

# ***This Week's Citation Classic***

Schaefer E S & Bell R Q. Development of a parental attitude research instrument. *Child Develop.* 29:339-61, 1958.  
[Nat'l. Inst. Mental Health, NIH, Public Health Serv., US Dept. Health, Education, and Welfare, Rockville, MD]

**A review of theory and research that suggested parent attitudes influence child personality development provided a basis for development of 32 parent attitude concepts defined by short attitude scales, and analyses of reliabilities and correlations with maternal education. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI™) indicates that this paper has been cited over 130 times since 1966.]**

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"Theory and research on parent influence on child personality and psy-chopathology, especially reports of validity of parent attitude measures, motivated this collaboration with Richard Q. Bell during the early years of the Laboratory of Psychology at the National Institute of Mental Health. Initial acceptance of the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) might be attributed to the need for research methods for testing theories of parent-child relationships and to the multivariate conceptualization and measurement that improved upon earlier studies. Continuing use of PARI, despite low validity in research on parent influence on personality development, reflects the lack of

research funding for development of improved family research methods. Apparently research methods as well as theories only become obsolete when superior methods and theories are developed. However, serendipitous findings that measures of childrearing and educational attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors might replace sociodemo-graphic variables in the prediction of child intellectual development<sup>1</sup> have modified my earlier perception of PARI as a citation success but a scientific failure.

"The initial work of concept development and measurement facilitated development of other fruitful methods for research on parent-child relationships.<sup>2</sup> A circumplex model for parent behavior<sup>3</sup> and subsequent comprehensive configurational models<sup>4</sup> have integrated many multivariate analyses of parent behavior and child behavior. Investigators committed to development of improved theories, concepts, methods, and models through a process of conceptual differentiation and integration are needed to increase the fruitfulness of research on parents and children.

"Research on family environments and relationships among mother, father, child, and sibling has contributed to understanding of family influence on cognitive and social development. Yet investments in family research have not been commensurate with contributions of the family to health, education, and welfare of children and parents. More descriptive, longitudinal, and intervention research on family environments is needed to provide a knowledge base for the promising field of family-centered investment in human capital."<sup>5</sup>

1. Schaefer E S & Edgerton M. Parent interview and sociodemographic predictors of adaptation and achievement. Paper delivered at the American Psychological Association Meeting, September, 1979, New York, NY.
2. Schaefer E S. Children's reports of parental behavior: an inventory. *Child Develop.* 36:413-24, 1965.
3. ...., A circumplex model for maternal behavior. *J. Abnormal Soc. Psycho.* 59:226-35, 1959.
4. ...., Development of hierarchical, configurational conceptual models for parent behavior and child behavior. (Hill J, ed.) *Minnesota symposia on child psychology.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1971. Vol. 5. p. 130-61.
5. Schultz T W. Investment in human capital. *Amer. Econ. Rev.* 51:1-17, 1961.