

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE DEPENDENCY  
BEHAVIOR OF MALE AND FEMALE NURSERY  
SCHOOL CHILDREN

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The development of dependency-independence is cited by McCandless (1961) as one of the five major areas of socialization found in all cultures. In every society, the totally dependent infant must progress toward relative independence as an adult. The process of acquiring dependent-independent behavior and its relationship to the child's socialization has been of great interest to researchers.

Dependency was studied extensively in the 1950's (Beller, 1955; Gewirtz, 1956; Heathers, 1955a, 1955b; Sears, Whiting, Knowles, & Sears, 1953). These researchers were interested in identifying some of the antecedents of dependent behavior in young children and in studying the dimensions of dependent behavior. Research on the effects of disturbances in dependency relationships and the effects of situational factors on dependent behavior have been conducted (Dibartolo & Vinacke, 1960; Hartup, 1958; Hartup & Keller, 1960; Stendler, 1952). Differences in the behavior of high- and low-dependent children have also been examined by Marshall & McCandless, 1957; McCandless, Bilous, & Bennett, 1961; Rosenthal, 1967; and Ross, 1966.

Research in the field of dependency has indicated that the study of the responses of adults to the dependent behavior of children is important if knowledge of some of the reinforcers of dependent behavior of young children is to be gained. Nursery school teachers are often

the first adults outside the family environment with whom the young child has close contact. Knowledge gained about dependency behavior of children and the adult's role as respondent to this behavior will enable nursery school teachers to obtain more insight into the dependency behavior of the children with whom they work and to better guide these children through the process of socialization.

#### Need for Study

Studies utilizing observation and interview techniques (Chasen, 1974; Cherry, 1975; Fagot & Patterson, 1969; Serbin, O'Leary & Tonick, 1973) have indicated that teachers perceive a difference in the amount of dependency behavior exhibited by male and female nursery school children. Research involving observation of children's dependency behavior has often reported no difference in the amount of dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children (Hartup & Keller, 1960; McCandless, et al., 1961). From these research findings, the question arises as to whether teachers of young children have preconceived ideas as to the dependency needs and behavior of male and female nursery school children. If teachers perceive that male and female nursery school children differ as to their dependency needs and behavior, despite research which suggests the opposite, it is possible that these teachers will respond differentially to male and female children because of this perception. The need exists to identify some of the factors which may contribute to the teacher's perceptions about the dependency needs and behavior of male and female nursery school children. The influences of the teacher's personal background, general



educational experience, and actual first hand experience with young children should be considered.

Concern with discriminatory practices in educational programming also suggests the need for further understanding of the ways in which to encourage equal treatment for all children by teachers. Chasen (1974) stated that "teachers must first perceive the differential ways they treat children so that they may genuinely treat them equally" (p. 234). This statement seems to be of crucial importance with regard to teachers' responses to dependency in children. Teachers need to identify those responses which best relate to the child's growth toward independence and to evaluate how those responses may be related to sex role expectation. The teacher's knowledge of constructive, supportive responses which are appropriate to the child's developmental level and dependency needs will aid the teacher in the preparation of the best learning environment. The goal directed toward the creation and maintenance of a learning environment which does not discriminate among children according to sex or dependency needs should be foremost in the minds of teachers of young children.

At the student level seems the most appropriate time for prospective teachers to begin to evaluate their responses to children and to learn appropriate ways to respond to children without discriminating among them according to sex or dependency needs. Research to identify students' perceptions of dependency behavior in young children is necessary before programs can be planned to help students toward objective evaluation of their perceptions of dependent behavior of young children and toward an awareness of the importance of their responses to children's dependent behavior.

## Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of students enrolled in a beginning class in child development (FRCD 2113) and student teachers who had completed at least one semester of participation in the child development laboratories as to the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children (FRCD 4420).

The specific purposes of this study were to:

1. Develop an instrument, the Dependency Perception Scale, designed to measure the perceptions of students of the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children, including a subscale for emotional dependency and a subscale for instrumental dependency.
2. To compare the responses of beginning FRCD 2113 students with no or minimal experience with young children (A), beginning FRCD 2113 students who have had experience with young children (B), and student teachers (C).
3. Examine the responses to items in the Dependency Perception Scale in order to identify the areas in which preconceived differences in expectations of dependency behavior between male and female nursery school children are expressed by FRCD 2113 students and those areas in which student teachers' responses differ from responses of beginning FRCD 2113 students.

The following hypotheses were examined:

- I. With respect to total scores on the Dependency Perception Scale, the beginning students with no or minimal experience

(A), the beginning students with experience (B), and the student teachers (C) are random samples of the same population.

- II. There is no significant relationship between scores on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) for Groups A (students with no or minimal experience with children 3-5), B (students with experience with children aged 3-5), C (student teachers).
- III. There is no significant difference between frequency of equalitarian and frequency of sex-related responses to each item in the Dependency Perception Scale by the total group of subjects.
- IV. Among the sex-related responses given to items on the Dependency Perception Scale, there is no significant difference between "boy" and "girl" responses.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children have dependency needs at infancy. At birth, infants are passively dependent on those around them for satisfaction of their needs. Infants are able to react to a stimulus but are unable to satisfy their own needs. As infants are held and comforted by adults, they learn to associate others with the satisfaction of their needs. As children learn to perceive others as related to fulfilling their needs, they develop certain responses which induce those around them to react to their needs and to satisfy them. When children have developed these responses which induce adults to attend to them, the infants no longer are passively dependent but actively dependent (Heathers, 1955a).

An important aspect of personality development is the learning of responses appropriate to social situations. The beginning phase of socialization involves looking to others for satisfaction of needs or for help and learning the most effective ways in which to get responses from others who are able to satisfy needs (Heathers, 1955b). The resolution of the infantile dependent need is necessary for personality development and adequate social adjustment (Sontag, Crandall, & Lacey, 1952). Thus, it is the child's demonstration of dependency needs and the satisfactory response of those adults in his/her

environment to these needs that influences his/her adjustment to the social environment.

The dependency behavior of children can be divided into two types, emotional dependency and instrumental dependency (Heathers, 1955a, 1955b). The term instrumental dependency is used to describe dependent behavior in which the responses of others are sought as a means of achieving "end-goals." For example, when a child asks an adult to help him/her pour a glass of milk, help from the adult is the "sub-goal." The glass of milk is the child's "end-goal" (Heathers, 1955a, p. 281). The adult's response to the child's demonstration of instrumental dependency modifies the child's instrumental dependent behavior. From the response of the adult, the child learns acceptable and unacceptable ways of asking for help. The child also learns those ways of seeking assistance which are effective in getting the adult to respond and those ways which are ineffective (Heathers, 1955a).

The term emotional dependence is used to describe dependent behavior in which the responses of others become "end-goals" rather than a means of reaching them (Heathers, 1955a). Emotional dependence has been classified as the need for reassurance, the need for affection, the need for approval, and the need for proximity and close physical contact (Beller, 1955, Hartup, 1958; Heathers 1955a, 1955b; McCandless & Bilous, 1961; Stendler, 1952).

As the adult attends to the child's needs and gives instrumental aid to the child when the child is anxious, the response of the adult becomes associated with relief from threatening situations. The child develops trust that the adult will help him/her and thus, seeks reassurance from the adult in threatening situations. In early infancy,

the adult's attending to the child's basic needs is often accompanied by sensual stimulation of the child such as holding him/her close, caressing him/her. Later, the child experiences affection from the adults in the form of being played with or given toys. Through sensory stimulation and demonstration of affection by the adult, the child comes to associate pleasurable sensations and comfort with adults. The child learns to seek attention from adults in order to experience pleasure and affection (Heathers, 1955a).

As children mature, the adults in their environment require them to act in certain ways in order to obtain adult help. Children learn that the choice of their response is important. Children's choice of response determines whether they are rewarded, praised, ignored, or punished by those adults around them. From this knowledge of the consequences of their responses, children begin to respond in ways which will be approved by adults and to seek adult approval before they act.

When the child has learned to depend on others for help, protection, reassurance, and affection, the first step--acquiring "infantile dependence"--has been made. When he learns to seek approval by conforming to others' requirements, he takes the second step which leads him out of infantile dependence toward what may be called "social maturity." Social maturity is primarily the readiness for mutual relations with others where one tries to satisfy others' needs as a condition for their satisfying his own (Heathers, 1955a, p. 283).

#### Adult's Role in Fostering Dependency

Beller (1955, p. 26) defined the dependency complex as "derived conceptually from association of the parent and parental behavior with drive reduction." The drives identified by Beller (1955) are those associated with emotional and instrumental dependency, i.e., the need

for physical contact, the need for proximity, the need for attention, the need for recognition, and the need for help. Stendler (1952, p. 3) viewed the adult as the "socializing agent" for the child. Gewirtz (1956, p. 213) stated that "the adult's responses act as social reinforcement for the child's dependent and independent behavior." In guiding the child through the process of socialization, the adult must provide instrumental help and assistance to the child, but he/she must also help the child develop the independence which comes from the child's associating his/her own behavior with drive reduction (Beller, 1955). In other words, the child must be made to feel that he/she can act independently of the adult in attempting to accomplish tasks which he/she desires to do and that this independent action is approved by the adult.

The child's independent responses, like his dependent responses, are culturally trained by the adults in the child's environment. Because children have learned to be dependent on the adults in their environment for acceptance and approval, they can learn to be independent if their behavior is rewarded and approved (Stendler, 1952).

Stendler (1952) suggested that certain critical periods exist in the child's development of dependent and independent responses. The first critical period is approximately the end of the first year of life when the child begins to test adults to see if he/she can depend on them. The second period is approximately two to three years of age when the child experiences conflict between the need to depend on his/her mother and the pressure to become independent in culturally approved ways. Overdependency develops when the child, from infancy, is

consistently rewarded for dependent responses (emotional and instrumental) and not rewarded for independent responses, or when the child receives inconsistent treatment for his/her dependent responses (Stendler, 1952).

Beller's (1955) study of the components of independent and dependent drives in young children led him to conclude that children differ significantly from one another in the strength of their independent and dependent drives. The differences in strengths of independent and dependent drives, Beller (1955) hypothesized, was a result of the differential ways parents and other significant adults responded to the dependent and independent behavior of children. Beller (1955) and Heathers (1955a, 1955b) stressed that a child must feel that he/she can depend on the adult's in his/her environment before he/she can develop independent behavior. The adult's reinforcement of dependent responses can lead to the child's independence, i.e., the adult's approval given to the child for attempting to do something unaided helps him/her develop the desire and confidence to do something unaided (Heathers, 1955a). However, when the adult's reinforcement of a child's dependent behavior is excessive and prevents the child from realizing that he/she can meet his/her own needs through his/her own activity, the child is prevented from developing independence.

The type of environment in which the child is placed and the adult's responses to the child in that environment have an effect on the type of dependent responses given by the child. Rosenthal (1967) studied the generalizability of the dependent behavior of preschool girls from their mother to a female experimenter. Rosenthal (1967) found that girls exhibited more dependent responses when placed in an



environment which caused them to be anxious. Girls highly dependent on their mothers exhibited a higher frequency of attention-seeking than girls who were considered to be low-dependent. In the environment which caused them to be anxious, all girls sought the proximity of an adult.

The adult's withdrawal of nurturance to the child's dependent responses was studied by Hartup (1958) who stated:

Withdrawal of nurturance by a female experimenter is similar to certain aspects of the care-taker child relationship. If so, such behavior by the experimenter should generate certain amounts of anxiety in young children which, in turn, should motivate dependency behavior (p. 191).

Hartup found that for girls, the withdrawal of nurturance by the female experimenter facilitated the performance of simple learning tasks and that highly dependent boys also performed simple learning tasks better when the female experimenter withdrew nurturance and support (Hartup, 1958).

Debartolo and Vinacke (1969) found that the highly dependent children's performance of a complex task was less efficient when adult nurturance was withdrawn. Dibartolo and Vinacke (1969, p. 255) stated ". . . there is a close correspondence between nurturant behavior and child dependency, with children high in dependency keenly sensitive to changes in nurturance level." Highly dependent children, it would appear, become increasingly more dependent if the adult does not respond to the child's dependent behavior. The child's attempt to make the adult respond to him/her may result in the child's increased performance of simple tasks. On more complex tasks, the highly dependent child would seem, from the research of Dibartolo and Vinacke, to become

less efficient because of the stress of completing the tasks combined with the child's attempt to get the adult to respond to him/her.

#### Implications for Teachers of Young Children

Hartup and Keller (1960) suggested that children's dependency responses are related to children's activity levels. Those children who are more active and outgoing will seek more adult attention and will demonstrate a more active form of emotional and instrumental dependency. Those children who are more passive will not be as demonstrative in their dependency responses. In discussing the differences in level of dependency activity, Hartup and Keller (1960) emphasized the adult's role in reinforcing the child's activity level, i.e., some parents may reinforce active dependency such as attention seeking, questioning, while some parents may reinforce passive dependency such as proximity seeking.

Teachers of young children may also have the opportunity to reinforce the dependent behavior of children. These teachers may be in a position to influence the type of dependent responses (emotional or instrumental) and the activity level of the children exhibiting the dependent behavior. The teachers will also have a strong influence on the type of emotional and physical environment in which young children are placed. Rosenthal (1967) found that children did generalize dependent behavior from the mother, "the primary attachment figure," to the female experimenter (p. 131). One could assume that the child would generalize or transfer dependent behavior from his/her mother to his/her teacher. If this is the case, teachers have a responsibility to be knowledgeable about some of the consequences of the dependent

behavior of children and the teachers' response to it. Research that looks more closely at variables effecting dependency and at the teachers' responses and attitudes toward dependency seems especially worthy of study.

Evidence indicates that dependent children are less liked by their peers. Marshall and McCandless (1957) studied the relationship between pre-school children's dependency on adults and their social acceptance by peers. These researchers questioned whether

extremely gratifying parents may develop habits of dependency in their children (probably reinforced by the same kind of teachers), thus perhaps reducing or precluding the possibility that the children can find equivalent satisfaction with their peers (p. 414).

The results of the study supported the hypothesis that dependent children participate less in activities and are less accepted by their peers (Marshall and McCandless, et al. (1957).

In a later study by McCandless, et al. (1961, p. 517) to ". . . investigate refinements of dependency behaviors as they vary by sex and affect children's relations with their peers," emotional dependency was found to interfere with a child's peer popularity but instrumental dependency was not. Emotional dependency of girls interfered with the girl's popularity more than the emotional dependency of boys interfered with their popularity. There were no sex differences in the amount of emotional or instrumental behavior exhibited by boys and girls. Moore and Updegraff (1964) studied the sociometric status of pre-school children as related to age, sex, nurturance-giving, and dependency. Their results partially confirmed the findings of McCandless, et al. (1961). Moore and Updegraff (1964) concluded that dependency interfered with popularity among young

pre-school age children, ages 3.2 to 3.10. S. G. Moore (1967) in discussing some correlates of peer acceptance in nursery school children stated that:

In summary, we might predict that a child's peer status will not suffer because of his dependency-striving and may even be enhanced if: a) the child directs many of his appeals to members of his peer group rather than to adults; b) his appeals for help, affection and support are not so intense as to interfere with active peer participation; c) he expresses his needs in school --appropriate ways such as through help and approval-- seeking rather than affection-seeking (p. 295).

Highly dependent children may learn different things than children who are classified as low-dependent. Ross (1966) trained an adult to teach 26 high-dependent and 26 low-dependent children a task (running a post-office) and at the same time, the researcher had the adult display various partially relevant and completely irrelevant behaviors. The researcher found that high-dependent children showed much more evidence of incidental learning and were less selective in what they learned than the low-dependent children. This result supports the findings of Jakubczak and Walters (1959) that high-dependent children were more likely to imitate the behavior of the adults and peers in their environment.

Geshuri (1975) hypothesized that highly dependent children would attend selectively to specific aspects of behavior which had social reward. Geshuri had 16 girls and 16 boys of pre-school age watch a film of the behavior of a ten year old boy in one of three film conditions, each consisting of a type of response consequence to the model (the ten year old boy). Highly dependent children matched the behavior of the model under conditions of social reward. Girls matched the model more closely than did boys. Geshuri concluded the pre-school

boys and girls had equally learned to imitate behavior but that "girls in comparison have also been differentially trained by this age to comply more closely to modeled behavior and social situations that follow these behaviors" (p. 554). The knowledge that dependent children tend to imitate the behavior of their peers and of adults and that these dependent children are less selective in what they learn can be used by teachers as they evaluate their own guidance techniques and methods of instructing young children.

Overdependency in early childhood may also affect later school performance. Winterbottom (1953) studied the relationship between childhood training in independence and the achievement motivation of eight and ten year old boys. Winterbottom concluded that

early rewarding training in independence and mastery accompanied by few restrictions given after mastery has been obtained contributed to the development of a strong achievement motivation (p. 440).

Berman (1976) investigating dependency in the pre-schooler as a predictive factor in reading disability, found that dependency can be a predictive factor in reading disability.

#### Sex Differences in Dependency Behavior

Research evidence concerning sex differences in dependent behavior of young children should also be examined. The results of research on sex differences in dependent behavior are inconsistent. Sears, et al. (1953) found that girls showed more rated and observed dependency toward teachers than did boys. Serbin, et al. (1973) found that girls were more emotionally dependent but that boys and girls showed no difference in instrumental dependent responses. McCandless, et al.

(1961) and Hartup & Keller (1960) found no sex difference in the total dependent responses of boys and girls. Belsky (1973) found that boys who had mothers who reinforced dependency were more dependent than girls whose mothers reinforced dependency. Girls whose mothers ignored their dependent responses were the least likely to show dependent behavior in school. Belsky (1973) stated that "ignoring dependency would seem to be appropriate for extinguishing this behavior in girls" and that "dependency for boys may be a function of their mother's reinforcement" (p. 165).

Interestingly, research of female teachers' perceptions of dependent behavior and their attitudes toward this behavior seems to be consistent across studies. Female teachers perceive females as being more dependent although research evidence points to the fact that boys and girls often display the same amount of dependent behavior. Levitin and Chananie (1973) predicted the female primary school teachers would prefer dependent behavior of children rather than aggressive behavior. This prediction was supported by their results. These researchers also found that teachers preferred the dependent girl rather than the aggressive girl and that teachers liked the dependent girls more than the aggressive girls. Teachers associated aggressiveness with boys and dependency with girls (Levitin and Chananie, 1972). Chasen (1974) found from giving a questionnaire to pre-school teachers that boys were considered more aggressive and girls more passive (associated with emotional dependency). Chasen (1974) stated:

Four year olds may come to school behaving in stereotypic fashion (girls more passive, boys more aggressive) but the teacher's beliefs and expectations tend to reinforce this behavior (p. 225).

Fagot and Patterson (1969) found that teachers reinforced feminine type behaviors for both sexes more than masculine behaviors and that boys were reinforced for opposite sex behaviors but girls were not. Fagot and Patterson (1969) also found that girls were reinforced for asking for help significantly more than were boys. Serbin, et al. (1973) in referring to the teachers' response to girls' dependent behavior observed:

these forms of response to dependent behavior do not specifically direct or encourage the child to become involved in projects or activities but do appear to reinforce proximity and attention seeking in ways which encourage or necessitate remaining close by (p. 801).

Cherry (1975) investigated the amount and style of female pre-school teachers' verbal interaction with boys and girls. Cherry (1975) found that teachers verbally interacted more, verbally initiated more, and used more attentional marked utterances in speech with boys than with girls.

The discrepancy with which teachers treat male and female children and the responses which they reinforce differentially in male and female children could affect more than the child's amount of dependent behavior. The child's self concept and sense of self worth also can be influenced as a result of his/her overdependent behavior. The child's performance in school and society may be altered. Cole (1972) warned that:

Dominated, submissive, dependent children have little chance to reach the goal of being an active and expressive creator of knowledge and experience and perhaps little opportunity as adults to be healthy and productive members of our society (p. 208).

### Summary

Dependency is part of the process of socialization. Children have dependency needs as infants. The response of adults to the child's dependency needs helps the child learn appropriate dependent behavior. Two forms of dependency have been identified, instrumental dependency and emotional dependency. The role of the adult in fostering dependency is very important. The child must first develop trust that he/she can depend on adults before he/she can begin to learn to be independent. Evidence exists that withdrawal of adult responses to dependency behavior creates anxiety in the child and interferes with the child's performance of certain tasks. Research also suggests that dependency behavior is related to a child's activity level. The more active, outgoing child demonstrates a different form of dependency than the passive child. The significant adults in the child's environment have an important role in reinforcing the activity level of the child and therefore, the type of dependency response he/she exhibits.

Highly dependent children have been found to differ from low-dependent children in amount of acceptance by their peers and in the content of what they learn. The research with regard to sex differences in dependent behavior is inconsistent across studies. Male and female children have been reported by some researchers to display an equal amount of emotional and instrumental behavior. Other research has reported a difference in the amount of dependent behavior of male and female children with female children displaying more emotional dependency than male children.



Female teachers' perceptions of sex differences with regard to dependency seem to indicate that girls are perceived as more dependent than boys. Girls and boys receive a different type of response from female teachers for their dependent behavior (Cherry, 1972 and Serbin, et al., 1973). Moreover, female teachers seem to prefer the dependent girl to the aggressive girl and associate dependent behavior with girls and aggressive behavior with boys (Levitin and Chananie, 1972).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURE

#### Subjects

The subjects of the study were students at Oklahoma State University who were enrolled in courses in the child development-early childhood education program. Two groups of students were used. Group I consisted of students enrolled in a beginning class in child development (FRCD 2113). Group II was composed of students who were enrolled in early childhood student teaching (FRCD 4420) and who had completed at least one semester of participation with children in the child development laboratories. The Dependency Perception Scale was administered to Group I, a total of 197 students, during three different class periods of FRCD 2113 in the third week of the spring semester of 1977. Of the 197 students in this group, four were males and were eliminated as subjects. The subjects ranged in age from 17 to 43 with a mean age of 19.7. Question number 7 on the General Information Sheet of the Dependency Perception Scale was used to determine which 2113 students had the least amount of experience working with children ages three to five. Question number 7 read as follows:

7. Have you ever worked with children ages 3-5 before?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, in what capacity?

Baby Sitter	_____
Sunday School	_____
Teacher's Aide	_____
Teacher	_____
Volunteer	_____
Recreation Program	_____
Parent	_____
Other	_____

Fifty-five students of the 193 students enrolled in FRCD 2113 checked "No" or only one blank on question 7 and were, therefore, considered to have had minimal experience working with children ages three to five. This group of 55 subjects was designated Group A. One hundred and thirty-eight students checked more than one blank on question 7 and were, therefore, considered to have had more experience working with children ages three to five and were designated Group B.

The Dependency Perception Scale was administered to Group II, students enrolled in student teaching, in the spring of 1977 and summer of 1977. Thirty-eight student teachers were in this group of subjects. One student did not complete the scale and was therefore eliminated as a subject. These 37 subjects were females ranging in age from 20 to 27 with a mean age of 21.8. This group of 37 student teachers was designated Group C. A description of the background characteristics for all of the subjects may be found in Table I.

#### Development of Instrument

The instrument used in this study was developed by the investigator. It was named the Dependency Perception Scale and was designed to

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS

Variable	Classification	Group I N=193	Group II N=37
Sex	Male	0	0
	Female	193	37
Age in Years	Range	17 to 43	20 to 27
	Mean	19.7	21.8
Marital Status	Single	177	20
	Married	14	16
	Divorced	1	1
	Widowed	1	0
Number of Children	0	188	34
	1	2	2
	2	0	1
	3	2	0
	4	0	0
	5	1	0
Classification	Freshman	102	0
	Sophomore	65	0
	Junior	19	0
	Senior	4	34
	Graduate	0	1
	Special	3	2
Experience with Children	Yes	180	37
	No	13	0
Kinds of Experience*	Baby Sitting	171	32
	Sunday School	93	21
	Teacher's Aide	39	12
	Teacher	11	28
	Volunteer	55	9
	Recreation Program	43	3
	Parent	4	3
	Other	31	6

\*More than one choice might have been selected.

measure perceptions of dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children. The components of the scale were based on descriptions of dependency behavior from psychological and child development literature (Beller, 1955; Gewirtz, 1956; Hartup, 1958; Heathers, 1955a, 1955b; Marshall & McCandless, 1957; McCandless, et al., 1961; Ross, 1966; and Stith & Connor, 1962). Two categories of dependency behavior, emotional and instrumental, as identified by Heathers (1955a) were used in the Dependency Perception Scale.

The Dependency Perception Scale consists of three parts:

- (1) Face sheet data giving personal background information of the respondent.
- (2) A subscale of ten items concerning emotional dependency behavior.
- (3) A subscale of ten items concerning instrumental dependency behavior.

The complete scale may be found in Appendix B.

Emotional dependency behavior is used to describe dependent behavior in which responses of others became "end goals" rather than a means of reaching "end goals" (Heathers, 1955a). A search of the literature revealed a group of behaviors commonly mentioned as examples of emotional dependency. From this group the investigator selected ten of the emotional dependency behaviors which seemed to appear most frequently. For each of these behaviors the investigator developed an item which could be answered showing whether the respondent expected boys or girls to engage in the behavior more frequently or whether an "equal" expectation was held. Each of the items was

developed on the basis of discussions in the literature plus the investigator's experience with children.

The emotional dependency behaviors selected and the related scale items are as follows:

Seeking Attention--Item number 1

Who most often is likely to seek the attention of an adult by making statements such as, "Look at me!" or "See what I can do!"

Seeking Nearness--Item number 2

Who most often plays near adults?

Seeking Proximity--Item number 5

Who most likes to be sitting beside adults or standing close to an adult during quiet activities?

Seeking Praise--Item number 7

Who most often would seek the praise of an adult by asking questions such as "Is this good?" or "Was mine the best one"?

Seeking Intervention and Support--Item number 9

When a conflict arises with his/her peers, who is most likely to seek the intervention of an adult?

Seeking Emotional Reassurance--Item number 10

When an anxiety-producing situation occurs, who would most often seek adult reassurance?

Seeking Physical Contact--Item number 11

Who would most like to have close physical contact with adults such as being hugged, caressed, or held in arms?

Seeking Comfort--Item number 14

When physically hurt, who is most likely to seek comfort from an adult?

Seeking Approval--Item number 16

Who seeks adult approval most often by asking questions such as "Did I do it right?" or "Was that O. K."?

Seeking Negative Attention--Item number 20

Who most often would seek attention from adults in ways which are inappropriate such as talking loudly when an adult is talking or demanding attention when an adult is occupied with other children or activities?

Instrumental dependency is used to describe dependency behavior in which the responses of others are sought as a means of achieving "end goals" (Heathers, 1955a). The child is described as "seeking objective help" when he/she is instrumentally dependent (McCandless, et al., 1961). A search of the literature revealed a group of behaviors commonly mentioned as examples of instrumental dependency. From this group, the investigator selected ten behaviors which seemed to appear most frequently. For each of these behaviors the investigator developed an item which could be answered showing whether the respondent expected boys or girls to engage in the behavior more frequently or whether an "equal" expectation was held. Each of the items was developed on the basis of discussions in the literature plus the investigator's experience with children.

The instrumental dependency behaviors selected and the related scale items are as follows:

Seeking Instruction--Item number 3

Who would be more likely to seek instruction from an adult by making statements such as "Show me how to do this" or "Tell me how this works."

Seeking Unnecessary Help--Item number 4

Who is more likely to seek unnecessary help such as asking an adult to get an activity from the shelf when he/she can reach it him/herself?

Seeking Help in Decision Making--Item Number 6

When a child is finished with a particular activity and looking for something else to do, who is more likely to ask an adult "What can I do now"? or "What should I do next"?

Seeking Permission--Item number 8

Who is more likely to ask the permission of an adult before getting out a piece of equipment or material that has not been specifically set out for his/her use?

Seeking Advice--Item number 12

Who is more likely to seek advice from an adult when he or she is puzzled or confused; for example, asking questions such as, "Teacher, which glass should I take"? or "Who can I get to help me"?

General Help Seeking--Item number 13

Who would ask adult assistance most often?

Seeking Help in Solving Problems--Item number 15

If a child faces a problem with materials or equipment at school, who is more likely to ask an adult to assist him/her?

Seeking Reward--Item number 17

Who is more likely to seek reward from adults such as asking, "If I drink all of my milk may I have more dessert"? or "If I sit quietly, can I be first to go to snack"?

Imitation of Adult Behavior--Item number 18

Who would most often imitate the behavior of an adult when the adult has demonstrated the correct way to do something or the correct way to ask for something?

Seeking Information--Item number 19

In discussion or conversation with an adult, who is most likely to ask more questions?

Below each item on the Dependency Perception Scale were the following response categories:

Boys \_\_\_\_\_



Girls \_\_\_\_\_

Equal \_\_\_\_\_

The subject was requested to mark one of the three responses for each item in the scale. In order to avoid response set of the subjects, the subscale items concerned with the emotional (Subscale A) and instrumental (Subscale B) dependency behavior of children were pooled and randomly selected for numerical order in the instrument. The random selection yielded the following numerical arrangement of items:

Emotional Dependency	1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 20
Instrumental Dependency	3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19

#### Administration of Instrument

In order to test administrative procedures, a pilot study was done in the fall of 1976. The subjects were 71 students who were enrolled in one section of an introductory child development class (FRCD 2113). As a result of the pilot test, no problems were identified and no revisions were made in the instrument or the administrative procedures.

At the beginning of the spring semester of 1977, arrangements were made to administer the Dependency Perception Scale to all three sections of the introductory class of child development in the Family Relations and Child Development Department of Oklahoma State University (FRCD 2113). The data were collected during the third week of the spring semester. In the spring of 1977 and the summer of 1977 the Dependency Perception Scale was administered to students who were enrolled in early childhood student teaching and had completed at least one semester

of participation in the child development laboratories on the Oklahoma State University campus.

The course instructor administered the scale to the FRCD 2113 students for the pilot study. Except for the pilot study, the scale was administered to all subjects by the investigator during class time. Prior permission from each class instructor was obtained. The subjects were informed that the investigator was a candidate for a degree of Master of Science in the Family Relations and Child Development Department of Oklahoma State University and that the Dependency Perception Scale which they were to be given was part of a master's thesis project. The subjects were informed that the Dependency Perception Scale was in no way connected with the course work of their FRCD class (2113, 4420, or 4252) and were assured, if necessary, that they would not be graded by the course instructor on the responses which they were to give. The subjects were given a choice as to whether they wished to participate in the study. No one declined to participate.

The subjects were informed of the purpose of the scale by the investigator and then instructed to read the brief statement of the purpose on the first page of the scale after the General Information Sheet. The statement read as follows:

The purpose of the following questions is to obtain information as to your perceptions of certain behaviors of children within a nursery school setting. Please answer according to how you think you "ought" to answer. There are no right or wrong answers.

The subjects were asked to scan the scale. The fact that the respondent's name was not required was stressed. The respondents were asked again to be as honest as possible when responding to the items

on the scale. The subjects were told that the results of the study would be made available to them. If they desired to have the study results, they were told to write their address on the back page of the scale upon completing the scale. The subjects were then asked to complete the scale during the class period.

#### Scoring and Scale Values

The instrument was scored by tallying the total number of "E" or equal responses to each item by subscales. The scores on each subscale ranged from "0" to "10". Statistical descriptions of the scale scores may be found in Table II.

TABLE II  
DESCRIPTION OF DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION  
SCALE SCORES

	Range	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Standard Error of the Mean
Subscale A	0-10	4.87	5.42	2.33	.1535
Subscale B	0-10	5.39	6.78	2.60	.1717

## Validity and Reliability

### Validity

The components of the scale were based on descriptions of dependency behavior from psychological and child development literature (Beller, 1955; Gewirtz, 1956; Hartup, 1958; Heathers, 1955a; 1955b; Marshall & McCandless, 1957; McCandless, et al., 1961; Ross, 1966; and Stith & Connor, 1962). Only the descriptions of dependency behavior, emotional and instrumental, which occurred most often throughout the literature were used. Because these descriptions of dependency behavior were often used in the literature by researchers using both observation and interview techniques, the investigator concluded that the items on the subscales A and B could be said to have construct or face validity.

### Reliability

Internal consistency of items in relation to each subscale was measured by a chi-square item analysis. The "E" or equal scores were used for the item analyses.

On subscale A (Emotional dependency), 34 (15%) of the respondents had a total score of 0, 1, or 2 and 34 (15%) of the respondents had a total score of 8, 9, or 10. The responses of these 68 subjects were compared on a 2 x 2 chi-square for each of the 10 test items according to whether their scores were "high" or "low" and whether their responses were "equal" or "not-equal." The chi-square value yielded by each of these comparisons was more than 29 with a level of significance beyond

.001. It was assumed, therefore, that each of these 10 items belonged in this scale.

On Subscale B (Instrumental dependency), 60 of the respondents had a total score of 0, 1, 2, or 3 and 55 (24%) of the respondents had a total score of 8, 9, or 10. From the group of 60 respondents with low scores 5 instruments were drawn randomly, leaving 55 (24%) of the total group who made the lowest scores. The item analysis of Subscale B was done by comparing the responses of these 110 subjects as described in the previous paragraph referring to the item analysis of Subscale A. The chi-square values yielded by each of these comparisons was more than 30 with a level of significance beyond .001. It was assumed, therefore, that Subscale B was also internally consistent.

#### Analysis of Data

In order to test Hypothesis I, analysis of variance was used, with application of an F-test for simple effects.

In order to test Hypothesis II, the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation was used.

In order to test Hypothesis III, the binomial test was used to identify significance of differences.

In order to test Hypothesis IV, the binomial test was used.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis I: With respect to total scores on the Dependency Perception Scale, the beginning students without experience, the beginning students with experience, and the student teachers are random samples of the same population. For facilitation of analysis, subjects were drawn randomly by a person not involved in the research from Group A (beginning students with minimal or no experience working with children ages 3-5) and Group B (beginning students with experience working with children ages 3-5) to provide 37 subjects in each of the three experimental groups. Group C (student teachers) already consisted of 37 subjects. The responses of these three groups of 37 subjects were analyzed by analysis of variance. A summary of the results may be found in Table III.

In terms of total scores on the Dependency Perception Scale, it is possible to reject the hypothesis that all three groups are random samples of the same population. It may be seen in Table III that with increasing experience, both practical and academic, the mean scores increased (more equalitarian responses were given) and the variance decreased. In order to examine the source of the difference found by the analysis of variance, the F-test for simple effects was applied. The results showed that Group A and Group B (beginning students with minimal or no experience and beginning students with experience) did

not differ significantly from each other. Both Group A and Group B did, however, differ significantly from Group C (student teachers) at the .001 level.

TABLE III  
COMPARISON OF TOTAL SCORES ON DEPENDENCY  
PERCEPTION SCALE BY ANALYSIS  
OF VARIANCE

Group	Mean	Variance	d.f.	F	p
A	10.297	19.020			
B	10.568	18.408	2/108	7.115	.001
C	13.703	16.966			

The difference found between Groups A and B and the student teachers (Group C) indicates that student teachers perceived male and female children as more equal in their demonstration of instrumental and emotional dependency behavior. This implies that beginning students may perceive male and female children as differing in their dependency needs and behavior but that as these students have more exposure to child development theory and practice and more experience working with children, they perceive male and female children as more equal in their dependency responses. The fact that Groups A and B did not differ significantly from one another suggests that just having the experience of working with young children may not be enough to change the student's perceptions of the dependency behavior of male and female children.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant relationship between scores on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) for Groups A, B, and C. A comparison of scores on Subscale A and Subscale B (Emotional and Instrumental dependency) of the Dependency Perception Scale through the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation may be found in Table IV. An examination of these results reveals that the hypothesis of no relationship between subscale scores may be rejected for each of the three groups of subjects in this study. These findings suggest that for both beginning students in child development courses and for student teachers, perceptions of dependency behaviors do not differ significantly between those behaviors related to emotional dependency and those related to instrumental dependency.

The fact that student teachers' and beginning students' perceptions of those behaviors related to emotional dependency and instrumental dependency did not differ significantly may be attributed to the fine distinction which exists between emotional and instrumental dependency. The two forms of dependency are related. Often, instrumental dependency is an extension of emotional dependency, i.e., the child must establish trust that the adult is one to whom he/she can turn before the child can ask the adult to help him/her. The child will usually establish an emotional bond with an adult before asking the adult for help, reassurance, instruction, etc. Students who do not have the benefit of long term experience with young children may not distinguish one form of dependency from another, and therefore, may perceive all dependent behavior as the same.



TABLE IV  
 COMPARISON OF SCORES ON SUBSCALE A AND SUBSCALE B  
 OF THE DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION SCALE FOR EACH  
 GROUP OF SUBJECTS THROUGH COEFFICIENT  
 OF CORRELATION

Group	Subscale A		Subscale B		<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.		
A*	4.919	2.046	5.378	2.639	.777	.001
B*	4.865	2.287	5.703	2.655	.547	.001
C*	6.568	2.267	7.135	2.275	.690	.001

\*Group A - Beginning students with no or minimal experience working with children 3-5.

\*Group B - Beginning students with experience working with children 3-5.

\*Group C - Student teachers who had completed at least one semester of participation in the Oklahoma State University Child Development Laboratories.

Hypothesis III: There is no significant difference between frequency of equalitarian and frequency of sex-related responses to each item in the Dependency Perception Scale by the total group of subjects. The binomial test was used in order to identify more specifically those behaviors which were viewed by the subjects as "sex-related" and those which were expected to be observed among boys and girls with equal frequency. Frequencies and percentages of responses by each group to each item may be found in Appendix A. In Table V comparisons of sex-related and equalitarian responses to each item are reported.

An examination of Table V reveals that on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) three items showed a significantly greater frequency of

TABLE V  
 BINOMIAL COMPARISONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF  
 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEX-RELATED AND  
 EQUALITARIAN RESPONSES TO ITEMS  
 ON THE DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION  
 SCALE

Item	Frequency		z	p
	Sex-related	Equalitarian		
<u>Subscale A</u>				
1. Seeking Attention	95	135	2.57	.01
2. Seeking Nearness	109	121	0.73	n.s.
5. Seeking Proximity	149	81	4.42	.001
7. Seeking Praise	82	148	4.29	.001
9. Seeking Intervention and Support	137	93	2.84	.005
10. Seeking Emotional Reassurance	92	138	2.97	.003
11. Seeking Physical Contact	156	74	5.34	.001
14. Seeking Comfort	106	124	1.12	n.s.
16. Seeking Approval	82	148	4.29	.001
20. Seeking Negative Attention	123	107	0.99	n.s.
	Total	1131	1169	
	%	49%	51%	
<u>Subscale B</u>				
3. Seeking Intervention	99	131	2.04	.05
4. Seeking Unnecessary Help	125	105	1.25	n.s.
6. Seeking Help in Decision Making	106	124	1.12	n.s.
8. Seeking Permission	134	96	2.44	.02
12. Seeking Advice	84	146	4.02	.001
13. General Help Seeking	140	90	3.23	.001
15. Seeking Help in Solving Problems	84	146	4.02	.001
17. Seeking Reward	98	132	2.14	.05
18. Imitation of Adult Behavior	109	121	0.73	n.s.
19. Seeking Information	98	132	2.14	.05
	Total	1077	1223	
	%	47%	53%	

sex-related responses than of equalitarian responses. These items were:

5. Seeking Proximity
9. Seeking Intervention and Support
11. Seeking Physical Contact

These items are all associated with a more passive mode of dependent behavior (Heathers, 1955b).

On Subscale A it should also be noted that four items showed a significantly greater frequency of equalitarian responses than of sex-related responses. These items are:

1. Seeking Attention
7. Seeking Praise
10. Seeking Emotional Reassurance
16. Seeking Approval

With the exception of Item number 10, these items are all associated with a more active mode of dependent behavior (Heathers, 1955b).

In considering the responses to items in Subscale B, it should be noted that only two of the ten items on this scale received significantly more sex-related responses than equalitarian responses. These items are:

8. Seeking Permission
13. General Help Seeking

These items also can be associated with a more passive form of dependency as the child who seeks permission and, in general, seeks help more of the time could be considered to be less venturesome, less sure of his/her actions, abilities.

On Subscale B five of the items received more equalitarian responses. These items are:

3. Seeking Instruction
12. Seeking Advice
15. Seeking Help in Solving Problems
17. Seeking Reward
19. Seeking Information

These five items are also associated with a more active mode of dependent behavior, i.e., the more active, demonstrative child would be more likely to display these behaviors than the more passive child (Heathers, 1955b).

Looking at both Subscale A and Subscale B together seems to indicate that items on Subscale A and Subscale B which received sex-related responses most often are associated with passive modes of dependency behavior. Items on Subscale A and Subscale B which received equalitarian responses most often are those that tend to be associated with more active modes of dependency behavior.

Hypothesis IV: Among the sex-related responses given to items on the Dependency Perception Scale, there is no significant difference between "boy" and "girl" responses. Since 49% of the responses to Subscale A and 47% of the responses to Subscale B were sex-related it seemed appropriate to examine the direction of the sex-related responses to each item in the Dependency Perception Scale. The binomial test used to determine the significance of differences between sex-related responses. In Table VI comparisons between sex-related responses to each item are reported.

TABLE VI  
 BINOMIAL COMPARISONS FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF  
 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEX-RELATED  
 RESPONSES TO ITEMS ON THE  
 DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION  
 SCALE

Item	Frequency		z	p
	Boys	Girls		
<u>Subscale A</u>				
1. Seeking Attention	71	24	4.72	.001
2. Seeking Nearness	10	99	8.43	.001
5. Seeking Proximity	9	149	12.13	.001
7. Seeking Praise	53	29	2.54	.01
9. Seeking Intervention and Support	14	123	7.86	.001
10. Seeking Emotional Reassurance	11	81	7.19	.001
11. Seeking Physical Contact	4	152	11.78	.001
14. Seeking Comfort	3	103	9.61	.001
16. Seeking Approval	35	47	1.24	n.s.
20. Seeking Negative Attention	117	6	9.91	.001
<u>Subscale B</u>				
3. Seeking Instruction	39	60	2.01	.05
4. Seeking Unnecessary Help	16	109	8.23	.001
6. Seeking Help in Decision Making	33	73	3.34	.001
8. Seeking Permission	13	121	9.24	.001
12. Seeking Advice	22	62	4.26	.001
13. General Help Seeking	8	132	10.39	.001
15. Seeking Help in Solving Problems	11	73	6.66	.001
17. Seeking Reward	76	22	5.35	.001
18. Imitation of Adult Behavior	34	75	3.83	.001
19. Seeking Information	60	38	2.12	.05

Among those giving sex-related responses on Subscale A, Items 1 (Seeking Attention), 7 (Seeking Praise), and 20 (Seeking Negative Attention) were behaviors more frequently expected in boys, while all the remaining items were more frequently expected among girls. On Subscale B, only Items 17 (Seeking Reward) and 19 (Seeking Information) were expected of boys more than among girls.

Examination of the direction of the sex-related responses to the Dependency Perception Scale suggests that girls were perceived as more passive in their dependency behavior. The items on both Subscale A and Subscale B where the frequency of response was greatest for girls were all descriptions of more passive modes of dependency behavior (Subscale A, Seeking Nearness, Seeking Proximity, Seeking Intervention and Support, Seeking Physical Contact, Seeking Comfort; Subscale B, Seeking Permission, General Help Seeking, Seeking Unnecessary Help).

The dependency behavior of boys seems to be perceived as manifesting itself in a more active mode of behavior. Items on Subscale A and Subscale B where the frequency of response was greatest for boys are descriptions of more active modes of dependency behavior (Subscale A, Seeking Attention, Seeking Praise, Seeking Negative Attention; Subscale B, Seeking Reward, Seeking Information).

From these responses to Subscale A and Subscale B, the tendency for girls to be considered passive and dependent and for boys to be considered less dependent is clear. When boys are considered more dependent it is within an active mode of dependent behavior. This is strongly evidenced by Item 20 on Subscale A where the frequency of response was much greater for boys than girls on the item, Seeking Negative Attention. Boys were considered to be much more likely than

than girls to distract the adult by seeking attention in ways which were unacceptable, disruptive (boys-117, girls-6). Conversely, on Item 11 of Subscale A, girls were considered to be much more likely to seek physical contact from the adult, such as hugging, being caressed, held in arms (Boys-4, girls-152).

The perception that girls are more passive and dependent and that boys are more active and aggressive is a stereotypic view of the behavior of boys and girls (Levitin & Chananie, 1972). Levitin and Chananie (1972) state that

. . . two classes of behaviors, dependency and aggressiveness are so regularly associated with females and males respectively, that these behaviors have become major referents for sex typing (p. 1311).

The adult's reinforcement of active dependency for boys and passive dependency for girls is likely to determine the kind of dependency behavior male and female children demonstrate. Research has suggested that the kind of dependency behavior a child exhibits is a function of the child's activity level (Hartup & Keller, 1960). Therefore, if girls are reinforced for more passive dependency behavior they are likely to become passive and if boys are reinforced for active dependency behavior they are likely to become more active in their dependency behavior.

Heathers (1955a, 1955b) stressed that the ultimate goal for all children is instrumental independence, i.e., the child's being able to initiate his/her own activities and being able to cope with difficulties while at the same time being knowledgeable as to acceptable ways of getting adults to help him/her. If the adults in the child's environment hold stereotypic views of male and female children's behavior

and perhaps have many stereotypic responses themselves, the child may never be reinforced for any behavior but that behavior which conforms to the sex role stereotype. If the behavior which conforms to the sex role stereotype is passive dependency, the child could be prevented from developing instrumental independence.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions of students enrolled in a beginning class in child development and student teachers who had completed at least one semester of participation in the child development laboratories as to the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children. An instrument entitled The Dependency Perception Scale was developed by the investigator to measure the perceptions of students as to the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children. The scale consisted of two subscales, one for emotional dependency (Subscale A) and one for instrumental dependency (Subscale B). For each item on the scale, the subject could answer whether he/she expected boys or girls to engage in the dependency behavior or whether an equal expectation was held for the dependency behavior. The Dependency Perception Scale was scored by tallying the total number of E or "Equal" responses of subjects for each item on the scale. The Dependency Perception Scale was administered to students enrolled in an introductory class in child development at Oklahoma State University (FRCD 2113) and to student teachers enrolled in early childhood student teaching in the Family Relations and Child Development Department of Oklahoma State University (FRCD 4420, 4252).

On the basis of a question in the General Information Sheet of The Dependency Perception Scale, the beginning students were divided into two groups, those with minimal or no experience with children age 3-5 (A) and those with experience with children age 3-5 (B). The responses of these two groups to the items on the Dependency Perception Scale were examined in order to identify areas in which preconceived differences in expectations of dependency behavior between male and female nursery school children were expressed by FRCD 2113 and those areas in which student teachers' (Group C) responses differed from 2113 students.

The following hypotheses were examined:

- I. With respect to total scores on the Dependency Perception Scale, the beginning students with no or minimal experience (A), the beginning students with experience (B), and the student teachers are random samples of the same population (C).
- II. There is no significant relationship between scores on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) for Groups A, B, or C.
- III. There is no significant difference between frequency of equalitarian and frequency of sex-related responses to each item in the Dependency Perception Scale by the total group of subjects.
- IV. Among the sex-related responses given to items on the Dependency Perception Scale, there is no significant difference between "boy" and "girl" responses.

The results of the study were as follows:

1. Student teachers (C) differed significantly from beginning students with minimal or no experience with children 3-5 (A) and beginning students with experience with children 3-5 (B) on the amount of equalitarian responses given to items in the Dependency Perception Scale.
2. A significant relationship existed between responses given to items on Subscale A and responses given to items on Subscale B.
3. Items on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) which received sex-related responses most often were associated with passive modes of dependency behavior. Items on Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) which received equalitarian responses were associated with a more active mode of dependency behavior.
4. Items on Subscale A and Subscale B where the frequency of response was greatest for girls were descriptions of passive modes of dependency behavior (Subscale A, Seeking Nearness, Seeking Proximity, Seeking Intervention and Support, Seeking Physical Contact, Seeking Comfort; Subscale B, Seeking Permission, General Help Seeking, Seeking Unnecessary Help). Items on Subscales A and B where the frequency of response was greatest for boys were descriptions of more active modes of dependency behavior (Subscale A, Seeking Attention, Seeking Praise, Seeking Negative Attention; Subscale B, Seeking Reward, Seeking Information).

## Implications

Student teachers gave equalitarian responses significantly more than beginning students with or without experience with children 3-5. From these results, it would appear that as the student is exposed to more child development theory and practice, her perceptions of the dependency behavior of male and female children changes in the direction of perceiving dependency behavior as occurring equally among male and female children.

Students who hold stereotypic views of the dependency behavior of male and female children and who respond themselves in stereotyped ways, may reinforce the children with whom they work for only the behaviors which fit the student's stereotype of how the child should respond. The fact that 49% of the responses given to Subscale A (Emotional Dependency) and 47% of the responses given to Subscale B (Instrumental Dependency) were sex-related strongly suggests that sex-stereotyping of children does exist in many of the perceptions of beginning students as to the dependency behavior of male and female children. The results of analyzing the sex-related responses suggest further that females are perceived as more dependent than males and more passive than males in their dependency behavior. Males are perceived as less dependent and as demonstrating a more active mode of dependent behavior.

The results of this study support the view that students must have adequate training in child development theory and practice, as well as experience with children in order to begin to develop perceptions which are less sex-stereotyped. The fact that these sex-stereotyped perceptions exist also presents a challenge to instructors

in early childhood education programs and student teacher training programs to include along with a thorough discussion of the role of dependency in the child's development and socialization, information about sex-role stereotypes and the myths associated with sexist thinking, so that students of child development can examine their perceptions of dependency behavior in the light of this information.

#### Recommendation for Future Research

The present study examined female perceptions of the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children. Administering the Dependency Perception Scale to male subjects to compare their perceptions to those of female subjects would be worthwhile in order to determine if a difference exists between male subjects and female subjects with regard to their perceptions of the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children.

The student teachers who participated in the present research were closely involved with the study of child development and with the pressures of student teaching. Administering the Dependency Perception Scale to teachers involved in a variety of teaching situations such as day care, public nursery schools and kindergartens, parent cooperatives might reveal a difference in the perceptions of these teachers as compared to the student teachers participating in this study. Teachers with more experience and teachers of children in the primary grades may also have different perceptions as to the dependency behavior of male and female children.

Research to observe the dependency behavior of male and female children could be redone to see if the results of this observation

support or conflict with earlier research as to the amount of dependency behavior demonstrated by male and female nursery school children. Research that observes the teacher's responses to dependency behavior of male and female children and compares this behavior to the teacher's responses to items on the Dependency Perception Scale would be helpful in examining the teacher's role in reinforcing the dependency behavior of male and female nursery school children.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RESPONSES TO ITEMS ON THE DPS SUBSCALES  
FOR GROUPS A, B, AND C

TABLE VII  
 RESPONSES TO ITEMS ON THE DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION  
 SUBSCALES FOR GROUPS A, B, AND C

	Boys		Girls		Equal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>Subscale A</u>						
Emotional Dependency						
Item 1						
Group A	21	38%	5	9%	29	53%
Group B	45	33%	16	11%	77	56%
Group C	5	14%	3	9%	29	82%
Item 2						
Group A	3	5%	39	71%	13	24%
Group B	7	5%	39	28%	92	67%
Group C	0	0%	21	56%	16	43%
Item 5						
Group A	2	4%	39	71%	14	25%
Group B	7	5%	88	64%	43	31%
Group C	0	0%	13	35%	24	65%
Item 7						
Group A	11	20%	8	15%	36	65%
Group B	37	27%	19	14%	82	59%
Group C	5	14%	2	5%	30	77%
Item 9						
Group A	1	2%	30	54%	24	44%
Group B	11	8%	78	57%	49	35%
Group C	2	5%	15	41%	20	54%
Item 10						
Group A	5	9%	13	24%	37	67%
Group B	6	4%	61	44%	71	52%
Group C	0	0%	77	19%	30	81%
Item 11						
Group A	1	2%	41	74%	13	24%
Group B	2	1%	89	65%	47	34%
Group C	1	3%	22	59%	14	38%
Item 14						
Group A	1	2%	26	47%	28	51%
Group B	1	1%	67	48%	70	51%
Group C	1	3%	10	27%	26	70%

TABLE VII (Continued)

	Boys		Girls		Equal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Item 16						
Group A	10	18%	9	17%	36	65%
Group B	22	16%	33	24%	83	60%
Group C	3	8%	5	14%	29	78%
Item 20						
Group A	27	49%	4	7%	24	44%
Group B	76	55%	2	1%	60	44%
Group C	14	38%	0	0%	23	62%
<u>Subscale B</u>						
Instrumental Dependency						
Item 3						
Group A	11	20%	10	18%	34	62%
Group B	26	19%	44	32%	68	49%
Group C	2	5%	6	16%	29	79%
Item 4						
Group A	4	7%	27	49%	24	44%
Group B	9	6%	70	51%	59	43%
Group C	3	8%	12	32%	22	59%
Item 6						
Group A	4	7%	14	25%	37	68%
Group B	27	19%	52	38%	59	43%
Group C	2	5%	7	19%	28	76%
Item 8						
Group A	3	5%	34	62%	18	33%
Group B	8	6%	76	55%	54	39%
Group C	2	5%	11	30%	24	65%
Item 12						
Group A	9	16%	11	20%	35	64%
Group B	12	9%	48	35%	78	56%
Group C	1	3%	3	8%	33	89%
Item 13						
Group A	2	4%	33	60%	20	36%
Group B	5	4%	87	63%	46	33%
Group C	1	3%	12	32%	24	65%

TABLE VII (Continued)

	Boys		Girls		Equal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Item 15						
Group A	1	2%	21	38%	33	60%
Group B	10	7%	45	33%	83	60%
Group C	0	0%	7	19%	30	81%
Item 17						
Group A	22	40%	6	11%	27	49%
Group B	48	35%	13	9%	77	56%
Group C	6	16%	3	8%	28	76%
Item 18						
Group A	11	20%	13	24%	31	56%
Group B	22	16%	38	27%	78	57%
Group C	1	3%	24	65%	12	32%
Item 19						
Group A	11	20%	7	13%	37	67%
Group B	41	30%	25	18%	72	52%
Group C	8	22%	6	16%	23	62%

APPENDIX B

THE DEPENDENCY PERCEPTION SCALE

## General Information

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Marital Status  
 Single \_\_\_\_\_  
 Married \_\_\_\_\_  
 Divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
 Widowed \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you have any children?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ages \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sex \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your classification at OSU?  
 Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sophomore \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \_\_\_\_\_  
 Graduate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you plan to be certified to teach?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever worked with children ages 3-5 before?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, in what capacity?  
 Baby Sitter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher's Aide \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Recreation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Program \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the following questions is to obtain information as to your perceptions of certain behaviors of children within a nursery school setting. Please answer according to what you would think would happen and not according to how you think you "ought" to answer. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Who most often is likely to seek the attention of an adult by making statements such as, "Look at me!" or "See what I can do!"?  
 Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
 Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
 Equal \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who most often plays near adults?  
 Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
 Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
 Equal \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who would be more likely to seek instruction from an adult by making statements such as, "Show me how to do this," or "Tell me how this works" ?  
 Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
 Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
 Equal \_\_\_\_\_



4. Who is more likely to seek unnecessary help such as asking an adult to get an activity from the shelf when he/she can reach it him/herself?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who most likes to be sitting beside adults or standing close to an adult during quiet activities?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
6. When a child is finished with a particular activity and looking for something else to do, who is more likely to ask an adult, "What can I do now"? or "What should I do next"?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
7. Who most often would seek the praise of an adult by asking questions such as, "Is this good"? or "Was mine the best one"?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who is more likely to ask the permission of an adult before getting out a piece of equipment or material that has not been specifically set out for him/her to use?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
9. When a conflict arises with his/her peers, who is most likely to seek the intervention of an adult?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
10. When an anxiety-producing situation occurs, who would most often seek adult reassurance?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
11. Who would most like to have close physical contact with adults such as being hugged, caressed, or held in arms?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_

12. Who is more likely to seek advice from an adult when he or she is puzzled or confused, for example, asking questions such as, "Teacher, which glass should I take"? or "Who can I get to help me"?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
13. Who would ask adult assistance most often?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
14. When physically hurt, who is most likely to seek comfort from an adult?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
15. If a child faces a problem with materials or equipment at school, who is more likely to ask an adult to assist him/her?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
16. Who seeks adult approval most often by asking questions such as, "Did I do it right"? or "Was that O.K."?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
17. Who is more likely to seek reward from adults such as asking, "If I drink all of my milk may I have more dessert"? or "If I sit quietly, can I be first to go to snack"?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_
18. Who would most often imitate the behavior of an adult when the adult has demonstrated the correct way to do something or the correct way to ask for something?
- Boys \_\_\_\_\_  
Girls \_\_\_\_\_  
Equal \_\_\_\_\_

19. In discussion or conversation with an adult, who is more likely to ask more questions?

Boys \_\_\_\_\_

Girls \_\_\_\_\_

Equal \_\_\_\_\_

20. Who most often would seek attention from adults in ways which are inappropriate such as talking loudly when an adult is talking or demanding attention when an adult is occupied with other children or activities?

Boys \_\_\_\_\_

Girls \_\_\_\_\_

Equal \_\_\_\_\_

VITA<sup>2</sup>

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