

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' POWERLESSNESS  
AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS  
OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background Information

In the past two decades, there has been much social and psychological research on the concept of alienation. The concept is useful as it points to an important interface between the individual and his social system where feelings of estrangement (powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness) are correlates of marginal social status (loss of control over means of directing one's life, disaffection with goals of the broader society).

Past research has tended to investigate psychological modes of alienation while leaving unexamined, for the most part, issues concerning the social context. Hence, there are some important sociological implications which have not been explored adequately. To what extent is alienation differently related to the various sectors of the individual's social world? How is it related to the broader dimensions of social structure? Which group in society manifest higher or lower alienation, and what are the underlying forces which cause such differences?

The literature treating problems specific to age-strata seems to justify a context-specific approach to alienation. Most young people in contemporary industrial societies must wait until they are well into their twenties before they enter adult systems of power and reward. Youth constitute a social group which has often been characterized as

markedly alienated (Keniston, 1965; Whittaker and Watts, 1969). This estrangement is often manifest in political and educational disaffection (Friedenberg, 1969), which is related to broader social change (Bengston, 1970). For example, the "alienated youth" of the 1950's have given rise to the "young radicals" of the 1960's; and if current seers of campus-commitment are correct, the mood of the 1970's is apathy--an alienation born of the realistic assessment of powerlessness (e.g., Hitch, 1972). At the other end of the life cycle, those elderly who have "disengaged" from participation in many of the significant roles of mid-life have also been characterized as higher in alienation than their middle-aged counterparts (Cumming and Henry, 1961; Lowenthal, 1964).

Marx was influenced by Hegel's idea that there is a "universal essence" of man which, as it is realized, constitutes the self-fulfillment of mankind. According to Marx, this process of self-fulfillment takes place only through productive or creative labor. He states that labor is the "existential activity of man, his free conscious activity--not a means for maintaining his life but for developing his universal nature" (Marcuse, 1941, p. 275). It is through labor that mankind should achieve the development of its full potentialities. With the mechanization of production under the capitalist system, however, the process of self-realization is frustrated, and the alienation of labor results. Fromm, citing Marx's Concept of Man, describes this view of alienation as follows:

Alienation (or "estrangement") means, for Marx, that man does not experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world, but that the world (nature, others and he himself) remain alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects, even though they may be objects of his own creation. Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object (Fromm, 1969, p. 44).

According to Marx, alienation takes a number of forms. The laborer is alienated, first of all, from the product of his labor; he has no control over the disposition of the commodities he produces. Second, the worker is alienated from the means of production. With the advent of the factory system, the worker did not own the tools or the machinery with which he worked. Through the wage contract he sold his labor as a commodity; and because he no longer had control over his work life, his activity at work was estranged from the rest of his existence.

Marx regarded the working class as the most alienated class; consequently, his aim was the "emancipation of the workers." (Faunice, 1968). Fromm points out that, in the light of subsequent events, Marx's preoccupation with the alienated manual worker was misplaced--alienation has "become the fate of the vast majority of people" (Fromm, 1966, p. 98). Many white-collar workers today are more alienated than some manual workers, especially skilled craftsmen, who may experience very little alienation from work. Fromm also contends that alienation is not limited to the work place. He states that alienation as we find it in modern society is almost total; it pervades the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to the state, to his fellow man, and to himself. Fromm, like Marx, emphasizes the passivity and powerlessness of man:

. . . [man] does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts--but his acts and their consequences have become his masters . . . his actions are not his own; while he is under the illusion of doing what he wants, he is driven by forces which are separated from his self . . . (Fromm, 1966, p. 99).

And in the same vein, "Man does not experience himself as the active bearer of his own powers and richness, but as an impoverished "thing" dependent on powers outside of himself . . ." (Fromm, 1966, p. 100).

Seeman (1968) has identified five alternative meanings of alienation that represent the major ways in which the concept has been used in traditional sociological analysis. The first and perhaps most common of these usages is in terms of powerlessness. It is this type of alienation with which Marx was primarily concerned in his analysis of the working class. As was noted above, however, loss of control over the important events that affect our lives has become an almost universal experience in complex mass societies. A second major usage of the term alienation may be labeled meaninglessness. Various writers have noted the increasing difficulty in rapidly changing segmented societies in finding appropriate standards for judgment regarding courses of action or patterns of belief. Meaninglessness refers, more specifically, to the difficulty in making accurate predictions about the behavior of others or about the outcome of one's actions. Situations have meaning to us to the extent that we are able to anticipate their outcomes. Industrialism has increased the incidence of social situations that are meaningless in this sense. A third type of alienation, according to Seeman, is normlessness. This type is based upon Durkheim's concept of anomie, which refers to a situation in which there are no effective norms to rules for behavior. As the term has been used in contemporary sociology, it has come to mean a circumstance in which there are no legitimate means to achieve socially prescribed goals. In industrial societies, for example, emphasis upon the goal of economic success is more pervasive than are the legitimate means for attaining this goal.

The expectation that it is necessary to use socially unapproved means to be successful illustrates normlessness in Seeman's sense. Isolation represents a fourth way in which the concept of alienation has been used. According to Seeman, the alienated in the isolation sense are those who, like the intellectual, assign a low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued in the given society. The hippie who rejects prevailing middle-class values, the political extremist who advocates the destruction of current political institutions, and the hermit who completely renounces the contemporary way of life all share this form of alienation. The final variant of alienation found in sociological writing is self-estrangement. Both Marx and Fromm use the concept in this way. Persons are self-estranged when they engage in activities that are not meaningful to themselves but are simply means to other ends. We can describe these persons as being alienated from themselves under these circumstances because what they are doing is not something that they regard as being important. The worker who works only for his salary, the housewife who cooks only to get it over with, or the other-directed type who acts 'only for its effect on others'-- are instances of self-estrangement.

Although these five types of alienation are conceptually independent, there are some ways in which they are linked. They may form a casual chain in which one or more types of alienation tend to produce another. The combination of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and normlessness is very likely to result in isolation: persons who have little control over the factors that affect the achievement of a goal, who are unclear about what the goal should be, and who feel that whatever the goal is it cannot be achieved through approved means frequently respond

by placing a low value upon achievement of that goal and are consequently alienated from a society in which it is typically highly valued.

Isolation, in the sense in which Seeman uses the term, refers to alienation from the total society. The same process may be seen at other levels as well. The worker who feels powerless and who sees the work place as meaningless and normless is unlikely to be very concerned with the goals of the work organization and is, therefore, isolated or alienated from it. An adolescent may feel alienated from his family for the same reasons.

A person who is isolated in the sense of having assigned a "low reward value to goals or beliefs that are typically highly valued" in any social situation is necessarily self-estranged in that situation. If we feel compelled to maintain membership in a group or organization whose goals we do not share, our activity in that group or organization will be perceived as a means to some other end. If we do not share the goals or values of the persons with whom we associate, we are alienated not only from them but also from ourselves to the extent that we minimize our investment of "self" in the situation, that is, to the extent that we routinize our behavior and act in ways that bear little relationship to our image of the kind of person we think we are.

Finally, the political scientist and psychologist, as well as the sociologist, have a fundamental interest in personal and social control, hence it should come as no surprise that the powerlessness version of alienation has been most extensively examined. In a degree, Rotter's (1966) I-E scale (a forced-choice measure of the individual's generalized expectancies for Internal versus External control), whose early development and relation to alienation was first reported on in the

paper by Rotter, Liverant & Seeman (1962), became as popular as the F (authoritarianism) scale was in the 1950's. Variants and near-relatives of it have been used in a wide range of sociological investigations-- e.g., in Coleman's (1966) demonstration that mastery attitudes are associated with school achievement, in Neal & Groat's (1970) and Bullough's (1972) finding that high powerlessness is associated with low success in family planning behavior and in Bauman & Drury's (1972) showing that low confidence in one's own fate control (not degree of commitment to the work ethic) distinguishes black welfare mothers from outer city whites (and that the mothers' relative sense of powerlessness is communicated to their sons).

#### The Purpose of the Study

Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Seeman, Rotter, Johnson, and many others have tried to define alienation and describe its effects on man's relationship to the world around him. This study was concerned with the powerlessness type of alienation. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship, if any, between teachers' powerlessness and their perception of behavioral problems of elementary school children. More specifically, the study attempted to determine if there was a relationship between the degree of powerlessness experienced by teachers and their perceptions of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school age children.

#### Significance of the Study

A review of educational research and literature indicated that educators are becoming increasingly aware of and interested in the

behavioral problems of elementary school children. The quantity of research and literature since 1900 demonstrates the increasing concern of teachers and principals with discovering how to deal more effectively with the child in the school environment.

Kaplan (1952, p. 660) supported this viewpoint when he stated that: "The behavior of children was found to be a primary source of distress to elementary school teachers, insofar as such behavior challenged the standards or functions of the teacher."

Bany and Johnson (1964) inferred that a knowledge of group and individual behavior was increasingly recognized as a necessary part of the elementary school teachers' professional knowledge.

Realizing that effective behavior guidance depends upon properly gauging background factors and carefully appraising misbehavior tendencies, many governmental agencies and private and volunteer organizations share educators' concerns. In a world which promises overpopulation and crowded conditions, these agencies are anxious for the desirable interaction of the individual with other peoples as well as for his own full actualization in our society. Kaplan (1965) identified several of these agencies including the National Institute of Mental Health, Children's Bureau, United States Office of Education, National Association of Mental Health, American Medical Association, and independent school districts, all of which serve both the public schools and the community.

The seriousness of behavior problems in children has been the subject of systematic study since the classic investigation by Wickman (1928). Wickman's (1928) study surveyed teachers to determine which behaviors of children were of concern to them. Following Wickman's (1928) study, numerous studies have been made which investigated



teachers' attitudes toward the behavior of children and which provided additional evidence of the influence of Wickman's (1928) study and the professional interest in the field.

The Wickman (1928) study and succeeding studies were conducted over a period of four decades. During this time, the gradual process of educational theory development and appraisal of misbehavior tended to reflect the gradual evolution of society itself. The Educational Policies Commission publication, Education and the Disadvantaged American (1962), stated that the United States, like the rest of the world, was remaking itself, and since education is both reflective and reconstructive in nature, educators must be cognizant of societal changes. Kowitz (1970) outlined these past four decades into four historical movements: (1) 1920 Child Guidance, (2) 1930 Child Study, (3) 1940-1950 Child Development, and (4) 1950 Post-Sputnik Central Office Specialists. According to Kowitz (1970), these historical movements influenced the role of the elementary school teacher.

Peck and Prescott (1960) pointed out that the role of the elementary school teacher from 1920 to 1950 changed from one which emphasized mainly the intellectual growth of children to one which emphasized the emotional and social growth as well. They suggested that this new emphasis required the elementary school teacher to possess understandings and insights into children's behavior in order to develop more satisfactory relationships with boys and girls.

Goodlad (1966) stated that the role of the school had been undergoing marked changes since the end of World War II and more especially since Sputnik in 1957. Goodlad (1966, p. 9) said:

One of the characteristics of this reform movement is that it is discipline centered rather than child or society centered. That is, the emphasis is on updating and reorganizing those academic disciplines that are considered basic in the pre-collegiate curriculum.

Lerner and Heyer (1963) made an earlier reference to the post-Sputnik theory of intellectual emphasis and noted that a segment of the population believed that schools should concentrate on teaching academic skills and knowledge to children and leave mental health, character development and adjustment to the home, the church, and the community. Also, in accordance with this theory, Clausen and Williams (1963) expressed the belief that the pressure for academic excellence had taken precedence over mental health considerations in the schools.

In the last few years a heated controversy has raged as a result of the contrasting philosophies regarding the proper role of the school. Call (1958) observed that educators had taken sides and that there were even educators who demonstrated a highly visible reluctance to initiate or support mental hygiene activities.

These major influences upon the public schools since 1920 have indicated that the role of the classroom teacher in our public schools is not constant but has indeed changed. Classroom teachers are a product of a society and of the educational process, and are influenced by controversial educational theories and societal attitudes.

Ragan (1961, p. 482) stated:

The amount and kind of preparation required for elementary school teachers has been changing rapidly in recent years. The length of college preparation required for any elementary teaching certificate has increased also from two years to a full four years.

Although modern teachers may be better prepared to empathize and accept the behavior of children than their counterparts of a decade ago, the complexity of the problems which young children as well as teachers experience, have increased. The teacher and pupil variables have changed in the last decade. Such changes are worthy of analysis.

#### Assumptions

1. Teacher powerlessness is a deterrent to effective discipline.
2. Complete confidentiality will assure teachers who may in fact be powerless that their responses will not affect their professional security.

#### Definition of Terms

Alienation: the degree to which a person feels unable to achieve the role he has determined to be rightfully his in a specific situation.

Powerlessness: the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the outcomes or reinforcements he seeks.

Perception: physical sensation interpreted in the light of experience.

Elementary School Teacher: a teacher, certified by the State Board of Education, to teach from kindergarten through grade six.

Inexperienced Teacher: a teacher who has 1-3 years teaching experience, including the present school year.

Experienced Teacher: a teacher who has 7 or more years teaching experience, including the present school year.

Behavior: the manner in which elementary school children conduct themselves. The seriousness of the behavior is related to the mental and emotional set of the teacher.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. The organizational climate of the school might affect the results of the study.
2. There may be other variables or factors unknown at the time of the study that could affect the result.
3. The response data may not be inferred to a population other than the schools from which samples were drawn.

#### Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter I provides background information of the study. The purpose and need for the study, as well as the research questions to be tested, have been identified. The major assumptions basic to this study, as well as the limitations have been stated. Finally, the terms used frequently in this study are defined.

Chapter II treats the selected, related literature which was reviewed for this study. Chapter III relates the methodology and design of the nature of this study. Chapter IV presents the analysis of data collected for this study. Chapter V summarizes the findings, and makes recommendations in relation to these conclusions for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter includes a review of selected sources of research pertaining to the perception of classroom teachers toward the behavior of children and alienation as a condition in modern society.

As the current re-evaluation of American education continues, unanswered questions relative to perceptual differences among teachers concerning the seriousness of pupil behavior still exists as well as the changing degree of alienation being experienced by teachers.

This research was conducted to determine whether there existed a relationship in the perceptions of classroom teachers toward the behavior of children and the degree of powerlessness they felt.

#### Teacher Perception of Behavioral Problems

Throughout educational history there has existed a great difference of adult opinion concerning that which constitutes discipline for misbehavior in young children. This difference of opinion apparently still exists among teachers of elementary school pupils. What constitutes misbehavior and the type of treatment which should be employed to curb or redirect it toward more reasonable ends is a major dilemma in education. Helping children in schools to acquire behavior patterns which contribute to the maintenance of progress and order in the elementary

school classroom is an ongoing and a historic process. Pickins (1928) related that the difficulty of keeping discipline has existed within groups organized for school purposes for several centuries. In colonial times pupils were treated quite severely and rigidly, with little recognition of individual differences. Many generations of United States citizens have sung the tune and words of "Readin, Ritin, and Rithmetic, taught to the tune of the hickory stick." They have heard and used the old adage of "spare the rod and spoil the child." This is often repeated, even today. Horace Mann described the discipline of his time as that of daily floggings for those who disobeyed. Meyer (1967) related that the dunce cap, the cane, the stick wielded by the birchman, the forcing of children to sit as still as wooden Indians, and other punitive penalties for school offenses were the routine of the early school classroom.

Many opinions related to discipline have their roots in early religious concepts relating to the depraved nature of man, and the concept of the sinful child. For generations in the United States, coercive disciplinary tactics were the traditional and the most widely accepted and effective way to insure and promote learning. The adult commanded and the child was to obey. The basic duty of the child was to please his elders because they knew better than the child what was good for him.

However, throughout history, attempts to broaden the concepts of discipline for children upon more rational and humanistic bases have been recorded. Educators began to realize that the traditional approach to education and necessary disciplinary control provided a poor preparation for democratic living principles. A shift to insure freedom of

feeling and personal expression was essential and desirable for growth. Yet American culture still seems to support the notion that physical punishment is necessary for controlling misbehavior in children.

Landis (1956, p. 491) has stated:

Punishment is so deeply embedded in the American mores, due to Puritanic and Calvinistic religious heritage, that to suggest that it is wrong and unnecessary seems to be almost sacrilegious. To omit punishment from the child-training program is according to folk belief, to ruin the child. Yet punishment tends, at all ages, to build resentment and to encourage aggression--exactly the opposite ends sought.

The literature of psychology indicates that the use of fear and punishment is likely to lead to feelings of rebellion, pugnacity, and aggressive child reactions. This information has been misinterpreted by some to infer that an undisciplined child will not fear the consequences of antisocial behavior.

Crow and Crow (1965) suggests that this latter concept is an error in that all humans tend to avoid engaging in socially unacceptable acts because they are unwilling to face the aftermath of such sanctioned behavior. Glasser (1969) believes rules, regulations and sanctions, administered in the early stages of training, are probably needed; but gradually the child can be guided to think through the effects on himself and on others of the displayed attitudes and behaviors.

Maslow (1959) suggests that clinical and educational data dictate that young children need to learn the limits that their physical world places on them and on their gratifications. This means controls, delays, limits, renunciations, frustrations, tolerance and discipline, and it is only to the self-disciplined and responsible child that a teacher or parent may say, "Do as you will."

Educators have been searching for answers to pupil control problems for many years. In 1928, a monumental study in school-child discipline and pupil control was executed by E. K. Wickman who reported misbehavior types common to elementary school children and compiled and validated lists of acts perceived by teachers to be misbehavior. He was confronted with the problem of the lack of any objective study of the behavior deviations of elementary school children. At that stage of development in educational history most textbooks on child training and discipline were written from the point of view of the author's individual judgment about desirable and undesirable behavior. Wickman (1928, p. 13) stated: "Relatively few studies are available in which the opinions of a social group have been collected on the subject."

Beginning with this viewpoint, Wickman requested the elementary school teachers participating in his study to list all kinds of behavioral problems which they had encountered during their teaching careers. By permitting teachers to make spontaneous responses, Wickman hoped they would record freely the kinds of behavior which they considered and treated as undesirable. The teachers reported 428 items which they considered to be acts of a school misbehavior and after duplications were eliminated, there remained 185 distinct undesirable behavioral items which were categorized into seven major groups with sub classifications.

These seven groups were:

- 1) Violations of general standards of morality and integrity.

These violations included such acts as stealing, dishonesty, immorality, profanity, and smoking.



2) Transgressions against authority. Listed under this heading were disobedience, disrespect for authority, defiance, impertinence, insubordination, slowness in obeying instructions, and willful misconduct.

3) Violations of general school regulations. This list included truancy, tardiness, irregularity in attendance, and destroying materials.

4) Violations of classroom rules. In this category were included such acts as disorderliness, restlessness, interruptions, too much social interaction, whispering, and lack of supplies.

5) Violations of school work requirements. Listed under this category were inattention, lack of interest, carelessness, and laziness.

6) Difficulties with other children. In this category were listed cruelty, roughness, annoying other children, tattling, and miscellany.

7) Undesirable personality traits. In this classification were mentioned negativisms, unacceptable social manners, self-indulgences, arrogance, evasions, interference, lack of emotional control, and undesirable mental states.

Wickman's seminal study has influenced replication studies by McClure (1929); Yourman (1932); Bain (1934); Laycock (1934); Hurlock and McDonald (1934); Synder (1934); Ellis and Miller (1936); Young, Masten, Isabel (1938); Solar (1949); and Tolor, Scarpetti, and Lane (1967); and Roubinek (1971).

Significant modifications to Wickman's design were made by Hurlock and McDonald (1934) who studies the relationship between behavior problems and chronological age and found the greatest number of undesirable behavior traits occurred at age 14 for boys and at age 12 for girls.

Boys' traits such as whispering, inattention, carelessness, failure to prepare and interrupting were significant. Girls exhibited such traits as carelessness, whispering, inattentiveness, lack of interest and day dreaming.

More recent studies, such as that of Stouffer (1952), who replicated Wickman's study, found that teacher attitudes and knowledge concerning the individual child's personality and emotional adjustments had changed. This supported Stendler's (1949) findings that teachers, for the most part, recognized and advocated constructive measures for dealing with the problem prone child.

Schrupp and Gjerde (1953) indicated that teacher attitudes and knowledge concerning the individual child's personality and emotional adjustment had changed toward the viewpoint recognized as that held more by mental hygienists and guidance counselors.

Tolor, Scarpetti, and Lane (1967) found that elementary school teachers in general tend to evaluate behavior that may be described as regressive, aggressive, and emotional quite differently than do clinical psychologists. It was evident that elementary school teachers considered these types of behaviors to be more pathological than did the mental health professionals. The inexperienced teacher, especially, was found to be less accepting or least tolerant of behavior variants.

To realize effective teaching with elementary school children, it is important for the teacher to possess basic knowledge and insight into developmental behaviors.

A National Education Association research study (1956) of 10,000 classroom teachers found that pupil misbehavior made teaching effectively very difficult.

Eaton, Weathers and Phillips (1957) found that many classroom teachers had left the profession because of intolerable classroom behavior and that beginning classroom teachers had difficulty with handling the behavior of classroom groups.

Flesher (1954) found that beginning teachers in Ohio rated the maintenance of order or discipline as a primary problem and that administrators considered this problematic area to be of greatest magnitude to elementary school teachers. Nelson and Thompson (1963) reported pupil discipline and control to be at the top of the list of teacher problems.

Jersild (1955) intimated that probably one of the major reasons why the typical teacher finds it so difficult to understand children's behaviors can be ultimately traced to the lack of teacher self-understanding, through which they may be willing to accept different kinds of children and be better able to interpret perceived behaviors of individual pupils. Self understanding may enhance the development of satisfactory interrelationships between teachers and elementary pupils and assist in the development of teacher knowledge and insight into the dynamic nature of child behavior patterns in the school social system.

Bidwell (1967) also emphasized that the accepting of one's self as one really is, with one's potentials and limitations, leads to mental health which is vital because teachers fulfill a role of the parent surrogate in helping a child fulfill his needs. If a teacher is to accomplish this task, he must constantly endeavor to understand himself.

Abraham Maslow (1959) reinforced this thesis by statements that professional teachers and children alike need to have a good sense of

identity. The problem of identity sense is not only of a philosophical nature concerning the intellect, but it is an intense striving. Psychological literature is replete with data about why children and other humans behave as they do. It has offered educators the insight that human behavior is understandable and forgivable and above all changeable in larger degree. Maslow has pointed to a major path toward self-improvement through self-knowledge and respect of this knowledge as it affects others with whom teachers interact. Burton (1962, p. 257) suggested that noncooperative behaviors and negative emotions of children must be accepted both emotionally and intellectually by teachers. He posits the statement that:

The mental attitude of an individual probably constitutes the most important element in the atmosphere of the classroom. The disgruntled, sour, sarcastic, sharp, and bitter teacher has a general attitude of mind that is most dangerous to the shy, timid, oversensitive child. The suspicious, doubting, supercilious teacher does untold damage to the pupil whose daily life is filled with one long series of threats against his own security. The over anxious, demonstrative, worried teacher has built up an attitude of mind that commonly develops in the classroom regression tendencies of pupils, is responsible for baby ways of behaving, and halts the maturing process so essential to the mental health and growth of children. And so it is, in their effect on the personalities of each and every pupil in the classroom, those influences emanating from the teacher's attitude of mind are fraught with the greatest possibilities for good or evil.

Teachers may not be aware of divergence between their knowledge, beliefs, and their practices in the classroom as Oliver (1953) verified through research checking teacher acceptance of educational principles and subsequent practice utilization.

Kaplan (1952) reported that child behavior accounts for approximately one-half of the common teacher annoyances and that child behavior most severely distressing teachers was that which threatened the

teacher's perceived role or that which violated the teacher's emotional or moral standards.

McDonnell (1963) supported Kaplan's findings by identifying four types of behavior that annoy teachers: (1) talking, (2) lack of attention, (3) tattling or disturbing others, and (4) seeking teacher attention or recognition. If teacher annoyance is to be reduced to acceptable levels, teachers should become aware that behavior patterns of elementary school age children are dynamic in nature and must be understood as such. Bilinski (1952) in an unpublished doctoral thesis reported that through close observation of children understanding of behavior patterns by teachers can be gained, but that above all else, behaviors of pupils are influenced by almost any environmental stimulus; thus accounting for the dynamic nature of child behavior in the school classroom group.

Popolo (1960) found a significant relationship existing between the teacher's personality, his opinions and attitudes toward teacher-pupil relationships and the teacher's observable behavioral traits. Authoritarian teachers tended to get significantly lower scores than did equalitarian teachers on an opinion attitude inventory concerning teacher-pupil relationships.

Attempts to differentiate teacher personalities that develop harmonious teacher-pupil relationships have been made. Leeds and Cook (1947) developed a scale for determining teacher-pupil attitudes and found teachers who had a harmonious relationship with children characterized by mutual affection and sympathetic understanding. The study indicated that the teacher most disliked by pupils was described by being of a mean disposition and those teachers well liked were

characterized by being nice, kind, friendly, understanding, willing to help, fair, and able to explain clearly.

Amidon and Miller (1965) found superior teachers were less dominant in their classrooms, gave less direct criticism, gave more encouragement of pupil initiated ideas with intent of utilizing them in learning experiences and used direction-giving techniques less than did the average teacher.

The literature reflects the idea that a teacher cannot assume the characteristics of the accepting-understanding teacher. It supports the concept that a teacher must desire and work to become that kind of personality. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Yearbook (1962, p. 1) stated:

Whatever we do in teaching depends upon what we think people are like. The goals we seek, the things we do, the judgments we make, even the experiments we are willing to try, are determined by our beliefs about the nature of man and his capabilities.

Increasing the teacher's skill in teacher-pupil interrelationships will not guarantee the solution of classroom difficulties; however, it may reduce the immediate anxieties and emotional duress that participants experience.

Kolesnik, (1976, p. 75) views perception as the psychological process by which we organize and coordinate and thus interpret or derive meaning from our sensory experiences. As the early gestaltists pointed out, these experiences, that is, the environmental stimuli we encounter, do not occur as independent, isolated elements. They always appear in some setting, as part of a pattern or configuration. They are always somehow related to other stimuli. Thus, the meaning of a particular

object or experience or whatever depends at least in part on its relationships with other objects or experiences and to the "total situation" of which they are parts. Perception is the recognition or awareness of these relationships.

The manner in which we respond to a stimulus depends not on how we perceive that stimulus but also, quite often, on how we perceive ourselves, our fellow human beings, other stimuli, and the world around us. Perception pertains not only to what a person "sees" in a situation, but also to how he "feels" about it, and what he does as a consequence. In other words, what anyone can do in a given situation depends not only (and maybe not so much) on what is "out there" in objective reality, but on what is somehow within somebody, or in somebody's so-called "mind's eye." This, of course, is the principle underlying the idea of beauty residing in the eyes of the beholder.

Kisker (1972, p. 27) states that knowledge of abnormal psychology is of greatest importance to teachers particularly in the primary and elementary grades. It is the classroom teacher who must detect the early signs of personality disorder and take the responsibility for pointing out the danger signals to the school administration. When psychological or psychiatric services are not available, the teacher should have some idea of how to handle the problem and when and where to make a referral.

Every teacher sooner or later is confronted with personality problems among his students. Mental retardation, hostile and aggressive behavior, sexual acting, vandalism and destructiveness, seclusiveness and withdrawal, and similar symptoms are frequent. His job is made far

easier when he has some conceptions of the conditions with which he must deal.

Teachers are in a unique position to observe signs of personality disturbance in their pupils. Parents seldom notice these changes unless the deviant behavior is very pronounced. Moreover, parents usually lack the necessary training and it is difficult for them to be objective about their own children. The teacher is the first professional person to observe the young child for an extended period of time. When some children are seen by a pediatrician or child specialist he sees them for a short period and is concerned primarily with physical symptoms. The teacher, from nursery school to the higher grades, has the best opportunity to discover the early signs of emotional disturbance. If he has a knowledge of abnormal psychology, he can serve a valuable function in promoting the cause of mental health.

In summary, the task of securing good pupil control is an educational one. The kind of discipline desired is the kind that comes from within the child and is rooted in attitudes, understandings, skills, and intergroup relations. Although there has been wide variation in the interpretation of what constitutes adequate pupil control or discipline in the classroom and how to attain it, there seems to be near uniformity of opinion that unless teachers and pupils exist and work together in harmony toward desirable ends, little of value can be accomplished by their efforts. Teachers and pupils working cooperatively together is in the democratic spirit and may indicate harmonious interrelations and self-discipline.

There seems to be a choice between orderliness produced by autocratic domination and punishment, and the good conduct resulting



from pupil understanding and self-discipline. Since the perception of misbehavior is related to the perceiver and to his particular social systems, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between minor and major deviation in behavioral conduct or even between acceptable behavior and misbehavior. In one social system, some behavioral acts may be viewed as trivial and in another as the serious distortions of delinquency.

Thus, the unresolved question, when does an act performed by a student become a behavioral problem?

Wickman (1928, p. 3) stated:

It is noted that the very existence of a behavior problem is designated by personal or social attitude. There can be no problems in behavior, in the active social sense, unless someone reacts to them as such. Moreover, any form of conduct in a child or adult may become a problem if it is regarded and treated as undesirable behavior by the social group in which the individual happens to live.

#### The Concept of Alienation

According to Neal and Seeman, "the mass society viewpoint" is that the desintegration of community ties has separated the individual from a society which he considers to be his own. This isolation produces a sense of powerlessness which can be damaging to the individual and to the democratic social order. Therefore, there is the need for mediating groups to function as a tie between primary social groups (families) and the nation in order that an individual may perceive himself as having capacity to determine his own life, and as having an effect on the lives of his fellows as well (Neal and Seeman, 1964, pp. 216-226).

### Alienation in Work Groups

In examining the feelings of relative power among work groups, it was found by Neal and Seeman that membership in work-based organizations accompanied a relatively strong sense of control over events of the individual, whereas powerlessness was related more to the lack of organization. Differences in the amount of powerlessness demonstrated by workers were found to be greatest among mobility-minded workers, while among non-striving white collar workers, feelings of powerlessness were less diverse. Explanation for this was offered in pointing out that organization for white collar workers served as a vehicle for mobility, whereas organization for manual workers is largely a vehicle of group security and shared economic welfare. It was further suggested that non-striving white collar workers might join organizations to do something, whereas their status oriented peers might join the organization to get something ( Seeman, 1964, p. 225).

According to Clark (1959, pp. 849-851) the construct for the concept of alienation would prove more helpful in the social sciences if it were clearly defined, and if a tool for measuring it were developed. In an effort to reach that end, Clark conducted a study of alienation among member participants in an agricultural cooperative association. Data included measurements of alienation, member satisfaction, member participation, and member knowledge as they related to the association.

Alienation was measured by Clark as the discrepancy between the power that man believes he has and that which he believes he should have. With this frame of reference, it is noted that man must consider himself as deserving a role in a given social situation before he can demonstrate feelings of alienation within it (Clark, 1959, p. 850).

This definition of alienation is closely related to Seeman's powerlessness which was defined as ". . . the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcome, or reinforcements he seeks" (Seeman, 1964, p. 784).

In the Clark study (1959, pp. 849-851) satisfaction was measured by a scale designed to measure the degree to which the expectations of the association were perceived to have been accomplished. Participation was similarly measured as the degree to which members meet the role expectations of the association. Knowledge was measured as the degree to which members are informed about the activity and function of the association.

Findings of the Clark study indicated that alienation was highly inversely correlated to the members' satisfaction with the organization. A relationship was found to exist between alienation scores and the number of other members known, ( $r = -.17$ ) and the number of memberships held in other organizations ( $r = -.21$ ). It was concluded that merely participating and obtaining knowledge about the organization was only slightly related to the degree of alienation. On the other hand, high satisfaction and low alienation of members seem to give little assurance of member participation and knowledge.

In summary, low measures of powerlessness were found to be identified among workers who possess high organizational identity. As might be expected high satisfaction with the function of a cooperative organization was found to be highly correlated to low alienation of the membership. It may be summarized that both identification with the organization and satisfaction with organizational activity correspond to low levels of alienation among the participants.

### Teacher Powerlessness

Closely tied to the growing professionalism among teachers and to the professional-bureaucratic conflict is teacher powerlessness, as evidenced by the following statement: "Today, to be professional, one must be militant" (Evans, 1969, p. 131). Although this is an exaggerated statement, it serves to illustrate the growth of militancy among teachers in recent years. Teachers, feeling their powerlessness, have become more militant for a number of reasons, one being that they have a sincere interest in how the child is educated (Brubacher, 1969, p. 30). Another, and perhaps the most important, reason for the increase in militancy is the "lack of machinery for resolving the conflict of bureaucratic and professional authority" (Boyan, 1969, p. 202). Teachers recognizing this lack feel powerless to achieve positive results.

Teachers are frustrated professionals. They are frustrated because they desire more freedom to teach, because of poor teaching-learning conditions, and because of low salaries (Batchelder, 1965, p. 18). In addition, the increased competency of teachers, which is a result of better preparation, creates frustration. They resent being forced to teach under conditions which are not commensurate with their qualifications (Batchelder, 1965, p. 20). Therefore, they feel powerless.

Teachers also become frustrated with the public, which gives lip service to public schools, but does not give education the financial support it deserves. In Oklahoma, for example, voters twice within one year refused to increase school support (Batchelder, 1965, p. 19). The reason was not that good schools were not desired by the people, but rather that they were unwilling to pay for them. Again, teachers feel powerless to change the situation.

All of these frustrations have contributed to the militancy which teachers have shown. Teachers want an increasing involvement in making decisions affecting the schools, and they have become more strongly united within their professional organizations seeking this end.

In a three-year study sponsored by the Cooperative Research Program of the United States Office of Education, Corwin (1963) investigated several aspects of staff conflicts in the public schools. He saw the increasing teacher professionalism as a major contributor to teacher-administrator conflicts because teachers were infringing upon the traditional rights of lay boards and administrators (Corwin, 1963, pp. 170-202). He based this conclusion upon his finding that the more professionally oriented teachers were inclined to be the more militant than those showing less professional orientation (Corwin, 1963, pp. 30-31).

Teachers, as they have become more professional, have sought to obtain more influence and control over educational decision-making; and as the teachers have tried to gain this influence, the boards and administrators have found themselves in conflict with the teachers (Urban, 1969, pp. 344-346). In addition, teachers desire, as do all professionals, some degree of autonomy; but to increase their autonomy, they must challenge the people who are in control (Corwin, 1966, p. 46). If these authorities do not release their hold voluntarily, the profession "will defy them by objecting, criticizing, or by legal action and more ambitious forms of militancy" (Corwin, 1963, p. 47).

There may be, therefore, many contributors to the rise in teacher militancy, and some of the most significant is conflict between the bureaucratically structured school and the professional teacher working

in that organization. Perhaps their powerlessness may help them to develop this militancy which will affect their perceptions of the behavioral problems of elementary school children.

#### Summary

Chapter II has presented a brief resumé of literature and research pertaining to the related areas of this study. It is intended that the reader will be able to develop a perspective and conception of the need leading to this study concerning teachers' powerlessness and their attitudes toward the behavior of children.

Chapter III will present the detailed description of the research design and methodology of the study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

#### Introduction

Chapter III describes the research techniques used in the study. More specifically, the chapter includes the sample, the method of data collection, a description of the instruments employed, and their reliability.

#### Methodology

This study proposed to establish a basis for the testing of the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between the degree of their powerlessness as perceived by elementary school teachers and their perceptions of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school children.
2. There is no significant difference between the relationships involving their powerlessness as perceived by elementary school teachers and their perceptions of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school children for experienced and for inexperienced teachers.

### Population and Sample

This study involved fifty elementary school teachers from five schools in Oklahoma. Universal characteristics of participating schools were location in rural settings, self-contained classroom organization, and classification as small elementary schools with a single administrator. This study further required that the sample group of elementary school teachers be divided to establish two groups representing inexperienced and experienced teachers. The demographic data needed to make this classification were secured from each respondent. For the purpose of this study, those teachers whose years of experience as classroom teachers fell within the range of one to three years were considered inexperienced and those whose experience was seven or more years were considered experienced.

### Instrumentation

The general plan in conducting the study was as follows: The immediate reactions of teachers to specific types of behavioral problems were elicited and measured in terms of perceived seriousness, using the Behavioral Problems Inventory (Dobson, 1966), hereafter called the B.P.I. This instrument was based upon studies by Wickman (1938) and others who reported behavioral types common to elementary school children, and who compiled and validated lists of acts perceived by teachers as misbehavior. The teachers were asked to judge the seriousness of each act by checking whether it ranked "high," "medium," or "low" in perceived seriousness.



### Reliability of the B.P.I. Instrument

The reliability coefficient based upon the Spearman-Brown formula was computed to be .70 (Bowman, 1970).

The original instrument was validated judgmentally by an informed, competent jury of professional educators, who were faculty professors of education at the University of Oklahoma, and was judged to be consistent with the conditions inherent and with the theory underlying the instrument. The content of the instrument was adjudged to measure the weighted combinations of information, attitudes, skills, traits, and abilities necessary for such an investigation with teachers.

### Neal and Seeman Alienation Scale (1964)

The instrument employed to measure teacher powerlessness was the Neal and Seeman Alienation Scale (1964), which measures powerlessness in work-related situations. The scale consists of seven forced-choice items, which were reduced from an original pool of 50 items via pretesting. (Actually, 12 items were employed in their study but only 7 were found to be scaleable.)

The items were originally devised to measure the individual's psychological orientation toward how much (internal) control he had over events in his environment versus the view that these were outside his control. Experience with these items has been developed from their use in a number of research studies. One point is given for each response that is external direction, making scores range from 0 (high power) to 7 (high powerlessness).

## Reliability of Neal and Seeman

### Alienation Scale (1964)

This seven item scale has a coefficient of reproducibility of .87. Neal and Rettig (1963) report for the same sample that ten of the original twelve items had factor loadings over .30 and seven loadings over .50 (which indicate inter-item correlations of about .15-.35). Using many of the same items, Seeman and Evans (1962) reported a split-half reliability of .70 and Neal (1959) a reproducibility coefficient of .866.

### Data Collection

The administrators of the schools who participated in the study were contacted in person to secure permission for the selected teachers to participate. The investigator delivered the instruments to selected elementary school teachers and gave instructions in their use. The principals assisted in the collection of data, and the two instruments were scored by the researcher.

### Data Treatment

Scores on each instrument were placed in order and an ordinal value was assigned to each raw score. Coefficients of correlation, with corrections for tied scores, were established using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (Siegel, 1956, p. 207). Three such coefficients were found: all teachers, experienced teachers, and inexperienced teachers. The statistical significance of each was determined by reference to tabled values (Siegel, 1956, p. 247). The coefficients for the experienced teacher and inexperienced teacher subgroups were taken

as estimates of product moment coefficients of correlation (Nunally, 1975). The difference between correlations was tested for significance using Fisher's transformation to  $z$ , whose standard error is related only to  $N$  and not to  $r$ . The technique is described in Guilford (1956, pp. 189-190). This technique was chosen because the correlations in this study were derived from two totally different and unmatched samples. In order to utilize this statistical technique, the standard error of difference between Fisher's  $z$ 's was computed (Guilford, 1956, p. 190). The statistical significance of the difference was determined by reference to a table of normal curve values (Guilford, 1956).

#### Summary

Chapter III has presented the procedures utilized in conducting the research study. A description of the population and sample drawn from it was given. A general description of the instruments used in the study including their reliabilities were presented.

The following chapter will present the data derived from this investigation and relate the analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN ANALYSIS AND TREATMENT OF DATA

#### Introduction

The data obtained in this investigation were used to test the null hypotheses, which were stated in Chapter III.

Presented in Table I are the data for the elementary school teachers who completed and returned both the Powerlessness Scale and Behavioral Problems Inventory. The numbers of respondents in cross classifications of experience and grade level assignments are displayed. Twenty-three of the 50 respondents were classified as experienced teachers; thirteen were classified inexperienced teachers. Responses were secured from at least six teachers at each of seven grade levels, kindergarten through sixth grade. All teachers responded, representing a one hundred percent return.

#### Data Treatment

Fifty elementary school teachers were selected. Their schools were located within a 25-mile radius of Stillwater, Oklahoma. They were classified into one of three groups: experienced, inexperienced, and other.

Spearman rank order coefficients of correlation (Siegel, 1956, p. 207) were established between scores on a powerlessness scale and a seriousness of pupil behavior scale for the following: all teachers,

experienced teachers, and inexperienced teachers. The statistical significance of the difference between coefficients of correlation for the experienced and inexperienced teacher was established (Guilford, 1956), using the rank order coefficients as estimates of product moment coefficients of correlation.

The 0.05 point of significance was selected for rejecting the null hypotheses.

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER RESPONDENTS

Teachers	Grade Level							Total
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Experienced (7 or more years)	2	4	4	2	2	3	6	23
Inexperienced (1-3 years)	3	2	1	2	1	2	2	13
Other (4-6 years)	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	14
Total	6	8	7	6	6	7	10	50

#### Teacher Attitudes Toward the Behavior of Children

##### Behavioral Problems Inventory (BPI)

The instrument was presented with explicit instructions to mark one of three points on a continuum that expressed the perceived level

of seriousness of each of the 34 behavioral acts. The subjects were urged to make each rating as rapidly as possible and not to consider how frequently the behavior occurred but only how serious the behavior was when it did occur. The intent was to secure the subjects' natural responses, rather than responses calculated to "please" the investigator or to respond "as a teacher ought to respond." The ratings were summed to derive a total score. The summated ratings were converted to ranks before coefficients of correlation were computed.

#### Powerlessness Scale

This instrument was designed to measure the degree of control that individuals feel they have over environments. This instrument contains seven pairs of statements. Each respondent chooses the one in each pair that he believes to be descriptive. The instrument yields scores from 0 to 7.

#### Findings

The rank order coefficients of correlations established from the data secured in this study are reported in Table II.

The coefficient of correlation between scores on the Powerlessness Scale and scores on the Behavioral Problems Inventory was negligible (-0.04). Thus, hypothesis one was not rejected. The null hypothesis of no relationship has to be considered as tenable.

Additional analyses of the relationship between scores for subgroups of teachers yielded greater, though not significant, coefficients of correlation. The difference between coefficients for the experienced and inexperienced teachers was 0.103. The rank order coefficients were

used as estimates of product moment coefficients. After securing Fisher's transformation to z coefficients, the statistical significance of the difference between the coefficients was assessed. The probability associated with a difference of this magnitude was greater than the established 0.05 level. Thus, hypothesis two was not rejected. The null hypothesis of no difference between the relationship for experienced and inexperienced teachers has to be considered as tenable.

TABLE II  
COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION

	N	$r_s$	P
All teachers	50	-0.04	>0.05
Experienced teachers	23	+0.10	>0.05
Inexperienced teachers	13	-0.19	>0.05

The fifty teachers who indicated that the list of behaviors was an appropriate description of children's behavioral problems represented 80.5 percent of the total group. This percentage indicated that a large majority of the group of teachers felt that the list of behaviors, developed by Wickman (1928), remained as indicative of the types of behaviors that children exhibit in the classrooms of the teachers who took part in the study.

Thirty teachers suggested twenty-one additional behaviors, some of which were listed by more than one teacher. Presented in Table III are the suggested additional behaviors supplied by the thirty teacher respondents.

TABLE III

ADDITIONAL TEACHER DEFINED BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS  
SUGGESTED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

---

1.	Lack of sportsmanship
2.	Lack of desire to cooperate
3.	Always chewing on something
4.	Uses only one train of thought
5.	Instigator of trouble
6.	Compulsive talker
7.	Stubborn attitude
8.	Frequent excuses to leave class
9.	Sneaky talking with others
10.	Befriends others with similar behavior
11.	Displays poor handwriting
12.	Lack of initiative in questioning
13.	Good students are not challenged
14.	Eating out of garbage can
15.	Chronic complainer (health)
16.	Sissy--boys who like girl games
17.	Out-of-seat misbehavior
18.	Constant demanding of attention
19.	Hanging onto teacher
20.	Depression
21.	Sluggishness in work

---



Three of the twenty-one items--4, 11, and 13--represented instructional and learning problems. Three items--5, 7, and 9--appeared to deal with problems relating to difficulties with authorities, and six items--2, 6, 8, 12, 17, and 21--dealt with problems relating to difficulties in application to school work. Most of the twenty-one items could be considered representative of special single word descriptions utilized by Wickman (1928). Unsportsmanship could be considered as descriptive of selfishness; lack of desire to cooperate could be considered as descriptive of interrupting; and depression was identical to depressed as stated in Wickman's (1928) list. The only behavior that this investigator felt might be a new additional behavior was chronic complainer (health), which did not appear to fit any description on the list of items.

#### Summary

Chapter IV has presented the procedural treatment and the statistical analysis of data collected through the use of Behavior Problems Inventory and Powerlessness Scale. The data were presented with appropriate discussion concerning the statistical test of significance and the results obtained. Statistical confidence was specified at the .05 confidence level and the null hypotheses were put to the test. Hypotheses one and two were not rejected. Chapter V will present a summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research in areas related to this study.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study was designed to establish the degree of relationship, if any, between teacher perceived powerlessness and their perception of the seriousness of elementary school pupils' behavioral problems.

The location and selection of participating teachers and schools was based upon several factors: 1) administrative cooperation, 2) teacher willingness to participate in the study, 3) location of school in a rural setting, 4) self contained classroom organization, and 5) administered by a single administrator. Criteria 3, 4, and 5 resulted in the schools being classified as small rural elementary schools. The fifty teachers participating in this study were classified into two groups. Teachers with 1-3 years of experience were considered inexperienced and teachers with 7 or more years of experience were considered experienced.

Two instruments of analysis were used. The Behavioral Problems Inventory was used to determine teachers' perception of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by children. The Powerlessness Scale was used to determine teachers' sense of control over their environments.

The data were analyzed through the use of Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficients. Significance was established at the 5 percent level of confidence.

### Findings

The findings of this investigation considered to be most significant were the following:

1. Null Hypothesis I, that there is no significant relationship between the degree of their powerlessness as perceived by elementary school teachers and their perception of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school age children, was not rejected.
2. Null Hypothesis II, that there is no significant difference between the relationships involving their powerlessness as perceived by elementary school children and their perception of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school children for experienced and inexperienced teachers, was not rejected.

### General Findings

A finding not stated in the formal hypotheses but appearing in the analysis of the data was the following: The difference in the signs of the coefficients for the experienced and inexperienced teachers is interesting. The feeling of powerlessness was slightly greater for the inexperienced than for the experienced teachers.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings of this study:

1. There was not any relationship between feelings of powerlessness as reported by teachers and their perceptions of the seriousness of behavioral problems exhibited by elementary school children.
2. The years-of-experience differential of teachers does not alter appreciably teacher perception toward powerlessness and children's behavior.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The validity of the results and conclusions of this study can be substantiated through similar investigations. Future study in the following areas would seem pertinent and important:

1. Since this study utilized a selected population, attempts at replication should utilize random sampling techniques.
2. Further research should entertain additional demographic variables such as chronological age, sex, grade level of teacher, educational background of teacher, and urban-rural setting.
3. Since this study indicated no attitudinal conflict between experienced and inexperienced teachers additional studies should attempt to determine the validity of this finding.
4. A replication of this study should be attempted with a larger sampling enabling the use of more sophisticated statistical analyses. Hopefully, this research study will serve to create

further interest in the subject of teachers' powerlessness and their perceptions of behavioral problems of elementary school children.

5. The study should be replicated using other, possibly more sensitive, instruments.

#### Further Considerations

The finding of no significant relationship between teacher-felt powerlessness and perception of the seriousness of children's behavior suggests several plausible conclusions. The most obvious is there simply is no relationship. Another includes the possibility of intervening variables that were not controlled in the research design.

In terms of limitations of this study, it is important to recognize that certain regional selective factors may have been operating in the school systems where this study was accomplished; therefore, future studies might utilize larger sample groups to reduce selective sampling bias.

Another consideration, relative to the years-of-experience differential, might be that experienced teachers in a rural school setting have greater influence on inexperienced teachers' social attitudes than in an urban location.

Finally, there is the prospect that in this very complex, intangible area of teacher powerlessness and perception of children's behavior, we may not at this point have instruments and research techniques sufficiently sophisticated to assess accurately the variables under consideration.

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APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BEHAVIORAL  
PROBLEMS INVENTORY

ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BEHAVIORAL  
PROBLEMS INVENTORY

READ ALOUD TO THE GROUP:

Your participation is desired in collecting data for the investigator's research project. This instrument is designed to record your responses to your perception of behavioral problems observed in elementary school age pupils.

The data collected by this instrument will be analyzed by groups and NO REFERENCE TO ANY INDIVIDUAL WILL BE MADE.

In the Inventory body of page 1, there are listed, to the right of the page, some behavioral problems of elementary school age pupils. Immediately to the left, there are three columns entitled "HIGH SERIOUSNESS," "MEDIUM SERIOUSNESS," and "LOW SERIOUSNESS." Please check ( ) each behavior as you perceive it as one of these. Simply record your immediate response--do not intellectualize the item. Do not proceed to the next page until all items have been checked. Thank you!

APPENDIX B

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS INVENTORY

## BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS INVENTORY

School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level taught or assigned \_\_\_\_\_ School system \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_, 1976  
month day

Teaching experience in years (include this year) \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: In the column headed "seriousness," please check ( ) each behavior as being "high," "medium," or "low" in seriousness.

SERIOUSNESS			BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS
High	Medium	Low	
			Running in the hall
			General rudeness and inconsideration for other students
			Cheating on class assignments and/or tests
			Defacing school property and/or equipment
			Habitual tardiness
			Committing petty thievery
			Lying, untruthfulness
			Masturbation
			Truancy
			Swearing, using profane language
			Smoking
			Obscene notes, talk

## SERIOUSNESS

## BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

High      Medium      Low

Playing with genitalia  
 Disorderliness in classroom  
 Whispering, writing notes  
 Interrupting  
 Failure to pay attention  
 Carelessness, inaccuracy in work  
 Physical Laziness  
 Willful disobedience  
 Cruelty, bullying  
 Quarrelsomeness  
 Tattling on others  
 Stubbornness, contrariness  
 Rages, temper tantrums  
 Rudeness, impudence to teachers  
 Shyness, timidity, withdrawing  
 Acting smart  
 Unhappiness, depression  
 Daydreaming  
 Slovenly appearance  
 Sissy or tomboy  
 No interest in classwork  
 Sex offense



APPENDIX C

THE POWERLESSNESS SCALE

## THE POWERLESSNESS SCALE

This is a survey to find out what the public thinks about certain events which we face in our society. Each item consists of a pair of statements. Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be true. Be sure to check the one you actually believe to be more nearly true, rather than the one you think you should check or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief; obviously, there are no right or wrong answers. Again, be sure to make a choice between each pair of statements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I think we have adequate means for preventing run-away inflation.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ There's very little we can do to keep prices from going higher.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Persons like myself have little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ I feel that we have adequate ways of coping with pressure groups.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A lasting world peace can be achieved by those of us who work toward it.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ There's very little we can do to bring about a permanent world peace.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ There's very little persons like myself can do to improve world opinion of the United States.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ I think each of us can do a great deal to improve world opinion of the United States.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ The average citizen can have an influence on government decisions.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ People like me can change the course of world events if we make ourselves heard.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ More and more, I feel helpless in the face of what's happening in the world today.  
       \_\_\_\_\_ I sometimes feel personally to blame for the sad state of affairs in our government.

**APPENDIX D**

**POWERLESSNESS RESPONSE**

## POWERLESSNESS RESPONSE

1. There's very little we can do to keep prices from going higher.
2. Persons like myself have little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups.
3. There's very little we can do to bring about a permanent world peace.
4. There's very little persons like myself can do to improve world opinion of the United States.
5. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
6. It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large.
7. More and more, I feel helpless in the face of what's happening in the world today.

VITA

Daniel Okwudiri Ucheagwu

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' POWERLESSNESS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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