and divorced families.

Steiner, Mazer, and Sobieski (cited in Moos & Moos, 1986), found that anorectics with severe symptoms came from families with low cohesiveness and organization that scored lower on expressiveness and independence than anorectics with fewer, less-severe symptoms. A comparison of matched bulimic and nonbulimic anorexia patients showed the family environments of bulimics to be characterized by more conflict and less cohesion and organization than families of nonbulimic patients (Strober, 1981; Johnson and Flack, 1985).

How does family environment affect the developing child and maturing adolescent? In researching cognitive and social development it was found that cohesion and intellectual-cultural orientation have the greatest influence on the developing child. In general, supportive and stimulating environments tend to promote cognitive development, while a constrictive achievement orientation may inhibit it (Moos &
Specifically, Garfinkel (cited in Moos & Moos, 1986) found that family cohesion was linked to verbal communication. In a study by Fowler (1980), product moment correlations were calculated on data gathered on 35 children to look at relationships between shyness, anxiety, developmental delay and speech-language problems and the Relationship Dimension of the Family Environment Scale as well as Control and Organization. Lower organization and scores control were associated with shyness and anxiety in the children, and developmental delay and speech-language problems were associated with the Relationship Dimension of the Family Environment Scale. Significance was accepted at the .05 level or greater. In another investigation, teacher's ratings of inattentive, impulsive, hyperactive, aggressive and anxious behaviors were taken on a non-clinic-referred sample of 926 nine-year-old children. Using canonical correlational analysis, the researchers found that the Relationship Dimension of the Family Environment Scale was significantly associated with aggressive, hyperactive and anxious behavior. Significance was accepted at the .05 level or greater (McGee, Williams, & Silva, 1985). The finding that hyperactivity and aggression are associated with the absence of a positive family climate, that is, the Relationship Dimension of the Family Environment Scale (McGee, Silva, & Williams, 1984; McGee, Williams, & Silva, 1984).

Higher self-esteem among adolescents has been related to the three factors associated with healthy temperament: high family cohesion, high expressiveness, and low conflict (Moos & Moos, 1986).
In contrast, self-esteem may be hampered by a family that overemphasizes achievement and conformity to restrictive rules (Hirsch, Moos, & Reischl, 1985; Cheung & Lau, 1985). In Cheung and Lau's research (1985), they administered the Self Esteem Inventory (SEI), (Coopersmith, 1967), to 713 Chinese students. Two groups were determined—one with high self esteem and the other with low self esteem. The two groups scored significantly different on all FES variables except Achievement Orientation (cronbach alpha was used as a correlation measure and .001 or greater was used as a significance level).

Family climates appear to be associated with specific personality traits. For example, families emphasizing the Relationship Dimension tended to have adolescents who were relatively free of anxiety. Independence and achievement characterized families of assertive, self-sufficient adolescents (Forman & Forman, 1981; Fowler, 1982).

Family and classroom environments may complement each other in promoting students' personal growth. According to Nelson (1984), students with the highest scholastic self-concepts were located in family and classroom settings high in support and structure (cohesion and organization).

In summary, the research reviewed using the Family Environment Scale suggests associations between development status and family climate. Associations were made in clinical, medical and academic areas. Although development, per se, is outside the scope of the specific research question, it is pertinent to the effort and serves
as the rationale for the investigation. This research takes the Adlerian approach to personality development, specifically lifestyle priorities, and asks how personality priorities affect family environment.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Sample and Procedure

Parents over the age of eighteen provided the sample for this research. Description of the population is as follows:

- Mean age: 35
- Caucasian: 78%
- Mean education: 14 years
- Hispanic: 12%
- Mean income: $25,000
- Black: 3%
- Mean number of children: 2
- Other: 1%
- Male: 38%
- Married: 63%
- Female: 62%
- Divorced: 26%
- Single: 10%

Forty-six percent of the sample stated that they "parent much the same way they were parented"; 51% stated they did not.

Data were gathered at Pima College West and at Park Mall until 151 questionnaires were collected. At Pima College West, data were gathered in two different ways. A small number of respondents (15), were solicited in two different classrooms of students by asking those people that were parents to stay after class and fill out the questionnaires. A larger number of respondents (approximately 93), were collected by setting up a table outside the student center. People passing by were asked if they were parents and, if so, were they willing to take 15 minutes to help in some research on parenting style. Recruited subjects were handed a packet consisting of a cover
sheet explaining the research and asking for demographic information. Attached were two questionnaires; one pertaining to personality characteristics and the other to family environment. The three forms were pointed out to the subjects; they were asked to work quickly by "going with their first answer", and to answer all questions.

The Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974), requires the respondent to read a statement and mark whether it is a true or a false statement as it applies to his family. On the FES, indecisive respondents were assisted by directives such as "answer true if you think it is true most of the time or of most of your family on most days" (as suggested by Moos & Moos, 1986, p. 4). For questions relating to personality characteristics on Kerns' Lifestyle Scale (1982), respondents were instructed to give the questions their own best interpretations, i.e., interpretations were not given to the respondent.

Instruments

Lifestyle Scale

The Lifestyle Scale (1986) is a 35-item pencil-and-paper questionnaire developed by Roy Kern at Georgia State University. It was developed for use as a research tool and for use in the clinical setting for the purpose of attaining lifestyle information on the priorities. The instrument uses the likert scale format asking a respondent to identify a statement as (1) never applies to me, through (5) perfectly applies to me. Each priority has seven statements
representing it and a total score is calculated for each personality priority: control, perfectionism, need to please, victim, and martyr. Descriptions of the priority variables are provided by Roy Kern in *Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer & Sperry, 1987):

**Control:** The controlling scale indicates an individual who deals with life's problems by being bossy, opinionated, unwilling to listen and generally more argumentative than cooperative. They are organized, like rules, are task oriented and are good problem solvers. Controllers actually fear being unable to organize and predict. They often have a need to be right and first and tend to breed conflict in the process of meeting these needs (Mosak, 1973).

This information, as well as that previously cited, suggests that high Control scores will be significantly related to high scores on Organization, Achievement Orientation and Conflict.

**Perfectionism:** This factor describes individuals who feel a need to control others or conform with their demands. Either manifestation, though seemingly opposite orientations, are possible. They may be conscientious, thoughtful, sensitive and cautious. Perfectionists may also be using the strategy to control others or situations. These individuals may like to operate alone, be overly sensitive to making mistakes, obsessive and conservative.

**Need To Please:** The NP factor is considered to be a method of
conforming. This individual's goals are to seek approval and to act as peacemaker. They do not like conflict and try to avoid it at all costs. They are usually caring and sensitive to others' feelings.

Based on this information it is hypothesized that high scores on the Need To Please variable will be significantly related to high scores on the Cohesion and Expressiveness variables, and low scores on the Conflict, Independence, Organization, and Control variables.

Victim: This factor describes people that feel that they have little control over life situations. They are oversensitive to others' feelings, have difficulty in problem solving and are interested in avoiding conflict and/or stress. High scores on this factor along with one on the martyr scale indicate individuals who have low self esteem, are discouraged and have a low energy level.

Based on this information it is hypothesized that high scores on the Martyr variable will be significantly related to high scores on the Conflict, Control, Achievement Orientation, and Independence variables; and low scores on the Cohesion and Expressiveness variables.

Martyr: If not coupled with a high score on the victim scale, this factor may indicate individuals whose expectations of themselves and others are so high they continually set up problem situations at work and at home. The situations are characterized by criticism, frustration and feelings of unfairness. They are generally considered overachievers.
Reliability and Validity

The application of the Lifestyle Scale to research is so new and recent that comprehensive and extensive reliability and validity testing have not been made available in sources commonly reviewing research instrumentation. Dr. Kern is and has been supervising research using his scale. He provided information concerning the reliability and validity of the Lifestyle Scale.

Factor analysis was used for placement of items on the five scales. For determining norms for the scales the questionnaire was administered to 629 graduate and undergraduate students and civil service employees.

Test-retest reliability was established by using Pearson r on a small number (26) graduate students: \( r = .43 \) which is significant at the .05 level.

Family Environment Scale

The FES has been a widely used research scale for measuring social climate since its inception in 1974 by Rudolph Moos. The instrument is comprised of ten subscales represented by nine statements per subscale. Seven of the subscales are used here to measure the social environmental characteristics of the sample. Form R is being used for this research, measuring peoples' perceptions of their conjugal or nuclear family environments. The subscales assess underlying domains or sets of dimensions (Moos & Moos, 1986):

(a) The Relationship dimensions are measured by Cohesion,

Cohesion: Cohesion represents the degree of commitment, help,
and support family members provide for one another.

**Expressiveness:** Expressiveness represents the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly.

**Conflict:** Conflict represents the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict among family members.

(b) The Personal Growth, or goal orientation dimensions are measured by the Independence and Achievement Orientation subscales. The Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, Active-Recreational Orientation and Moral-Religious subscales are being omitted to make the survey less time consuming for the respondents.

**Independence:** Independence represents the extent to which family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions.

**Achievement Orientation:** Achievement Orientation represents the extent to which activities such as school and work are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework.

(c) The System Maintenance dimensions are measured by the Organization and Control subscales.

**Organization:** The Organization factor represents the degree of importance of clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.

**Control:** The Control factor represents the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life.
Scale Development

To gain an understanding of family social climates and to obtain an initial pool of questionnaire items, items were constructed from information gathered in structured interviews. Additional items were also adapted from other social climate scales. These procedures resulted in an initial 200-item Family Environment Scale.

Three domains of social environment were used and each item has to reflect one of them: interpersonal relations e.g., cohesion; personal growth e.g., independence, and system maintenance e.g., organization. This initial scale was administered to a sample of over 1,000 people in 285 families. The sample included different types of families solicited from three church groups, from a newspaper advertisement, and from contact with students at a local high school. An ethnic minority subsample was recruited in part from these sources and in part by Black and Mexican-American research assistants. Families considered "distressed" were obtained from a mental health clinic or were affiliated with a correctional facility.

Five psychometric criteria were used to select items for the final form of the FES:

1. The overall item split was as close to 50-50 as possible to avoid items characteristic only of unusual families
2. Items correlated more highly with their own subscale
3. Each of the subscales had approximately an equal number of items scoring true and scoring false to control for acquiescence response set
4. The subscales had low to moderate intercorrelations, and
5. Each item (and each subscale) should discriminate among families (Moos & Moos, 1986).

**Reliability**

**Internal Consistencies and Intercorrelations**

Moos and Moos (1986) ran internal consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha) for each of the subscales and they were all in the moderate to substantial range (.61 to .78).

The subscales were intercorrelated separately on samples of 1,468 husbands and wives and 621 sons and daughters drawn from 534 normal and 266 distressed families. The subscales were found to measure distinct though somewhat related aspects of family social environments (Moos & Moos, 1986). Conflict and Organization are positively correlated (.41) and Cohesion and Conflict were negatively correlated (-.44). The intercorrelations were quite similar for parents and children and account for an average of less than 10% of the subscale variance.

**Test-Retest Reliability and Profile Stability**

Test-retest reliabilities of individual scores for the subscales were calculated for 47 family members in each family who took the Form R twice with an 8-week interval between tests. The scores were all in an acceptable range, varying from a low of .68 for Independence to a high of .86 for Cohesion (Moos & Moos, 1986). Scores on a 4-month testing interval on 35 families ranged from .66 to .78 and on a 12-month interval, .52 to .81 (Moos & Moos, 1986).
Validity

Content and face validity were built into the FES indices at the outset by formulating definitions of specific constructs such as cohesion and organization; by preparing items to fit the construct definitions, and by selecting items that were conceptually related to a dimension as agreed upon by independent raters. In addition, items were chosen on the basis of empirical criteria such as item intercorrelations, item subscale correlations, and internal consistency analyses (Moos & Moos, 1986). Also, to increase conceptual clarity and minimize item overlap, each item was placed on only one dimension.

Construct Validity

Several studies support the construct validity of the FES subscales. Sandler and Barrera (1984) found that persons who saw their family as more cohesive reported receiving more socially supportive behaviors from family members. FES cohesion is positively related to the Procidano-Heller indices of perceived support from family members and friends (Swindle, 1983), the Locke-Wallace marital Adjustment Scale (Waring, McElrath, Lefcoe, & Weisz, 1981), and the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Abbott & Brody, 1985). FES expressiveness and conflict also are predictably related to the DAS. Brown, Yelsma, and Keller (1981) found that individuals who handled conflict constructively were likely to report low family conflict. Finally, Schaefer and Olson (1980) noted that 18 of 20 associations between five aspects of partner intimacy and six conceptually comparable FES subscales were significant as predicted. Specifically,
the couples' perceptions of high family cohesion and expressiveness and lack of conflict were significantly related to their reports of their emotional, social, and sexual intimacy.

Jensen and his colleagues (1983) developed a Family Routines Inventory that measures 28 observable behaviors that involve two or more family members and occur with predictable regularity in daily family life (for instance, the family eats at the same time each night, children go to bed at the same time almost every night, etc.). As predicted, high scores on the Family Routines Inventory were related to high family cohesion, organization, and control and low family conflict.

Another way to examine validity is to link individuals' reports about their family to trained raters' judgments of it. Spiegel and Wissler (1983) asked professional staff members to rate five aspects of psychiatric patients' family milieus on the basis of information obtained during a home visit. Staff members' ratings correlated significantly with patients' and their wives' reports of family cohesion, expressiveness and conflict.

The FES subscales also show discriminant validity in that they are not highly related to measures of different constructs. Thus, Russell (1980) found relatively little relationship between FES cohesion and cohesion as measured by the Family Sculpture Test or by an adapted version of the Bowerman and Bahr Identification scale. Therefore, the three measurement procedures tap different aspects of family cohesion. In addition, there were no associations between the
FES and the Card Sort Procedure (CSP), a measure of family problem-solving behavior. The FES taps family members' perceptions of the family, while the CSP taps how families behave in a problem-solving situation with unclear external demands (Oliveri & Reiss, 1984). Finally, a summary index of family social relationships was significantly related to another index of family support (discussing problems with family or relatives), but not to one of support in the work environment (Holahan & Moos, 1983).

To summarize, much research work has been done on the FES to enhance construct validity by using both convergent and discriminant validation approaches.

Criterion Validity

Moos and Moos (1986) consider the criterion validity of the Scales acceptable; the dimensions are related to external criteria in both concurrent and predictive studies. For example, aspects of the family environment, as measured by the FES, have been associated with adaptation to pregnancy and parenthood, childhood and adolescent adjustment to parental divorce, adaptation to chronic childhood illness and other life stressors, children's cognitive and social development, and adjustment among families of psychiatric and medical patients.

Researchers have conducted similar studies in other settings, and overall the Scales appear to be valid predictive measures of social climate (Moos & Moos, 1987).
Data Analysis

The five personality priorities on the Lifestyle Scale and the seven dimensions of social environment on the FES were analyzed by using the correlation matrix. The values of the variables being explored were not controlled; instead, how paired sets of variables covary in the natural environment was observed (Kachigan, 1986). Association among random variables was explored and causal relationships were not considered or attempted. The primary goal of this research was to describe and hypothesize rather than predict or establish causation.

Subscale intercorrelations for both the LSS and the FES were calculated based on the scores of this sample.

Hypotheses

Clinical evidence and research in the area of parental personalities and their effect on family atmosphere contribute to the following hypotheses:

Control

Relationship Dimension: High Control scores will be significantly related to low Cohesion scores, low Expressiveness and high Conflict scores.

Personal Growth Dimension: High Control scores will be significantly related to low Independence and high Achievement scores.

System Maintenance Dimension: High Control scores will be significantly related to high scores on both Organization and Control variables.
Perfectionist

**Personal Growth Dimension:** High scores on the Perfectionist variable will be significantly related to high scores on the Achievement Orientation variable.

**Need To Please**

**Relationship Dimension:** High scores on the Need to Please variable will be significantly related to high scores on Cohesion and Expressiveness and low scores on the Conflict variable.

**Personal Growth Dimension:** High scores on the NP variable will be significantly related to low scores on both the Independence and the Achievement Orientation variables.

**System Maintenance Dimension:** High NP scores will be significantly related to low scores on the Control and Organization variables.

Victim

**Relationship Dimension:** High scores on the Victim variable will be significantly related to low Cohesion and Expressiveness scores and high Conflict scores.

**Personal Growth Dimension:** High scores on the Victim variable will be significantly related to high Independence and low Achievement Orientation scores.

**System Maintenance Dimension:** High scores on the Victim variable will be significantly related to low scores on both the Organization and Control variables.

Martyr

**Relationship Dimension:** high scores on the Martyr variable will
be significantly related to low Cohesion and Expressiveness scores and high Conflict scores.

**Personal Growth Dimension:** High scores on the Martyr variable will be significantly related to both high Independence and Achievement Orientation scores.

**System Maintenance Dimension:** High scores on the Martyr variable will be significantly related to high scores on both the Control and Organization variables.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Correlations were accepted as significant at the .05 level or greater. Specific significance levels and R values for each correlation are shown in Table 1.

Control Hypotheses

High Control scores will be significantly related to high Conflict, Organization and Control scores; and low Cohesion, Expressiveness and Independence scores.

The results show that high Control scores are significantly related to high Conflict and Control (FES) scores; and low Expressiveness scores.

Perfectionist Hypothesis

High Perfection scores will be significantly related to high Achievement Orientation scores.

Results show that high Perfection scores are significantly related to high Control and Organization scores and low Expressiveness scores.

Need To Please Hypotheses

High NP scores will be significantly related to high Cohesion and Expressiveness scores and low Independence, Achievement Orientation, Control and Organization scores.

Results show that high NP scores are significantly related to high Conflict and Control scores and low Cohesion and Expressiveness.
Victim Hypotheses

High Victim scores will be significantly related to high Conflict and Independence scores and low Cohesion, Expressiveness, Achievement Orientation, Organization and Control scores.

Results show that high Victim scores are significantly related to high Conflict, Achievement Orientation and Control scores and low Cohesion, Expressiveness, Independence and Organization scores.

Martyr Hypotheses

High Martyr scores will be significantly related to high Conflict, Independence, Achievement Orientation, Control, and Organization scores; and low Cohesion and Expressiveness scores.

Results show that high Martyr scores are significantly related to high Conflict, Achievement Orientation and Control scores and low Cohesion, Expressiveness, and Organization scores.
Table 1

Correlations of FES and LSS Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSS Variables</th>
<th>FES Variables</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Perfectionist</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Martyr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
<td>-.37***</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.24***</td>
<td>-.40***</td>
<td>-.32***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.36***</td>
<td>.25***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R values were determined using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Significance levels are one-tailed; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.
Subscale intercorrelations were calculated for both the FES and the LSS. Significant correlations were accepted at the .05 level or greater (see Tables 2 and 3). This research reveals more and stronger subscale intercorrelations than those noted by Moos and Moos (1986). Subscale intercorrelations for the LSS were not available for comparison. Although strong and numerous subscale intercorrelations may make FES/LSS correlations less dramatic, when considered at face value, the subscale intercorrelations present more information about the relationship between parental personality and family environment. For example, as seen in Table 2, Expressiveness is significantly related to Cohesion, Independence and Organization, and inversely related to Conflict and Control. Conflict is inversely related to Cohesion, Expressiveness, Independence and Organization, and positively related to Control. The relationships between the subscales are ones that one might expect.
Table 2

FES Subscale Intercorrelations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Coh.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>.40***</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.46***</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exp.</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.25***</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Con.</td>
<td>-.48***</td>
<td>-.25***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.38***</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.41***</td>
<td>.36***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ind.</td>
<td>.40***</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>-.38***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. AO</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Org.</td>
<td>.46***</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>-.41***</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Con.</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.34***</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R values were determined using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Significance levels are one-tailed; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Coh. = Cohesion
Exp. = Expressiveness
Con. = Conflict
Ind. = Independence
AO = Achievement Orientation
Org. = Organization
Con. = Control
Table 3

LSS Subscale Intercorrelations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Control</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.27***</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.38****</td>
<td>.60****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perfection</td>
<td>.27***</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.31****</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.31****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Need to Please</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.31****</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.39****</td>
<td>.28***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Victim</td>
<td>.38****</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.39****</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.54****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Martyr</td>
<td>.60****</td>
<td>.31****</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>.54****</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R values were determined using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Significance levels are one-tailed; *p \leq 0.05, 
**p \leq 0.01, ***p \leq 0.001, ****p \leq 0.0001.
There were many significant correlations between the personality priorities and the family environment. The dimension represented least in significant relationships is the Personal Growth Dimension (see Table 4). It was hypothesized that Achievement Orientation would be significantly related to Control and Perfection as they are characteristics attributed to people striving for excellence and superiority and being task oriented. These correlations did not appear at a significant level in the results. This result is especially puzzling since the questions comprising the Achievement Orientation scale indicate, at face value, an emphasis on excellence and superiority. A low item–subscale correlation score (.32) may partially explain the unexpected result creating doubt as to how well the questions comprising the variable actually represent it (Moos & Moos, 1986).

The Independence variable on the Family Environment Scale only appears as positively related to the Victim variable. Since Control and Need to Please are described as efforts at keeping an environment rigidly maintained, it was hypothesized that Independence would be negatively related to them. This hypothesis was rejected as insignificant. Again, this result may be explained by a low item–subscale correlation (.27) for the Independence variable (Moos & Moos, 1986).

On the System Maintenance Dimension, Control is said to inhibit
personal growth because "it may be associated with tension and alienation...." (Moos, 1987, p. 33). The results of this research indicate the opposite to be true when considering the associations between the Victim and Martyr variables and the family environment variables. The Victim variable is negatively related to Cohesion and Expressiveness and positively related to Conflict. In addition, it is positively related to Independence and Achievement Orientation, the Personal Growth Dimension. The same holds true for the Martyr variable as it is negatively related to Cohesion and Expressiveness and positively related to Conflict and Achievement Orientation. Therefore, in these research results, a negative family relationship is related positively to high Independence and Achievement Orientation (Personal Growth).

A possible explanation for this result is that Independence and Achievement Orientation may represent compensatory efforts on the part of family members at feeling significant in a very discouraging, incohesive environment. In other words, if the family relation cannot be relied on for support and comfort, maybe attention is turned toward the self in establishing feelings of significance and belonging by being self reliant and achievement oriented.

All five personality priorities are significantly related to the Control variable on the Family Environment Scale. Organization and Control measure "how orderly and organized the setting is, how clear it is in its expectations, how much control it maintains, and how responsive it is to change" (Moos, 1987, p. 9). The difference
between the two variables is that Organization is orderliness with flexibility and Control is orderliness without flexibility. The results indicate that family environments with high Control are rigid, inflexible and in four out of five cases, also significantly related to Conflict. The resulting correlations for the Victim and Martyr variables represent the difference between Organization and Control nicely by showing a positive relationship to Control and a negative relationship to Organization.

The dimension most consistently affected by the personality priorities is the Relationship Dimension. Either all or part of the Relationship Dimension is negatively impacted by increasing priority scores. The entire Relationship Dimension is impacted by three of the five lifestyle variables (Need to Please, Victim, and Martyr). This result is consistent with research findings covered in the Literature Review in that the Relationship Dimension appears consistently as a significant factor in troubled families. This consideration particularly, along with the other research results, contribute to the objective of gaining information for parent education and family counseling to help families improve intrafamilial relationships.

**Parent Education**

Conveying information to parents about priorities and their effects on family atmosphere and child development can be an important part of parent education. Since parents are generally unaware of their beliefs and perceptions, they may not understand why they are having difficulty in parenting. We become entrenched in our line of
movement and lose our flexibility, therefore, "identifying beliefs that may be influencing your parenting is the first step toward becoming a more effective parent; as long as we don't examine our beliefs, they aren't likely to change: (Dinkmeyer, McKay, Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & McKay, 1987, p. 56). It may prove to be more effective in teaching parenting to go to the basis for interpersonal relations (the priorities) to understand why we do what we do. It may facilitate a parent's understanding of democratic principles if they know from what perspective they are looking. For instance, a perfectionist might come to understand why he has trouble encouraging his child's work by acknowledging his effort rather than the final product; a controller may understand why she has trouble understanding and implementing an effective family meeting; an authoritarian may come to know why he has no patience for the system of natural and logical consequences. Becoming acquainted with priorities may facilitate incorporation of Adlerian principles by allowing a parent to see where he may have to try harder because of a specific bias working against him.

Once a parent understands her priorities she can begin to reorient herself toward the more useful side of her tendencies. For example, a person striving for superiority can learn to accentuate responsibility, ambitiousness, courage and perceptivity; a controller—organization, leadership, industriousness and persistence; and pleasers—friendliness, sensitivity and understanding (Dinkmeyer, McKay, Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & McKay, 1987). Flexibility in using one's priorities, learned through parent education, will make more effective parents and facilitate better family relations.
Adlerian Family Counseling

In Adlerian family counseling sessions, the counselor tries to get some insight into family dynamics—one aspect being individual lifestyles. Lifestyles establish what role a person plays and what conclusions he has drawn about himself and life through his role in the family. In developing an understanding of a person's private logic we gain insight into his behavior. The initial effort by the counselor is to concentrate on the behavioral objectives of the child-in-focus and subsequently on the parents' methods of encouraging or maintaining the behavior. All family dynamics relate, in part, to each individual's style of life.

A counselor needs to start from a place of understanding to facilitate the clients' receptivity to her challenges of their faulty parenting styles. An effective counselor displays knowledge of priorities and helps a client to see how they are operating in his life. Knowledge and past experience in the use of priorities should be used as bases for forming hypotheses about the client's movement but should always be "checked out" with the client for verification. In other words, they are to be used to direct the process of discovery with the client not for purposes of individual diagnosis by the professional. In the counseling situation, priorities are used to understand goals and convictions not to categorize people (Dinkmeyer, Dinkmeyer, & Sperry, 1987). By dealing with the movement instead of simply identifying the feelings, the counselor makes it more likely that the goals and beliefs influencing the feelings and the behavior
will be modified (encourages change). Through understanding and expertise, a counselor creates movement towards goals more conducive to social interest such as cooperation, respect and equality.

Results of this research, indicating how priorities affect environment, will be helpful in providing the counselor with more information for hypothesizing about the family climate based on the priority scores. The scores may suggest issues at hand and direction for treatment of the family in counseling. For example, the two aspects of family environment that appear as significantly affected by all five priorities are Expressiveness and Control. Any high score seen on the priorities may indicate a threat to expressiveness and the use of an inflexible, authoritarian means of maintaining order in the family. This possibility suggests to the counselor that she may need to emphasize group communication skills and alternative means of system maintenance. Examples of such, using the Adlerian approach, are the use of effective family council (democratic communication), and natural and logical consequences (system maintenance).

In summary, for the most part the results of this research confirm what Adlerian clinicians have concluded through their work with individuals and families. What this research does suggest is that the Lifestyle Scale may be an appropriate and useful tool for discovery in Adlerian family counseling and as such, over a period of time, may reveal more accurate information on the effects of lifestyle priorities on family environment for use in parent education.
Table 4*

FES Subscales and Dimension Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cohesion</td>
<td>the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Expressiveness</td>
<td>the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Conflict</td>
<td>the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict among family members</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Growth Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Independence</td>
<td>the extent to which family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Achievement Orientation</td>
<td>the extent to which activities (such as school and work) are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Maintenance Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Organization</td>
<td>the degree of importance of clear organization and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Control</td>
<td>the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*(Moos & Moos, 1986, p. 2)
Limitations

1. The sample taken is a convenience sample making generalizability of these results less appropriate. The sample is skewed in that it is primarily caucasian, middle class (mean income of $25,000), older (mean age of 35), and educated (mean education of 14 years).

2. Family environment was reported by only one family member. It might be argued that only one person's perception of family environment is not a true representation of the environment. A more accurate representation would include an average score for all family members for each variable (family incongruence score). In developing the Family Environment Scale, Moos and Moos (1986) considered incongruence scores for gender (husbands-wives; sons-daughters) and for parent-child perceptions. Regarding gender they found that there were few, if any, overall gender differences in perception of the family climate. In considering the parent-child differences, they found small but systematic differences in how parents and adolescents viewed their family. They believe that those with more authority and responsibility (parents) perceive the environment in a more positive light than those with less authority and responsibility (adolescents). In both cases, they concluded that the differences in perception were insignificant.

3. Strong and significant subscale intercorrelations resulted making the FES/LSS correlations less dramatic.

4. Item-subscale correlations were low, ranging from .27 for Independence to a high of .44 for Cohesion (Moos & Moos, 1986). Item-subscale correlations were not calculated on this sample.
REFERENCES


