Parent-characters in televised family programs set examples for viewers who may re-enact their behaviors with real children. This study attempts to determine how much "desirable" and "undesirable" behavior is modeled on these shows, and whether the behaviors are coupled with responses that might encourage or discourage viewer adoption of the behaviors. Three programs ("Roseanne," "Married... With Children," and "The Simpsons") are contrasted with other programs to determine whether the allegedly "bad" parent-characters on these controversial shows are significantly different from the allegedly "good" parent-characters on other family programs in terms of modeled parenting behaviors and responses to these behaviors. Humor and gender are also analyzed.

The contents of 75 prime-time family situation comedies which aired during the winter months of 1991 made up the data for this research. Variables in the analysis included: parenting behavior types (beneficial/detrimental), responses to parenting behaviors
(rewarded/punished), humor--defined by canned laughter, genre
(controversial/ noncontroversial program), and gender.

Sixty-five percent of the beneficial behaviors and 38% of the
detrimental behaviors were rewarded, while 35% of the beneficial
behaviors and 62% of the detrimental behaviors were punished. Humor
was associated with detrimental behaviors more frequently than with
beneficial behaviors. The controversial genre was associated with
more detrimental behavior than the noncontroversial genre, though
there was no significant difference in responses for detrimental
behavior. Humor was associated with detrimental behaviors on the
controversial genre more frequently than on the noncontroversial
genre. A significant association was found for gender and genre for
type of parenting behavior as well as type of humor. Both genders
exhibited more detrimental behavior and derogatory humor on
controversial than noncontroversial shows, and mother-characters
exhibited more than father-characters. Findings are interpreted in
light of social learning theory, the social sanctioning power of
humor, and the illusions of reality provided by television for norms
of behavior in private domains (i.e. private homes).
Parenting Behaviors: A Content Analysis
of TV Family Situation Comedies

by

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Americans have been influenced by television (TV) since the early 1950's when it began to be adopted as a primary form of entertainment (Busby, 1988). As early as 1970, the U.S. Census indicated that 96% of all households had at least one TV set (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1972), and the median viewing time has climbed to over three hours per day (Johnson, 1984; LoSciuto, 1972). This exceeds the time Americans spend doing anything else except sleeping (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1981). Because of this heavy exposure to TV, researchers have spent a great deal of time studying its influences on the American public. Some studies have focused on viewing patterns (Brody, Stoneman, & Sanders, 1980; Hollenbeck, 1978; LoSciuto, 1972; McDonald & Glynn, 1986; Robinson, 1972), while others have analyzed program content (Dall, 1988; Elliot, 1984; Greenberg & Atkin, 1983; Greenberg & Heeter, 1982; Mackey & Hess, 1982; Williams, Zabrack, & Joy, 1982), and advertising (Atkin, 1975; Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Haley, Richardson, & Baldwin, 1984; Moschis & Moore, 1982; Ratcliffe & Wittman, 1983). Studies focused on learning indicate that TV is an effective teacher for children ("On the level," 1980; Selnow, 1986) and adults (Frankel, Birkimer, Brown, & Cunningham, 1983; Jason, Curran, Goodman, & Smith, 1989; "Television for," 1976). TV has been adopted as an educational tool by schools
(Dresang, 1987), hospitals (Nielsen & Sheppard, 1988), and communities (Franke-Ogg & Pritchard, 1989; McDavis & Tucker, 1983). The effects of TV viewing include changes in beliefs (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 1982), attitudes (Kulman & Akamatsu, 1988; Ross, Anderson, & Wisocki, 1982; Rule & Ferguson, 1986; Signorielli, 1989), and behaviors (Bollen & Phillips, 1982; Comstock, 1986; Phillips, 1982; Rubinstein, 1983; Solomon, 1982; Surgeon General's Advisory Committee, 1972; Winett, Leckliter, Chinn, & Stahl, 1984.)

Family life has always been popular fare on TV (Gagnon & Roberts, 1982; "TV shows," 1988). Since its inception, family-oriented shows have held high positions in the ratings (Norback & Norback, 1980). Four family shows (programs that include a parent-character who is responsible for a dependent child-character) were included in the ten top-rated shows of 1987, with "Family Ties" and "The Cosby Show" occupying first and second positions (Broadcasting, 1987). In 1991, 15 family shows, spanning the four national networks (NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX), were scheduled during prime viewing hours (7-10 p.m.). Sitcoms are the most typical format for family programs. During the winter months of the 1991 season, there were approximately five times as many family comedies as there were family dramas scheduled on national networks during prime-time ("TV This Week," 1991).

In spite of the popularity of family shows, little research has been done on them. The few studies available have been content analyses, carried out to determine the realism of parent and marital
role portrayals (Fisher & Dean, 1976), happiness allocation (Thomas & Callahan, 1982), and styles of parenting (Dail & Way, 1983, 1985). This is surprising since family programs have existed and have influenced American life since the early 1950's (Adler & Cater, 1976; Duhl, 1976; Gagnon & Roberts, 1982; Sklar, 1980)

Family programming in the 1950's and 1960's was dominated by such shows as: "Donna Reed," "Father Knows Best," and "Leave It to Beaver." These popular shows promoted the mythical images of the all-knowing father and all-serving mother. Children could be difficult, but TV parents had all the proscribed answers for dealing with them (Gagnon & Roberts, 1982). Through the 1970's, however, as roles became more flexible for American men and women, parenting roles on TV also began to be more loosely defined (Duhl, 1976). This trend toward looser roles appears to have continued through the 1980's and into the 1990's. Real-life changes in family configurations and family problems are reflected in current programing which now includes single and remarried parents. Current TV parents deal with a host of challenges never faced by their predecessors, and they don't have all the answers. Some even gain their status with viewers through their ineffectiveness--by not knowing how to deal with their children.

Ineffective TV parents dominate a new genre of family programs ("Roseanne," "Married With Children," and "The Simpsons") known in the popular press as "anti-family" shows (Zoglin, 1990). These parent-characters model self-centered behaviors ranging from poor caretaking and verbal barbs to physical abuse; and such behaviors are
earmarks of these controversial shows. When these programs were introduced, an intense public controversy raged between critics who felt the shows should be banned because they devalued family and fans who praised the programs for their realism (Berkman, 1990; Carter, 1990; Fischer, 1990; "New cultural," 1989; Polskin, 1989; Powers, 1990; "Rakolta back," 1989; Rebeck, 1990; Simms, 1989; "Too baudy," 1989; Zehme, 1990; Zoglin, 1988), but the controversy seems to have subsided over the last year as the controversial shows have gained a solid foothold in the popularity polls (Jarvis, 1992).

Do these controversial programs pose a threat to viewers' parenting? A potential for adoption of the destructive parenting behaviors on the controversial shows exists according to social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and the potential is increased by the popularity of (heavy exposure to) these shows. "Roseanne" currently has the highest ratings of any program on prime-time television (Jarvis, 1992), and "The Simpsons" has held the honored "top dog" position in the past (Bierbaum; 1989; Knight, 1989; Zoglin, 1990). It is unknown whether the parent-characters on these shows are identified by viewers as "bad" (or at least "questionable") parent role-models due to the controversy. If they are not identified as such, unwary adoption of their behaviors may pose a threat to viewers' parenting. However, even if they are identified as "bad," the dichotomy of the genres may influence viewers to label parent-characters on noncontroversial programs as "good," inducing them to regard all parenting behaviors on the noncontroversial programs as beneficial and socially acceptable. To date, there is no
empirical evidence concerning the desirability of the parenting behaviors on either genre. We have no data to make a decision about the influence of family shows (of any type) on the viewing public.

It is known, however, that the attraction of viewers is of prime concern in a competitive media market (Beschloss, 1990; Zillman & Bryant, 1988), and because all three of the controversial family shows have enjoyed tremendous popularity, sitcom writers might be (or may have been) influenced to alter the "good" parent behaviors on noncontroversial shows for the sake of ratings. This is perhaps the most compelling reason for examining existing family programming--so that we can establish a baseline to see how programming is changing over time.

Another reason for the study is to see how humor is associated with parenting behaviors on TV. Humor is known to increase attentiveness to and attractiveness of others, which enhances learning and motivates re-enactment of modeled behaviors (Bandura, 1977; Colwell & Wigle, 1984; Powell & Andersen, 1985; Weaver & Cottrell, 1988; Wlodkowski, 1985; Ziv, 1988). If humor is more frequently associated with poor parenting behaviors than with helpful ones, this could increase the probability that viewers might adopt undesirable modeled behaviors.

In summary, the purpose of this research is to determine the desirability of the content of prime-time family situation comedies (the most popular form of family programming on TV) in terms of parenting behaviors presented and their potential for influencing parenting practices of viewers. The recent introduction of the
"controversial" family programs into weekly prime-time programming makes this a timely study. The viewing audience for family shows includes parents and individuals who will become parents in the future, and many lives may be affected by media-induced changes in behaviors of viewers. Gaining a better understanding of the desirability of the parenting behaviors which are displayed on family situation comedies and of factors intrinsic to the programming that may affect adoption of these behaviors by viewers is the general focus of this study.
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND:
RATIONALE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

TV programs have the potential to influence viewers to alter their behaviors. Social learning theory is reviewed here to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the processes which allow televised behaviors to influence viewers. This is followed by the application of social learning theory principles to family programs and parent characters. Then the desirability of various types of televised parenting behaviors and response contingencies is addressed, along with special considerations for the influences of humor and realism. Finally, the purpose of this study is summarized.

Theoretical Perspective: Social Learning Theory

Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) assumes that there is a continuous interaction between personal factors, environmental factors, and behavior. These factors determine what people learn and how they behave. Humans are continuously learning through observation of, and interaction with, the environment. Learning through observation is called social, observational, or vicarious learning. When people are learning through observation, they are called observers. The person or behavior they are observing is called a model.

Models (examples), rewards (anything desired), and punishments (anything undesired) are of primary importance in social learning theory. Models can be presented in various forms—live or in the symbolic forms (pictures and/or words) of broadcast, printed, or
recorded material. Rewards and punishments can be internal or external to the observer, vicarious or direct, and either self- or other-regulated. Models, rewards, and punishments influence four processes that account for the acquisition of behaviors by observers (Bandura, 1977).

The first two processes, called attentional and retentional processes, control what is learned. Re-enactment of learned behaviors is viewed as a separate act, contingent on the first two processes, but governed by separate ones called reproductional and motivational processes (Bandura, 1977). A closer look at each of the four processes is warranted to clarify their relationships, functions, and outcomes.

**Basic Processes**

**Attentional Processes**

Attentional processes deal with the attention and perception given to models and/or their behaviors. If people are to learn new behaviors through observation, they must notice the modeled behavior, and they must perceive the details or components (sequence of behavioral actions) of which it is composed. People are most likely to pay attention to salient factors such as the attractiveness of models, behaviors that achieve valued goals, and rewards acquired by models. These external factors usually play the largest part in regulating what people attend to, but internal factors such as observers' moods may also have an influence (Bandura, 1977).

**Retentional Processes**

Modeled behaviors lose their power to affect observers unless
they are remembered. To be remembered, observed behaviors must be coded in some symbolic form, either in words or pictures, and maintained in permanent memory for retrieval at a later time. Observers remember modeled behaviors that are rewarded better than unrewarded ones if they anticipate gaining benefits from reproducing the behaviors in their own lives. Anticipation of reward motivates them to code and rehearse (think about) the behaviors for future use. Repeated exposure to any behavior, rewarded or not, also helps observers place enduring, retrievable images in memory (Bandura, 1977).

**Motor Reproduction Processes**

Motor reproduction processes involve changing the symbolic representation for an observed behavior (stored in memory) into physical actions. In order for observers to reproduce modeled behaviors they must be able to organize their physical operations spatially and temporally—to give the memory physical structure in time and space. There are several steps in this process: making a physical attempt to reproduce the behavior, perceiving discrepancies between one's actions and the behavior in memory, and correcting the perceived discrepancies. Correct motor reproduction sometimes requires repeating this cycle of monitoring and refinement (Bandura, 1977). When children learn to clap, for instance, they often produce finger-to-palm contact which resembles clapping, but which fails to produce the clapping noise. By recalling the palm-to-palm detail of clapping, and noticing and correcting the faulty aspects of their performance, they narrow or eliminate the discrepancy between their
behavior and the model in memory and are eventually successful in producing the clapping noise.

Motivational Processes

Motivation is a primary factor determining which modeled behaviors are likely to be adopted (retained for future use) and reproduced (acted out). Motivational factors can vary tremendously between viewers and include: stimulus inducements, anticipated satisfactions, observed benefits, the experienced functional value, perceived risks, self-evaluative derivatives, and various social barriers and economic constraints (Bandura, 1977). In general, however, behaviors that seem to be effective for models--behaviors that are rewarded--are most likely to be adopted and reproduced. Adoption and reproduction are less likely for modeled behaviors that are ineffective or punished. This is because modeled rewards and punishments act as cues to inform observers of potential consequences for re-enactment in real life (Bandura, 1977).

When a similarity, such as social role, exists between a model and an observer, the observer is more likely to re-enact the model's behaviors. Expectation for successful re-enactment is increased in these instances because skills are also assumed to be similar (Bandura, 1977).

Generalization

Models can influence observers to act in ways that are not exact imitations of modeled behaviors through a process of generalization called abstract modeling. In this process, viewers derive the principles underlying specific modeled behaviors and create rules
about them for generating new behaviors with similar characteristics. The new behaviors resemble behaviors the models would be likely to exhibit under similar circumstances. Observers must be repeatedly exposed to various behaviors which share common properties for abstract modeling to occur. Exposure alone does not ensure generalization. As with exact imitation, it is the salient or significant features that will be noticed. In abstract modeling, these features must be the common properties (or must accompany the common properties) which generate the rules for new behavior (Bandura, 1977). The term re-enactment is used to refer to any reproduction of modeled behavior—whether exact, as in imitation, or similar, as in abstract modeling.

Generalization is important because observers rarely encounter the exact circumstances which may have induced the model to elicit that particular behavior. This gives observers the freedom to re-enact modeled behaviors in dissimilar settings, with different rewards, and to alter the components of the modeled behaviors to meet their needs in each particular situation. For instance, an observer may see a character on television tell a friend to call later. The observer is not restricted to repeating the actor’s words to remind a friend to call, but may generalize this observation to reminding different people to do different things in different situations, by means of phone calls, letters, or other forms of communication.

Social Learning Theory and TV Viewing Habits

Television is an especially effective medium for influencing behavior. Albert Bandura states that televised modeling is so
effective in capturing attention that individuals "learn much of what they see [on television] without requiring any special incentives to do so" (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1966 in Bandura, 1977, p. 25). Researchers who study television viewing patterns might well add that the medium is so attractive that most viewers will watch it regardless of what they will see on TV. For instance, Comstock (1980) found that for most people, the decision to watch TV generally takes precedence over the selection of what to watch. When there is nothing "good" to watch during their preferred viewing time, most people watch whatever is available. Rubens's study (1982) also supports this finding of indiscriminant viewing. In his study, TV viewers were questioned about 17 programs (series)—16 of which were highly criticized and one which was praised for programming content. Despite general concern over the amount of sex, profanity, and violence on TV, few subjects were critical of the programs for these reasons. In fact, there was a strong inclination for some viewers to subject themselves willingly to programs containing material which was counter to their professed moral and ethical standards. For instance, religious viewers of strong Fundamentalist faiths were particularly concerned about sex and profanity, but were the most likely to watch and express favorable opinions about these programs.

Even when researchers use a cluster analysis technique, which groups audience segments by professed viewing habits, the majority of viewers fall into fairly nondiscriminatory groups. Domzal and Kernan (1983) found three distinct groups of viewers using this technique, which they labeled "embracers," "accomodators," and "protestors."
Embracers represented 49% of the subjects and watched 95% of the 20 programs surveyed on either a regular or an occasional basis. Accommodators represented 27% of the sample and also watched 95% of the programs, but unlike the embracers, limited their regular-basis-viewing to programs with a "nontrivial" message (i.e., "20/20" instead of "Dukes of Hazzard"). The smallest group (24% of the subjects) was made up of protestors who were very selective in their viewing habits. They regularly viewed only 15% of the 20 programs surveyed, and never watched 45% of them. Thus the research suggests nonselective exposure to TV is the norm for most Americans, indicating TV is highly successful in attracting the attention of its viewers.

Television also has exceptional capacity for influencing memory and promoting generalization through repetitious broadcasts (series formats and reruns) (Son, Reese, & Davie, 1987). Here again, viewing patterns of the public imbue television with its power to influence. In a study by Barwise, Ehrenberg, and Goodhardt (1982) where "program loyalty" (watching the same series each time it comes on) was measured, of viewers who were watching TV at all, 70% watched the same show the next time it was on if it aired during prime time and 90% watched it the next time if it aired during the day. This repetitious exposure to similar modeled behaviors over time increases learning.

TV, then, is an excellent teacher. It captures attention and rewards it through entertainment as it presents various models of behavior. It presents the behaviors repetitiously, both through
repeat broadcasts, and through the similarity of behavior patterns across shows. Nothing else is required for learning to take place. This does not necessarily mean, however, that viewers will automatically re-enact everything they see. Motivational processes, determine re-enactment of observed behaviors, according to social learning theory, and many motivational processes are individually determined by factors extrinsic to the television programming. As noted earlier, however, motivation is very strongly influenced by one factor intrinsic to television programming. This factor will be discussed next.

**Viewer Re-enactment of Televised Behaviors**

**The Effect of Televised Rewards and Punishments**

As noted, each television viewer (observer of modeled behaviors on TV) has unique personal and situational factors that influence whether they will re-enact a learned behavior, but there is one factor that increases the potential for re-enactment by all observers. That factor is whether the model receives a reward or punishment (the response contingency) following the modeled behavior. When a model is displayed receiving a reward for a particular behavior, this acts as a cue to viewers that they might also be rewarded for re-enactment. As a rule, then, television characters who model behaviors followed by rewards have great potential to increase re-enactment of the behavior by viewers (Bandura, 1977).

When a model is punished for a particular behavior, this acts as a cue to viewers that they might be punished for re-enactment, reducing the chances that viewers will re-enact the behavior.
Viewers are not always dissuaded from re-enacting punished behaviors, however, because many punished behaviors have potential rewards (implicit or explicit) associated with them which may have more influence than the punishment (Bandura, 1977). For example, a character may lie to a police officer on a television drama and receive a prison sentence for this, but the character may also display satisfaction because another character's life was saved by giving false information to the police.

**Rewarding Antisocial Behaviors on TV**

Justice dictates that people in our society will somehow receive rewards for prosocial behaviors and be punished for antisocial behaviors. Television often displays models being rewarded for antisocial behaviors, however. These models are usually "good guys" and their antisocial conduct is redefined in acceptable terms and given social sanction (in TV reality). When good guys cheat, they are "clever." When they rob banks, they are "borrowing" money. When they kill other people it is "justified." Almost any behavior can be reframed as acceptable in real life too, and with acceptable terms, many people will engage in reprehensible conduct (Jones, 1978; Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 1975). Thus, TV models sometimes exemplify, legitimatize, and advocate adoption of antisocial behaviors which viewers can and do adopt and re-enact. The adoption process for socially prohibited behaviors is the same as the process for prosocial behavior except that it is slower (Bandura, 1977).

**What about antisocial behaviors that receive no punishment?**

Seeing TV characters engage in prohibited activities without
receiving adverse consequences can reduce viewer inhibitions which would ordinarily suppress re-enactment of the modeled behaviors (Bandura 1976; Rachman, 1972). In fact, if models are not punished for behaviors which are socially prohibited, expectations for successful re-enactment of those behaviors may be created which can actually increase observers' persistence in re-enacting the behaviors in the face of actual punishment or absence of reward. In this respect, the lack of punishment has an effect on the observer which is similar to the receipt of rewards (Bandura, 1965; Walters & Parke, 1964; Walters, Parke, & Cane, 1965).

**Punishing Prosocial Behaviors on TV**

Pro-social behaviors are sometimes punished on TV also, usually to create a challenge for a serious character or a comic situation for a humorous one. Viewer adoption and re-enactment of these modeled behaviors is less predictable. The presence of a discrepancy between prosocial behavior and unsanctioned punishment requires viewers to rely more on their own experiences to judge potential outcomes for re-enactment. If the modeled behavior is identified as prosocial by viewers and the modeled punishment is seen as unrealistic, viewers are likely to adopt and re-enact the behavior. If the modeled punishment induces viewers to perceive the behavior as antisocial, however, re-enactment is less likely to occur (Bandura, 1977).

In summary, any behavior that is modeled on television may be adopted and re-enacted by viewers. Behaviors that are rewarded are most likely to be re-enacted, but behaviors that are punished may
also be re-enacted because these behaviors often have a potential reward associated with them.

Evidence of TV's Influence On Viewer Behaviors and Attitudes

Studies concerning the influence of TV on behavior have demonstrated its ability to inspire increases in the frequency of productive behaviors such as saving electricity (Winett et al., 1984) and improving eating habits (Solomon, 1982), as well as reducing destructive behaviors such as eating disorders, drug use (Whitaker, 1989), smoking (Solomon, 1982), homicide (Comstock, 1986; Whitaker, 1989), suicide (Bollen & Phillips, 1982; Phillips, 1982), and other aggressive and violent acts (Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1973).

The influence of TV goes beyond adoption (or rejection), re-enactment, and generalization of modeled behaviors, however. Attitudes and beliefs can also be altered by exposure to television. Specifically, studies have shown that attitudes towards nuclear war (Kulman & Akamatsu, 1988), smoking (Dyer, 1983), political candidates (McLeod, Glynn, & McDonald, 1983), aggression (Rule & Ferguson, 1986), various advertised products, (Rubinstein, 1983), and one's own self (Ross et al., 1982) can be influenced by what individuals see on television. Attitudes and beliefs conveyed by TV models, can also affect the perception of societal norms (Adler & Cater, 1976; Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Lowery & DeFleur, 1983; Mackey & Hess, 1982; Signorielli, 1989).

Societal Norms and TV

Viewers have perceptions of societal norms (social rules) which
regulate behavior that are heavily influenced by exposure to TV (Bandura, 1977). This is especially true for rules governing intimate, private, or rarely experienced domains, such as private homes, doctors' offices, or jails. People have limited opportunities to observe others within these restricted domains, yet television provides myriad representations of life in these spheres (representations that may or may not be realistic). The differential between opportunities to view real behaviors which take place in restricted domains and representations of these behaviors induces viewers to accept the symbolic social reality of TV (the portrayed reality, hereafter referred to as TV reality) as a reflection of the actual social reality that exists (hereafter called social reality). Thus, TV is empowered to influence viewers' perceptions of societal norms, and this in turn influences which beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors may be adopted by viewers (Adler & Cater, 1976).

Whether adoption of a modeled belief, attitude, or behavior occurs appears to depend on the amount of reality-based information the viewer has to counter the "fictional realism" (realistically portrayed falsehoods) of television. In Arcuri's (1977) and Rochford's (1974, in Arcuri, 1977) survey of police officers' views of the influence of "cop" shows, officers reported the public seemed to believe: police can take fingerprints off water; police are expected to answer a call regardless of its nature; police should be on the scene in two minutes; police have all experts at their immediate disposal; and all crimes should be solved in half an hour. Rochford speculates heavy exposure to television and lack of experience with
real police, police procedures, and/or police stations, leads most viewers to believe the TV myths about police are true. All of this is understandable, since police activities occur in a relatively restricted domain—one with which few people have much experience in real life.

Gerbner and Gross (1976) would agree with these notions. They analyzed the assumptions TV cultivates about the facts, norms, and values of society, then turned the findings into questions about the real world. Answers to the questions revealed whether subjects in their study held a view of reality which leaned toward the fictional representations on TV or toward the observable world. They found that "heavy" TV viewers (those who watched four hours or more a day) gave the TV reality answers more frequently than the real-world answers. Some college education apparently made a difference, but within the educated group, high exposure to TV also biased the answers in favor of TV reality and away from the observable facts of the real world. Education did not make as much difference as the frequency of exposure to television.

TV and Parenting

Because family life takes place in a private domain, norms for family life are particularly vulnerable to the influence of TV reality. When viewers' adopted norms for family mirror those portrayed on TV, viewers' norms are reinforced by the (perceived) societal endorsement of TV reality. When viewers' norms are different, perceived discrepancies often provoke viewers to adopt the TV norms (Dorr, 1981). Even if discrepancies are not perceived,
simple exposure to new modeled behaviors can also alter viewers' norms. Ableson (1981, cited in Dorr, 1981) and Janis (1980, cited in Dorr, 1981) agree that family programs provide a set of "instructions" for viewers about how to behave within various family roles and family situations. They also present a set of conversational forms (scripts and interaction patterns) which are perceived by viewers as models of appropriate and inappropriate interaction in relationships (Brown & Vaughn, 1987). Thus, parents and potential parents who watch TV (hereafter referred to simply as viewers) can learn how they "should" behave as well as how they could behave from family shows.

As with other programs, patterns of viewer exposure dictate the potential of the family shows to influence viewers' adoption and re-enactment of behaviors. Domzal and Kernan (1983) mentioned earlier for their work in identifying audience segments ("embracers," "accommodators," and "protestors"), included two family programs in their survey ("Little House on the Prairie" and "The Jeffersons"). Interestingly, both were watched regularly by embracers (the largest of the three groups), but only occasionally by the other two groups. Furthermore, according to the "profile" which emerged, embracers watched the most TV of all three groups, watched it mostly to escape from their problems and to relax, and selected programs mostly from habit. They were mainly interested in being entertained (rather than being informed), and of the three groups, had the least interest in comprehensive news and information issues, and were the lightest readers of books. Thus, a large number of people are likely to watch
family shows, and those most likely to watch are the people with the fewest sources of reality-based information with which to compare or evaluate their perceptions of TV messages and behaviors. These factors seem to indicate that viewers of family shows are particularly vulnerable to being influenced by the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors portrayed by role models on these programs.

No research has been done to verify actual changes in parenting due to television viewing, although several researchers and authors have expressed concern about the effects of television on parents' behaviors and attitudes (Dail & Way, 1983, 1985; Dorr, 1981; Duhl, 1976; Gagnon & Roberts, 1982) and on family norms (Fisher & Dean, 1976). This appears to be an important topic of study, however, due to the preliminary findings of the few exploratory studies which have been done on family program content.

In 1973, Fisher and Dean (1976) analyzed 59 television programs to determine the realism of marital and parental roles portrayed on prime-time TV. They coded program contents using an instrument which listed contemporary marital and parent role behaviors (created by "reducing and compacting" a college student survey of observed husband-, wife-, father-, and mother-role behaviors). They then analyzed the degree of realism in the programming by comparing the behaviors found in the programs with an inventory reflecting behavior in the average American middle-class family. They found that most marital and parenting behaviors were portrayed realistically, however the TV programs also included many behaviors which were not considered "normal and realistic" at the time. These behaviors
included frequent complaints about spouses, violent acts, extramarital affairs, displays of jealousy, and leaving or arguing with spouses. Given the continued portrayal of these acts on television over the years, it is reasonable to be concerned about how television may be influencing viewers.

A later study, conducted in 1982, by Dail and Way (1983, 1985), analyzed the content of 44 family-oriented programs to determine how frequently various styles of parenting (authoritarian, permissive, or neutral) were displayed and how frequently each style was reinforced by a child-character. The frequency of various types of parenting behaviors (instrumental, expressive, or neutral) was also analyzed. They coded these behaviors using an instrument created for their study (the descriptors for each coding category were unanimously accepted by a panel of three experts in family sociology and child development to establish content validity). They concluded that the frequency of portrayal of parenting behaviors was very likely to have socializing effects on adult viewers (though they had no actual measure of this). Parental roles (parent verbalizations reflecting one main idea spoken immediately prior to a child response) were exhibited an average of 31.8 times per hour and child rearing patterns (parent verbalizations spoken directly to a child) were portrayed 27.8 times per hour on the family programs they analyzed. This was a very high ratio compared to alcohol consumption which was portrayed approximately four times per hour and food related behaviors which were portrayed about eight times per hour, both of which had been shown to have strong influences on behavior (Breed &
DeFoe, 1981; Garlington, 1977; Greenberg, Fernandez-Collado, Graef, Korzenny, & Atkin, 1979; Lowery, 1980; Way, 1983). Dall and Way's study indicated that more research is warranted.

These studies represent the extent of empirical information available about parents on family programs. There is not enough information at this time to determine the impact of these shows on viewers. Television is known to be an effective medium, however, for transmitting information about parenting. Various informational series have been created and presented to young adults and parents for the specific purpose of educating them on this topic. Data on these programs show that they have been effective in increasing knowledge and skills (Heffner & Platt, 1980; MacDonald, 1984; Morlan, 1976). It seems reasonable, then, to conclude that family programming may have a widespread effect on parenting behaviors, and it is important that televised parenting behaviors be in the best interests of the real children who may be affected by their parents' adoption and re-enactment of these behaviors according to social learning theory.

**Beneficial vs. Detrimental Parenting Behaviors**

Parenting behaviors may be beneficial (helpful) or detrimental (harmful) in terms of their potential effect on dependent children. These notions of beneficial and detrimental parent behaviors are supported by thousands of studies which confirm and expand on the maturational, psychoanalytic, behavioral, and cognitive-developmental theories of famous and well-respected researchers such as Jean Piaget (1977, 1983), Erik Erikson (1963), John Bowlby (1969), D. Baumrind
Studies indicate that normal development in children is contingent on the number, type, and quality of interactions they have with the environment and with their primary caretakers (e.g., parents, sitters). Children must have their physical, social, and emotional needs met adequately for proper development. In our country, it is the responsibility of parents to see that the opportunities, conditions, and materials are provided to meet these needs (Bigner, 1989). Ideally, this means parents should: provide food, exercise, and medical care to facilitate physical growth and development (Salkind, 1985); develop and maintain a loving, supportive, predictable relationship with each child to encourage attachment and a sense of trust and belonging (Bowby, 1969; Erikson, 1963); support each child's natural curiosity and provide new experiences to stimulate mental growth and allow the child to gain mastery over the environment (Piaget, 1977) and a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977); provide encouragement and set reasonable expectations which will help children succeed socially with a high sense of autonomy and self-esteem (Erikson, 1963); model appropriate behaviors and refrain from modeling inappropriate behaviors (Bandura, 1977), and encourage responsible behaviors using an authoritative style of parenting sensitive to children's thoughts, feelings, and capabilities so as to facilitate social functioning and acceptance (Baumrind, 1967; Belsky et al., 1984).

Parent-characters on television may model beneficial behaviors
such as those described above or they may model detrimental behaviors which do not meet and/or block the satisfaction of children's needs. (See Appendix A for examples of these parenting behaviors). Parent-models have the opportunity, therefore, to alter viewers' parenting knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors in beneficial or detrimental ways.

Social Learning Theory and the Desirability of Televising Various Parenting Behaviors and Response Contingencies

Because viewers may adopt and re-enact parenting behaviors observed on TV, it is worthwhile to establish which modeled behaviors are desirable and which are not, according to social learning theory. Theoretically, the desirability of each televised behavior may be judged by its potential for eliciting re-enactment from viewers (as indicated by associated response contingencies) and its potential effect on the development of real children (as suggested by various developmental theories). The desirability of each combination of parenting behavior and response are summarized in Table 1. Discussion of the combinations follows.
Table 1

The Desirability of Televising Various Parent Behaviors With Various Response Contingencies According to Social Learning Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior modeled:</th>
<th>Rewarded</th>
<th>Punished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial</td>
<td>Highly Desirable</td>
<td>Mixed Desirability*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental</td>
<td>Highly Undesirable</td>
<td>Undesirable**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*According to social learning theory, it would be better, for the sake of real children, that this be rewarded rather than punished to increase the likelihood that viewers will adopt and re-enact the beneficial behaviors.

**According to social learning theory, it would be better, for the sake of real children, that this not be televised at all to prevent viewers from learning detrimental parenting behaviors. If the detrimental behavior is televised, however, it is desirable that it be punished to reduce the likelihood that viewers will re-enact these behaviors.

It is desirable, according to Bandura's social learning theory, that parent-characters model behaviors in the best interest of real children (beneficial behaviors), and that these behaviors be followed by rewards to induce viewers to adopt and re-enact them. Beneficial behaviors that are not modeled cannot be learned, adopted, or re-enacted. Viewers would lose the positive influences of TV on parenting knowledge and skills if beneficial parenting behaviors were not modeled. It is not desirable for beneficial parenting behaviors to be associated with punishment on TV because punishment may reduce
the tendency for viewers to re-enact these behaviors. Viewers who lack knowledge about child development or the conceptual skills to determine what constitutes acceptable parenting may be particularly at risk to the negative effects of this response contingency.

Modeling detrimental parenting behaviors is not desirable, whether the behaviors are rewarded or punished, because once learned these behaviors may be re-enacted by viewers at their discretion. If they are not modeled at all, viewers are less likely to learn, adopt, and re-enact them. If detrimental parenting behaviors are modeled, however, they should be followed by punishment to discourage viewers from adopting and re-enacting them. Rewards should not be associated with detrimental parenting modeled on television, since social learning theory suggests that this may increase their potential for adoption and re-enactment by parents.

Special Concerns: Realism and Humor

Realism and Family Norms

The response contingencies of modeled behaviors generally act as cues to inform TV viewers of likely consequences for re-enactment in real life. Whether viewers accept the cues depends, in large part, on whether they think the TV reality portrayed in the program reflects social reality (i.e., would this behavior really be acceptable in their social circles?). This is not usually much of a consideration because, as mentioned earlier, it is generally accepted by viewers that television does reflect social reality.

The controversial family shows—"Married with Children," "Roseanne," and "The Simpsons"—may be viewed somewhat differently,
however. Viewers may feel confused about which parenting behaviors are really sanctioned and/or which responses are realistic on these shows because they display a mixture of satirical and serious parenting behaviors along with a mixture of realistic and unrealistic responses. Confusion could lead some viewers to adopt detrimental parenting practices.

Of even greater concern, however, is the widespread influence controversial family programs could have on family norms. According to cultural norms theory (Cassata & Assante, 1979), exposure to these programs, could, over time, lead viewers to adopt new values and modify their current attitudes toward family. If script writers alter the parent-characters (or their behaviors) on the noncontroversial family programs to make them more like the parents on controversial programs (for the sake of audience attraction), detrimental changes in family norms could occur even faster. Viewers may be wary of adopting the behaviors, values, or attitudes of "bad" parents they see on controversial programs, but they may not hesitate at all to adopt the detrimental behaviors, values, or attitudes displayed by "good" parents on noncontroversial shows.

Humor and Detrimental Parenting Behaviors

Humor on family programs is a special concern when it is associated with detrimental parenting behaviors because humor is known to increase attention (Powell & Anderson, 1985), interest (Wlodkowski, 1985), and motivation to learn (Weaver & Cottrell, 1988) and to increase actual learning (Ziv, 1988). These factors could increase the potential for adoption of detrimental parenting
behaviors by viewers. Producers of family situation comedies have included canned laughter after dialogue and behavior that they would like the audience to laugh at. This pairing of laughter with humor is intended to cue the audience to laugh at those points in the program, and it works very well (Chapman, 1973; Cupchik & Leventhal, 1974; Fuller & Sheehy-Skeffington, 1974; Nosanchuk & Lightstone, 1974; Pistole & Shor, 1979; Smyth & Fuller, 1972). The sense of security from perceived conformity and the innate pleasure connected with laughing, act as a reward for responding to these cues (Zimbardo, 1985). Thus canned laughter increases audience pleasure, and ratings which increases audience shares as producers intended. It also implies a norm about what viewers should find funny.

Humor that contains explicit or implicit references of a derogatory nature that focus on human beings, either the joker or another person, present the focal person of the joke in an unfavorable light. Canned laughter is often paired with derogatory humor presented by parent-characters on TV. This is unfortunate, because if viewers adopt these humorous but derogatory behaviors, the quality of their parenting could be reduced.

Presenting derogatory humor and jokes in front of or to a child (either on TV or in real life) must be considered detrimental parenting behavior for several reasons. When the joke is at the expense of the parent who is telling the joke, the parent is modeling poor self-esteem and poor self-talk to the child (e.g., Parent about self: "Did you buy any beer for the tub-o-lard?"). When the child's other parent is the butt of the joke, the derogatory humor can
undermine the child's positive view of the other parent (e.g.,
Stranger at the door: "Is your husband home?" Mother: "No, I'm
cooking feet for dinner"). When the joke is about a child's brother
or sister, it can create problems in the sibling relationship (e.g.,
Father with kids to acquaintance who can't remember youngest child's
name: "Oh that's OK, the baby's name isn't important"). Derogatory
humor that targets children who are present and within hearing
distance can diminish their self-esteem, self-confidence and/or
self-efficacy (e.g., Father: "I know I made a few mistakes in my
life! For instance [pointing at each kid] one, two, three").
Finally, derogatory jokes about friends, relatives, or other people
model anti-social attitudes and/or prejudice (e.g., Father about a
relative: "Sure, throw her wrinkled butt into a wheel chair and roll
her on over here").

The potential for re-enactment of humorous but derogatory
behaviors seen on TV is especially high due to the combination of
reward (both for watching and for re-enactment), perceived sanction
(from TV reality and/or social reality), and potential lack of
understanding about the effect of these acts on children. Parents
have ample opportunity to act in derogatory-humorous ways with their
own children, and they may actually experience rewards and social
sanctions (laughter) for these acts in spite of their detrimental
effect on children. Therefore, it is not desirable for
parent-characters on TV to model derogatory humor, particularly in
the presence of their dependent (character) children.
Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the desirability of the content of prime-time family situation comedies on TV, in terms of types of parenting behaviors presented and their potential for influencing parenting practices of viewers. The following specific questions are addressed in this study:

1. How much beneficial and detrimental parent modeling is portrayed on television?

2. How frequently is each response (reward or punishment) associated with each type (beneficial or detrimental) of parenting behavior?

3. How frequently is derogatory humor associated with parenting behaviors?


5. Do the dimensions vary by gender of the parent-character?

The purpose for examining each question is summarized below:

1. Types of Parenting Behaviors

The frequency and type of parenting behaviors (beneficial or detrimental) are examined to determine the potential impact of television on viewers' learning. How much opportunity exists for viewers to learn beneficial parenting behaviors from TV? How much
opportunity exists for viewers to learn detrimental parenting behaviors from TV?

2. Response Contingencies

The frequency and type of response contingencies (reward or punishment) associated with each type of parenting behavior are examined to determine the potential for adoption or rejection of each behavior type by viewers. Are beneficial parenting behaviors rewarded more often on TV than detrimental ones, or less often? Do the response contingencies indicate that viewers would be more likely to adopt beneficial behaviors or detrimental behaviors?

3. Derogatory Humor

The frequency of association between derogatory humor and parenting behaviors is examined to determine how often derogatory humor might influence viewers to adopt detrimental parenting behaviors. Are detrimental parenting behaviors rarely associated with humor or is this a frequent occurrence?

4. Program Genre

The differences between controversial and noncontroversial programs are analyzed to see how much the potential differs between program genres for learning and adopting detrimental parenting behaviors. Do controversial programs really contain more instances of detrimental parenting behaviors as current controversies might suggest (Berkman, 1990; Carter, 1990; Fischer, 1990; "New cultural," 1989; Polskin, 1989; Powers, 1990; "Rakolta back," 1989; Rebeck, 1990; Sims, 1989; "Too baudy," 1989; Zehme, 1990; Zoglin, 1988)? Are the detrimental parenting behaviors rewarded more or less often on
these shows than they are on noncontroversial programs? Are the
detrimental parenting behaviors associated with derogatory humor more
frequently on one genre than on another?

5. Gender of Parent-Character Models

Finally, each dimension of the study (e.g., types of parenting
behaviors, response contingencies, frequency of derogatory
humor/parenting behavior association, and program genre) is analyzed
in terms of gender to determine if a difference exists between male
and female viewers for learning, adoption, or re-enactment of each
type of behavior due to similarity (sex and role) between
parent-model and viewer. Is there a difference between the amount of
detrimental and beneficial parenting portrayed by father vs. mother
characters? Is there a difference between father and mother
characters in terms of the amount of reward or punishment they
receive for each type of behavior? Is derogatory humor more
frequently associated with the detrimental behaviors of one gender or
the other? Which gender displays detrimental parenting behaviors
more frequently on controversial programs? On noncontroversial
programs?

It is hoped that this study will provide valuable information
about the potential influence of family TV programs on viewers'
parenting behaviors, and indicate whether we should be concerned
about the potential effects of existing family programs. The outcome
of the study should also indicate whether further investigation is
warranted and provide a baseline for comparison should further
studies be done in this area.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study utilizes the research technique of content analysis to determine how frequently various types of parenting behaviors, response contingencies, and humor are modeled by parent-characters on family television programs. This method was selected because it is thought to be "particularly well suited to the study of communications and to answering the classic question of communications research: 'Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?'" (Babbie, 1986, p. 268). The study sample is composed of 75 half-hour family-oriented prime-time television programs, which were videotaped during the first three months of 1991. This chapter describes the criteria and procedures for selecting the population and sample, the procedures for recruiting and training coders, the codebooks and coding procedures, and the operational definitions of coded variables.

Population and Sample

Selection of Series for Coding

All series scheduled for broadcast during prime-time hours on the national networks during January 1991 were evaluated to determine whether their typical focus and content were appropriate for inclusion in the study. Criteria for including each series were as follows:

Family Orientation/2 Parent-Child Scenes Minimum

Each series had to be family-oriented. This was defined as any series that focused on family (including parent or child concerns),
with individual episodes containing at least two scenes depicting parent(s) and child(ren) together. A change in scene was defined as a change in set or break for a commercial. This restriction was to be certain each program included a reasonable amount of material for coding.

**Minimum of One Parent and One Dependent Child Living Together**

Each series had to have at least one parent and one financially dependent child living together in the same household. Parents could be biological, step, adoptive, single, married, divorced, or separated as long as they were readily identified as playing the role of a primary caretaker. Adults in long-term, sanctioned caretaking arrangements such as raising a relative or friend's child (without legal adoption) were treated as parents. Temporary or substitute caretakers (those providing day care or babysitting who deferred caretaking decisions to another person) were not considered parents. Thus grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other friends who lived with the family were not considered as parents even when they had periodic short-term responsibility for the child(ren).

**Contemporary American Setting**

Each series had to depict an American family (any race or creed) and it had to be contemporary (e.g., not colonial or futuristic). The purpose of this restriction was to study shows most likely to portray parents similar to those in the potential viewing audience.

**Weekly Series/Prime-Time/National Broadcasts**

Each series had to be broadcast weekly between 7:00 and 10:00 p.m. on one of the national networks—NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX. This
restriction was made because programs broadcast nationally during prime-time are known to have the largest viewing audience. Series is the most typical format for family programs.

**Situation Comedies**

Series selection was further limited to situation comedies because this was the predominant genre of family program falling in the selected time-frame, and because humor is one aspect of the study. This restriction excluded only one family program—a 60-minute drama.

In summary, fifteen series met the criteria listed above, including 12 noncontroversial series and 3 controversial (as defined in chapter 2). These series are listed on Table 2.

**Table 2**

**1991 Televised Family Situation Comedies Episodes Collected for Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name/Type</th>
<th>Broadcast Date of Each Episode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noncontroversial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blossom</td>
<td>1/14 2/04 2/18 3/04 3/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosby Show, The</td>
<td>1/10 1/07 2/21 3/07 3/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Rules</td>
<td>1/27 1/29 2/05 2/12 2/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Matters</td>
<td>1/11 2/01 2/15 2/22 3/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Prince</td>
<td>1/14 2/04 2/11 2/18 2/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>1/11 1/18 1/25 2/01 2/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Pains</td>
<td>1/23 1/30 2/06 2/20 2/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Dad</td>
<td>1/21 1/28 2/11 2/14 3/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Colors</td>
<td>1/20 1/27 2/17 2/24 3/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle Buck</td>
<td>1/26 2/02 2/09 2/23 3/02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who's the Boss</td>
<td>1/29 2/05 2/12 2/19 2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonder Years</td>
<td>1/30 2/07 2/21 3/06 3/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controversial</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married w/ Children</td>
<td>1/13 1/20 1/27 2/03 2/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseanne</td>
<td>1/15 2/15 2/12 2/19 2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpsons</td>
<td>1/17 1/31 2/14 2/28 3/14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selection of Episodes for Coding

Because of limited taping facilities, no more than one show could be taped during a given time period. When selected series' broadcasts conflicted (were broadcast at the same time on different channels) the decision concerning which series to record first was made by flipping a coin. Thereafter, each episode of the conflicted shows were recorded on alternate weeks (if broadcast). Series that did not conflict were taped on consecutive weeks.

After taping, episodes were screened to be sure they met criteria for inclusion. Episodes not containing at least two scenes depicting parents and children together were discarded. Programs which were interrupted for news flashes (news of the war in Kuwait interrupted approximately a half-dozen programs), then resumed "in progress" were not included since portions of the story-line were eliminated and parent-child interactions could not be viewed in context. In this manner, episodes from each series were "collected" until five acceptable episodes were obtained from each series. (Any additional recordings were used for practice and drift checks). This procedure yielded 75 half-hour episodes for analysis. Table 2 shows the broadcast dates of each episode selected for the study.

Selection of Scenes for Coding

Only the portions of scenes which contain both a parent and a dependent child either in each other's presence or communicating with each other (by phone or through a door or wall) were coded. These scenes are most relevant for this study because the presence of a parent and a child in the scene may cue parent-viewers that the
modeled parenting behaviors are sanctioned for re-enactment in front of or with a real child. Scenes without children may depict parenting behaviors that could be re-enacted with live children, but the absence of children is more likely to act as a cue that the behaviors may not be sanctioned for re-enactment with children, according to Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Typical content of omitted scenes included private (no children present) discussions between parent-characters about activities unrelated to parenting which portrayed subplots in the programs.

Leads, weekly introductions and credits, special credits, out-takes, and advertisements were not coded unless the activity portrayed in them was related to the plot and both parents and children were present in the scene (some programs ran credits during the plot formation or ending).

Forms, Coders, and Coding Procedures

Coding Forms

Prior to coding, three identical codebooks were prepared (one for each coder) for each individual program to be coded during training sessions, actual data collection, and for drift checks (described later). A transcript of the dialogue to be coded was printed on the left side of the pages and columns for coding each variable were printed on the right side. See Appendix B for a sample codebook page.

Coder Selection and Training

Three undergraduate students were recruited from the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS) at Oregon State
University (by means of an announcement distributed in HDFS classes) to serve as coders for this project. All coders were female, in their third year of college, and had completed courses in human development, family life, and parenting. All grew up in families with at least one younger brother or sister, and had experience teaching or caring for young children. These three students received three weeks of intensive training and practice in coding family programs prior to coding the programs for this project.

The first training session began with an introduction to the coding variables, directions for coding and a discussion of developmental theories (see Appendices A and C for representative examples of the type of information coders received during training). This was followed by jointly filling out codebook pages and discussing the coded scenes with respect to rules for coding. Coders left the first training session with video tapes of the first three practice programs and their respective codebooks, a list of program characters and their roles and relationships (see Appendix D), and instructions to practice the coding procedures. Correlations were calculated for this practice coding and coders discussed discrepancies in their answers at the second training session. This sequence of assigning practice programs, calculating correlations, and discussing discrepant answers was repeated several times. Altogether, there were 4 training sessions, and a total of 12 programs coded for practice prior to coding actual data. A flowchart for coding punishment and reward of parent-characters' behaviors was developed as a result of the discussions during the training sessions.
This flowchart was used as a supplement to the information in Appendices A and C to simplify the coding of problematic punishment/reward responses.

The typical intercoder reliability rating for similar TV content analysis conducted by other researchers has ranged from .74 to .89 (Dail & Way, 1983, 1985; Thomas & Callahan, 1982; Williams et al., 1982). An overall intercoder reliability rating of .77 was achieved for the 12 practice programs during training for this research (see Appendix F).

**Coding Procedures**

**Sequence of Coding Actual Data**

Completely random ordering of the rating of episodes was not possible because students would not have been able to access the proper tapes when needed. (Providing this type of access would have required recording each 1/2 hour episode on a separate tape or making multiple copies of the existing tapes. Neither option could be justified due to the cost.) In lieu of random ordering of episodes, the sequence for rating each videotape was counter-balanced so that coders coded the tapes in varied orders.

To accomplish this, the nine video cassettes which contained the 75 programs of data were matched into four sets (to make the number of programs to be coded approximately equal in each set). The original assignment of each set of tapes was randomly chosen, and tapes were distributed accordingly. Tape sets were then rotated and exchanged three times over a six week period, with each coder taking assigned tapes home to code at her leisure prior to the next exchange
deadline. Coders coded their programs independently and were asked not to discuss their answers with each other. (See Appendix G for tape contents and tape assignments).

**Specific Coding Procedures**

The specific coding procedures required coders to watch each episode one time through without stopping, as if they were "ordinary" viewers, to gain an understanding of the plot and context. Coders then reviewed each scene as many times as they felt necessary to fill out the coding forms accurately. (For more detail on coding instructions, see Appendix C).

**Drift Checks**

Drift is the phenomenon of altering coding criteria subtly over time. It is a common and significant problem when coding takes weeks or months to complete. It occurs because the passage of time and exposure to new material can erode the coders' original conceptions of the criteria. When drift occurs, correlations tend to drop significantly, and retraining is necessary.

To combat this phenomena, "drift checks" were conducted just before each new set of tapes was coded. These drift checks consisted of having all coders independently code a program (which was not used for practice or actual data), and analyzing correlations to be sure they were acceptable. No significant drift occurred according to correlations on the drift checks, which averaged .78 for the three checks (see Appendix H for tables of drift check correlations). Coders met to discuss the few discrepancies in coding that existed for these programs. These discussions undoubtedly constituted
mini-retraining sessions, helping them to recall and reaffirm details of the criteria for coding which kept correlations high. Had correlations been unacceptable for these checks, more training would have taken place to bring correlations up before the next set of actual data tapes were coded for the project.

Operational Definitions of Variables

Individual variables to be measured included types of parenting behaviors, response contingencies for parenting behaviors, types of humor, genre of family program, and gender of parent-model. Each measure is described in detail below.

Types of Parenting Behaviors

Parenting behaviors were coded as beneficial or detrimental according to whether subcomponents ("what and "how" of the behavior) were coded positively or negatively. The "what" category denotes potentially helpful or hurtful effect as indicated by manifest (visible, surface) content of the behavior. The "how" category predicts helpful or hurtful effect as implied by latent (underlying) content of the behavior (see Appendix A for examples of various combinations of "how" and "what" and Appendix C for specific coding directions given to coders). Both latent and manifest content of behaviors were examined because it was assumed this would force coders to consider all important aspects of a behavior and increase the accuracy of the more global "beneficial" and "detrimental" labels.

Both manifest ("what") and latent ("how") content of the behavior had to be coded as positive to label the behavior
"beneficial." Any other combination resulted in a label of "detrimental." At first glance, this coding procedure might appear to tip the coding in a pessimistic direction, inflating the amount of detrimental behaviors. A further directive countered this possibility, however. Neither the manifest nor latent content of a behavior was to be coded negatively unless the coder could specify a logical reason why this should be so--based on the theories of development which the coders had learned in undergraduate classes on child development, psychology, and communication. If coders were uncertain as to how a developmental theory related to the behavior in question, they coded it positively (see Appendix C, Columns 3 and 4, tip #5).

Nonverbal parenting behaviors not associated with either verbal behavior or canned laughter were not coded. This restricted the scope of the coding to a manageable level yet insured that the most salient behaviors (dialogues and their associated nonverbals) were coded.

Response Contingencies for Parenting Behaviors

The response contingency classifications were reward and punishment. Cues (facial expressions, gestures, body postures, comments) presented by the parent-characters in response to responses (or consequences) to their behavior were used to determine whether the parent behavior should be coded as rewarded or punished. Certain responses/consequences were typically received as a reward, while others were typically received as punishment (A sample of these typical responses and consequences is listed in Appendix I along with
response contingency classification). If no cue was given by the parent-character, or if cues were difficult to determine, the parent-character's behavior was coded according to the typical classification of that response/consequence. For instance, if a mother-character provoked a child and got slapped, but the scene ended immediately or no parent cues were shown concerning the incident, the parent's behavior was coded as "punished" because most people would respond with displeasure to being slapped.

The only exception to this coding procedure was if the parent-character provided pre-behavior (before the behavior occurs) cues that they were seeking an unusual response. In these rare instances, the pre-behavior cue indicated to the coder that the response/consequence should be coded with the opposite classification. For instance if a parent-character wanted to avoid being selected for a committee and appeared to be purposely seeking criticism from other committee members in order to avoid having to serve on the committee, the pre-behavior cue (wanting to avoid being selected) would cause coders to code her behavior as "rewarded" if she received criticism. (See Appendices C and E for specific coding directions and examples for coding punishment and reward responses).

Types of Humor

Humor was operationalized for this study to mean canned laughter. Only humor associated with verbal or nonverbal behaviors of parent-characters was coded. When these behaviors were detrimental, the associated humor was considered to be "derogatory." When they were beneficial, the associated humor was coded as "nonderogatory." Two programs were excluded from the humor analysis.
because they lacked canned laughter. These programs were "The Simpsons" and "The Wonder Years."

Genre of Family Programs

Two family program genres were represented in the sample to be coded—noncontroversial family programs and controversial family programs. Controversial programs included "Roseanne," "Married with Children," and "The Simpsons"—programs labeled "anti-family" in an article by Zoglin (1990), which described the public controversy surrounding these shows. All other family programs in the sample made up the noncontroversial genre (see Table 2 for a list of which programs were included in each genre). Genre was never discussed with coders. Coders had no knowledge that genre of programs was to be analyzed and they had no reason to differentiate between genres while they were coding.

Gender of Parent-Characters

Gender of parent-characters was coded according to parenting roles as father or mother.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter, outcomes from the data analysis are presented, beginning with a description of the data set and correlations for intercoder reliability. Results corresponding to the five questions posed in chapter two are described next. Each question addresses one of the five study variables: parenting behavior types, response contingencies, humor, genre, and gender. Outcomes for each question are successively more detailed as each introduces a new variable to be related to those brought out in earlier questions.

Question one ("How much beneficial and detrimental parent modeling is portrayed on TV?") and question two ("How frequently is each response contingency--reward or punishment--associated with each type of parenting behavior?") are addressed first. The analysis for question three ("How frequently is derogatory humor associated with parenting behavior?") makes use of a subset (omitting programs without canned laughter) and is addressed next, in terms of how it relates to parenting behavior types and response contingencies. In the section addressing question four ("How much do noncontroversial and controversial programs differ on each of the [previous] dimensions?"), the data sets are split according to genre to compare parenting behavior types, behavior/response combinations, and humor. Finally, question five ("Do the [previous] dimensions vary by gender of the parent character?") is addressed, again using whichever data set is appropriate to calculate outcomes as they relate gender to
parenting behavior types, behavior/response combinations, humor, and
genre of the programs.

The analysis of data for this chapter is based on simple
descriptive statistics. Percentages and chi square calculations are
given to facilitate comparisons and draw conclusions about the data.
It should be noted that the meaningfulness of the chi square analysis
rests on the assumption that all observations are independent of one
another. In this study, they are not, since each of the behaviors
does not come from a different character. The behaviors come from 26
independent characters, variously engaged in 75 ongoing verbally
interactive (interdependent) dialogues. Thus, the reader is
encouraged to look beyond the chi square statistic, to the
percentages, to make sense of the findings.

Data Set Description

Coding the 75 programs yielded 3,576 incidents of parenting
behaviors. Of these, eight were problematic in that they were
accompanied neither by responses of any sort nor by PRR's (parents'
responses to the responses)--i.e., the response was implied as
inevitable by the story line, but was not shown. Because this
represented such a small portion of the data, these segments of
parenting behaviors were simply excluded to simplify analysis. Codes
from the remaining 3,568 parenting behaviors and their associated
responses, gender indicators, and humor indicators constitute the raw
data for this analysis. These data were drawn from 37.5 hours of TV
family situation comedy programming.
Intercoder Reliability Correlations

Intercoder reliability correlations were run for the actual data. Though not typically done, this procedure was included for the learning experience it offered the researcher and to verify the effectiveness of the coder training and drift checks. As was hoped, drift check data yielded higher correlations than training data, and both were at acceptable levels (above 70%—see Table 3). A pleasant surprise was that correlations on the actual data exceeded both training and drift check correlations, indicating coders followed coding procedures diligently when coding the actual data. This knowledge should increase the reader's faith in the findings.

As an aside, it might be noted that the coders found the latent content of parent-characters' behaviors consistently more difficult to code than the manifest content, but only slightly so. The responses to parent-characters' behaviors were also more difficult to code than the behaviors themselves. In spite of these differences, the correlations suggest that overall the procedures for coding were reliable since the correlations fall within normally accepted standards for this type of research.
Table 3

Average Intercoder Reliability Correlations (All Coders)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>(manifest)</th>
<th>(Latent)</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What</td>
<td>How</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drift Checks</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Data</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beneficial and Detrimental Parenting Behaviors

and Their Response Contingencies

As was mentioned in the literature review, simple exposure to a modeled behavior is all that is required for observers to learn the behavior according to social learning theory. It is logical to presume that when more beneficial behaviors are modeled on TV, more opportunity exists for viewers to learn (and possibly adopt) these behaviors. Likewise, the more detrimental behaviors are modeled, the more opportunity there is for viewers to learn them. How much beneficial and detrimental parent modeling is portrayed on family situation comedies? Of the 3,568 parenting behaviors in the full data set, 72% were beneficial and 28% were detrimental.

According to social learning theory, responses received by TV models serve to modify the impact of the modeling on viewer adoption of the behaviors. Modeled behaviors which receive rewarding responses are more likely to be adopted, while those that receive punishing responses are less likely to be adopted. How often was
each response contingency associated with each type of parenting behavior? Sixty-five percent of the beneficial behaviors and 38% of the detrimental behaviors were rewarded, while 35% of the beneficial behaviors and 62% of the detrimental behaviors were punished. These percentage can be found on Table 4, where the comparisons can be made by looking at percentages in the cells which are aligned horizontally (cross-wise comparison). The chi square statistic was significant ($X^2 (1, N = 3568) = 212.47, p < .001$). This means that the four cells differ in a statistically significant way and there is a highly significant statistical relationship between parenting behavior types and response contingencies. The finding of statistical significance simply adds weight to what can be observed from the comparison of percentages across parenting behavior types—that type of parenting behavior is strongly associated with type of response, and that there is a substantial difference in how frequently a given response is associated with a given type of parenting behavior.
Table 4

Type of Parenting Behavior by Response Contingency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Response</th>
<th>Type of Parenting Behavior</th>
<th>Beneficial</th>
<th>Detrimental</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded</td>
<td></td>
<td>1671</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>2056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(65%)</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished</td>
<td></td>
<td>893</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>1512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>(62%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2564</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>3568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 (1, N = 3568) = 212.47, p < .001$

These four cells represent four possible associations between behaviors and responses, and will be referred to as behavior/response combinations throughout the rest of this paper. The four specific behavior/response combinations are labeled according to the behavior and response association each represents---beneficial/rewarded, beneficial/punished, detrimental/rewarded, and detrimental/punished.

Humor

The analysis for humor was on 32.5 hours of the programming rather than the 37.5 hours represented by the full data set. This is because two of the series ("The Simpsons" and "The Wonder Years") did not contain canned laughter—which denoted humor according to the operational definition. The 13 remaining series which made up the humor subset contained 3,152 parenting behaviors. Thirty-two percent of these were humorous and 68% were not. As noted in the literature
review, humor is known to have an attention attracting and sanctioning power which can increase viewers' learning and adoption of modeled behaviors. How often was humor associated with each type of parenting behavior and behavior/response combination? As Table 5 indicates, 23% of the beneficial behaviors in this subset were humorous (benign humor), and 55% of the detrimental behaviors were humorous (derogatory humor). The chi square was significant ($X^2 (1, N = 3152) = 290.6, p < .001$). This means there is a highly significant statistical relationship between parenting behavior types and the presence/absence of humor.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Parenting Behavior</th>
<th>Beneficial</th>
<th>Detrimental</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humorous (w/canned laughter)</td>
<td>531 (23%)</td>
<td>490 (55%)</td>
<td>1021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonhumorous (w/out canned laughs)</td>
<td>1730 (77%)</td>
<td>401 (45%)</td>
<td>2131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2261 (100%) 891 (100%) 3152

$X^2 (1, N = 3152) = 290.6, p < .001$

Response Contingencies For Humorous Parenting Behaviors

Analysis of responses to humorous parenting behaviors was done on the humor subset, which excluded the two programs without canned
laughter. Is there a significant association between types of humorous parenting behaviors and types of responses? When submitted to chi square analysis, the relationship was statistically significant \( \chi^2 (1, N = 1021) = 201.84, p < .001 \), see Table 6.

Comparing cross-wise, note that 66% of the humorous beneficial parenting behaviors were rewarded as compared to 42% of the humorous detrimental parenting behaviors. Thirty-four percent of the humorous beneficial parenting behaviors were punished as compared to 58% of the humorous detrimental parenting behaviors. Thus, reward is more commonly associated with humorous beneficial parenting behaviors, while punishment is more commonly associated with humorous detrimental behaviors, as one might expect. However, the incidence of reward for humorous detrimental parenting behaviors, and punishment for humorous beneficial behaviors is also notable. Together, these undesirable behavior/response combinations represent over one-third of the humorous parenting incidents.
Table 6

Humorous Incidents by Parenting Behavior Type and Response Contingency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Behaviors Associated w/Humor</th>
<th>Beneficial (Benign Humor)</th>
<th>Detrimental (Derogatory Humor)</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Contingency:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(66%)</td>
<td>(42%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34%)</td>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>531</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 (1, N = 1021) = 201.84, p < .001$

Program Genre

How much do noncontroversial and controversial programs differ on the dimensions of behavior types, response contingencies, and humor? Each outcome will be presented as these variables are addressed in turn, beginning with parenting behavior types.

Parenting Behavior Types Exhibited on Controversial and Noncontroversial Programs

How much do noncontroversial and controversial programs differ on the dimension of parenting behavior types? Of the entire data set of 3,568 parenting behaviors, 78% were from noncontroversial programs and 22% were from controversial programs. Noncontroversial programs represented 30 hours of programming and controversial programs represented 7.5 hours of programming. When weighted by number of
hours of programming, 78% percent of the parenting behaviors in the noncontroversial programs and 50% in the controversial programs were beneficial, while 22% of the parenting behaviors in the noncontroversial programs and 50% in the controversial programs were detrimental, as Table 7 indicates. The relationship between program genre and behavior type is statistically significant as the chi square analysis indicates ($X^2 (1, N = 196) = 16.789, p < .001$).

Table 7

Types of Parenting Behaviors by Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Type</th>
<th>Noncontroversial</th>
<th>Controversial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial</td>
<td>73 (78%)</td>
<td>51 (50%)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental</td>
<td>20 (22%)</td>
<td>52 (50%)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93 (100%)</td>
<td>103 (100%)</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, $N = 2128/30$ hrs. programming; cell 2, $N = 381/7.5$ hrs programming; cell 3, $N = 618/30$ hrs. programming; cell 4, $N = 387/7.5$ hrs. programming. $X^2 (1, N = 196) = 16.789, p < .001$

Response Contingencies for Each Type of Parenting Behavior on Controversial and Noncontroversial Programs

Though the two genres are significantly different in the amount
of beneficial and detrimental parenting exhibited, this may not necessarily indicate major differences in their influence on viewers. Response contingencies should also be considered. How much do the two genres differ on this variable? Of the beneficial parenting behaviors, 65% on the noncontroversial programs and 64% on the controversial programs were rewarded, while 35% on the noncontroversial programs and 36% on the controversial programs were punished (see Table 8). Of the detrimental parenting behaviors, 37% on the noncontroversial programs and 40% on the controversial programs were rewarded, while 63% on the noncontroversial programs and 60% on the controversial programs were punished (see Table 9). As Tables 8 and 9 indicate, when weighted by programming hours, there was no statistically significant relationship between genre and behavior/response combinations (\(X^2 (1, N = 123) = .0381, p < NS\) for Table 8, and \(X^2 (1, N = 73) = .0529, p < NS\) for Table 9).
Table 8

Responses to Beneficial Parenting Behaviors by Genre of Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior/Response Combinations:</th>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial/Rewarded</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(65%)</td>
<td>(64%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial/Punished</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, N = 1428/30 hrs. programming; cell 2, N = 243/7.5 hrs programming; cell 3, N = 754/30 hrs. programming; cell 4, N = 138/7.5 hrs. programming. 

X² (1, N = 123) = .0381, p < NS
Table 9

Responses to Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Genre of Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior/Response Combinations:</th>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental/Rewarded</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37%)</td>
<td>(40%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental/Punished</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(63%)</td>
<td>(60%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, N = 230/30 hrs. programming; cell 2, N = 155/7.5 hrs programming; cell 3, N = 388/30 hrs. programming; cell 4, N = 231/7.5 hrs. programming. X² (1, N = 73) = .0529, p < NS

Humor on Controversial and Noncontroversial Programs

Do controversial and noncontroversial programs differ on the variable of humor? Of the 3,152 parenting behaviors in the subset of thirteen programs used for analysis of humor, 33% were contained on the 5 hours of controversial programming and 67% were on the 27.5 hours of noncontroversial programs. There was almost three times as many humor incidents per hour (and almost five times as much derogatory humor per hour) on the controversial programs as on the noncontroversial ones. Making cross-wise comparisons between the cells on Table 10, we find benign humor accounted for 62% of the humor on noncontroversial programs and 32% of the humor on
controversial programs. Derogatory humor accounted for 38% of the humor on noncontroversial programs and 68% on the controversial programs. When weighted by number of hours of programming, the chi square was significant ($X^2 (1, N = 93) = 6.9081, p < .01$).

Table 10
Humorous Beneficial and Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Genre of Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th>Noncontroversial</th>
<th>Controversial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humorous/Beneficial</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Benign Humor)</td>
<td>(62%)</td>
<td>(32%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous/Detrimental</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Derogatory Humor)</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
<td>(68%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, $N = 423/27.5$ hrs. programming; cell 2, $N = 108/5$ hrs programming; cell 3, $N = 260/27.5$ hrs. programming; cell 4, $N = 232/5$ hrs. programming. $X^2 (1, N = 93) = 6.9081, p < .01$

Taking the analysis a step further, the relationship between humor and correlated behavior/response combinations is examined for each program genre. The outcome for each genre is as follows: 67% of the humorous beneficial parenting behaviors were rewarded on noncontroversial programs and 65% were rewarded on controversial programs, while 33% were punished on noncontroversial programs and
35% were punished on controversial programs (found on Table 11).

Forty-three percent of the humorous detrimental parenting behaviors were rewarded on noncontroversial programs and 41% were rewarded on controversial programs, while 57% were punished on noncontroversial programs and 50% were punished on controversial programs (found on Table 12). When weighted by programming hours and submitted to chi square analysis, no significant relationships between genre and responses to either type of humorous parenting behavior were found.

Table 11

Humorous Beneficial Parenting Behaviors by Response Contingency and Genre of Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humorous Behavior/Response Combinations</th>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th>Noncontroversial</th>
<th>Controversial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benign Humor/Rewarded</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (67%)</td>
<td>14 (65%)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benign Humor/Punished</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (33%)</td>
<td>8 (35%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 (100%)</td>
<td>22 (100%)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, N = 283/27.5 hrs. programming; cell 2, N = 70/5 hrs programming; cell 3, N = 140/27.5 hrs. programming; cell 4, N = 38/5 hrs. programming.

\[ X^2 (1, N = 37) = .0174, p < NS \]
Table 12

**Humorous Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Response Contingency and Genre of Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humorous Behavior/Response Combinations:</th>
<th>Program, Genre</th>
<th>Noncontroversial</th>
<th>Controversial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory Humor/ Rewarded</td>
<td></td>
<td>(43%)</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory Humor/ Punished</td>
<td></td>
<td>(57%)</td>
<td>(59%)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by hours of programming: cell 1, N = 111/27.5 hrs. programming; cell 2, N = 96/5 hrs programming; cell 3, N = 149/27.5 hrs. programming; cell 4, N = 136/5 hrs. programming.  
$X^2 (1, N = 55) = .00557, p < NS$

**Gender**

Are there significant differences between the portrayal of fathers and mothers on television? Of the parenting behaviors exhibited on all the family programs, 66% were those of father-characters and 34% were those of mother-characters. This discrepancy is largely due to there being more father-characters than mother-characters (four programs featured father-headed single-parent families).

**Type of Parenting Behavior and Gender**

Seventy-four percent of the mother-characters' behaviors and 71% of the father-characters' behaviors were beneficial, while 26% of the
mother-characters' and 29% of the father-characters' behaviors were detrimental. When submitted to chi square, with averages weighted by number of parent characters, there was no statistical significance ($X^2 (1, N = 267) = .3697, p < NS$, see Table 13).

Table 13
Type of Parenting Behavior by Gender of Parent-Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(74%)</td>
<td>(71%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, $N = 907/11$ mother-characters; cell 2, $N = 1657/15$ father-characters; cell 3, $N = 317/11$ mother-characters; cell 4, $N = 687/15$ father-characters. $X^2 (1, N = 267) = .3697, p < NS$

Other Study Variables and Gender

Findings for the association of other study variables with gender lack notability when weighted by number programs per parent character. The association between genre and type of behaviors (Beneficial or Detrimental) for each gender, and between types of humor and genre for each gender are the exceptions. These
associations were significant. (Tables 14-17 illustrate associations along with levels of significance). Contingency tables for other variables are included in Appendix J, for readers who are interested.

In general father-characters tended to display more beneficial and detrimental behaviors than mother-characters, with beneficial behaviors displayed more frequently on noncontroversial programs and detrimental behaviors displayed more frequently on controversial programs. Father-characters also displayed more instances of benign humor than mother-characters, but unlike mother-characters who displayed more frequently on controversial programs, they displayed this type of humor almost equally across genres. The two genders displayed almost equal amounts of derogatory humor, with most of it displayed on controversial programs by both genders also.
Table 14
Beneficial Parenting Behaviors by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th>Beneficial</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>70 (45%)</td>
<td>57 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>87 (55%)</td>
<td>124 (68%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

157 (100%) 181 (100%) 338

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 210/3 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 171/3 father-characters; cell 3, N = 697/8 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 1486/12 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 338) = 6.085, p < .025$
Table 15

Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Detrimental</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(80%)</td>
<td>(62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79 (100%) 107 (100%) 186

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 188/3 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 199/3 father-characters; cell 3, N = 129/8 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 488/12 father-characters.

χ² (1, N = 186) = 6.5784, p < .025
**Table 16**

**Benign Humor by Gender and Program Genre**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre</th>
<th>Benign Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(65%)</td>
<td>(48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>(52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43 (100%) 55 (100%) 98

*Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 56/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 52/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 107/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 316/11 father-characters.*

\[X^2 (1, N = 98) = 2.883, p < .05\]
Table 17

Derogatory Humor by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Derogatory Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(88%)</td>
<td>(74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, \(N = 125/2\) mother-characters; cell 2, \(N = 106/2\) father-characters; cell 3, \(N = 57/7\) mother-characters; cell 4, \(N = 202/11\) father-characters. 

\[X^2 (1, N = 142) = 4.7189, p < .05\]
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the desirability of the content of prime-time family situation comedies on TV in terms of types of parenting behaviors presented and their potential for influencing parenting practices of viewers. In this section, the findings related to each specific question posed in chapter two are discussed as they relate to social learning theory. Only factors intrinsic to family programming have been analyzed in this study. These factors include the modeled parenting behavior types (beneficial/detrimental), the modeled responses to those parenting behavior types (reward/punishment), humor (as defined by canned laughter), and the association of these factors with genre (controversial/noncontroversial) and with gender (father/mother).

Factors intrinsic to the program are not the only things that influence how viewers (and society) will be affected by the programming. There are many extrinsic factors--frequency of viewing, selectivity of viewing, attitudes and education of viewers, to name a few--which could modify how intrinsic factors might influence viewers. These extrinsic factors will also be presented, when relevant, to aid the reader's understanding of the implications of the study findings. The discussion begins with the first study variable--parenting behavior types.

Parenting Behavior Types

Both beneficial and detrimental parenting behaviors were modeled on these programs, but beneficial behaviors were modeled more frequently than detrimental ones. Thus, opportunity exists for
viewers to learn both types of parenting behaviors, and assuming all programs are viewed with equal frequency (an assumption which will be examined later in this chapter), there is more opportunity to learn beneficial than detrimental parenting behaviors.

According to social learning theory, exposure to a modeled behavior is all that is necessary for an observer to learn the behavior. In the full data set, 28% of the parenting behaviors were detrimental. Is this frequency too high? How much television people watch and which programs they watch (variables extrinsic to, but possibly influenced by, the programming) are critical factors which should be considered when answering this question, as is whether viewers are able to discriminate beneficial from detrimental parenting behaviors. If viewers are selective about what they watch, keep their exposure to detrimental parenting behaviors to a minimum, and are able to distinguish one type of parenting behavior from another easily, then the present content of the family sitcoms is probably not harmful. What does research on these extrinsic factors indicate?

As noted in chapter two, Comstock (1980) found viewers watched TV even when there was nothing "good" on. Ruebens (1981) also found indiscriminant viewing patterns. Many of the viewers in his sample stated concern about the frequency of sex, profanity, and violence on TV, but seemed unable to recognize it in the programs they watched, or were unwilling to limit their viewing of it if they did recognize it. It is reasonable to conclude from this that viewers of family
shows are probably also unselective about what they watch in terms of their exposure to detrimental parenting behaviors.

Domzal and Kernan (1983), who used a cluster analysis technique to identify "embracers," "accommodators," and "protestors" (noted in Chapter Two), found that viewers in the group most likely to watch the two family programs included in their survey identified closely with television, watched it somewhat indiscriminantly—-for entertainment and escape purposes, and displayed a very accepting attitude towards it. This group also had the least interest in comprehensive news and information and were the lightest readers of books. Domzal and Kernan's study paints a profile of the people most likely to regularly watch family sitcoms as viewers who have high exposure to the fictional realism of television, who have few sources of reality-based information with which to compare or evaluate their perceptions of TV messages and behaviors, and who are generally unguarded about how they allow television to influence them.

Can we conclude from these studies that the rate of detrimental parenting on family programs is too high? Social learning theory supports the idea that the ability of viewers to differentiate between beneficial and detrimental parenting behaviors could make a difference in which ones they adopt for themselves. If we are more concerned about viewer adoption of detrimental behaviors than about exposure to them, we must consider whether viewers are able to discriminate between these two behavior types.

As noted in the literature review, there is ample evidence that the ability to spot the difference between TV reality and Social
reality is based on how much real-world information the viewer has (Arcuri, 1977). Heavy (frequent) viewers of television have the most trouble differentiating reality from fiction according to Gerbner and Gross (1976), and though education (college level) makes some difference in this ability, it does not make as much difference as the frequency of exposure to television. Unfortunately, "heavy" exposure to television and lack of reality-based information were major descriptors of the "embracer" group defined by Domzal and Kernan (1983)—the group which seems most likely to watch family programs. Even if reality-based information were readily available from the private domain of family life, these viewers would be unlikely to seek it out. We can conclude therefore, that at least some portion of the viewers of family sitcoms may have some trouble differentiating between the beneficial and detrimental parenting behaviors modeled on TV. How many is unknown. Should these facts cause us to be concerned about the number of detrimental parenting behaviors on television? It is a matter of opinion. Certainly there are enough potentially negative ramifications to warrant further investigation into this matter.

Though viewers may not be very discriminating in their TV viewing habits, and some viewers with little or no experience with real children may be confused about which parenting behaviors are beneficial or detrimental to real children, this does not mean they will necessarily adopt the detrimental behaviors they see on TV for use in their own lives—the aspect of exposure about which we should be most concerned. Exposure to modeled behaviors only ensures that a
viewer will learn the behavior, while adoption depends on many additional factors--some intrinsic and some extrinsic to the programming. The most important intrinsic factor, according to social learning theory, is the response contingencies portrayed for each type of parenting behavior (Bandura, 1977). Whether we should be concerned about the parenting behaviors depends very much on what responses are received by the parent-characters for each type of behavior.

Response Contingencies for Parenting Behaviors

There were four possible behavior/response combinations coded in this study: beneficial/rewarded, beneficial/punished, detrimental/rewarded, and detrimental/punished. Findings indicate that of the four possible behavior/response combinations, beneficial/rewarded behaviors occurred most frequently, with beneficial/punished, detrimental/punished, and detrimental/rewarded behaviors following in second, third, and fourth place, respectively. In general, this is good news. The highly desirable combination of beneficial/rewarded behaviors occurred more frequently than any other behavior combination (representing 46% of all coded behaviors), meaning beneficial behaviors would be most likely to be learned and adopted, assuming equality of viewer exposure to all programs and equality of all other "adoption" factors. Unfortunately, 25% were beneficial/punished (which according to social learning theory could deter adoption of these desirable behaviors--better that this be rewarded to promote adoption), 18% were detrimental/punished (which could promote learning of detrimental parenting behaviors--better
this not be shown to eliminate the opportunity to learn these behaviors) and 11% were detrimental/rewarded (which could promote learning AND adoption of detrimental parenting behaviors—better that this be punished if it is to be shown at all). Overall, more than one-half of the behaviors on the family sitcoms fall into categories which are clearly undesirable or have mixed desirability according to Social Learning Theory. (See Table 1 for a graphic summary of which behavior/response combinations are desirable and undesirable).

Implications Of the Response Contingency Findings

Should we be concerned about these findings for response contingencies? Yes. Television has largely replaced the poets, philosophers, educators, and religious leaders of society who have been charged historically with the responsibility of presenting (to the masses) the mythologies that shape our culture (Katz & Nikelly, 1983). Television's power stems from the fact that it requires no literacy (unlike print), no mobility (unlike schools and churches), and costs nothing (unlike theatre) (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), and from its ability to contact millions of viewers simultaneously with its "realistic" fiction format (Breen & Corcoran, 1982), proffering its illusion of reality and social sanctions 24 hours a day. There are sufficient conflicting messages on family sitcoms (e.g., rewards and punishments for both types of parenting behaviors) to confuse nondiscriminating viewers about which parenting behaviors should be adopted, and, for most viewers, the presence of a rewarded behavior on TV implies there is social sanction for the behavior (Bandura, 1977). The research of Bollen and Phillips (1982), Comstock (1986),
Phillips (1982), Rubinstein (1983), Solomon (1982), Winett et al., (1984), and many other researchers (Surgeon General's Advisory Committee, 1972) indicates television does have the power to alter viewers' behaviors. Of course, factors intrinsic to the programming (modeled rewards and punishments) are not the only thing that influences adoption and re-enactment of televised behaviors by viewers. There are many factors intrinsic to each viewer which certainly influence which televised behaviors an individual will adopt. Given the scope of its influence, however, the potential effects of any questionable television programming should be evaluated quite carefully. When a basic social institution like family is involved, evaluation could prove to be critical to the well-being of both current and future generations.

Humor

Humor (operationally defined as canned laughter) was associated with about one-third of the parenting behaviors, and it was associated much more frequently with detrimental than with beneficial parenting behaviors. What does this mean? A review of some previous research on humor and canned laughter may be helpful for this evaluation. Humor is an effective social influence technique, often used to facilitate teaching (Adams, 1974; Welker, 1977; Wlodkowski, 1985). It has been shown to increase attention of viewers to TV commercials and improve their liking of both the commercials and the products advertised on TV (Duncan & Nelson, 1985) and in magazines (Madden & Weinberger, 1982). It increases the likeability of communicators (Goodchilds, 1972; Gruner, 1976; Mann, 1981; Mettee,
Laughter is a behavior, which, like humor, can modify the behaviors and attitudes of the listener or viewer. Researchers who have studied the effects of modeled laughter have found it facilitates laughter in others. This seems to be true regardless of whether the model is live (Brown, Brown, & Ramos, 1981; Brown, Dixon, & Hudson, 1982) or taped (Chapman, 1973; Cupchik & Leventhal, 1974; Fuller & Sheehy-Skeffington, 1974; Smyth & Fuller, 1972). Canned (taped) laughter is generally experienced as enjoyable and appears to elicit positive responses to the material which it accompanies (Chapman & Chapman, 1974; Fuller & Sheehy-Skeffington, 1974; Pistole & Shor, 1979; Smyth & Fuller, 1972).

Situation comedies are the primary format for family programs on television, and almost all of them make use of canned laughter. Why? Canned laughter increases pleasure and recall of the associated material (Chapman, 1973) which most certainly increases viewer ratings and loyalty to the programs. No wonder the television industry makes such generous use of this stimulus. As Nosanchuk and Lightstone (1974) point out:

Sitting in our living rooms, we are subjected to a stimulus which is subtle (for so we experience it) yet believed to be capable of exacting 'conformity' (as indeed the industry vows by its continued use), with practically no cognitive pressure being felt on the part of the 'victim' even in the absence of any real group at all (p.154).
It seems then, that humor increases attention to and retention of televised material. It also increases liking of the material which can facilitate adoption of the televised message. This can increase exposure to similar messages through increased program loyalty and ratings, which enhances the power of television to present realistic misinformation and reduces the amount of time viewers have to obtain reality-based information through real-world experiences or fact-based reading and classes. It also means humor may be significantly increasing the learning and adoption of undesirable parenting behaviors.

**Verbal Aggression**

Are there other reasons to be concerned about humor being so strongly associated with detrimental parenting behaviors? Yes. The initial plan for this study was to code nonverbal behaviors only when they accompanied verbal behaviors, except for those nonverbals accompanied by canned laughter—as noted in Appendix C, under Column 1 directions for coding. As it turned out, however, virtually no nonverbal behaviors were accompanied by canned laughter unless they were also accompanied by verbal dialogue, thus derogatory humor was always associated with verbal aggression. This finding is in line with Williams and his colleagues (1982) who found, of all program genres, sitcoms contain the greatest amount of verbal aggression associated with humor.

Why should we be concerned about humorous verbal aggression? Aggressive humor is perceived as funnier than nonaggressive humor (McCauley, Woods, Coolidge, & Kulick, 1983; Singer, Gollob, & Levine,
1967). Thus, viewers may be induced to prefer programs which have high amounts of humorous aggression, if producers incorporate more and more aggressive humor into programs in order to increase ratings and audience loyalty. This is undesirable for several reasons. First, there is evidence that heavy exposure to televised violence leads to desensitization and more tolerance for violence (Bandura, 1978). It follows that desensitization to verbal aggressions in the family could be the result of heavy exposure to increasing levels of verbal aggression in family situation comedies. Second, there is evidence that both aggressive and humorous films facilitate aggressive moods and behaviors in some viewers (particularly angry ones) through a process of excitation transfer (Baron, 1978; Berkowitz, 1970; Mueller & Donnerstein, 1983). Thus modeling of verbal aggression may elicit re-enactment in a certain segment of viewers who are in a state of anger. How large this segment might be is unknown. What is known, however, is that this same viewing segment is likely to be especially drawn to watching the most aggressive humorous programs repeatedly because aroused viewers tend to find all types of humor funnier than nonaroused viewers (Cantor, Bryant, & Zillmann, 1974; Prerost, 1975; Zillmann, 1971).

Another possible reason to be concerned about the association between humorous verbal aggression and detrimental parenting behaviors is that much of the humor associated with detrimental parenting behaviors is disparaging of the parent-characters, that is, it makes fun of how badly they behave, particularly in their interactions with child-characters. (This notion rests on the fact
that there was almost five times as much derogatory humor per hour on the controversial programs as on the noncontroversial programs—as previously noted in chapter four—where bumbling/inept parenting is the main attraction.) Frequent exposure to humorous detrimental parenting behaviors could influence viewers to adopt such behaviors. Why would any viewer want to copy behavior which will be self-disparaging? Mindess (1971) and Goldstein (1976) cite several reasons. When we identify with humorous "bumblers" we may become detached observers of ourselves, picturing our plight as a circumstance of fate (I'm just born . . . clumsy, unlucky, unskilled). So, though joking does not help us overcome real inadequacies, we can temporarily diminish the importance of them by making them laughable. According to Zillmann and Stocking (1976), self-disparagement may also deprive others of an opportunity to put us down. Thus, it can serve as a defense mechanism, minimizing inevitable depreciation by others. Additionally, self-disparaging humor is enjoyable to others and helps them to see us as "having a sense of humor." Humor used this way can turn a social disadvantage (lack of some desirable skill or quality) into an admired advantage (e.g., being seen as a 'good' guy, maybe even a 'secure' guy" (p. 155)).

Implications Of the Humor Findings

Based on factors presented from other studies, the frequency of association between humor and detrimental parenting behaviors found in this study should cause some concern. However, the fact that beneficial humorous behaviors were more frequently associated with
reward, while detrimental humorous behaviors were more frequently associated with punishment, should provide some reassurance. Unfortunately, it is not known which has more influence on the viewer—the modeled response for a parenting behavior or its association with humor. Lacking this knowledge, evaluation of the acceptability of the present rates of response contingencies for humorous televised parenting behaviors could still be done, based on preference for error types. Would we rather assume humor is more influential and take a cautious attitude toward accepting the presence of humorous detrimental parenting behaviors on TV, knowing such caution may be unwarranted, or assume responses to parenting behaviors are more influential and ignore the possibility that humor may make some detrimental parenting behaviors more "attractive" or "acceptable" to at least a portion of the viewers? Before deciding, it may be relevant to examine the association between genre and humorous detrimental parenting behaviors.

Genre

Controversial programs (the three programs which have stirred public controversy over their negative parenting content) represented only 20% of the family programs aired during prime time, but they contained almost 40% of the detrimental parenting behaviors, which translates to a rate of 51.5 detrimental behaviors per hour (compared to 20.6 for noncontroversial programs). There was no difference between the two genres in how frequently each response contingency was associated with each behavior type (as indicated by Tables 8 and 9). Controversial programs were much more humorous than
noncontroversial programs, with derogatory humor (humor associated with detrimental parenting) being primarily associated with controversial shows (the hourly rate of derogatory humor incidents on controversial and noncontroversial programs was 46.4 and 9.5, respectively). Little difference existed between genres in terms of response contingencies for either type of behaviors associated with humor (as indicated by Tables 11 and 12).

How are these outcomes to be interpreted? Is controversy beneficial in that it cues viewers to watch the controversial programs more critically, or do viewers watch controversial programs even less critically than noncontroversial ones because they perceive them to be more realistic (as some critics proclaim)? How do humor, genre type, and response contingencies come together to influence the viewing public?

It stands to reason that the controversy itself influences various segments of the viewing audience to behave very differently. The anti-controversial program audience is likely not to watch the controversial programs or to watch them with a highly critical and unaccepting attitude, thus they would be exposed to the least amount of detrimental parenting behavior and would be the least accepting of it. This viewing segment probably correlates with the "protestor" segment of Domzal and Kernan's (1983) study. The pro-controversial program audience is likely to watch controversial programs quite frequently and to be particularly accepting of both the rewarded and the humorous parenting behaviors presented, thus they may be more at risk for adopting the detrimental behaviors than other viewing
segments. This group is likely to correlate with the "embracers" segment of Domzal and Kernan's study. The uncommitted audiences probably conform to the norm and watch whatever is popular, and may correlate with the "accommodator" or the "embracer" segments. What is the norm?

Good or bad as it may be, many viewers like and watch controversial family sitcoms. "The Simpsons," "Married With Children," and "Roseanne," have continued to be shown during prime time and have increased their ratings over time since the data for this study were collected in the fall of 1991. As of October, 1992, "Roseanne" held the highest viewing audience of all current shows aired during prime time, attracting 36 million viewers each week according to Nielsen ratings (Jarvis, 1992), and the concern about this and the other controversial programs seems to have died down (as indicated by the reduction of related articles in the public press). If Jarvis's article summarizes viewers' current perspectives—that the show "goes where no show would go before" and "tells the truth" (p. 13), we should probably be concerned about the content of the controversial shows, particularly since the humor on these shows is primarily derogatory (68%), and we know humor increases attention to and learning of the modeled behaviors it accompanies (Bandura, 1977; Powell & Andersen, 1985; Weaver & Cottrel, 1988; Ziv, 1988).

"Roseanne"—How It Stacks Up Against Noncontroversial Programs

(In this section findings for "Roseanne" are compared to the averages for noncontroversial programs. Comparison of all controversial programs and all noncontroversial programs is not
possible in this instance because one of the controversial programs--"The Simpsons"--was not included in both the behavior and humor analysis sets, which would be necessary for uniform comparisons of the variables contrasted in this section. "Roseanne" was chosen for this comparison because it is so popular, because it tends to fall between the other two controversial programs in terms of detrimental behaviors, and because it is included in both data sets used for analysis.)

Like those on the other controversial programs, the parent-characters on "Roseanne" are not very good role-models for parenting real children. Forty-eight percent of the parenting behaviors on this show (more than any other program except "Married with Children") were detrimental. In addition, 29% of these detrimental behaviors were associated with humor, 18% with rewarding responses, and 12% with both humor and rewarding responses--factors which may enhance adoption of these undesirable behaviors. Also, 31% of the beneficial parenting behaviors were associated with punishment, a factor which may disuade adoption of these desirable behaviors.

How do the figures for "Roseanne," the most popular of the controversial family programs, compare with average figures for noncontroversial programs? On noncontroversial programs, an average of only 22% of the parenting behaviors were detrimental, but of these detrimental behaviors, 42% were associated with humor, 37% with rewarding responses, and 18% with both humor and reward. Thirty-five percent of beneficial parenting behaviors were associated with
punishment. So, though the noncontroversial programs contain a lower percentage of detrimental and a higher percentage of beneficial parenting behaviors than "Roseanne," each behavior type is more apt to be associated with an "undesirable" response on the noncontroversial shows.

**Implications Of the Genre Findings**

Should we be concerned about the noncontroversial programs? Which genre poses more of a threat in terms of the potential for adoption of detrimental parenting behaviors by viewers? It is difficult to know which variables to give the most weight, but the potential threat can be summed up this way. As indicated by the popularity of controversial programs, most viewers do not avoid them, thus these programs provide the opportunity for frequent exposure to high amounts of detrimental parenting. Because viewers watch them frequently, it is probable that many of them are unable to determine (at least some of the time) which of the parenting behaviors exhibited are beneficial and which are detrimental in terms of effects on real children (a notion supported by the previously presented findings of Arcuri (1977), Rochford (1974), and Gerbner and Gross (1976). There is a strong association between humor and detrimental parenting on these shows, and re-enactment of disparaging humor by the viewer can be rewarding. Also, if viewers see the controversial programs as more "realistic" (Jarvis, 1992) than the noncontroversial programs, social sanction is likely to be perceived for the parenting behaviors which are modeled, providing further inducement to adopt/copy the detrimental behaviors, of which there
are a great many. For these reasons, we should be concerned about
the programming on the controversial programs.

Though the percentage of detrimental parenting behaviors per
noncontroversial show is lower than that of "Roseanne," the average
frequency of undesirable responses for parenting behaviors is greater
on the noncontroversial programs. What's more, there are many
noncontroversial series aired, so the opportunity to view undesirable
behavior/response combinations is quite high. Also, because of the
public controversy which surrounded the three controversial programs
during 1989-1991, the noncontroversial parent-characters are more
likely to be seen by viewers as ideal parent role-models, thus
viewers may be less critical of their behaviors and more apt to
mis-label at least some of the detrimental parenting behaviors as
beneficial. For these reasons, we should also be concerned about the
programming on the noncontroversial programs.

For both genres, then, the most important question is not
whether the frequencies of the portrayal of detrimental behaviors and
undesirable behavior/response combinations is higher on one genre
than the other, but how these factors interact with viewers' perceptions of each genre to influence their adoption and
re-enactment of the modeled parenting behaviors. Until more research
is done, we can only speculate, on the complicated interactions and
additive effects of the multiple variables which can influence
viewers.

Gender

Gerbner and Gross (1976) noted that most of the representation
on television goes to character-types that dominate the social order, with about 3/4 of the leading characters being male, American, middle and upper-class, and in the prime of life. Surprisingly, this was the finding for family sitcoms also. Though mothers are almost universally the primary caretakers of real children in our society, fathers are more frequently portrayed in family situation-comedies. All of the series portraying single-parent families were headed by a father caretaker, though in real life male-headed single-parent families are by far the exception rather than the rule.

As for the association between gender and the five study variables, statistical significance was found for many, but there were no substantive differences for gender as indicated by percentage comparisons. When gender is skewed in one genre, and humor and behavior type are associated with genre, it is difficult to place much faith in the significance of the differences between genders for any of the variables. As for effect of gender differences, I found no studies indicating viewers were more influenced by gender than role (or vice versa) of a model on television. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that similarity in role between model and viewer is more important than similarity in gender. I conclude from this that parenting behaviors, responses, humor, and genre, are more important than gender in interpreting the potential influence of the family sitcoms. Thus, the most important finding for gender is simply the lack of proportional representation of each gender according to their real-life roles, and this is not likely to have
great impact on viewers since they can learn and adopt behaviors from role models of either gender.

Recommendations

Future Research

There is always a danger of speculating too far ahead of facts with exploratory studies, but speculation can be helpful when it opens our eyes to the need for further study in topics of profound concern to our society. The findings of this study indicate some aspects of current family situation comedy programming may not be in the best interest of viewers and society in general. Granted, this is speculation based on social learning theory and on tentatively related research findings, but it is the most that can be done at this stage of research on family programming. We do not know what a "safe" level of exposure to detrimental parenting acts or "undesirable" behavior/response combinations is. We do not know how humor interacts with detrimental parenting to influence perceived sanctions and actual adoption of such behaviors. We do not know how genre influences adoption of televised parenting behaviors. We do not know these things because there has been absolutely no research on these factors. It is hoped, however, that the empirical findings of this exploratory study and the importance of the potential effects of family sitcoms on our society will inspire more research in this area.

Replication is strongly needed to verify the reliability of the findings of this study concerning programming content, and to track changes in family program content over time. We need to know if
producers really are making use of the "humorous aggression=increased ratings" connection, and incorporating increasing amounts of detrimental parenting behaviors and derogatory humor in their programming in an attempt to increase audience shares. We also need to know how much viewers rely on TV in relation to other sources for their information about how to parent, how well viewers can discriminate between beneficial and detrimental parenting behaviors, and whether there is an association between discrimination ability and exposure to various types of parenting behaviors/humor/genre of family programs on TV.

A replication of Domzal and Kernan's (1983) study is needed, using male as well as female subjects, and with a larger number of family programs to verify the profile of the family sitcom viewer, and to segment the audience further. Further segmentation of the viewing audience could result in the identification of "risk factors"--profile factors associated with each viewing sub-segment which might increase their potential for adopting detrimental parenting behaviors, and "protection factors"--those which might insulate the typical viewer of each sub-segment from adopting detrimental parenting behaviors. Finally, it would be desirable to establish some empirical evidence regarding the association between the variables of this study and actual parenting attitudes, values, and behaviors of viewers. Without further research, we will continue to be dependent on the profit-driven decisions of TV producers and the responses of a "victimized" (Nosanchuk & Lightstone, 1974)
viewing public to determine the content of family programming, and, ultimately, its influence on our society.

Education

Though the potential for negative effects of family sitcoms on individuals and on society in general is not well-established empirically, we can take steps to insure that any negative effects are minimized. The findings from this and other studies supporting the possibility of negative effects should be disseminated to the public. Viewers must be told (probably repeatedly) that although they are very entertaining, family situation comedies are not a particularly good source for parenting information. This message could be presented through any media form, but would probably be most effective if it accompanied each family sitcom. Networks could air public service announcements to this effect, and perhaps offer more educational programs about parenting. The educational programs should be as entertaining as the family situation comedies (possibly featuring the same actors), and should educate viewers to differentiate between helpful and harmful parenting behaviors. Ideally, realistic outcomes (both short- and long-term) for the children, parents, and family system would also be shown for each example of parenting behavior--something often absent in family sitcoms. As an alternative, simple disclaimers aired with each family sitcom might alert viewers to potentially detrimental influences and prompt them to seek alternate sources for information about parenting.
REFERENCES


Berkman, D. (1990, March). If I don't like it, you can't see it. *USA Today,* pp. 50-52.


Carter, G. J. (1990, December 2). Simpsons 'r' us. USA Weekend, pp. 4-5.


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APPENDICES
Appendix A

Examples of Beneficial and Detrimental Parenting Behaviors

Classified According to Developmental Theories and Children's Needs


Example: Child reminds Mom that she forgot to feed him today.
(Assume the coder perceives meeting the child's need for food as the focus or "what" the parent is doing/not doing.)

Beneficial Parent Behavior (+ what, + how):
Parent: "Oh my gosh! I can't believe it! Let's get you a good nutritious meal right now!" (Parent gets up and fixes child some food; then sets a clock to get up early so she can fix breakfast for the child before going to work the next day.)

Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, - how):
Parent: "I told you not to bother me when I'm getting ready to go out." (Parent makes no move to feed the child.)

Detrimental Parent Behavior (+ what, - how):
Parent gives food to the child saying: "There it is, I hope you choke on it."

Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, + how):
Parent takes the child onto his/her lap and says "We won't have any food until I get paid tomorrow. Maybe you'll feel better if I hold you."


Example: Child tries to join Mom and Dad who are watching television. (Assume coder sees allowing togetherness as the focus of "what" the parent is doing.)

Beneficial Parent Behavior (+ what, + how):
Mom says to Dad "Scoot over honey, our daughter wants to watch TV with us." (Mom makes room for the child on the couch.)

Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, - how):
Parent says to the child "Go away! You're not sitting here!" (pushes the child away.)

Detrimental Parent Behavior (+ what, - how):
Parent allows the child to sit down but says "You can sit here if you keep your mouth shut and don't bug me"
Appendix A, continued

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (- what, + how):
no appropriate example*
The "what" would probably be defined differently

3. Piaget, Bandura: Stimulate mental growth and allow child to gain a sense of mastery over the environment and sense of efficacy: Need for new experiences and support for curiosity and trying new skills.

**Example:** Small child receives a package in the mail and wants to open it. (Assume allowing/helping the child to open the package is seen as the focus of "what" the parent is doing.)

**Beneficial Parent Behavior** (+ what, + how):
Parent says "I'll help you cut the tape on the package and then you can open it the rest of the way. (Parent helps the child work the scissors and lets the child take it from there.)

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (- what, - how):
Parent says "Get away from that package! I'll open it myself after you have gone to bed. You'd probably cut yourself anyway." (Parent puts the package up.)

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (+ what, - how):
Parent says "Sure go ahead and open it. It's just cookies from Grandma and they're always broken anyway, so I guess you can't wreck them any more than they already are."

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (- what, + how):
no appropriate example*
The "what" would probably be defined differently


**Example:** Six year old child is invited to play Candyland next door with another six year old. (Assume allowing the child to play is the focus of "what" the parent is doing.)

**Beneficial Parent Behavior** (+ what, + how):
Parent says "OK, I'll take you over and leave you to play for one hour. I'm sure you'll play nicely together, you're such a good sport."

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (- what, - how):
Parent says "No. You can't play Candyland with the neighbor. You'd miss Mommy too much if you go over there and besides, you're not a very good sport."

**Detrimental Parent Behavior** (+ what, - how):
Parent says "Sure, go ahead and play, but don't come crying to me when you lose".
Appendix A, continued

**Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, + how):**
no appropriate example*
The "what" would probably be defined differently

5. Bandura, Baumrind: Social functioning and social acceptance: Need for parenting which is sensitive to thoughts, feelings, and capabilities and need for parent to model appropriate behaviors.

**Example:** Parent has had a long hard day, and the child wants a ride to the school science fair. (Assume coder sees modeling consideration of others needs as the focus of "what" the parent is doing)

**Beneficial Parent Behavior (+ what, + how):**
Parent says "I'm sorry, honey, I've had a hard day. I'm going to take a 20-minute time-out to rest, then I can take you to the school."

**Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, - how):**
Parent says "I don't care what you do. I just need some peace and quiet! Why don't you go play on the railroad tracks or something?"

**Detrimental Parent Behavior (+ what, - how):**
Parent says "I know you want to go to the school, but I'm tired. OK, OK, I'll take you to the fair, but you'll be sorry you made me do this. I'm already in a bad mood and you're making it worse."

**Detrimental Parent Behavior (- what, + how):**
no appropriate example*
The "what" would probably be defined differently

*No appropriate example can be found for some situations simply because coders tend to look at the presence of parenting behaviors rather than the absence of them, defining "what" the parent is according to behaviors that are present. An example of a "- what, + how" for no. 2 above might be: Parent says "no, you can't sit with us because you need to get ready for bed now". It is not likely, however, that the coder would see the "what" as not allowing togetherness. Reminding the child to get ready for bed, would probably be seen as the "what". The absence of a parenting behavior tends to be seen as the focus of what the parent is doing only if it is essential to the child's well-being at that moment and when the absence of adequate parenting is presented in an explicit way. i.e. it is part of an ongoing theme in the plot that the parent is not providing for the needs of the child. When a specific parenting activity is not explicitly indicated, the coder simply sees some other focus ("what") in the situation."
Appendix A, continued

In example no. 1, above, if the situation were not explicit enough to indicate that the lack of food was significant, coders would be more likely to see the "what" as "providing comfort to a distressed child" rather than "neglecting to provide adequate food". In such a case, the example labeled "- what, + how", would then be coded "+ what, + how".

Summary

A code of "+ what, + how" indicates that the coder found nothing in the behavior which they judged as likely to have a detrimental effect on the child's development according to their understanding of developmental theories.

A code of "+ what, - how" indicates that the coder saw the objectively identifiable behavior as having a beneficial effect in terms of the related need, but judged something else about that behavior to be detriment in terms of satisfying an equally pressing need as defined by another developmental theory. A code of "+ what, - how" may also represent a conflicted behavior--one that has both beneficial and detrimental aspects in terms of just one identified need.

A code of "- what, + how" indicates that the coder saw the objectively identifiable behavior as having a detrimental effect but judged the manner of the parent-character's behavior to be positive.

A code of "- what, - how" indicates that the coder judged the parent's behavior to be likely to be detrimental because of both the objectively identifiable behavior (what the parent was doing or saying) and the subjective aspects of the behavior (explicit or implicit meaning indicated by nonverbal behaviors/context). If a parent pushes a child down and spite is implied in the words/nonverbals/context, this would be coded "- what, - how". If, however, if a parent pushes a child down and the words/nonverbals/context indicate it is an accident, this would be coded "- what, + how", and if a parent pushes a child out of the way of a moving vehicle, this would undoubtedly be coded "+ what, + how".
Appendix B

Sample Page of a Codebook

Tape 4, Show 1, Rate, Who's the Boss 1-15-91

RATER: | role: parent's | rew/ | L |
---|---|---|---
| kitchen | | | |
(Tony and Billy)
Tony: ok now we add a little milk...
Billy: I got it.
Tony: ..... let me give you a hand with that.
Billy: I said I got it.
Tony: I'm sorry. Oh ho, well you know I was just trying to help out a little bit.
Billy: Well, What do you think I am a baby?
Tony: A baby, what are you kidding me, I was gonna tell you I think you need a shave! Alright, come on, get over here, help me out.
Tony: Ah..., so tell me does your grandmother like chocolate cake?
Billy: I do!
Tony: I know but you're not the one that's in the hospital.
Billy: I know. She tripped and hurt her side.
Tony: yea that poor thing
Billy: I didn't do it
Tony: I know you didn't do it
Billy: I wasn't even in the same room
Tony: I believe you
Appendix C
Directions for coding

Example of the columns:

Column numbers and titles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiation : Role : Parent's : Rewarded : Humorous :</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>: : What : How :</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of columns:

COLUMN 1: INITIATION/RESPONSE

For the purposes of this study, each parent's verbal behavior will be considered an initiation (I) which elicits a response (R) from others. For instance, a parent might say "go to bed" and response might be "I don't want to."

The codes I and R mark the boundaries of the initiation and response, but do not necessarily indicate that what is written in the codebook is the sum total of the initiation and the response. Nonverbal behaviors, gestures, expressions, etc., must also be considered. Boundaries are marked to help you, the coder, see what should be considered the initiation (the words and nonverbals of the segment marked I) and where to stop looking for the response (not farther than the attached R segment).

Therefore, if a parent says "go to bed" and this is followed by "it's not time yet" by another parent and then "I don't want to" from the child, you would not look beyond the words "it's not time yet" for the response (unless "I don't want to" is coded R in column 1).

For coding, verbalizations will be of primary consideration and
Appendix C, continued

Nonverbals will be secondary. This means we are only coding nonverbals that accompany the verbals. Other nonverbals will be ignored. The exception to this is if the nonverbal behavior is accompanied by canned laughter (coded in column 6 for you).

If the response that follows the initiation is logically related to the intitiation, you will consider the words and nonverbals as the response. However, if the next segment is not related (for instance a new subject is started), you must consider only the nonverbals which are shown before the next segment. For instance, if a parent says "go to bed" to a child and the next statement is "I guess I'll get something to eat" from the other parent, these are (probably) not logically related, so you would look for nonverbals (expressions, actions, gestures) shown before the second parent said "I guess I'll get something to eat. Probably this would be a shot of the child shaking his/her head no or making a face." If you have NO clue as to a nonverbal that is related, go ahead and use the next segment words as the response (unless there is a change of scene or commercial break).

When the "I"s in the first column are connected by a vertical bar, the response will apply to all of the segments containing the "I"s.

Occasionally there is no indication of a response. This may occur if there is an immediate cut to another scene or a commercial break. In this case, please write "NO RESPONSE" across the columns.

The I and R column is filled in for you. You do not need to
Appendix C, continued

fill this in.

COLUMN 2: ROLE

For this study we are only considering parents' behaviors and responses to parents' behaviors. This column is filled in for analysis purposes only. "F" indicates father, "M" indicates mother. You do not have anything to fill out in this column.

COLUMN 3 AND 4: PARENT BEHAVIORS, HOW AND WHAT

Columns 3 and 4 should be filled in by you for every segment that has an M or F in column 2. The codes for columns 3 and 4 are plus and minus signs. The plus sign indicates that the behavior is beneficial or at least not detrimental. The minus sign indicates that behavior is likely to be detrimental.

Columns 3 and 4 represent one category for the final results. They indicate whether the parenting behavior is generally beneficial or detrimental in terms of effect on children. The reason there are two columns is to help you, the coder, notice both aspects of the behavior—what the parent is doing, and how the parent is doing it. See Appendix A for clarification on this.

Code columns 3 and 4 at the same time for each segment. While coding you should be mentally saying "What the parent is doing is .... Is this beneficial or detrimental?" "Are they doing it in a beneficial or detrimental way?"

For instance, a parent might take a child by the hand and tuck him into bed or might point toward the bedroom and stomp a foot indicating the child needs to go to bed. The "what" (getting the
child to bed) is the same in both instances and you might code the
"what" column with a plus. However, the "how" is different, and you
would be likely to code the tucking in segment with a plus and the
foot stomping segment with a minus in the how column.

Some tips for coding columns 3 and 4:
1. Code the logical effect of this behavior, not the intent. (even
abusive parents often mean well)
2. Be objective. Rely on what you have learned about child
development to judge the potential effect of the behavior. Recall
self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-concept, stages of development,
needs, etc. Don't forget that children copy what they see parents do
as well as respond directly to what parents do.
3. Think specifically if the words are specific. Think more
generally if the words are pretty general.
4. If you are uncertain about how to code a behavior, magnify
it—think of the parent saying/doing it over and over in the same
way. This may make it more clear how obnoxious or soothing the
behavior may be.
5. If you can't find any logical reason to code it as a negative,
based on what you have learned in undergraduate classes, code it as a
positive. TO CODE SOMETHING NEGATIVELY, YOU MUST HAVE A LOGICAL
REASON BASED ON THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT FROM YOUR UNDERGRADUATE
STUDIES.
6. Assume parents can and should maintain self-control of anger at
all times. It's ok to express it in socially acceptable ways—
yelling at someone else. Not hurting someone else.

7. Assume that if there's a barb, sting, or other hurt included with a good behavior that there is a better way to handle the situation and code this as a negative. You don't have to know how else to handle it, just assume that there is a better way. Parenting doesn't ever have to hurt a child.

8. Assume that authoritarian parenting (ordering/bossing) is not as good as authoritative (remember Erikson's stages). Look for assertion, loving guidance, and leadership without submission and dominance.

9. Watch out for angry or sarcastic tone of voice. They usually sting the recipient of the comments (and set an antisocial example for children witnessing the interaction—even if the “stung person” does not respond verbally).

10. Code insincere comments that appear positive to characters but are known to be negative to TV viewers as minus in the how column.

COLUMN 5: REWARDED AND PUNISHED

Column 5 should be coded by you for every segment which is filled in on column 2. The codes for column 5 are P (punished) and R (rewarded). P means the parenting behavior indicated in this segment got a response that was not wanted or not appreciated. R means the parenting behavior got a response that was desired or was appreciated.

Often a parent initiation (I) will be followed by a response (R) from another person and this will be followed by the another response
Appendix C, continued

from the parent (which we'll call the PRR-Parent's response to the response). For instance, one parent might say "Gee, that looks good, can I have some?" (coded I), followed by "Forget it, I'm not sharing" (coded R), followed by a close up of a disappointed expression on the first parent's face and/or a comment "why not?" (PRR). This PRR is not the same as the R that is coded in column two. It comes after the response to the initiation.

Clues for how to code the 5th column can be found in the PRR --but not necessarily in the meaning of the words. Look at facial expression (if shown), changes in body posture, position, or movement, tone of voice. If there was a response, code this column even if there was no PRR revealed. Make an educated guess about whether the response would have been received as a reward or punishment to code the parent behavior segment (I) as punished (P) or rewarded (R). The only segments with a code in column two that should not be coded in column 5 are the ones that have NO RESPONSE written across the columns.

Tips to help you code column 5:

1. Ask "Did the parent get what he/she wanted?" "Did he/she get it in the way it was wanted?" Look at the PRR if it is shown.
2. If there is a sting (parent got what he/she wanted but in an undesirable way or with a barb attached) code it as a punishment
3. If uncertain as to how to code it, magnify it--imagine the response being said/acted out over and over. How would the parent feel about it?
Appendix C, continued

4. Do not be objective. Be the parent. Feel the response.

5. If you're sure the parent was not punished, code it as rewarded.

6. Code insincere compliments as the TV viewer sees them, not as the parent sees them. For instance if a parent acts like he thinks he is getting a compliment but the complimenter indicates to the TV viewer the compliment is insincere, consider this as punishment and code the parent behavior punished.

7. If more than one person is rewarding/punishing the parent behavior and these conflict--look to the parent's response to determine whether it was received as a reward (expression, etc).

8. Possessions and loved ones are an extension of self--if things or people we love are made fun of or attacked by others this is usually experienced as punishing.

COLUMN 6: HUMOR

This column is coded with a check mark to indicate that a segment containing parent behavior was followed by canned laughter. Segments followed by canned laughter are operationally defined for this project as humorous. This column is for analysis purposes only. You do not have to fill in anything in column 6.

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REVIEW

--Segments with an entry in column 2 (M or F) should also be coded in columns 3, 4 and 5.

--Segments that are hooked together with a vertical bar in the first column share the same response.

--You need to be objective when coding parenting behaviors in columns
Appendix C, continued

3 and 4, but empathic when coding column 5. For this reason it is best to code all of columns 3 and 4 before coding all of column 5. --I suggest you follow this routine:

1: Scan the code sheet for which segments you will be rating.
2: Watch the entire program from start to finish (it's ok to skip commercials). This is very important for coding the P/R column because you need to get a feel for the meaning of each response to code whether it has punishing or rewarding qualities. The meaning is imbedded in the plot and is often revealed through it's connection with other occurrences in the program--which of course you would only know if you watched the entire program.
3: Rewind and watch the segments as many times as you need to to do the coding. I like to code as best I can on paper from memory, rewind and watch each segment again filling in what I couldn't remember and verifying that I coded correctly.
If you go from commercial to commercial or scene to scene, it seems to go faster. Feel free to watch the segments as many times as you need to. Some gestures and expressions go by very quickly.
4: Check your codebook when you’re done to be sure you’ve filled out all the appropriate spaces adjacent to the M’s and F’s in column 2.
5: Take a break often. Get some munchies. Kick your shoes off. Anything to relax and still concentrate. Try to make it fun for yourself.
Appendix D

Cast Relationships and Coding Instructions

BLOSSOM

Main characters:
Father figure: Nick Ruesso (musician)
Oldest child: Tony, Anthony--son, young adult, financially dependent
Middle child: Joey--son, adolescent
Youngest child: Blossom--daughter, young adolescent

Others who do not live with them:
Six: Blossom's girl friend, adolescent
Agnus: The Grandma (accountant)

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Nick as the father to Tony, Joey, and Blossom. Do not treat Agnus as a parent.

THE COSBY SHOW

Main characters:
Father figure: Cliff Huxtable (Pediatrician)
Mother figure: Claire Huxtable (Attorney)
Youngest child: Rudy--a daughter, age 12

Others who live with them:
Pam: adolescent girl, daughter of a friend of Claire's. She is being supported by the Huxtables while she goes to high school, and she lives with them.
Olivia: Grand-daughter--preschooler

Others who don't live with them:
Oldest child: Sondra--a daughter, about age 27
Next oldest child: Denise--a daughter, about age 24
Next oldest child: Theo--a son, college student
Next oldest child: Vanessa--a daughter, about age 20

INSTRUCTIONS: In this series, Olivia and Pam are in a long-term care arrangement with the Huxtables, and their own parents are completely absent from the series. Treat Cliff and Claire as parents to Rudy, Pam, and Olivia.
Appendix D, continued

DAVIS RULES

Main characters:
Father figure: Dwight Davis (principal of a grade school)
Mother figure: none
Oldest child: Robbie—son, adolescent
Middle child: Charlie—son, grade school age
Youngest child: Ben—son, grade school age

Others who live with them:
Gunny: (Gunnery Sargeant Davis), Dwight’s father, retired

Others who do not live with them:
Cosmo: Dwight’s girlfriend

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Dwight as the parent of Robbie, Charlie, and Ben. Do not treat Grandpa as a parent. Do not treat Cosmo as a parent.

FAMILY MATTERS

Main characters:
Father figure: Carl Windslow (a police officer)
Mother figure: Harriet Windslow (homemaker?)
Oldest child: Eddie—Carl and Harriet’s son, a teenager
Middle child: Laura—Carl and Harriet’s daughter, a teenager
Youngest child: Judy—Carl and Harriet’s daughter, middle school age

Others who live with them:
Richie: Carl and Harriet’s nephew, a preschooler
Rachel: Carl’s sister, Richie’s mom, an adult (homemaker?)
Rae: Harriet’s mom

Others who don’t live with them:
Steve Urkel: neighbor kid

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Harriet and Carl as the parents of their children, but not as the parents of Richie. Treat Rachel as the parent of Richie, but not as the parent of the other children. (We will code each parent’s behavior only in scenes where their own children are present).
Appendix D, continued

FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main characters:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father figure:</td>
<td>Phillip (Phil) Banks (lawyer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother figure:</td>
<td>Vivian (Viv) Banks (English Professor at a college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest child:</td>
<td>Hillary--daughter, age 21, lives at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle child:</td>
<td>Carlton--son, college student,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest child:</td>
<td>Ashley--daughter, middle school age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others who live with them:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will:</td>
<td>Phil and Vivian's nephew, college age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey:</td>
<td>The butler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Phillip and Vivian as parents to Carlton, Hillary, Ashley and Will. They are legally and financially responsible for Will while he is living with them going to college. Do not treat Geoffrey as a parent.

* * * * * * * * * *

FULL HOUSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main characters:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father figure:</td>
<td>Danny Tanner (a talk show host)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother figure:</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldest child:</td>
<td>DJ, Deej, Donna Joe--daughter, adolescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle child:</td>
<td>Stephanie--daughter, grade schooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest child:</td>
<td>Michelle--daughter, preschooler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others who live with them:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessie:</td>
<td>Danny's brother, adult (an entertainer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey:</td>
<td>Danny's best friend, adult (an entertainer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others who don't live with them</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becky:</td>
<td>Jessie's fiance/wife, adult (relationship changes during the series, and so does the living arrangement: Becky works with Danny as a talk show host)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimmy:</td>
<td>friend of DJ's, adolescent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Danny as the father of the three girls. Do not treat Jessie, Joey, or Becky as parents.

* * * * * * * * * *
Appendix D, continued

GROWING PAINS

Main characters:
Father figure: Jason Seaver
Mother figure: Maggie (Margaret) Seaver
Oldest Child: Mike--son, college age, lives in living quarters attached to, but outside the house, still financially dependent
Next oldest child: Carol--daughter, adolescent (age 19), lives at home
Next oldest child: Ben--son, adolescent
Youngest child: Chrissy--daughter, preschooler

Others who don't live with them:
Ed: Maggie's father

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Jason and Maggie as parents to Mike, Carol, Ben, and Chrissy

* * * * * * * * * * * *

MAJOR DAD

Main characters:
Father figure: John (Major) McGillis
Mother figure: Polly McGillis (former married name Cooper)
Oldest child: Elizabeth--Polly's daughter, John's step-daughter, adolescent
Middle child: Robin--Polly's daughter, John's step-daughter, middle-school age
Youngest child: Casey--Polly's daughter, John's step-daughter, middle-school age

Others who do not live with them:
Jessey: Elizabeth's boyfriend
General Craig: John's boss
Gunny: John's secretary
Eugene Halawacha: John's gopher

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat both John and Polly as parents to Elizabeth, Robin, and Casey.

* * * * * * * * * * * *
Appendix D, continued

MARRIED WITH CHILDREN

Main characters:
Father figure: Al Bundy (shoe salesman)
Mother figure: Peggy Bundy (homemaker)
Oldest child: Kelly--daughter, adolescent
Youngest child: Bud--son, adolescent

Others who don't live with them:
Marcie: neighbor woman

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Al and Peg as the parents of Kelly and Bud.

ROSEANNE

Main characters:
Mother figure: Roseanne Conner (waitress)
Father figure: Dan Conner (construction worker)
Oldest child: Becky--daughter, adolescent
Middle child: Darlene--daughter, adolescent
Youngest child: DJ--son, grade schooler

Others who do not live with them:
Jackie: Roseanne's sister, adult (ex-police woman)
Ed*: Dan's father, Roseanne's father-in-law, Crystal's husband, adult (salesman)
Crystal*: Ed's wife, Roseanne's best friend, Lonnie's mother
Lonnie*: Crystal's son, Ed's stepson

*Ed and Crystal marry during this series and Crystal becomes Roseanne and Dan's mother-in-law. Lonnie becomes Dan's step-brother.

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Roseanne and Dan as parents to Becky, Darlene, and DJ.
Appendix D, continued

THE SIMPSONS

Main characters:
Father figure: Homer Simpson (works at a nuclear power plant)
Mother figure: Marge Simpson (homemaker)
Oldest child: Bart--son, young adolescent
Middle child: Lisa--daughter, middle school age
Youngest child: Maggie--daughter, baby

Others who do not live with them
Selma: Marge's sister (a twin)
?????: Marge's sister (a twin)

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Homer and Marge as the parents of Bart, Lisa, and Maggie.

TRUE COLORS

Main characters:
Father figure: Ron Freeman (dentist)
Mother figure: Ellen Freeman (homemaker)
Oldest child: Terry--Ron's son, Ellen's step-son, lives at home
Middle child: Katie--Ellen's daughter, Ron's step-daughter, adolescent
Youngest child: Lester--Ron's son, Ellen's step-son, adolescent

Others who live with them:
Sarah: Ellen's mother

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Ron and Ellen as parents to Terry, Katie, and Lester. Do not treat Sarah as a parent.
Appendix D, continued

UNCLE BUCK

Main characters:
- Father figure: Buck Russell (homemaker?)
- Mother figure: none
- Oldest child: Tia--Buck's niece, adolescent
- Middle child: Miles--Buck's nephew, grade school age
- Youngest child: Mazey--Buck's niece, grade school age

Others who don't live with the family:
- the children's grandmother
- Skagg: Buck's friend, male, adult

INSTRUCTIONS: Buck has full long-term responsibility for Tia, Miles, and Mazey. Treat him as their parent. Do not treat Grandma as a parent.

WHO'S THE BOSS

Main characters:
- Father figure: Tony Macelli (housekeeper, college student)
- Mother figure: Angela Bowers (advertising executive)
- Middle child: Johnathan--Angela's son, Tony's "step-son," adolescent
- Youngest child: Billy--Tony and Angela's "step-son," (adopted during this series)

Others who do not live with them:
- Mona: Angela's mother (Angela's secretary)
- Oldest child: Samantha--Tony's daughter, Angela's "step-daughter", college age, independent
- Mrs. Napoli: Billy's Grandmother and previous guardian

INSTRUCTIONS: Tony and Angela are not married, but they share the responsibility of raising the children in a long-term relationship. Treat them as if they were both the parents of Johnathan and Billy. We won't code scenes where only Sam and the parents are there because she does not live with them and is not considered a dependent child. Do not treat Mona as a parent. Do not treat Mrs. Napoli as a parent.
Appendix D, continued

THE WONDER YEARS

Main characters:
Father figure: Jack Arnold
Mother figure: Norma
Middle child: Wayne--son, adolescent
Youngest child: Kevin--son, young adolescent

Others who don't live with them:
Oldest child: Karen, gone to college?
Winnie: Kevin's long time girlfriend (broke up during this series)

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Jack and Norma as parents to Wayne and Kevin.

YOU TAKE THE KIDS (Show used only for practice coding)

Main characters:
Father figure: Michael--blue collar worker
Mother figure: Nel (homemaker)
Oldest child: Raymond--son, adolescent
Next oldest child: Peter--son, adolescent
Next oldest child: Lorette--daughter, adolescent
Youngest child: Nate, Nathaniel--son, young adolescent

Others that live with them:
Nel's mother

INSTRUCTIONS: Treat Michael and Nel as the parents of all the children.
Appendix E

Flowchart For Coding Punishment and Reward

INITIATION ------------------------ NO RESPONSE ------------------------ write "no response"
(Parent's behavior); (scene cut) across the columns

RESPONSE(S) ------------------------ CLEAR PRR* (facial expression, words, and
(of others to parent's behavior) actions logically relate to

NO PRR* or

UNCLEAR PRR

PRR is positive neutral negative

code R code R code P
(rewarded) (rewarded) (punished)

RESPONSE(S)

LOGICALLY RELATED

MIXED UNMIXED

RESPONSE RESPONSE

(part reward, part punishment)

code P (punished)

RESPONSE RESPONSE

WOULD HAVE WOULD HAVE

BEEN ACCEPTABLE DISPLEASED THE
TO THE PARENT PARENT

code R code P
(rewarded) (punished)

INITIATION INITIATION
WAS AN WAS A
INTERJECTION SPECIFIC QUESTION
(no response expected) DIRECTED AT A
SPECIFIC PERSON

code R code P
(rewarded) (punished)

*PRR=Parent-character's response to the response received for their own behavior
Appendix F

Training Programs and Correlations

Programs Used for Training

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<th>Number</th>
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<td>3/10/91</td>
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<td>Family Matters</td>
<td>3/01/91</td>
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<td>3/03/91</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Fresh Prince of Belair</td>
<td>3/04/91</td>
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<td>3/05/91</td>
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*Classifications unknown to coders

Correlations for Training Programs

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<th>P4-6</th>
<th>P7-9</th>
<th>P10-12</th>
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Averages

123
Appendix G

Tape Sets: Coding Sequences and Contents

Sequence for Coding Tapes:

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Tape Sets and Tape Contents (in order recorded on tapes)

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<td>show 2,</td>
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Appendix G, continued

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## Appendix H

### Drift Check Correlations

#### Drift Check #1

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>.76</strong></td>
<td><strong>.76</strong></td>
<td><strong>.76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Drift Check #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables:</th>
<th>Coders 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Coders 2 &amp; 3</th>
<th>Coders 1 &amp; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Behaviors</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>.75</strong></td>
<td><strong>.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>.74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Drift Check #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables:</th>
<th>Coders 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Coders 2 &amp; 3</th>
<th>Coders 1 &amp; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Behaviors</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>.79</strong></td>
<td><strong>.90</strong></td>
<td><strong>.82</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ALL THREE DRIFT CHECKS COMBINED AVERAGES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Behaviors</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variables Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>.78</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Coders 1 & 2 | .76 |
| Coders 2 & 3 | .81 |
| Coders 1 & 3 | .77 |
| **Coders Average** | **.78** |
Appendix I

Classification of Typical Responses and Consequences For Behavior

PUNISHMENTS

- not getting something desirable
- losing something desirable
- gaining anything undesirable

BEING OR FEELING:

- accused
- annoyed
- attacked
- blamed
- censured
- complained about
- criticized
- cursed
- deceived
- disagreed with
- disappointed
- disapproved of
- embarrased
- forgotten
- humiliated
- insulted
- misunderstood
- neglected
- objected to
- hurt
- prohibited
- put down
- rejected
- ridiculed
- scolded
- treated discourteously
- treated dishonestly
- treated rudely
- treated unfairly
- unsafe

LOSING:

- acceptance
- advantage
- assistance
- cooperation
- courage
- freedom
- friendship
- happiness
- health
- love
- pleasure
- pride
- respect
- strength
- support

REWARDS

- getting something desirable
- getting rid of something undesirable
- keeping something desired

BEING OR FEELING:

- accepted
- admired
- agreed with
- appreciated
- caressed
- comfortable
- courted
- defended
- desired
- entertained
- flattered
- flirted with
- praised
- promoted
- proven correct
- remembered
- responded to
- safe
- smart
- understood
- useful

AVOIDING, EVADING, RELIEVING, REDUCING OR STOPPING:

- anxiety
- assault
- blame
- criticism
- danger
- disappointment
- discomfort
- embarassment
- enemies
- failure
- pain
- scoldings
- tedium
- worry
- anger
- apprehension
- grief
- jealousy

GAINING, HAVING, OR RETAINING

- advantage
- approval
- cooperation
### Table 18

**Responses to Beneficial Parenting Behaviors by Gender of Character**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beneficial</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(67%)</td>
<td>(64%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beneficial</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, \( N = 610/11 \) mother-characters; cell 2, \( N = 1061/15 \) father-characters; cell 3, \( N = 297/11 \) mother-characters; cell 4, \( N = 596/15 \) father-characters.

\( X^2 (1, N = 193) = .2168, \) p < NS
Table 19

Responses to Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Gender of Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detrimental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(42%)</td>
<td>(37%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td>(63%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 (100%) 46 (100%) 75

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 134/11 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 251/15 father-characters; cell 3, N = 183/11 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 436/15 father-characters.

X² (1, N = 75) = .24517, p < NS
Table 20
Humorous Parenting by Behavior Type and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Parent-Character</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hum/Bene (Benign)</td>
<td>18 (47%)</td>
<td>28 (54%)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hum/Det (Derogatory)</td>
<td>20 (53%)</td>
<td>24 (46%)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 162/9 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 368/13 father-characters; cell 3, N = 183/9 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 308/13 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 90) = .4943, p < NS$
Table 21
Responses to Humorous Beneficial Parenting Behaviors by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Parent-Char</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial/Rewarded</td>
<td>13 (70%)</td>
<td>18 (65%)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial/Punished</td>
<td>5 (30%)</td>
<td>10 (35%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 (100%)</td>
<td>28 (100%)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 114/9 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 239/13 father-characters; cell 3, N = 48/9 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 130/13 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 46) = .1561, p < NS$
Table 22
Responses to Humorous Detrimental Parenting Behaviors by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Parent-Character</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hum/Det/Rewarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(49%)</td>
<td>(38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hum/Det/Punished</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51%)</td>
<td>(62%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 89/9 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 118/13 father-characters; cell 3, N = 94/9 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 190/13 father-characters.

\[X^2 (1, N = 44) = .47546, p < NS\]
Table 23

Rewarding Responses for Benign Humor by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Benign Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded on Contro</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(64%)</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded on Noncontro</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 38/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 321/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 76/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 207/11 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 65) = 2.0242, p < NS$
## Table 24

**Punishing Responses for Benign Humor by Gender and Program Genre**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Benign Humor</th>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished on Contro</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(68%)</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished on Noncontro</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32%)</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                        |         |         |        |
| 13                     | 20      | 33      |
| (100%)                 | (100%)  |         |        |

*Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 18/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 20/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 30/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 110/11 father-characters.*

\[ X^2 (1, N = 33) = 1.0257, p < NS \]
Appendix J, continued

Table 25
Rewarding Responses for Derogatory Humor by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Derogatory Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded on Contro</td>
<td>30 (88%)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded on Noncontro</td>
<td>4 (12%)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7 (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34 (100%)</td>
<td>25 (100%)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 60/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 35/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 28/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 82/11 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 59) = 3.0144, p < .10$
Table 26
Punishing Responses for Derogatory Humor by Gender and Program Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Derogatory Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished on Contro:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(89%)</td>
<td>(77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punished on Noncontro:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 65/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 71/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 29/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 120/11 father-characters.

\[ X^2 \ (1, \ N = 83) = 2.054, \ p < NS \]
Table 27

Father-characters Relationship Between Detrimental Behavior and Derogatory Humor by Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Detrimental Behaviors</th>
<th>Derogatory Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(69%)</td>
<td>(74%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31%)</td>
<td>(26%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>144</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 199/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 106/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 488/11 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 202/11 father-characters.

$X^2 (1, N = 215) = .60194, p < NS$
Table 28

Mother-characters Relationship Between Detrimental Behaviors and Derogatory Humor by Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Genre:</th>
<th>Detrimental Behaviors</th>
<th>Derogatory Humor</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>94 (84%)</td>
<td>63 (88%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncontroversial</td>
<td>18 (16%)</td>
<td>8 (12%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cell data is weighted by the number of parent-characters: cell 1, N = 188/2 mother-characters; cell 2, N = 125/2 father-characters; cell 3, N = 129/7 mother-characters; cell 4, N = 57/7 father-characters.

\[ X^2 (1, N = 183) = .82742, p < NS \]