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A Path-Analytic Approach to the Relations Between Parental Traits and Acceptance and Adolescent Adjustment[1]

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A path-analytic model was employed to examine relations between parent-reported instrumental and expressive traits, child-reported parental acceptance, and adolescent self-esteem and self-consciousness. Analyses were run separately for each parent–child dyad. It was predicted that any relations between parental traits and child adjustment would be mediated by parental acceptance, especially for expressive traits. This prediction was confirmed for families with daughters. The findings suggest, for the daughter dyads, that parents with expressive traits are more likely to communicate acceptance which, in turn, fosters child adjustment. Of the total variance accounted for in the child adjustment indices, most was due to the contribution of parental acceptance to the model. A comparison of these results with those of previous studies suggests that relations between parental traits and the other variables in the path model are less dramatic when parents' report of their own personality characteristics are employed than when child report is employed. Future research may be improved by serious consideration of mediating variables rather than examining relations between distally-related parent and child variables.

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Claims that androgynous individuals are more behaviorally flexible and/or psychologically healthy have appeared in the literature over the past decade (e.g., Bem, 1975; Bem & Lenney, 1976; Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976; Helmreich, Spence, & Holahan, 1979). Whether or not such claims can be applied to effective parenting has been the subject of considerable speculation but little empirical scrutiny. As yet, only two research teams (Baumrind, 1982; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) have sought to determine whether relations exist between parental masculinity and femininity *and* child adjustment, and they have done so with nine-year-olds and high-school students, respectively. The purpose of the present study is to examine relations between parental expressiveness and instrumentality [i.e., *parental* self-report on the Masculinity and Femininity scales of the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ); Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974] and young adolescents' self-esteem and self-consciousness, particularly as such relations are mediated by parental "warmth" or acceptance. In general, our argument is that global measures of parental traits, such as are reflected in self-report measures of instrumentality and expressiveness, are unlikely to be powerful correlates of child outcomes given that children have limited access to the wide variety of domains in which parental traits are represented. That is, they observe their parents principally in their role *as* parents. On the whole, however, expressive parents ought to be perceived by their children as more warm and accepting than are less expressive parents. We argue, then, that any relation between parental expressiveness and self-esteem is likely to be mediated by parental acceptance of the child.

As part of a larger study, Spence & Helmreich (1978) reported their findings on the parental antecedents of high-school students' self-esteem. Their investigation was stimulated, in part, by an interest in the relative effectiveness of androgynous parenting. They employed measures of the children's perception of their parents' levels of masculinity and femininity on the PAQ, the children's report of parental behaviors and attitudes (as measured by the Parental Attitudes Questionnaire; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), and the children's self-esteem. Child-reported parental scores on the PAQ (construed by Spence and Helmreich as a measure of the parents' instrumental and expressive traits) were first subjected to the median-split technique and then couple types [e.g., androgynous (father)—feminine (mother)] were created. Parents' scores on the Parental Attitudes Questionnaire (a measure of the following parent behaviors and attitudes: positivity, democracy, rule enforcement, protectiveness, sex role enforcement, achievement standards, and family harmony) were subjected to a statistical technique [Automatic Interaction Detection (AID); Sonquist, Baker, & Morgan, 1973] whereby different groups of families (called behavioral constellations) were isolated for whom differing relations between parental behaviors and child self-esteem emerged.

For both sexes, they found that couples where both parents were rated as *androgynous* by their children tended to fall in those behavioral constellations characterized by high levels of positivity and democracy, and they tended to have children with the highest levels of self-esteem. As a result of these and other related findings, Spence and Helmreich (1978) concluded that "perceived parent behaviors may affect self-esteem independently of perceived parental attributes" (p. 199). The present study extends the Spence and Helmreich (1978) effort by: (a) examining simultaneously the relations between parental traits, parental acceptance, and child adjustment via a path-analytic model; (2) employing parental report of their own traits rather than child report; (3) examining young adolescents rather than high-school students; and (4) examining the independent contributions of instrumental and expressive traits to the model rather than collapsing the data with the median-split approach. The rationale underlying each of these factors will become clear.

Baumrind (1982) examined Bem's (Bem, 1974, 1975; Bem & Lenney, 1976; Bem et al., 1976) and Spence and Helmreich's (Helmreich et al., 1979; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), claims that androgynous individuals are more effective people and parents. As part of her study, she assessed the relations between parent-reported scores on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974), actual parenting behaviors, and a variety of competence measures in nine-year-olds. Her results indicated that androgynous parents are responsive but are not demanding, thus making them child centered rather than authoritative. Conversely, sex-typed individuals are more likely to be authoritative, traditional, and demanding in the parenting role, and more likely to have competent children than are androgynous parents. (Few significant relations emerged, however, between parental responses on the BSRI and the child-competence measures). Baumrind also found that mothers' and fathers' Femininity scores, and not their Masculinity scores, were positively correlated with parental responsiveness. Given the discrepancies between the Baumrind (1982) findings and those of Spence and Helmreich (1978), it appears that further research is needed on how parental traits and behaviors interact as antecedents of child adjustment.

Other studies have specifically examined how parental child-rearing techniques are related to child self-esteem (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965). Coopersmith (1967; see Maccoby, 1980, for a review of his findings), for example, found that mothers who were accepting, affectionate, involved, strict but democratic, and who favored noncoercive forms of discipline tended to have sons (ages 10–12) with higher levels of self-esteem. On the basis of her review of the literature, Wylie (1979) concluded that parents' "regard" for their children and their level of parental interest and rapport appear to be positively related to their children's level of self-regard (also see Harter, 1983). More generally, the association of parental "warmth"

and "acceptance" with a variety of "positive" child outcomes is ubiquitous in the child-development literature (Martin, 1975). This construct (warmth, acceptance/rejection, or love/hostility) regularly appears in factor analyses of parental behaviors as well (e.g., Baumrind, 1982; Schaefer, 1959; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Furthermore, parents whose self-reports rate them as high on expressiveness are, given the item content of most Femininity scales, likely to be seen as warm in the parental role (Baumrind, 1982, has found evidence of this).

A review of the current literature seems to indicate that a causal model is implicit in much of the theorizing to date. That is, it appears that parental traits may be predictive of certain parenting behaviors that may, in turn, be predictive of better child adjustment. Such a causal conceptualization is implied, for example, when Baumrind (1982) stated that children with androgynous parents may be less competent because they "tend to be child-centered, and children from child-centered homes tend to be less competent than children from firm or traditional homes" (p. 68). Also, Spence and Helmreich (1978) pointed out that "it seems quite conceivable that these parental characteristics [instrumentality and expressiveness] are themselves correlated with the socialization techniques the parent employs" (p. 142). (They then went on to show that parental styles, such as warmth, are correlated with child self-esteem.)

Despite what seems to be a basic agreement on the causal process, there appear to be, as we have already noted, some important differences between Baumrind's (1982), and Spence and Helmreich's (1978), findings. Spence and Helmreich (1978) reported rather dramatic relations between parental instrumental and expressive traits and child self-esteem. Baumrind's results, however, were far less dramatic. Our speculation is that parental traits may be related to child self-esteem only insofar as they have an effect on the parenting behaviors that impact on child self-esteem. It may be, then, that Spence and Helmreich (1978) found *direct* relations between parental traits and child self-esteem because child report of parental traits was employed and Baumrind found fewer of these results due to her use of parent report of their own traits. One obvious problem with employing child report of parental traits is that it is difficult to determine the degree to which the correlations between child perceptions of adult traits and the child outcomes are a function of the child's projections (Child, 1954). As Spence and Helmreich (1978) pointed out:

> There are multiple slippages between parents' perceptions of themselves and students' perceptions of their parents. Both fathers and mothers may behave somewhat differently at home than in other settings; their actions toward a particular child may be shaped by their attitudes toward that child and by that child's behavior toward them; children's interpretation of their parents' behavior and hence their inferences about their parents' attributes are filtered through their own needs and temperamental characteristics. (p. 217)

Put another way, children's reports of parental "traits" are shaped by their interactions with parents *as* parents. Parental report of their own traits presumably taps a broader range of the adults' roles. As an example, Spence and Helmreich (1978) found that relations between parent couple types and student PAQ category were "diluted" when parent report of their own traits was employed rather than child report. In the same way, we would predict that the relations between parental traits and child self-esteem will diminish when parent report is employed. Parent report is preferred and perhaps more valid because we are, after all, measuring the parents' own instrumental and expressive self-concept.

Seventh graders were the focus of the present study for at least two reasons. First, although we are primarily concerned here with the direct and indirect effects of parental instrumental and expressive traits on child adjustment rather than with the "effectiveness" of parental androgyny per se, it is of value to discuss the implications that androgynous parenting may have for the young adolescent sample examined here. Given the likelihood that parents' gender-related expectations for their children intensify during early adolescence (Hill & Lynch, 1983), it may well be that androgynous parenting is *not* antecedent to child-perceived parental acceptance at this stage of development. It could be argued that adolescents find it more reassuring to have expressive and/or traditional parents, and they would therefore report that these parents were more accepting. Second, and more generally, an investigation of child adjustment and its parental antecedents during early adolescence may be of special interest because earlier studies have only examined younger children or high-school students and because, as Harter (1983) pointed out, young adolescents typically evidence heightened self-consciousness and lowered self-esteem as compared to children (Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973).

In the present study, a general path-analytic model (see Figure 1) of the effects of parental traits on adolescent adjustment (i.e., self-esteem and self-consciousness), as such relations are mediated by parental acceptance, is tested.[3] As already noted, there is an extensive literature in support of the relation between parental warmth and acceptance, and child adjustment. Furthermore, expressiveness can be construed as a trait that is antecendent to parental acceptance. We expect, then, that expressive traits will be predictive of parental acceptance that will, in turn, be predictive of child self-esteem and self-consciousness. No direct path between parental expressiveness and

[3]It has seemed to us and to others (Lubinski, Tellegen, & Butcher, 1981, 1983) that, in most studies, scores on measures such as the PAQ are better dealt with by employing regression analyses rather than the median-split approach. Among other things, a substantial loss of information is inherent in the latter approach. Thus, the path-analytic model allows us to avoid having to dichotomize our data.

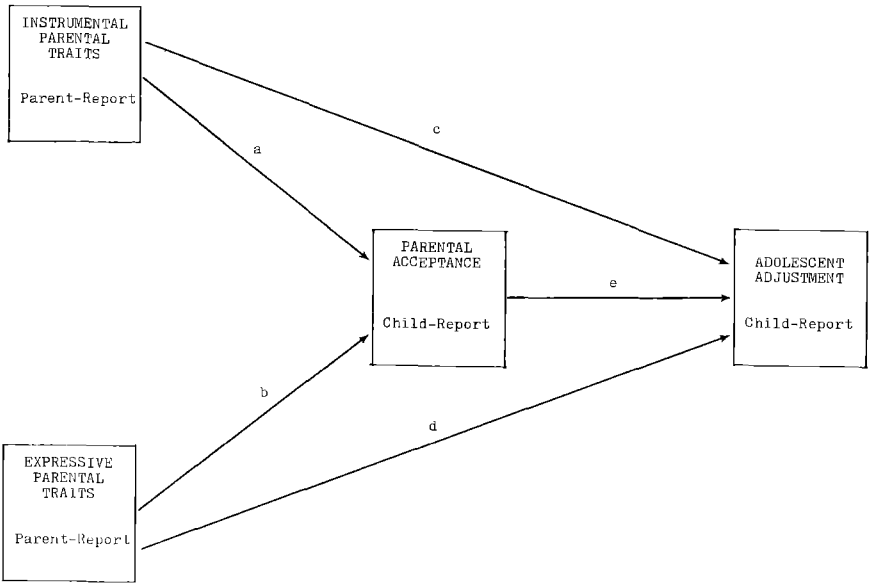

Fig. 1. Proposed path-analytic model of the relations between parental traits and acceptance, and adolescent adjustment. Early adolescent adjustment refers to self-esteem and self-consciousness. (Lower-case letters that label each path are referred to in Table II).

the child outcomes is predicted. Moreover, we expect to find these relations for all parent-child dyads. In terms of the general path model given in Figure 1, we expect paths b and e to be significant. On the other hand, the derivation of an intuitively satisfying relationship between instrumental traits (i.e., independent, active, competitive, self-confident, and stands up well under pressure), and parental acceptance or child adjustment is not as straightforward. Parental instrumentality does not directly imply the presence of perceived warmth. As a result, we predict that instrumentality will not be directly (path c) or indirectly (via parental acceptance) related to child adjustment.[4]

[4]It is important to emphasize that we are not predicting that all paths in the general model (see Figure 1) will be significant. That is, we are predicting the absence of effects (i.e., the null hypothesis). We are aware, then, of the interpretive problems inherent in predicting the null hypothesis as an outcome.

METHOD

Overall Description of the Research Program

This study was part of a larger research program ("Family Relations in Early Adolescence") conducted between 1978 and 1981 at the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development, Boys Town, Nebraska (Hill, Note 1). The program included two streams of data collection: a field stream and a laboratory stream. Those families participating in the field stream were given questionnaires in their homes by research assistants working on the project. Families who participated in the laboratory stream were asked to fill out questionnaires as well as perform various interactional tasks that were videotaped.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were 95 seventh-grade girls and 64 seventh-grade boys, and their families, who were recruited from eight school districts in a Midwestern urban city. Families who participated in the field stream were used in this study. Families had to meet the following criteria: they had to be intact such that the child was living with his or her natural parents, the child had to be a seventh grader, and he or she had to be a first-born child. Principals of the schools in these districts were asked to provide lists of students who fit these criteria. Of the school districts that participated, 95–100% of the principals were cooperative. Approximately 40% of the families agreed to participate. The most common reason for refusal was that the family did not have enough time. On the Duncan Socio-Economic Index (SEI; Duncan, 1977), scores based upon paternal occupation ranged from 7 to 86. No differences in socioeconomic status were noted between those who agreed to participate and those who declined. Approximately 31% of the children attended Catholic schools, while the remainder attended public schools.

Procedure

All families were tested in their homes during a 2–3 hr period. A research assistant delivered the questionnaire materials at the appointed time and remained with the family while the questionnaires were completed. This procedure was designed to ensure maximal return of questionnaires from families agreeing to participate. It also permitted us to monitor the independent com-

pletion of the questionnaires and to prevent any coercion on the part of the parents for the child to complete them or to complete them in particular ways.

The questionnaires referred to are two in number, one designed for parents and one for their seventh-grade children. Both the parent and the child questionnaires contained several established and newly developed scales, and also contained items that speak to the purposes of the research program as a whole but not to the analyses below.

Measures

The Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). This 24-item questionnaire was developed by Spence et al. (1974). There are eight masculinity items, eight femininity items, and eight masculinity–femininity items. Each item consists of two poles that anchor a 5-point scale (0–4). The participant is to choose which of the five points best applies to him or her. An item was labeled "masculine", for example, if the stereotypically masculine pole was socially desirable to some degree in both sexes, but occurred to a greater degree in males (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). The masculinity–femininity items are different than the other scales in that one pole is socially desirable for one sex and the other is socially desirable for the other sex.

The mothers' and fathers' own raw scores on the Masculinity and Femininity scales were employed in the analyses. These raw scores are construed as measuring the instrumental and expressive personality characteristics (or traits) of the parents. The Cronbach alphas for these scales ranged from .68 to .80 for mothers and fathers. The Masculinity and Femininity scales of the PAQ were correlated .05 and .10 for the father–son and father–daughter dyads, respectively, and were correlated .30 and .23 for the mother–son and mother–daughter dyads, respectively. Although for mothers the scales were moderately correlated, little variance is shared between the scales. As a result, the analyses were run as dictated.

Parental Acceptance. To assess the parents' level of acceptance of their children, Spence and Helmreich's (1978) Parental Attitudes Questionnaire was incorporated into our child questionnaire. In a second-order factor analysis on 11 first-order parenting scales, three global factors of parenting behavior (as per Schaefer, 1959) emerged for sons and daughters, which were labeled "mother and family acceptance," "father acceptance," and "family rules and standards" (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

In order to obtain subject scores for the acceptance variables, some changes had to be made in the item content of the first-order factors. Spence and Helmreich (1978) allowed all items that loaded above their factor-loading criterion (.30) to load on a factor, thus allowing a given item to load on more

than one first-order factor. It became clear that to add together scores on these first-order factors to obtain scores on the second-order factors would mean that some items would be included as many as three times. Thus, before obtaining scores for the second-order factors, items were only maintained on those first-order factors on which they had the highest loading. The resulting first-order factors were maintained only on those second-order factors on which they had the highest loading. Because Spence and Helmreich (1978) derived their parenting factors separately for sons and daughters, the item content of the parental-acceptance factor is somewhat different for each parent–child dyad. The factor label for mother and family acceptance was changed to just "mother acceptance" because only a small portion of its items referred to parents in general, while the remainder referred to mothers. Cronbach alphas for mother and father acceptance (with our data) were .75 and .83, respectively, for the sons' responses, and .85 and .86 for the daughters' responses.

Self-Esteem and Self-Consciousness. Items which measure adolescent self-esteem and self-consciousness have been taken from the Simmons et al. (1973) Interview Schedule. So as to include items with a positive valence, three additional self-esteem items were generated by the staff of the project. Items were summed so as to arrive at composite scores for self-esteem and self-consciousness. Some of the items had to be reverse scored (and variations thereof) so that a high score on an item represented a high level of self-esteem or self-consciousness. Cronbach alphas for these scales ranged from .62 to .80 for boys and girls. As should have been the case, self-esteem and self-consciousness were correlated (negatively). Given that these correlations were moderate ($-.35$ for boys and $-.27$ for girls), little variance is shared between the scales.

RESULTS

Variable Means and Standard Deviations

Sex-specific means and standard deviations for all parent and child variables are included in Table I. Because the mother and father acceptance scales are based on different items for each parent–child dyad, these data are not comparable between the sexes or between parents. Analyses were run on the remaining variables, however, to determine if there were significant differences (in terms of group means or variance) for these variables between sons and daughters. An analysis of the differences between variances allows us to determine if the variance for a given variable is significantly

Table I. Sex-Specific Variable Means and Standard Deviations[a]

Variable	Males ($n = 64$)		Females ($n = 95$)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Father Instru	21.33	4.38	22.11	4.59
Father Express	21.10	4.15	20.58	4.40
Mother Instru	19.72	4.33	18.20	4.41
Mother Express	23.99	3.11	23.10	3.82
Father Acceptance	54.92	9.23	57.98	10.90
Mother Acceptance	86.70	9.35	73.07	12.85
Self-esteem	22.68	2.78	21.62	3.25
Self-consciousness	14.16	2.16	15.04	2.20

[a]Instru, instrumental traits (PAQ Masculinity scale score), Express, expressive traits (PAQ Femininity scale score). Because the mother and father acceptance scales are comprised of different items for each parent–child dyad, these data are not comparable.

restricted for one of the sexes. In the event that such a restriction occurred, we would be more likely to find an attenuation of our subsequent correlational analyses. Based on *F* tests of sample variances (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Bent, 1975), it was found that males and females did not differ with respect to variance level on any of the variables.

As expected (Simmons & Rosenberg, 1975), males reported significantly ly higher levels of self-esteem ($M = 22.68$) than did females ($M = 21.62$), $t(157) = 2.13$, $p < .05$. Similarly, males reported lower levels of self-consciousness ($M = 14.16$) than did females ($M = 15.04$), $t(157) = -2.50$, $p < .05$. Mothers of sons also reported higher levels of instrumentality (scores on the PAQ Masculinity scale; $M = 19.72$) than did mothers of females ($M = 18.20$), $t(157) = 2.14$, $p < .05$. The latter finding aside, we are assured that variances between groups are not significantly different and that when differences between group means occur, they typically reflect those found in existing literature.

Path Analysis

Path-analytic procedures were employed as a "method of decomposing and interpreting linear relationships" (Kim & Kohout, 1975, p. 383). The model we have proposed is recursive insofar as it is assumed that reciprocal causation in the form of causal feedback loops does not occur. Although this assumption may not be totally justified, particularly for the relations between parental acceptance and the child outcomes (Maccoby, 1980), causal feedback loops have not as yet been demonstrated empirically in this

literature. Taking account of such effects would require complex estimation techniques (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Thus, the causal ordering we have proposed is based upon the previous theoretical discussion and it will be determined how well the data fit our predictions (Bell, Weinberg, & Hammersmith, 1981). All path analyses were completed separately for each of the four parent–child dyads, given our ignorance of parent–child relations during early adolescence.

As can be seen in Figure 1, parental traits have been placed causally prior to parental acceptance that, in turn, is assumed to be causally prior to the child outcomes. The "causal flow" is from left to right. Paths connecting the variables can either be direct or indirect. *Direct* paths are those connections between variables comprised of a single pathway. A standardized path coefficient, or beta (β), represents the strength of a direct path. This coefficient is determined by computing the standardized beta weight between the predictor variable and the predicted variable after all other variables that have direct paths to the predicted variable are included in the model (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). For example, the standardized path coefficient between acceptance and self-esteem is the standardized beta weight resulting from the prediction of self-esteem from acceptance with parental instrumental and expressive traits already partialled out. Standardized path coefficients represent the amount of change (in standard deviation units) in the predicted variable caused by a one standard deviation increase in the predictor (or causally prior variable).

Indirect paths are compound pathways (with mediating variables) made up of several direct pathways. In terms of our predictions, we expect there to be an indirect path from parental expressiveness to adolescent adjustment that is comprised of two significant direct paths (paths b and e in Figure 1). The strength of an indirect path is determined by computing the product of the standardized (direct) path coefficients that make up such a compound path. Pearson correlations and standardized path coefficients (direct effects) are included in Table II.[5] For purposes of simplicity, the coefficients for the indirect paths are not included in the table. All results were computed by employing multiple-regression analyses, whereby relations between variables were examined after the required variables were included in the model.

The findings for mothers and daughters (see Table II) indicate that there is an indirect and a direct path (which approached significance; $.05 < p <$

[5]When employing the regression approach, it is important to examine not only the direct effects but to examine simple correlations as well. For example, one would be in error to conclude that expressiveness was not related to the dependent variables simply because it was not predictive after instrumentality was included in the model. Expressiveness may still be significantly related to the outcome of interest, but the variance that it shares with this outcome is redundant after instrumentality enters the model. For this reason, correlations (as well as direct effects) are included in Table II.

Table II. Correlations and Direct Effects Among Path Model Variables for the Four Parent–Child Dyads[a,b]

Antec Vars	Dep Vars	Path	Pearson correlation	Direct effects	Antec Vars	Dep Vars	Path	Pearson correlation	Direct effects
		Mother–Daughter					Father–Daughter		
Inst	Acc	a	.08	.03	Inst	Acc	a	.20[d]	.19[c]
Exp	Acc	b	.24[d]	.23[d]	Exp	Acc	b	.18[c]	.16
Inst	Est	c	.15	.16	Inst	Est	c	.07	.01
Exp	Est	d	−.05	−.17[c]	Exp	Est	d	−.04	−.14
Acc	Est	e	.35[e]	.38[e]	Acc	Est	e	.38[e]	.41[e]
Inst	Con	c	−.07	−.08	Inst	Con	c	−.12	−.11
Exp	Con	d	.05	.07	Exp	Con	d	−.04	−.02
Acc	Con	e	−.02	−.02	Acc	Con	e	−.06	−.04
		Mother–Son					Father–Son		
Inst	Acc	a	.04	.03	Inst	Acc	a	−.09	−.09
Exp	Acc	b	.06	.05	Exp	Acc	b	.09	.09
Inst	Est	c	−.06	−.12	Inst	Est	c	−.10	−.05
Exp	Est	d	.14	.16	Exp	Est	d	.04	.00
Acc	Est	e	.53[e]	.52[e]	Acc	Est	e	.59[e]	.58[e]
Inst	Con	c	−.02	.05	Inst	Con	c	.22[c]	.19
Exp	Con	d	−.20	−.20	Exp	Con	d	−.08	−.05
Acc	Con	e	−.37[e]	−.36[e]	Acc	Con	e	−.47[e]	−.45[e]

[a]Antec Vars, antecedant variables, Dep Vars, dependent variables, Inst, instrumental traits (parent report), exp, expressive trait (parent report), Acc, parental acceptance (child report), Est, self-esteem (child report), and Con, self-consciousness (child report). The letters under the columns labeled "Path" refer to the path labels in Figure 1.

[b]n (sons) = 64; n (daughters) = 95.

[c]$p < .10$.

[d]$p < .05$.

[e]$p < .01$.

.10) from parental expressive traits to child self-esteem. The indirect path indicates that mothers who rated themselves as high on expressiveness tended to be seen by their daughters as more accepting (path b, $\beta = .23$) and that mothers who were seen as more accepting tended to have daughters who reported higher levels of self-esteem (path e, $\beta = .38$). The direct path (which approached significance) indicates that maternal expressiveness was negatively predictive of daughters' self-esteem after other variables that have a direct pathway to self-esteem were controlled (path d, $\beta = -.17$). It should be noted, however, that the simple correlation between expressiveness and self-esteem was negligible ($r = -.05$) and that only after instrumentality and acceptance were controlled did the correlation approach significance. Thus, this finding, which represents a suppression effect, is difficult to interpret. Acceptance was predictive of self-esteem but not of self-consciousness for this dyad (see Table II). For the father-daughter dyad, instrumentality and expressiveness were not directly related to self-esteem (respectively, path c, $\beta = .01$; path d, $\beta = -.14$). Instrumentality

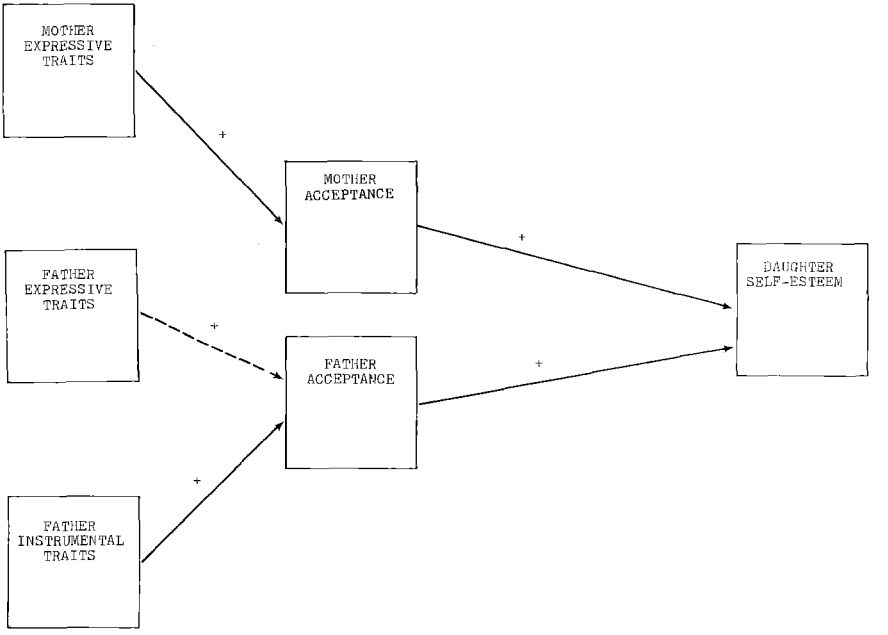

Fig. 2. Final path-analytic model of the relations between parental traits and acceptance, and daughter adjustment. Because of the presence of suppression effects, the significance of all paths in this figure is based on Pearson correlations rather than on direct effects. Significant paths ($p < .05$) are represented by solid lines. Paths that approached significance ($.05 < p < .10$), are represented by dashed lines. The direction of all effects is noted.

was, however, significantly correlated with paternal acceptance (r = .20) and the direct effect for this relation approached significance (path a, β = .19). The correlation between father expressiveness and acceptance also approached significance (r = .18). Acceptance was positively predictive of self-esteem but not of self-consciousness for the father-daughter dyad.

For both the mother-son and father-son dyads, acceptance was positively predictive of self-esteem (path e, β = .52 and .58, respectively) *and* self-consciousness (path e, β = −.36 and −.45, respectively). Expressive and instrumental traits were not predictive of acceptance or the child outcomes (see Table II) except for a correlation that approached significance between father instrumentality and son self-consciousness (r = .22). More of the variance in the child outcomes was accounted for by the parent predictors in the son dyads than in the daughter dyads (owing almost entirely to the higher correlations between acceptance and self-esteem, and self-consciousness, for the son dyads). That is, 30 and 35% of the variance in the sons' self-esteem was accounted for by the mother and father predictors, respectively, as compared to 17 and 17% for the daughter dyads. Similarly, 17 and 25% of the variance in sons' self-consciousness was accounted for by the mother and father predictors, respectively, as compared to 1 and 2% for the daughter dyads. The final path models are included in Figures 2

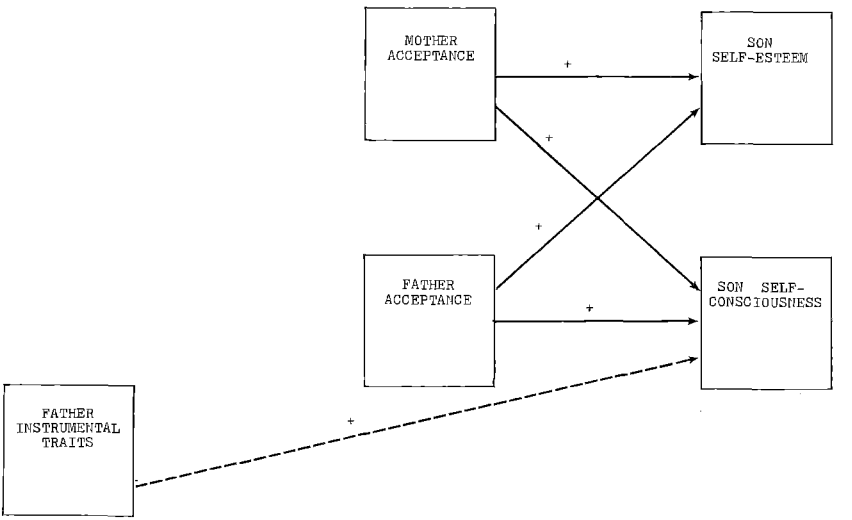

Fig. 3. Final path-analytic model of the relations between parental traits and acceptance, and son adjustment. Because of the presence of suppression effects, the significance of all paths in this figure is based on Pearson correlations rather than on direct effects. Significant paths ($p < .05$) are represented by solid lines. Paths that approached significance ($.05 < p < .10$), are represented by dashed lines. The direction of all effects is noted.

(daughters) and 3 (sons). Because of the presence of suppression effects, it was felt that the findings would be better communicated if the significance of all paths in these figures was based on Pearson correlations rather than on direct effects—the latter being quite sensitive to suppression effects.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study lend support to our predictions, but only for families with daughters and especially for the mother–daughter dyad (see Figures 2 and 3). For the mother–daughter dyad, maternal expressiveness was predictive of child-reported maternal acceptance; acceptance, in turn, was predictive of daughter self-esteem. In a similar way, there were indirect paths from father expressiveness (approached significance) and instrumentality to daughters' self-esteem via father acceptance. As was generally the case in Baumrind's (1982) study, parent-reported traits were not directly related to child adjustment (except in two cases where the effect was either not predicted or was in a direct opposite from that predicted). These results support (but only for families with daughters) the notion that parental traits have an impact on self-esteem only insofar as they have an effect on parental behaviors (such as acceptance) that impact on child adjustment.[6]

Because expressiveness was moderately correlated with acceptance in both daughter dyads, it appears that parents from these dyads who endorsed such traits tended to appear warm in the parenting role. These results are much like Baumrind's (1982), where there were significant correlations between the BSRI Femininity scale and parental responsiveness. Also, the magnitude of these correlations for mothers and fathers in the Baumrind effort were very similar to those found in our study with parental acceptance (.31 and .19, respectively, vs .24 and .18, respectively, in our study). These findings stand in contrast to the rather dramatic relations between *child-report* of parental traits and parental behaviors found in the Spence and Helmreich (1978) study (e.g., 44% of those families who were positive and democratic in the parenting role were androgynous–androgynous). It appears that our results, along with Baumrind's (1982), suggest that the relations are different and less dramatic when parents report on their own less time- and situation-bound characteristics (i.e., perhaps more validly "traits") than when child report is employed. Since children's attributions of instrumentality and expressiveness are based principally upon their parents' behavior in the paren-

[6]Causation cannot be assumed, of course, since this is a correlational study. Moreover, the fact that many of the paths of our general path model were not significant does not prove that such relations do not exist.

ting role, striking relations between child-reported parental traits and child report of parenting behaviors, as reported by Spence and Helmreich (1978), are not surprising.

By far the most dramatic finding in the present study are between parental acceptance and the child outcomes. In all dyads, parental acceptance was correlated with self-esteem and explained up to 35% ($r = .59$, father–son dyad) of the variance in this child outcome. By comparison, parental traits only accounted for up to 2% ($r = .15$; between mother instrumentality and daughter self-esteem) of the variance in child self-esteem. As is true in many studies, across a variety of parent and child measures, children who view their parents as more accepting also tend to have higher self-esteem (Harter, 1983). It is important to note that our findings may also be an artifact of employing child report for *both* parental acceptance and the child outcomes.

Although somewhat lower in magnitude, relations between parental acceptance and self-consciousness were similar to those between parental acceptance and self-esteem, but only for the son dyads. The apparent attenuation of results for self-consciousness in general may have occurred because of the somewhat lower response variability for this variable, as compared to self-esteem (see Table I), and/or because self-consciousness may be less stable over time than self-esteem (thus making it less predictable by other more stable variables such as parental acceptance).[7] In fact, Simmons and Rosenberg (1975) not only found self-consciousness to be less stable than self-esteem, but that it was particularly so for girls. If this was the case in the present effort, this may explain why we obtained fewer findings for girls when self-consciousness was the dependent variable. Another major difference between the son and daughter dyads was that our path-analtyic predictions were not supported for sons to the extent that they were for the daughter dyads. For sons, father and mother traits were not significantly predictive of parental acceptance or sons' self-esteem. Why is it that child-reported parental acceptance is more highly predictive of the outcomes for sons than for daughters, but that parent-reported traits only play a predictive role for parental acceptance in the daughter dyads?

Perhaps daughters at this age are more able than are sons to view their parents objectively and themselves as distinct from their parents (thus the lower correlations between child-reported parental acceptance and self-esteem for daughters). If this is true, then daughter-reported parental acceptance should correlate more highly with the parents' report of their own traits than

[7]The response variability for self-consciousness was significantly less ($p < .05$; Nie et al., 1975; Runyon & Haber, 1984) for males and females as compared to the response variability for self-esteem.

is the case with boys (and this is, in fact, what we found). This argument assumes, however, that girls at this age are more cognitively mature than their male counterparts. As yet, the social cognitive literature does not support such gender differences (Shantz, 1983). Another explanation for the sex differences is that the parental antecedents of child adjustment may be different for the two sexes. Bronfenbrenner (1961) has argued that many of the child outcomes "which are especially valued for boys in our culture, apparently require for their development a somewhat different balance of authority and affection than is found in the 'love-oriented' strategy characteristically applied with girls" (p. 92). Thus, it may be that parental acceptance is not communicated with expressiveness to the same degree with boys as with girls. This argument would at least explain why parental expressiveness was correlated with parental acceptance only in the daughter dyads.

Our findings do not support the notion that androgynous parents are viewed as more effective parents and have more competent children. Because the path analyses employed here involve the inclusion of masculinity and femininity scales as main effects in a regression model, we were essentially testing the additive notion of androgyny. That is, if the two scales were found to be significantly predictive, we would have some support for the additive androgyny hypothesis (see Lubinski et al., 1983, for further elaboration). The only support for Spence and Helmreich's (1978) findings that androgynous parents have better adjusted offspring occurred for the father-daughter dyad wherein instrumentality *and* expressiveness were related to father acceptance, which was related, in turn, to daughter self-esteem.[8] It may be, as alluded to earlier, that androgynous parental traits were more frequently related to child adjustment in the Spence and Helmreich study because their sample was older than ours. As high-school and college age individuals begin to develop lasting relationships and establish their careers, a different type of parent may be beneficial. That is, androgynous parents may aid the child at this developmental stage in the acquisition of the various skills that may be required to meet these new demands. An alternative explanation is that children who view their parents as accepting will also tend to report (as they did in Spence & Helmreich's, 1978, study) that their parents are high on the socially desirable items that comprise the PAQ (thus yielding

[8]We also included the interaction of instrumentality and expressiveness (or Masculinity × Femininity) in the regression analyses (entered after the main effects; Cohen & Cohen, 1983) since Lubinski et al. (1983) believed such an interaction is a better operational definition of androgyny than the purely additive model. When such interaction terms were included in the model, only one significant relation emerged. The Instrumentality × Expressiveness interaction was significantly predictive of father acceptance ($p < .01$) for the father-son dyad. The plot of the regression equation, however, did not support the androgyny hypothesis. As a result, interaction terms were not included in Figure 1 or Table II.

high parental scores on the Masculinity and Femininity scales, and therefore an androgyny label). On the other hand, when parent report is employed, parents viewed by their children as more accepting may believe themselves to be more expressive. Again, it seems likely to us that Spence and Helmreich's (1978) findings are, at least in part, an artifact of their use of child report of parental traits.

As is clear from the path model in Figure 1, we chose to examine the relations between instrumental and expressive parental traits and the other variables in the model with regression analyses rather than with a median-split approach. So as to compare the two approaches, however, the data were subjected to the median-split technique. As expected, when one inspects the dependent variable means of the four PAQ groups (androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated), the trends mirror the results that emerged from the regression analyses. Even though they were similar, however, it appears that many of the regression results were "washed out" in the median-split analyses. Such a finding was expected since the regression results were subtle and the median-split technique produces a loss of information. In fact, there is little reason to compare the results of the two types of analyses since a mathematical relationship exists between analysis of variance (where independent variables are derived via the median-split approach) and multiple-regression analyses. As Cohen and Cohen (1983) pointed out, "if we assume a normal distribution for the median-dichotomized variable (and Y), its (point biserial) r^2 with Y will only be .64 as large as would the r^2 with Y of the original graduated variable" (p. 309).

The path-analytic model presented here is, of course, not a complete model of the parental antecedents of child self-esteem. It was designed only to elucidate a few issues. First, it demonstrates that future research may be improved by serious consideration of mediating variables rather than simply examining relations between distally related parental traits and child outcomes. Second, it seems likely that parents are better reporters of their own traits than are their children since children have limited access to their parents outside of the parenting role. Children's perceptions of their parents' attributes are important to examine, but should be viewed as such rather than as a measure of parental traits. Third, it is important to take into consideration the distinctive features of the sample one chooses to examine. Different variables may be relevant for children of different ages. Fourth, regression analyses, rather than median-split analyses, are preferred in studies of this kind. If one wishes to examine differences between the androgynous, feminine, masculine, and undifferentiated groups, Hall and Taylor's (1985) recommendations should be considered. Fifth, we have some confidence that parents with expressive traits are more likely to communicate acceptance (especially for girls) and that parents who are viewed as accepting have

children (boys or girls) who are better adjusted. These relations will, of course, vary as a function of co-existing traits in the parents, the family's current life situation, and individual differences between children (e.g., temperament and developmental stage).

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