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CHILDREN'S CONSUMER-REQUEST PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERACTIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1979

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CHILDREN'S CONSUMER-REQUEST PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERACTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Alison Fae Alexander, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1979

Reading Committee:
Donald J. Cegala
Norman D. Elliott
Ellen A. Wartella

Approved By

Department of Communication
I would like to thank Donald J. Cegala for his continual support, encouragement, and strength. Without his critiques, questions, and willingness to go beyond his own area of specialization, my personal dissertation goals might never have been realized. I'm particularly grateful for the long and sometimes tedious hours spent helping me in this endeavor. The guidance was invaluable.

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VITA

October 21, 1949 ........ Born - Petersburg, West Virginia

1971 ................. B.A. in Education, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia

1971-1972 ............. M.A. in Communication, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky

1972-1975 ............. Teacher, Huntington High School, Huntington, West Virginia

1975-1979 ............. Graduate Teaching and Research Associate, Department of Communication, The Ohio State University

HONORS AND AWARDS

Elected to membership, Phi Kappa Phi, 1978.
President, Marshall University Speaker's Bureau, 1971.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapter:

Journal Article:

Convention Papers:


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Communication


Studies in Research Methods. Professor Donald J. Cegala
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

At an early age children begin making requests or demands. As the child encounters the world, he or she inevitably comes upon the word "no." Yet children soon learn that pleas or tears may change that "no" to a "yes." And persuasion enters the world of the child.

The present study examines persuasive strategies used by children in a consumer request situation. It focuses on the strategies used by children in a consumer request situation and the relationship between persuasive strategies, social cognitive ability and the child's interactional environment within the home.

The development of persuasive ability in children is important for the development of communicative effectiveness. As Weinstein (1969) suggests, "If the process of socialization is defined as equipping individuals to function as participating members of society, no set of skills ... is as essential to participating in society as the skills enabling people to get others to think, feel, or do what they want them to" (p. 753).

The child may pursue a variety of persuasive goals: staying up late, not eating their vegetables, getting parents
to stop smoking, or requesting products, to name only a few. In this study the general area of persuasion has been narrowed to consumer requests for two reasons. First, there has been great concern about the effects of advertising on the family. It is feared that consumption requests by children, motivated by exposure to advertising on television, may strain parent-child relations (Adler et al., 1977). This concern has led Adler and his colleagues to state in their National Science Foundation Report (1977) that several research questions need to be addressed concerning the attitudes parents hold toward television advertising, the mediation of children's product requests, and the outcomes of those requests. The difficulties of obtaining direct observations and/or unobtrusive measures for this type of research partially account for the scarcity of it (Adler et al., 1977). In addition, it is difficult to make direct linkages between a child's viewing of television advertising and spontaneous product requests of the parent. Despite these difficulties there is a need for research which describes the nature of parent-child interaction about advertised products and the child's purchase requests.

Second, it seemed conceptually more feasible to limit the context to one-goal type in the development of persuasive ability rather than persuasive ability in a variety of situations. This also allows the investigator to specify which antecedent abilities and environments may be most likely to influence the development of abilities within the consumer
Persuasion is a context-bound activity, requiring the effective persuader to adapt to the other with respect to the persuasive goal. The cognitive and behavioral adaptation required for effective persuasion can be studied in terms of the mediating cognitive skills and the repertoire of adaptive persuasive strategies that an individual can bring to bear in a persuasive situation in order to achieve a particular persuasive goal.

The ability to persuade another seems at minimum to be composed of the ability to recognize the relevant aspects of the persuadee in the persuasive situation as well as the ability to select and implement an appropriate strategy within the situation. Shantz (1975) labels the ability to characterize others and make inferences about their psychological experiences as social cognitive skill. The concept of role-taking skills, also called in the literature social cognitive skills, empathy, identification, and person perception, has been frequently used to explain the development of the ability in children to discriminate role-relevant attributes of another in a situation. Flavell et al. (1968) note, "The ability to persuade another person effectively ought to presuppose the ability to identify those of his role attributes which are persuasion-relevant, that is, the particular needs in the listener to which appeal might profitably be directed, the sorts of arguments to which he might be susceptible--in
general, the 'chinks' in his sales resistance which the persuasive message ought to seek out and enter" (p. 135). Evidence shows that social cognitive skills become more complex and abstract (Livesley and Bromley, 1973), greater in depth (Flavell et al., 1968), and less centered on the self (Piaget, 1955) with increasing age and cognitive development. It is the development of these social cognitive abilities, particularly the ability to discriminate listener attributes which might be relevant to persuasive communicative situations, which is a major factor of interest in the development of persuasive skills.

However, to be an effective persuader the individual must have a variety of strategies within his or her persuasive repertoire. These may be learned through a variety of methods including trial and error (Weinstein, 1966), imitation or reinforcement (Wood, 1976), or through careful analysis and problem-solving activities on the part of the child (Wood, 1976). Whatever the process whereby any particular persuasive strategy enters the child's persuasive repertoire it will be initiated, reinforced, and shaped in interaction. Since the most pervasive form of interaction for the child is his or her interaction within the family, it can be argued that families who encourage discussion, interplay of ideas, and even argument will provide a better environment for both learning and practicing persuasive arguments. Therefore, the nature of the interactional environment within the home and its relation to the persuasive development of the child is
the major factor of interest in this study.

Several research questions are addressed in this study that are designed to explore the general nature of children's persuasive ability within a consumer request situation. Specifically,

1. What are the strategies used by children in a consumer-request situation?

2. What is the relationship between the development of social cognitive skill and the nature of children's consumer-related persuasive strategies?

3. What is the relationship between the interactional nature of the child's environment and the nature of children's consumer-related persuasive strategies?

A Model for Understanding Persuasive Ability

Requesting is inherently a goal-directed activity. To discuss persuasion is to recognize that it is inherently an attempt to control the responses of others. Bruner (1978) suggests that all communication is in fact goal-directed and that it begins at a very early age. He states, "If a child is in fact communicating, he has some end in mind" (p. 44). The importance of Bruner's insight is in recognizing that the child learns to communicate with other members of society for some reason. Bruner identified four functions that communication serves for two children he observed from before their first to their second birthday: affiliation, indicating, generating possible worlds, and requesting. This study is concerned with requesting. Bruner and his colleagues noted
that children as early as ten months attempt to obtain nearby objects and that requesting gradually expands as the child matures to include requests for distant or absent objects through the use of such words as "that," "this," or "here," "there." Ervin-Tripp (1977) notes that directives, that subset of requests which make a demand on the listener for services, are frequent from the beginning of child language, with some directives composing as high as 50% of a child's utterances. Thus we see that requesting is an attempt to gain some goal which appears in children's verbal and nonverbal behavior at an early age.

Children begin requesting at an early age. How do they learn to be effective in achieving their goal? Bruner (1978) espouses a problem-solving model of language acquisition in which the mother and child interaction fine-tunes the child's language learning through dialogue. Thus Bruner recognizes the essentially communicative nature of language use when he states that, "Language is learned in order to interact with someone about something the two of you share" (p. 49).

Imitation, Bruner notes, may be used as the child tries to get through to the mother; however, real language learning "involves solving problems by communicating in a dialogue" (Bruner, 1978, p. 45). First attempts to enact behavioral strategies may be a simple matter of imitation and observational learning (Bandura, 1965; Wood, 1976; Weinstein, 1969). Thus, we see a young child trying out on his or her mother
the threat which the child has always connected with negative consequences, "If you don't, I'll tell Daddy." Presumably, this imitation of behaviors previously directed to the child will not influence the mother as the child had hoped. However other imitations may be more successful. Thus within the dialogue the child's persuasive behaviors are shaped as certain ones prove useful and others do not in achieving the end desired. Accordingly, the persuasive repertoire of the child begins to expand and become more effective. As the child matures he or she may begin to produce strategies which involve some measure of planning. For example, a child may learn to conceal the importance of a goal in bargaining, or may develop the ability to ask ahead for a desired goal. Wood (1976) suggests that children may through shrewd calculated thought discover methods of achieving their goals. For example, children learn that requests (with perhaps a hint of tears or tantrum) are more likely to be granted when the parents are entertaining or when shopping than when at home alone.

How language is acquired, in this case persuasive strategies, is a controversial topic and many questions surrounding the acquisition of language are unanswered at this time. However, we do know that requesting is a goal-directed activity which develops as the child matures. Having reviewed several methods whereby persuasive strategies may enter the behavioral repertoire of the child, let us turn
to questions of the development of individual differences in the child's evolving persuasive ability. That is, what influences the child's ability to be an effective persuader in the request situation?

It is suggested here that cognitive processes relate to the ability to manage the production of strategic messages. This idea will be developed in detail; however, some quali-fication of that remark must be established. There are several factors which contribute to the quality of a communicative message, the cognitive ability of the child being only one of several. The cognitive structure which intervenes between stimulus and response can be influenced by motivational and situational factors. Flavell et al. (1968, Flavell, 1977) also indicates that the developing abilities of a child perceptually, cognitively and linguistically which are necessary for effective communication may be inadequate to any particular task. Thus a less developed skill perceptually (centration), cognitively (social cognitive skills), and/or linguistically (syntactic forms, word acquisition) may influence a message. Therefore, only a general relationship may be posited which states that a child's cognitive abilities contribute to the adequacy of a persuasive message (Flavell et al., 1968). This is analogous to the research in intelligence in which considerable work has found a positive correlation between intelligence and a variety of achievement measures (Willerman, 1977). While intelligence
contributes to achievement (i.e., is correlated with), it is not the sole cause. Similarly, highly developed social cognitive abilities contribute to, but are not solely responsible for, effective persuasive strategies.

The cognitive process which is deemed most important for the development of effectiveness in persuasive ability is social cognition. Kohlberg (1969) notes that the inherent aspect of social cognition is role-taking ability:

> All the basic processes involved in "physical" cognition and in stimulating developmental changes in these cognitions, are also basic to social development. In addition, however, social cognition always involves role-taking, i.e., awareness that the other is some way like the self, and that the other knows or is responsive to the self in a system of complementary expectations. (p. 349)

Several researchers have been concerned with establishing the nature of this social cognitive ability and specifically how it differs from physical cognition. Cognitive man is conceptualized as a complex system of interacting processes which generate, code, transform and otherwise manipulate information of diverse sorts. It is the object of social cognition which separates it from other aspects of human cognition. Social cognition takes as its object humans and human affairs (Flavell, 1977). It is cognition about the symbolic social world in which humans live. Tagiui (1969) cites the objects which form the content of social cognition:

> The observations or inferences we make are principally about intentions, attitudes, emotions, ideas, abilities, purposes, traits, thoughts, perceptions, memories—events that
are inside the person and strictly psychological. Similarly, we attend to certain psychological qualities of relationships between persons, such as friendship, love, power and influence. We attribute to a person properties of consciousness and self-determination, and the capacity for representation of his environment, which in turn mediates his actions. (p. 396)

Kohlberg (1969) articulates the cognitive developmental assumption about the development of cognitive structures, in this case social cognitive structures. "Development of cognitive structures is the result of processes of interaction between the structure of the organism and the structure of the environment, rather than being the direct result of maturation or the direct result of learning" (p. 348). Thus we see that these social cognitive structures develop as the child meets the social world and through the processes of assimilation and accommodation articulated by Piaget (1955) become increasingly differentiated and integrated (Kohlberg, 1969). Accordingly, environment becomes an important element in the development of social cognitive structures. That is, according to cognitive developmental theory, organism-environment interaction is basic to the development of cognitive structure. Therefore it becomes important to ask what environmental elements might best produce a positive influence on the development of social cognitive abilities, specifically the abilities related to persuasion. It seems intuitively obvious that an environment in which argument, in the sense of discussion in which
individuals are allowed and encouraged to consider both sides of a question, is encouraged and in which the child both observes and practices persuasive interaction would be most likely to foster that type of organism-environment interaction which would facilitate the most highly developed persuasion-relevant cognitive structures. This type of environment allows the child to have role-taking opportunities, to observe and participate in persuasive situations, thus allowing that child to form cognitive structures which are sensitive to the necessity of listener-adaptation in persuasion as well as developing pragmatic skill with the persuasive attempts made by the child.

The environment of the child may also explain an interesting irony of children's persuasive statements. One can observe children saying things which it is hard to believe they understand or using a tactic wrongly. This may be a direct impact of the child's environment. The child may be simply imitating the form or content of previously observed persuasive interactions. According to Bruner (1978) these would be shaped in interaction with the mother; however, they do appear and may be explained through direct imitation.

Flavell (1971, 1977) has proposed a model of the inference-making process which captures the subtle interrelation between cognition and environment necessary for the application of persuasive strategies to communicative interaction. Briefly, he posits four necessary conditions for
inference-making: existence, the awareness of perspectives in general; need, the awareness that the present situation calls for inferential activity; inference, including both predicting the role attributes of the other and maintaining those inferences over time; and application, the ability to apply that awareness behaviorally in a specific situation. Flavell implicitly recognizes the necessity of characterizing not only the inference making process, per se, but also the preconditions for inference to occur. He postulates two necessary "existence" conditions for inference making: 1) the child must be aware that self and other have internal states, and 2) the child must be aware that the internal states of others may differ from his or her own. Thus one of the child's first developmental tasks is to become aware of the mere existence of basic psychological events to others. In a sense, the child becomes able to differentiate his own perspective from those of others. The absence of this ability is what is meant by Piaget's concept of egocentricism. The development is what is called meta-cognitive ability (i.e., the ability to have cognitions about cognitions) (Flavell, 1971).

The need component highlights the influence of situation. The failure of a child to apply appropriate skills which he or she possesses is termed production deficiency. Flavell suggests that frequently the child feels no need to attempt social cognition. That is, the child could use some behavior
in his or her repertoire or could engage in the process of inference making about another, but simply does not do so either because he or she may not want to, may not see the point in making the effort, or because the relevance of these activities is not linked in the child's mind (Flavell, 1971, 1977). The need component of the model underscores the distinction between an individual's capability of engaging in inferential activity and spontaneously seeing the need or utility of doing so.

Inference concerns the skill to engage in a given form of social thinking successfully. Even if aware of the existence of a given emotion and the need to do something about it, a child may simply not have the skill to infer what another is feeling from the available information. Thus, the necessary cognitive knowledge and skills for inference making include awareness of existence and need as well as actual inferential capability.

The final component of Flavell's model is application. He admits in 1971 that this is not his prime concern and leaves it out of his model altogether in 1977. It is, however, the application of inference making to overt communicative behavior which is the prime focus of this study. The ability of the child to use the information gained is precisely the cognitive linkage which this study is attempting to explore.
Thus the model being proposed here states that social cognitive skills and an "argumentative" environment should promote the development of sophistication in persuasive strategies. This study will augment previous research on children's persuasive development by examining the influence of the child's environment and by specifying the particular context (i.e., consumer request) which is being measured throughout. The next section will provide an introduction to the literature on persuasive development in children and the social and environmental variables which are relevant to that development. Finally, a research model for this study will be presented.

Strategies and the Developing Child

The purpose of this section is to examine the previous research in children's use of strategy in their interactions. Strategy here refers to the actor's choice of an utterance from the realm of possible alternative in order to achieve a persuasive goal. Delia and O'Keefe (1977) note that the actor's choice of a strategy reflects an attempt to adapt to the beliefs and intentions of the other, as well as an attempt to forward a conception of social reality. These attempts to define social reality can vary from asserting one's own perception of a situation to an intended attempt to manipulate the other.

Because every communication involves choice, all communication to some degree can be viewed as strategic in nature.
This view of communication has been clearly articulated by Watzlawick, Bevin, and Jackson (1967) and is here expanded by Delia and O'Keefe (1977):

Every communication involves a strategic aspect for every act represents an attempt to define or redefine several aspects of social reality. Since action is based upon the actor's beliefs about the reality in which he is engaged his action can be seen as an attempt to forward his conception of reality. His view is proffered as an hypothesis in his actions which may be accepted or rejected by the other with whom he interacts. The actor expresses his view of reality via strategies which represent the adaptation of his beliefs and intentions to the preexisting conditions of the interactional situation. (p. 10)

For purposes of this study, research in children's strategies can be divided into four areas: those using naturally occurring data, those using data obtained from mother's reports of children's behavior, those using role-playing on the part of the child, and finally those studies which have looked at consumer-request strategies specifically.

The research studies which have used naturally occurring data in the analysis of children's persuasive efforts have come from the sociolinguistic research tradition. Sociolinguists from the Berkeley school are interested in when individual speech acts and/or events enter the child's repertoire. They have been exploring the child's developing ability to use language to request, demand, command, promise, deny, greet, comment, converse and perform numerous other communicative acts or functions (Ervin-Tripp, 1977).
Researchers in this tradition ask, for example, when the child first comprehends indirect requests such as "It's rather noisy in here" to mean "Please stop making so much noise" (Flavell, 1977). Their research methods have tended to be either systematic observations of children's spontaneous communication or tasks which clearly mimic everyday communicative situations.

The work of Ervin-Tripp (1977) concerns the use of directives in children. She found that children lacked forms of request which did not identify what is wanted such as indirect type questions (Is your mother there?) and affirmative hints (It's cold in here.). However, in preschool years children are using imperatives, questions and need statements and are subtly modifying their usage in light of social variables such as age of addressee, familiarity, task and probability of compliance.

Some research has used interview data. Rodnick and Wood (1973) interviewed fifteen mothers about the strategies used by children in eating, sleeping, and playing. The three to seven-year olds used both verbal and nonverbal strategies to get their way and employed psychological tactics such as expressing fear of the dark or the monsters under the bed, expressing affection or loneliness. They also engaged in mischievous strategies such as gagging on unwanted food, or pleading illness to get the food necessary for their cure. Children by that age were also using father to get around mother (who was apparently more strict). Parents of seven to
eleven-year olds reported fewer strategies. Two were annoying repetition and asking to wait up until Dad got home. Rodnick and Wood were surprised to find a decrease in the number of strategies employed by older children instead of the expected increase. They hypothesize either methodological problems (too few subjects) or that older subjects may "have a wealth of communication strategies which apply to different behavioral universals or universals expressed somewhat differently" (p. 250).

Thirdly, we come to the most frequently used method of data collection: role-playing. Here children are asked to imagine that they must persuade a target person of something and are asked to think of all the possible methods of persuading they can.

Radke (1946) found that preschoolers were beginning to develop a repertoire of manipulative tactics and that they understood the differential effectiveness of some tactics with mothers and others with fathers. Wood, Weinstein, and Parker (1967) had 16 children from preschool through third grade indicate their hypothetical tactics in changing the mind of a friend, mother and teacher. They found that the youngest children were most likely to simply ask (48%) or were unable to answer the interviewer's questions (21%). Third graders on the other hand were more likely to invoke more subtle strategies such as norm invocation (appeal to rules, fair play, 15%), or to offer positive sanctions (gifts, favors, 48%). Even at that age a large proportion of
children simply asked for what they wanted (25%). Interestingly, children at all ages were sensitive to the different status of teachers. Kindergarteners were more likely to approach the teacher with subtle suggestions such as norm invocation or positive sanctions than they were either friends or mothers. Wood et al. (1967) also note that the use of tactics seems to precede a logical understanding of the rationale which underlies their tactics.

Flavell et al. (1968) had third, seventh and eleventh graders role-play two persuasive tasks. The results indicate that the size of the persuasive repertoire, as measured by the different number of arguments used, increased with age as did judge's ratings of persuasive effectiveness. Certain types of arguments showed an increase at higher grade levels including arguments about prestige, advantage to others, and a bandwagon argument.

Finley and Humphreys (1974) examined appeals generated when 60 five, nine and thirteen-year old girls were asked to role-play persuading their mother and best friends to give up watching TV to play a game. Several developmental trends were noted. First, the number and variety of appeals increased to age 9, but decreased between nine and thirteen. Simple requests decreased with age. The authors noted that the decrease between nine and thirteen was accounted for by the older girls tendency to eschew "high pressure" strategies.
Piché, Rubin, and Michlin (1978) investigated the relationship between age, social class and children's persuasive communication strategies. Thirty-two fifth and ninth graders delivered persuasive messages to four hypothetical target listeners. Results indicated that older subjects accommodated their messages to target's role characteristics and produced a higher frequency of positional messages, which were defined by the authors as role-oriented, than did fifth graders. No differences between high and low socioeconomic class subjects were found.

Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan (1977) examined the social distinction of directives in role-playing situations. They concluded that the children (ranging in age from seven to twelve years) had acquired all the conventional forms that directives may take as articulated by Ervin-Tripp (1977). Some of the social factors influencing the production of those directives were rank and situation. Interestingly, peer directives showed much variation and suggested the necessity of a negotiation in which peers either accept or refuse the right of another peer to address them with verbal forms of power (i.e., forms which indicate that the listener has no choice in obeying the request).

Brennis and Lein (1977) explored the structure and strategies of American children's arguments. Data from seventy role-playing situations were collected from first, third, and fourth graders. The content of these disputes were
categorized after examination of transcripts. These include threats, bribes, insults, praise, moral persuasion (I had it first), negating or contradicting previous assertions, simple assertions (That is mine), denial, affirmation, supportive demand for evidence and nonword vocal signals (Nyeeh-nyeeh). Four paralinguistic categories which these children also varied were speed, volume, intonation, and stress. Sequential response patterns for content categories were diagrammed.

Generally, Brennis and Lein found that content and style were reciprocally redundant; that is arguments characterized by short content exchanges were more elaborated paralinguistically and vice versa. Arguments tended to be consistently either long or short and appeared to be constrained by the opening statement and response. Brennis and Lein state the purpose of much of sociolinguistic research in their conclusion:

Analysis of speech and its meaning and interpretation lead us to an understanding of the skills necessary to appropriate speech. We learn not only how speech is used and interpreted, but what the complex of skills necessary for making and interpreting appropriate speech are . . . As we understand what elements of speech lead to the definition of a speech event, we may be able to restructure the arguments in which children participate in school to allow them to increase the rate and quality of their participation. (p. 65)

One area of research has attempted to delineate through their analysis more than the number and variety of children's persuasive strategies. This research tradition is attempting to represent the increasing levels of social perspective-
taking inherent in the persuasive strategies of children. It began with work on adaptation to a listener.

Alvy (1973) found that younger children did not vary their persuasive strategies when different dimensions were portrayed in two photographs (i.e., a boy smiling and frowning). In an extension of Alvy's study Delia and Clark (1977) had boys of ages six, eight, ten and twelve spontaneously describe the differences in pictures. Older children were more likely to describe the differences accurately and to adapt their persuasive strategies to these differences. Recognition of the communicative difference in the two figures was a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the production of adapted persuasive strategies. Delia and Clark (1977) propose a progression of awareness in which the ability to identify listener characteristics precedes the recognition of the relevance of the characteristics to communicative strategies. Clark and Delia (1976) asked children in grades two through nine to develop persuasive messages in reference to three common situations. When these messages were analyzed as to the level of social perspective-taking revealed in the persuasive strategies, children were found to be increasingly sophisticated with age. Clark and Delia (1977) also report results which indicate a strong relation between a child's cognitive complexity and his or her ability to construe motivations for other's acts. Finally, O'Keefe and Delia (1977) report a study which indicates that older
children use both a greater number and variety of strategies as well as strategies reflecting progressively more advanced modes of perspective taking.

Very few studies have dealt with the strategies used by children specifically in a consumer-request situation. Ward, Popper, and Wackman (1977) delineated 28 tactics used by children in requesting various products through analyzing mothers' reports of strategies which children had attempted. They examined how those tactics influenced mothers' responses, the influence of television-related requests, the influence of situation, cost, location, people present, and the previous behavior of the child. Some of the tactics reported by Ward et al. (1977) include asking both father and mother, pleading, wanting something because friends have it, and asking for something because they saw it on television. Ward and Wackman (1972) looked at children's purchase influence attempts and parental yielding. One hundred and thirty-two mothers responded to a questionnaire asking about the frequency of those requests. They found that children's purchase influence attempts usually decrease with age; however, while Ward, Wackman and Wartella (1977) did not find a decrease in the requests with age, they did find that parents were more likely to yield to the attempts of older children.

The research in the development of persuasive strategies has resulted in conflicting findings. For example, Rodnick and Wood (1973) found that the number of strategies used by
children decreased with age, while Clark and Delia (1976) report that the number increased. On the other hand, Finley and Humphreys (1976) found that the number of strategies increased until age nine and then decreased. Finley and Humphrey suggest that rather than simply becoming larger, the older child's repertoire of behavioral strategies becomes more selective. That is, older children learn to eliminate strategies with negative social consequences or that are not effective. Certainly further research is needed to test this hypothesis and others that may account for the inconsistent findings with respect to age differences.

Research which has attempted to identify the development of increasing levels of sophistication implied in the persuasive strategies used has consistently found that sophistication does increase with age. However, all the results have been based on role-playing data.

Perhaps, the greatest weakness of the research on children's strategy has been the failure to use naturally occurring interactional data. The difficulty with obtaining data of this type is obvious; however, these data are vital. Data of this type would allow one to look at a wide variety of issues including how children adapt when specific counterarguments, refusals, or objections are made during the interaction. For example, do children adapt within the context by jumping to other arguments, higher levels of appeal, or do they simply repeat what has been said? It would seem important to study
the child's persuasive strategies in the continual process of adaptation required in a real-life situation.

In summary, the major finding from research on communicative strategies in children is that it develops with age. However, age is not an explanatory variable and, while it is relevant to assess gross stage differences in children, it does not account for individual differences in strategy employment. The remaining sections will suggest a basis for assessing individual differences in strategy employment.

The Development of Social Cognition

Several variables seem particularly related to a child's developing the wide variety of cognitive skills necessary to human interaction. Shantz (1975) identifies five areas of inference-making skills which have been researched: What is the other seeing? thinking? feeling? intending? and What is the other like? Other theorists have suggested several developmental axes along which children's view of the social world have been shown to change: egocentricism to perspectivism, global to differentiated, simple to complex, concrete to abstract, and diffuse to integrated (Shantz, 1975; Flavell et al., 1968; Selman, 1976). Specifically, children's social perceptions have been shown to change with age in their complexity, stability across situations, abstractness and sensitivity to motivation and psychological states, integration and organization (Delia and O'Keefe, 1978).
Of the many cognitive processes that may relate to the employment of communicative strategies, role-taking and the interpersonal construct system have been selected for study. These processes have been selected because role-taking deals with the content of the child's cognitions about self, situation and other and because complexity deals with the structure through which this content is channelled. Following is a more detailed rationale for selecting perspective taking and the interpersonal construct system.

Role taking: egocentricism to perspectivism. The dimension of egocentricism is the most frequently studied of the developmental axes and illustrates the difficulties in linking social cognition and communicative behavior. If a child is to adapt his or her message to a receiver it would seem necessary that the child understand how others perceive the reality of the situation in which the two are involved. For example, if a child is to ask mother for a favor, the child who knows that good behavior will put mother into a receptive mood may plan to exhibit that behavior before making the request. In this circumstance, the communicator must shift his or her perspective to that of the other in order to adapt the message to the intended target. Glucksberg, Krauss, and Higgins (1976) propose that, "to the extent that adequate referential communication requires a speaker to assume the perspective of other, role-taking abilities should be related to the ability to communicate accurately and efficiently"
The movement from egocentricism to perspectivism is perhaps the best known of the developmental axes. Selman (1976) proposes that the child starts from a cognitive state in which the cognizer sees the world from a single point of view--his. Flavell et al. (1968) note that this occurs without knowledge of the existence of viewpoints or perspectives other than his or her own and thus without awareness that he or she is the prisoner of his or her own viewpoint. By middle childhood, Selman (1976) states the child gains the ability to infer the other's psychological state and the awareness that his psychological state can be the object of another's thinking. After about ten the child learns to take into account both self and other perspective. Ecocentricism is now generally viewed as a developmental axis. That is, it is not a stage after which egocentricism disappears, but is a quality present in some amount in all stages of development (Loofts, 1971). Perspectivism, or perspective-taking, is likewise present in some amount in all stages of development.

Although the relationship between the development of role-taking and communicative skills seems intuitively obvious, correlations between measures of the two have been low (Glucksberg et al., 1976). Role-taking skill, like the use of listener-adapted messages, appears to improve with age (Flavell et al., 1968). Research which has attempted to link directly level of perspective-taking with communication skill has failed to find a strong positive relationship
(Johnson, 1977; Cowan, 1956; Rubin, 1973; Feffer and Suchotliff, 1966). This may be attributable to methodological and theoretical limitations of the research. It may be linguistic, rather than role-taking, skill which has been assessed by many of the role-taking measures. For example, the task used by Feffer (1959) in which the child is required to tell a story from the perspective of several different characters within the story is representative of procedures used. Similarly, Flavell et al. (1968) had subjects explain how to play a game to blindfold subjects. Flavell suggests that it may be very difficult to keep a listener's special problems in mind, while also producing an extended verbal description or narration (1977). It is possible the complexity of the verbal task overwhelmed the child's ability to adapt to a listener. Many of these tasks may be in fact measuring memory, vocabulary, or performance skills which are only indirectly related to communicative performance. One way of overcoming these objections is the use of nonverbal measures of role-taking skill.

A second difficulty with measures of perspective-taking skills has been the assumption that global measurement of role-taking ability adequately operationalizes the role-taking of a child within a specific situation. One of the hard-learned lessons of research in attitude-behavior linkage with adults is that global measures of attitude are poor predictors of behavior in specific situations. By analogy, it may be
that global measures of perspective-taking ability are poor indicators of the child's performance within a specific situation. Several authors have called for research which links specific skills with specific communicative behaviors (Flavell et al., 1968; Johnson, 1977; Delia, 1977). The research conducted here attempts to follow this suggestion by incorporating a situated measurement of perspective taking. More will be said later about the role of situation in product requests. For now, we turn to the second cognitive process to be examined in this study, cognitive complexity.

**Cognitive complexity: the Development of Personal Constructs.** The developing child is understood to be involved in a series of progressive transformations of cognitive structure. It is this cognitive structure through which perceptions of the environment are channelled. However, these structures are highly permeable as through the process of assimilation and accommodation the mind builds ever-changing knowledge structures. Similarly, it can be argued that in the social world the child develops knowledge structures or a system of constructs for dealing with human behavior (Kohlberg, 1969). It is through these social cognitive structures that the child construes the social world. These constantly transforming social structures act as a channel for perceptions of other individuals. Our perceptions of another are construed through our social cognitive structures or social construal process. Werner (1957) posits in the
orthogenetic principle, that the child progresses from a global, diffuse perspective to a differentiated and hierarchically integrated one. Thus the interpersonal schema which are employed in the construal of the social world should become increasingly complex and differentiated as the child matures. The research most closely related to social construal, and therefore most likely to be measuring the interpersonal construct system of children, is that of cognitive complexity in person perception.

Typically, research in person perception has found that young children, six to seven years of age, will describe a person's appearance, possessions, family or identity characteristics despite instructions to the contrary (Livesley & Bromley, 1973; Peevers & Secord, 1971; Scarlett, Press & Crockett, 1971). During middle childhood the children's descriptions become more likely to include as well traits and states of the individual. Terms used to describe others seem less global or abstract and more precise (kind to helpful, generous). At about that time children begin to describe more frequently individuals in terms of their internal states. By adolescence, descriptions have become a carefully organized portrait of the other person with caveats frequently encountered which indicate that the author is aware the description reflects only one impression and is perhaps not in accord with others. Children begin, as they mature, to deal with contradictory traits and attempt to give causal explanations for
such discrepancies (Livesley & Bromley, 1973; Peevers & Secord, 1971).

Delia and O'Keefe (1977) note that as a child matures the system of personal constructs used to construe individuals becomes more differentiated, tends more to represent people in terms of psychological states, can integrate conflicting information about others into a coherent account of their action and, increases in both number and variety the constructs attributed to individuals. The measurement of the differentiation of perceiver's construct systems is termed cognitive complexity and is an index of differences in personal construct systems.

Clark and Delia (1976) note if a child employs a very limited number of constructs in forming impressions of others, he or she is less likely to even distinguish behavioral cues which could be relevant for persuasive adaptation. Gross construal systems could miss data which would be relevant to an individual's response. Adult research in cognitive complexity has shown that individuals with higher levels of complexity are more flexible in their communicative behavior, more likely to make abstract attributions, and less reliant on simplifying social schemas. Thus one could argue that it is possible that children with higher complexity scores may exhibit some of these behaviors. With children, Delia and Clark (1977) did in fact find that cognitive complexity was correlated with effectiveness in adapting persuasive
As with perspective taking, it can be argued that cognitive complexity is a situation specific variable. Research with adults has shown that complexity is not a trait variable that remains stable across time and situation (Sokuvitz, 1977). A child may, for example, have a relatively differentiated view of his parents or his teacher while having a more global perception of other adults. The role of situation in cognitive processes is examined in greater detail in the next section.

Environment and the Development of Persuasive Strategies

Inference occurs within a context and must ultimately be analyzed with reference to that context. The child is directly influenced by situation as he or she learns what is acceptable and/or effective in a situation through interaction within the family. Situation mediates the inferences made about others and also is instrumental in forming the structures which are used to analyze situations; as such, it must be considered when linking social cognition and communicative development. Situation influences both how we assess the individuals involved and how we communicatively adapt to them.

The family is probably the most important socializing force in the life of most children. As Chaffee (1978) states there are at least three reasons for expecting the habitual family communication structures to have a subsequent large
impact on behavior: 1) The family should have the greatest socializing force because it is the most prevalent environment and occurs when the child is most impressionable, 2) There is less variance within families, and therefore more stability, than is characteristic of other socializing institutions such as teachers, churches, or friends, and 3) It is a unique socializing environment in which parents feel greatly responsible for the social and cognitive results of their teachings on the child.

What however is the process by which this pattern of family behavior influences the subsequent cognitive and social behaviors of the child? As was discussed the organism-environment interaction produces new cognitive structures. The practice which a child would get in a home which encouraged argument would assure that a stimulus-rich communicative environment would facilitate the natural development of ability.

**Environment: Family Communication Patterns.** One of the most frequently used measures of the habitual family patterns within the home used in the field of communication is the Family Communication Pattern (FCP) measure. The authors of this measure (see McLeod, Chaffee, Eswara, 1966; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; McLeod, Chaffee, & Wackman, 1967) assumed originally that communication within families could be arrayed along a unidimensional continuum from homes where children were encouraged to argue and make up their own minds to homes
where children were told to not argue or to upset people. However, they soon discovered that there were two distinct types of families in between these extremes. There were families in which neither pattern was stressed and conversely there were families in which parents sent both messages to their child. This has been conceptualized by the authors in terms of Newcomb's A-B-X model, in which families are characterized as stressing the A-X relationship (the topic of communication), the A-B relationship (the relationship between the participants), both or neither. Family communication pattern measures have proved to be a strong and systematic predictor of cognitive as well as behavioral events that occur in a variety of contexts (Chaffee, 1978). However, no one has examined the linkage between growth of persuasive effectiveness and family communication patterns in children. One would expect that the homes which stress the A-X relationship would facilitate persuasive effectiveness.

Environment: Consumer attitudes and skill. Ward and his colleagues (Ward, Popper, Wackman, 1977; Ward & Wackman, 1972) have isolated several self-report measures of consumer skill and attitudes toward consumer issues that seem to be predictive of the mother's response to children's purchase requests. Their research has indicated that mothers who view themselves as careful consumers and who are distrustful of the uses of television advertising are more likely to discuss consumer requests with their child. These mothers are about
equally likely to yield or refuse but will do it with explanation. Thus this variable was determined to be of use in establishing the specific consumer-related environment of the child. It was hypothesized that children whose mother discussed purchase requests with the child would be more sophisticated in their consumer-request strategies than would children who were yielded to or refused without explanation.

Research Model

It is the view of this research that the child's developing persuasive ability is best understood by studying the development of social cognitive skills and the interactive environment of the child.

As with all cognitive theories, social cognitive theory posits a cognitive process intervening between a stimulus and a child's response. The content of this cognitive process is the child's assessments of self, other, and situation. The structure is the process of organizing this information. As in the development of cognition about the physical world, the social cognitive position suggests that children vary with age in the quantity and quality of assessments of the social world.

However, persuasive development depends on more than the child's general social cognitive abilities. There are many external influences on children which can influence their persuasive strategies. The primary influence suggested and studied here is the general family environment in particular
the impact on the child of an environment which encourages or discourages argument. Families can provide an environment which enriches or restricts the child's developing repertoire of strategies. This can occur in two ways in the consumer-request situation: 1) the child may learn from observation of her or his parents engaged in discussion or argument and 2) the child may learn from interaction with his or her parents in a consumer situation. In this process the family influences the development of a repertoire of persuasive strategies which in turn influences the child's development of persuasive skills.

The key independent variables of this study are family influences or environment and the child's stage of social cognitive development. Aspects of social cognitive development measured in this study are role-taking ability (both general and specific, as well as nonverbal) and cognitive complexity. Aspects of the family interactional environment measured in this study include the mothers' reports of consumer skill and attitude and family communication pattern. Strategy will be coded from the transcripts of actual interactions between the mother and child.

Based on this model the following hypotheses were tested:

1. Social cognitive development and strategy will correlate positively with age.
2. Social cognitive development will correlate positively with strategy.
3. Interactional environment will correlate positively with strategy.

4. Social cognitive development and interaction will each significantly account for variance in the use of consumer strategies.
CHAPTER II
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

To explore the nature of children's persuasive strategies in consumer requests and the cognitive and environmental correlates of that behavior, the following research design was employed. The subjects used will be described. This will be followed by a report of the design of the research and the operational definitions used for strategy, cognition and environment.

Subjects

Data were collected from 32 kindergarten and third grade students and their mothers in the Columbus, Ohio and Huntington and Ceredo, West Virginia area. These children were selected because of their accessibility to the investigator either through recommendations by friends or because they were known to the investigator. This permitted several visits to the home for private interviews with both the mother and the child.

Data were collected from children in two age groups to assure variability in cognitive and persuasive abilities. Previous research indicates that young children are egocentric in their use of language (Piaget, 1955), are unable or
unlikely to take the role of others (Flavell et al., 1968), and use fewer and less sophisticated strategies in non-consumer request situations (Rodnick and Wood, 1973; Wood, Weinstein & Parker, 1967). Alternately, children at the third grade level are more adept at persuasion and perform cognitive tasks in a more adult manner (Flavell et al., 1968; Flavell, 1977; Wood, Weinstein & Parker, 1967; Clark & Delia, 1977). Thus within this range one would expect differences in abilities between age groups.

Despite the non-random sample selection procedure, the subject pairs tested appeared reasonably representative of middle class American homes. Mothers and fathers range in age from twenty-six to forty-five. Incomes ranged from a low of below seven thousand dollars to a high of twenty-five thousand dollars. The modal income (16 of 32 families) was between fifteen and twenty-five thousand dollars. The families ranged in size from four children to only child. The majority (25) had two children, one in addition to the subject used in this study. Occupations of the children's parents included technicians, a commercial artist, a construction worker, an architectural photographer, a university professor, and housewife.

The younger group of children, who will be called the kindergarteners throughout this work, ranged in age from 60 to 76 months of age. The older group, the third graders, ranged from 99 to 109 months of age. Seventeen kindergarteners and 15 third graders were studied.
Design of the Study

Data included an interview with both the mother and the child, a questionnaire filled out by the mother and a taped interaction between mother and child. Mothers were first contacted by phone in late November and early December 1978. They were told that the researcher was involved in a dissertation study at Ohio State University and was interested in studying the development of persuasive strategies in children, particularly in a consumer request situation. They were informed that their participation would require approximately two hours of time. If they were willing to participate, a time was set for the first interview between the investigator and the mother.

At the first meeting the experimenter and the mother discussed any questions the mother had about the nature of the project, the mother signed the consent form, (see Appendix A), and was interviewed by the experimenter (see Appendix B). During the interview with the mother, she was presented with an audio cassette tape, a set of instructions, and if necessary, a tape recorder. At a time convenient to both mother and child, the mother was instructed to initiate a "tape" (instead of the usual letter) to Santa Claus. The set of instructions given to the mother are included in Appendix C. She was encouraged by the investigator to question the child's Christmas wish list in a manner similar to typical methods of questioning in a non-Christmas setting.
Pretest questioning of mothers reveal that many of the third graders did not believe in Santa Claus. However, the mothers interviewed indicated that the children were still willing to send letters to Santa in hopes that someone would discover the child's Christmas wishes. Children who were firm non-believers and were unwilling to send a letter to Santa, were informed that the tape was a way for the mother to remember what the child wanted. A belief in Santa was not deemed necessary for persuasiveness to occur.

The taping of the mother-child interaction about the child's Christmas wish list did not occur while the investigator was present. After the taping was completed, the mother either mailed it to Santa Claus at a special post office box or called the investigator who picked it up personally.

Children were interviewed after Christmas. This was an entirely verbal interview and was conducted and audio taped in the child's home. The tasks included in the interview are included in Appendix D. Measures of cognitive ability of the child were assessed from performance on tasks in three areas: (a) verbal and nonverbal measures of general and specific role-taking skill, (b) role-taking complexity, and (c) conservation of liquid and length. Also the persuasive strategies of the child in a role-playing situation were elicited as well as his or her memory of Christmas presents received. These tasks were accomplished in one interview which typically
took between twenty and thirty-five minutes. Before the interview began the investigator attempted to establish rapport with the child in order to reduce anxiety and to encourage free expression by the child. During the interview the child was allowed to ask questions as he or she wished. At that time the mother was given a self-administered questionnaire (see Appendix E) to take while the investigator interviewed the child or to mail in at her convenience.

Operational Definitions

Assessment of Strategies

The thirty-two subjects produced audio recorded interactions about the child's Christmas list. Each interaction was transcribed to permit analysis of the persuasive strategies used. Each transcript underwent two sets of corrections suggested by two listeners other than the typist.

Typically the research on children's interpersonal strategies has been limited by (1) the failure to code actual interactions and (2) the lack of clear conceptual principles in the coding systems employed. This research is designed in part to help correct this problem. The system is designed to code actual interactions and to classify the persuasive strategies contained within these interactions as to the nature and sophistication of the strategies used. It relies heavily on the work of Delia and Clark (1977, 1978, 1979), as well as the work of Piché et al. (1979) and Wood et al. (1967). Unlike
the work of Delia and Clark which specifies the underlying levels of social perspective-taking implied in the strategy, this system makes a much simpler assumption about the development of persuasive skill: sophistication is manifest in requests which are elaborated or justified. This assumption will be discussed in detail below.

The system for analyzing the mother-child interactions consists of four sets of categories: initial requests, support strategies, non-persuasive child messages, and mother utterances. Since actual interactions were coded, two of the four categories used in the coding system represent utterances from the conversation which are not persuasive messages of the child: nonpersuasive child messages and mother utterances. A full description of the content code is included in Appendix F.

The system for analyzing the persuasive messages of the child consists of two sets of categories: initial requests and support strategies. The first set specifies the form in which the initial request was made and the second the "functional strategies used to support the request" (Delia, 1978, p. 1). Thus initial requests were coded the first time the child requested a specific product; support was any subsequent statement which could be viewed as relevant to that product request.

Initial and support strategies could be coded at one of two levels. Simple requests or support strategies designate
messages in which the persuader did not elaborate or justify his or her request beyond minimal levels or in answer to questions by the mother did not go beyond the information requested. For example, the request might be made very simply, "I want a Baby Wet 'n Care." Or it may be a simple answer to a question, "It's a doll." Strategies coded at the second level were defined as elaborated. At this level the child went beyond that which is minimally necessary or requested of them to provide additional information about their product choice, their need of the product, or to answer a counterargument. Elaborated requests were assumed to reflect a higher level of role-taking since they require the child to (1) see the need for additional support of his or her persuasive request and (2) be able to choose support of his or her request which will increase the probability of achieving the persuasive goal. However, postulating a two-level system does not require that the investigator make specific a priori decisions about the hierarchic sequencing of persuasive strategies in terms of implied levels of perspective-taking. Thus the researcher is not forced into making decisions which state for example that "Will you please keep this dog for me cause my Mom won't let me keep it" is a level II statement and less sophisticated than "If you let me keep the puppy, I'll wash your car everyday" which is a level III statement (Delia, 1978).
Elaborated statements by the child, in this system, are subdivided into two categories: product appeals and personal appeals. Product appeals give additional information about the use, attributes of, exposure to and positive and negative characteristics of the requested product. Personal appeals concentrate instead on detailing the child's need or desire for the product, the advantages to be obtained for child or others from the product, or the invocation of abstract notions of relational obligations, fair play, and rules and norms of the Christmas setting. In combination, these categories comprise the realm of elaborated statements.

Thus the overall organization of the coding system for the persuasive messages of the child is outlined below:

I. Initial Request
   A. Simple
   B. Elaborated
      1. Product
      2. Personal

II. Support Strategies
   A. Simple
   B. Elaborated
      1. Product
      2. Personal

The nonpersuasive set of categories for child utterances was necessary for a wide variety of conversational matter which did not relate to the child's persuasive techniques. Examples of such statements are, "My name is . . . ," "Goodbye
"Santa," "When can I go over to Suzy's house?", "I'm hungry," "What do you mean," "I won this dinosaur at school today, Mom."

Mother utterances were subdivided into four major categories: questions, counterarguments, assertions, and facilitative comments. Questions and counterarguments can be further subdivided as product questions, personal questions, or a combination of the two. These are further elaborated in Appendix F.

The strategies employed in each dyad were coded from transcripts. The transcripts were separately coded by two individuals, the investigator and an undergraduate assistant. The unit of analysis was an utterance. This was defined as the smallest ideational unit. It may consist of a word, phrase, or sentence and may be understood as a single thought or the equivalent to a simple sentence. Several rules aided in defining utterances: (1) Utterances were person specific. No utterance included words from two different people. Whenever a new speaker began, a new unit also began. (2) Utterances were scored as continuing through voice overs which were defined as comments by the other member which did not force the contributor to break the statement. (3) Utterances were not scored as continuing through interruptions which were defined as comments which forced a break in the contributor's statement. (4) All ambiguities of definition of voice overs versus interruptions were decided with reference to the audio
tape. (5) Voice overs were coded only if they expressed an intelligible thought in the judgment of the coders.

Following a series of discussions of the category definitions and joint coding of two transcripts which were not subsequently used in the study, the coders separately analyzed the transcripts while noting questions, difficulties and any need for new categories. The coders then met to resolve difficulties and compare coding decisions. While the definitions of several categories had to be reworded for more precision, few new categories were added. A blameshifting category was added in which the child attempts to shift blame from self to others usually for the previous destruction or abuse of a toy.

Agreement was achieved in all cases by referencing the established definitions or precedents for questionable materials. These decisions are reflected in the category definitions as given. Several weeks later, the coders recoded five transcripts and compared their results. Agreement across the five transcripts ranges from 92 to 97 percent. Once again all discrepancies could be resolved through established procedures.

Sophistication of strategy by the child was operationally defined as the proportion of elaborated statements. Thus all statements falling in the two persuasion-relevant categories (i.e., initial and support) were summed for each child. This total score formed the denominator of the equation. All
elaborated statements were summed for each child and formed the numerator. The resulting proportion score indicated the percentage of the child's persuasive messages which were elaborated. This elaborated score, was intended to be used as the criterion variable in the regression equations which are reported in the next chapter.

Assessment of Social Cognitive Abilities

Social cognitive development of the child was assessed from performance on a number of social inference tasks in two areas of social cognitive understanding: (a) role-taking skills including general, specific and nonverbal measures and (b) cognitive complexity.

Abundant evidence exists to support the notion that the development of the ability to "characterize others and . . . make inferences about their covert, inner psychological experiences" (Shantz, 1975, p. 258) is a task drawing upon a variety of social inference making skills to form a continually varying, gestalt perception of another (Shantz, 1975; Flavell, 1971, 1977; Kohlberg, 1969). Recognizing the diversity of skills required in the development of social cognitive ability, the tasks used in this research attempted to measure the range of social cognitive abilities.

Role-taking skills: General. A number of techniques are available to assess role-taking verbally. Rubin (1978) recently attempted to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of five verbal and nonverbal measures of children's
role-taking skills. He included the Rothenberg task (1970) which measures the child's ability to describe how the central actor in an audio-taped story felt and why. Children's verbal responses to interviewer questions about the feelings and motivations of the actor were coded according to the accuracy of descriptions of feelings and understanding of the motives of the actor in four separate stories. Rothenberg suggests that the validity of her procedure as a measure of role-taking skill was supported by significant correlations between role-taking skill and grade, intelligence, and interpersonal adjustment. She reports intrarater reliability of .91. Rubin (1978) reports 81.2 percent of agreement across three graduate students coding according to the Rothenberg scale. He reports a correlation of .50 across the four Rothenberg stories over all grades combined.

A second technique for measuring role-taking abilities includes measures of children's abilities to tell how another is feeling as well as what another is thinking. Developed by Hale and Delia (1978) children's verbal descriptions of two situations, one of hurt and one of annoyance, were elicited. Children were then asked to describe what the other person in the situation was thinking and feeling about the situation. As used by Clark and Delia (1977) this system coded responses ranging from an inability to see the situation from the perspective of the other to a mature ability to see it from the point of view of the other. Clark and Delia (1978) report intrarater reliability measures of .85.
Employing the same principle used by Clark and Delia (1977) and Rothenberg (1970), a role-taking skill task was devised which assessed the child's ability to understand the feelings and thoughts of a mother who is faced with a child throwing a temper tantrum in a grocery store. (See Appendix D, Task 2.) The child was told the story and was then asked a series of questions about how both mother and child felt and why.

Prior experimentation has indicated that the younger child tends to focus on surface attributes of a social situation and/or fails to see a need to construct a coherent account of the antecedents, motivations and consequences of the social setting (Flavell, 1977).

The scoring system for general role-taking skill is based on that of Clark and Delia (1977) and Rothenberg (1970). The child's answers to the series of questions dealing with how the mother felt in the situation, why and what happened in the story to change her feelings, her thoughts in the store, and why she said to put the box back on the shelf gave ample opportunity for the child to respond in detail about the motivations and feelings of the mother. An inability or refusal to answer the questions received no credit (0); un-elaborated statements of anger or statements which merely repeated aspects of the story were given less credit (1) than more elaborated ones. At level two (2) children elaborated on the situational reasons for the mother's feelings in terms of the behavior of the child. At this level children isolated
the elements of the conflict with such statements as "Jim was behaving badly" or "wanted something he shouldn't." At the highest level (3), the child gave a plausible integrated account of the state of the mother within the situation. Thus the child attributed the feelings of the mother to not only the behavior of the child but to embarrassment, and even, in one case, to a desire not to see the child grow up to be selfish.

In order to assess reliability of this measure, as in all coding of social cognitive skills, the investigator first coded all the interviews and then returned several weeks later and recoded ten of the thirty-two interviews. Reliability for the general role-taking measure was assessed as percentage of agreement and was .90.

**Role-taking skills: Specific.** Considerable research suggests that role-taking skill is not uniform across a variety of situations (Kohlberg, 1969; Shantz, 1975; Rubin, 1978). That is, an individual may be highly perceptive in his or her evaluation of familiar people (such as mothers or teachers) in familiar situations (such as going to school or shopping), but may be unable or unwilling to apply these role-taking skills to unfamiliar people or situations. Therefore measures of role-taking skill across a variety of situations may legitimately expect to find a wide variation in individual scores. However, this investigator is interested in finding information relating to the child's role-taking
ability with his or her own mother. Therefore a situation specific (i.e., the product request situation) measure of a child's understanding of his or her own mother's thoughts and feelings when the child makes product requests was devised.

While there are no established measures of situation specific role-taking skill, the task and coding paralleled the construction of general role-taking measures. In the specific measure of the child's understanding of his own mother's behavior in product request situations the child was asked six questions about how and why his or her mother responded to product requests. (See Appendix D, Task 3.) In the coding system a 0 to 3 range was used in which the highest level reached by three of the possible six questions was coded. Therefore at least half of the child's answers had to reach the level that was coded for him or her. Again no answer received no credit (0); at level one (1) the child's ability to understand the mother as a potential target is limited in nature. At this level the child's ability to gain products seems to be contingent only on the self (If I am good, I will get it.), or on the product (She won't buy junk food.) and/or on the global perspectives of the mother (She doesn't like . . . . ). At this point it would seem the child feels emmeshed in a reward situation in which the contingent conditions are only vaguely understood. At level two (2) reasons are offered for the mother's product decisions; however, they do not provide full explanations of the other's
perspective on the situation. Thus at this level responses of the mother are repeated or paraphrased (We have too many toys already.) or simple need-purchase links are made (We need it for school or for winter.). At level three (3) elaborated explanation of the mother's reasons for granting or denying requests are given. At this level, the child reveals an understanding of the thoughts and/or feelings of the mother and reveals as well an understanding that the mother varies along understandable dimensions and should therefore be approached differently in different situations (I will tell her that I played with it at a friend's house so that she will know I will like it if she buys it.).

Reliability was again assessed after a two-week interval. Percentage of agreement was 90%.

*Role-taking skill: Nonverbal.* Role-taking skill was measured through a nonverbal measure as well as a verbal one. This test was designed by DeVries (1970) to eliminate verbal facility from measures of role-taking skill. This task is designed to measure a child's ability to consider what the other might be thinking in a game playing situation. In this task the child is invited to play the Penny Game with the investigator. The child is told to "Guess which hand the penny is in" as the experimenter presents closed fists for a series of seven guesses. Then the child hides the penny for seven trials. On the first three guessing trials, the child experiences positive reinforcement as the experimenter has a
penny in each hand. In the next three trials, negative reinforcement is introduced as the experimenter has a penny in neither hand. The final trial is positively reinforced. When the child acts as hider, the experimenter attempts to guess incorrectly.

The validity of this task as a measure of role-taking skill is based in previous research by Gratch (1964) which indicated that children were found to develop with age from always choosing the same alternative, to choosing alternate ones, and then to choosing the alternative in an irregular pattern. Both Gratch (1964) and DeVries (1970) suggest that these age changes in social guessing behavior reflect a shift from acting without taking the game role of the other into account to acting in terms of an anticipation of the other's game behavior. Results of DeVries's study (1970) are consistent with these observations. She found that shift hiding did increase with age, with deceptive hiding being acquired earlier than deceptive guessing. This development of competitive and deceptive hiding prior to competitive and deceptive guessing suggested that the child is able to take account of the other's perspective before he or she is able to take account of the other's taking account of the child's perspective (DeVries, 1970, p. 759). Rubin (1978) found a significant correlation between DeVries' nonverbal measure and Miller, Kessel, and Flavell's (1970) verbal measure of recursive thought \( r = .22 \).
This procedure yields a five-point scale ranging from one (in which the child is unable to play the game) to five (use of shifting strategy in guessing). This scoring procedure reflects that of DeVries.

As DeVries (1970) notes only the first four guessing trials are used to assess strategy as these guesses which are positively reinforced were viewed as "reflecting the child's spontaneous projection of game strategy, uncontaminated by a challenge to the efficacy of that strategy upon failure to find the penny" (p. 761). Subjects were scored pass-fail on the following categories: (1) Attempts to play the game when asked to hide; (2) does not always hide in same hand, changes penny hand more than once during guessing, hides correctly on at least one trial, changes hand guessed more than once during guessing; (3) almost always hides correctly; has competitive attitude such as indication of disappointment or glee, cheating, offers advice to experimenter; (4) uses shifting or irregular pattern in hiding; and (5) uses shifting or irregular pattern in guessing. Thus the child receives a score from 1 to 5 indicating the number of items passed.

DeVries performed a scalogram analysis which indicated that the items used form a Guttman scale (reproducibility = .95; change reproducibility = .85; index of consistency = .66). Rubin indicated 100% agreement among his coders; the reliability obtained in this study was 100%.
Cognitive Complexity. Considerable research indicates that a cognitive system becomes more complex as it develops, moving from a global undifferentiated system of organizing impressions of social reality to a more complex, differentiated one (Delia & Clark, 1977; Flavell, 1977). Indeed, Flavell (1974) suggests that the study of the development of inferences about others (i.e., social cognition) "lies at the intersection of two major fields of study . . . cognitive development . . . and person perception" (p. 67). It is with the concerns of the field of person perception that cognitive complexity lies. Research has indicated that cognitive complexity appears to affect the ways in which impressions are organized (Mayo & Crockett, 1964), the ability to predict another's behavior (Bieri, 1955), and the styles of adapting to others in various social situations (Delia, 1973). The internal standards which an individual uses to evaluate an individual within a social setting will interact with the information obtained from the other person through role-taking abilities to produce a representation of the other.

Several measures of cognitive complexity are available. The Role Category Questionnaire (Crockett, 1965) has been used widely (Sokuvitz, 1977; Boynton, 1978; Delia, Clark & Switzer, 1974; Clark & Delia, 1978). This task assesses the number of constructs used in forming impressions of others. This is known as cognitive differentiation, a term which refers to the fineness of discrimination or relative
dimensionality of the individual's construct system. Research bearing on the validity of the measure is summarized by Crockett (1965) and Delia, Clark and Switzer (1974).

A similar task has been used in research on person perception in children (Livesley & Bromley, 1973; Scarlett, Press & Crockett, 1971) and on children's perceptions of television characters (Wartella & Alexander, 1978). Level of abstraction used in person perception has been shown to be an important aspect of complexity which enlarges the meaning of cognitive complexity (Boynton, 1979). This task assesses the level of abstraction of constructs used in forming impressions of others. Thus in this study, both differentiation as operationalized by the number of constructs used in the task and level of abstraction were used as measures of cognitive complexity.

To accomplish this the children were asked to describe their mother. (See Appendix D, Task 5.) They were asked to imagine describing their mother to a friend who had never met the mother. When it appeared the description was completed, the child was probed to remember anything else he or she could.

Impressions were then coded along the previously mentioned dimensions: differentiation and abstraction. As in Crockett's research (1965) the descriptions were coded as to the number of discrete attributes of characteristics supplied within each impression. This differentiation measure followed
the guidelines established by Crockett, Press, Delia and Penny (1974), except it was necessary, as the authors noted it may be, to include external descriptions in the constructs counted. External qualities, such as physical traits, age, name or the like were scored. The predominance of external descriptions in children's impressions mandated this liberalization of the system.

Secondly, the impressions were also scored for level of abstraction. These levels are established in detail in Wartella and Alexander (1978) and follow the work of Livesley and Bromley (1973) and Gollin (1958). The lowest level (1) codes physical descriptions and global traits such as she's a blonde, a mother, nice, pretty. The mid-level (2) codes descriptions of the other's actions such as she plays a lot of tennis, drives us places, and takes care of me when I'm sick. The highest level (3) includes descriptions of states and traits of the other such as she is gallant, generous, or smart. Thus each child received a score representing the highest level of description achieved and the number of constructs used to describe other. Reliability for the coding of differentiation and abstraction in this study both reached 100% levels of agreement.

Assessment of Environment

Assessment of the argumentative environment of the child included measurement of two areas of family interaction: (a) family communication patterns and (b) mothers' consumer
attitudes. The relative influence of environment on the developing child is discussed in many social development theories. Kohlberg (1969) gives a particularly cogent discussion of the environmental assumptions of psychoanalytic, social learning theory and social cognitive developmental viewpoints.

While few agree on the nature and extent of environmental influence, all admit that environment has an influence. In fact, one of the most frequently repeated criticisms of developmental research is the lack of a theory of situationality or environmental influence (Kohlberg, 1969).

Paralleling the work of Ward, Wackman and Wartella (1977) and Ward, Popper and Wackman (1977) it is suggested that a child's observation of a parent's consumer behavior and the child's exposure to typical patterns of interaction (particularly parent-child interaction in consumption situations) are learning situations for the child which ultimately influence his or her behavior. It is hypothesized that an environment which encourages free expression, the exchange of ideas and egalitarian interaction between parent and child would provide the opportunity for the child to not only observe but practice being persuasive. Similarly it has been shown that in an environment where the mother prizes high levels of consumer skill, she is more likely to negotiate purchase requests with the child (Ward et al., 1977). Thus, two measures of these particular environmental factors which are hypothesized to be
relevant to the variable of strategic sophistication comprise the measure of environment.

**Environment: Family Communication Patterns.** The measure of family communication was developed by McLeod, Chaffee, and Wackman (1966). Two dimensions characterize this scale: socio and concept. The socio orientation is designed to measure the extent to which the parents of a child emphasize harmony and restrict the expression of anger in their children and the extent to which the interaction between parent and child are organized on an hierarchical rather than egalitarian basis. The concept orientation measures the extent to which the child is encouraged to discuss and is exposed to discussion of controversial topics and also the extent to which the parent's encourage the child to express his or her ideas and to look at all sides of controversial issues. By dichotomizing each scale at the mean a four-fold typology of family types has been developed: (a) those who emphasize neither concept nor socio orientations are laissez-faire, (b) those who emphasize both, consensual, (c) those who emphasize concept over socio orientations, pluralistic, and (d) those who emphasize socio orientations over concept, protective. However, in this study the raw scores on each dimension will be used as predictors, rather than family types.

Extensive information is available in McLeod et al. (1966) about the development and reliability of the scale. Family communication pattern measures have been shown to be
useful predictors in research on political socialization (Chaffee, McLeod, Wackman, 1966) and persuasibility (Eswara, 1970; Chaffee, 1978). The family communication measure is presented in Appendix E (Items 40 through 49).

The socio scale is made up of five items: Do you tell your children (a) that your ideas are correct and shouldn't be questioned, (2) that children should give in on arguments, rather than making people angry, (3) say things like, "You'll know better when you grow up," (4) not to argue with adults, (5) say the best way to stay out of trouble is to keep away from it. An item-total correlation for the socio dimension indicated that the input of each item to the total subset produced a Kuder-Richardson reliability of .802. Item 43 did not correlate well with the subtest scores and was dropped from the analysis. The average item-by-total score correlation for the socio dimension was .80 and the range for that dimension was from .338 to .872.

The concept scale is also composed of five items including: (1) to always look at both sides of an issue, (2) that children know more about some things than adults do, (3) to talk at home about things like politics or religion where people take different sides, (4) that getting ideas across is important even if others don't like it, and (5) emphasize that every member should have some say in family decisions. An item-total correlation for the concept dimension indicated that the input of each item to the total subset, after item
47 was dropped, producing a Kuder-Richardson reliability of .890. The average item by total score correlation for the concept dimension was .89 and the range was from .657 to .916.

Mothers responded to the items on a five-point scale ranging from very often to never. Their individual answers to each item were summed for each dimension.

Environment: consumer skill. The work of Ward and his colleagues has been useful in finding a measure of environmental influences specific to the consumer request situation. Ward, Popper and Wackman (1977) examined mothers' responses to children's purchase requests. He hypothesized that mothers' consumer skills are related to responses to children's purchase requests. He expected to find that mothers with higher consumer skill levels would be more likely to negotiate with their children and less likely to refuse without explanation. He found that mothers who negotiated with their children, as well as mothers who refused to yield to their children's purchase request, had high self-reported consumer skills. Similarly, a measure of mothers' dislike of commercials directed toward children used by Ward, Wackman and Wartella (1977) was a useful index of the mothers' attitudes toward commercials. It was hypothesized that a high distrust of commercials would likewise promote more consumer-related interaction between the mother and child in a consumer request situation.
The mothers' consumer skill was measured through a series of attitude items which are included in Appendix E, Items 20 through 29. Choosing the items which best correlated with the hypothesized overall subtest resulted in a three-item summed scale composed of the following items: (1) I think television ads can provide useful information about new products, (2) I think watching advertising on television is helpful in learning about new products, and (3) I always like to have a household budget. The Kuder-Richardson reliability statistic for this subtest is .657 with an average correlation of .65 and a range of .505 to .728. These were answered with a four-point scale ranging from a lot like me to not at all like me. Higher scores indicate planfullness and the use of television sources in an attempt to be a good consumer.

Mothers' attitude toward commercial advertising to children was measured through a series of attitude items which are included in Appendix E, Items 30 through 39. Once again choosing the items which best correlated with the entire subtest resulted in a Kuder-Richardson reliability for the six-item subtest of .826 with an average correlation of .83 and ranging from .516 to .779. The following items were rated on a four-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. (1) Commercials on children's shows are often deceptive, (2) There are too many commercials on shows that children watch, (3) Commercials often persuade people to buy things they don't need, (4) The advertisements, in general,
present a true picture of the product advertised, (5) Advertising is a fair price to pay for mass-media entertainment, and (6) Commercials to children should be regulated by advertisers themselves. Higher scores indicated a distrust of the advertising industry.

Preliminary Analysis

The measures of social cognitive development, interactional environment, and strategy were used to assess the relationships hypothesized in the first chapter. Data transformations were used for each measure in order to reduce and standardize the data set.

In any study in which children of different ages are used, one must be concerned with the changes which occur in any child due to the passage of time. That is, an eight-year old would be expected to be more developed with respect to the above cognitive and strategic variables than a five-year old. If one is interested in the relative importance of two predictors in terms of a third, changes in those variables are confounded by the pervasive effect of age. Thus, if one is interested in the unique influence of predictors upon a criterion variable, one must remove the theoretically uninteresting and empirically unspecified influence of age (i.e., development) from the measures used. As Elliott (1978) notes, "if this is not the case, then 'development' is not a proper explanation; or our observations would require a frame other than development" (p.77). In this work, age will be removed
as a confounding variable by conducting analyses within age groups. This decision will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

**Preliminary analysis: the nature of persuasive strategies.** The persuasive messages of the children were divided into three major categories: simple utterances, elaborated product appeals, and elaborated personal appeals. Table 1 shows the percentage of children using each strategy level by grade. Almost all children used the simple and product level of persuasive strategy in their interactions. The major difference by grade in the occurrence of persuasive strategy was the use of personal appeals: only 59% of the kindergarteners compared to 100% of the third graders used this level.

**TABLE 1. Percentage of Children Using Each Strategy by Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were four major measures of the child's use of persuasive strategies: number of simple utterances, number
of product appeals, number of personal appeals, and total number of persuasive utterances. There were no mean differences between kindergarteners and third graders on any of the four measures. However, the standard deviation of the total number of utterances and the number of simple utterances varied markedly between kindergarten and third grade (Number of utterances total: kindergarten s.d. = 31.86; third s.d. = 13.81; simple utterances: kindergarten s.d. = 25.64; third s.d. = 11.23). There was no such deviation for the number of product and personal utterances. Thus kindergartener's interactions were characterized by more variability than were the interactions of the third graders in two cases.

Other research has used a variety of measures of the persuasive messages of the child. In order to compare the results of this study with previous research, a variety of measures of persuasive strategies were computed for this sample and where possible compared to results of other studies.

The most frequent research question has dealt with the extent of the child's repertoire: How many strategies are used at varying grade levels? As previously mentioned, research has found that the number of different strategies increased with age in several cases; however, in two exceptions, older children actually demonstrated a decrease in number of strategies (Finley & Humphreys, 1974; Rodnick & Wood, 1973). The number of different strategies (i.e., the
number of separate content codes used) used by each child was computed and the differences by grade tested. Results show that third graders, who used a mean number of 12.1 different strategies, tend to use a greater number of strategies than do kindergarteners, who used a mean of 9.6 ($x^2 = 21.75$, 13 df, $p = .059$). However, the variability within age groups is great with kindergarteners ranging from a low of four to a high of 10 total strategies and with third graders ranging from seven to 17. Clark and Delia (1976) report the mean number of different arguments used by third graders in their role-playing study was 2.5. This would seem to indicate that the concern should be less with the number of strategies used within any age level and more with the factors promoting individual differences.

Particularly the work of Delia and his colleagues has attempted to quantify the persuasive sophistication of the child. In their work, utterances are coded in a three-level hierarchical system reflecting progressively higher levels of social perspective-taking implied in the statements. Persuasive messages are coded in at least two major ways: the highest level achieved and the mean level achieved. The highest level achieved simply refers to the most sophisticated statement contained in a persuasive message. Thus each message receives a score (a one, two, or three) indicating whether all statements were of the simplest level (1), or whether at least one reached the mid (2) or highest (3) level.
The mean level is achieved by summing all the weighted utterances and dividing by the number of utterances. Thus, a statement containing four utterances coded at levels 1, 1, 1, 3 would receive a mean level score of 1.5 as would a statement containing the following four utterances: 1, 1, 2, 2. The first statement would receive a 3 score for the highest level achieved and the second would receive a 2.

The coding system used in this study was converted into the system used by Delia by transforming each content code into the proper level within the hierarchical system. Both mean level and highest level were computed and were examined for differences between age levels.

Using Delia's system, the mean highest level achieved by kindergarteners averaged 2.125 and for third graders, 2.533. This difference approached significance ($x^2 = 3.53, 2df, p = .17$). Fifty-three percent of the third graders but only 23.5% of the kindergarteners achieved the highest level; 70% of the kindergarteners and 46.7% of the third graders achieved only level 2 in their interactions; one subject, a kindergartner, used only level 1. This can be compared to the results of Clark and Delia (1976) in which the mean for highest level achieved for third graders was 1.58; no children younger than age seven were tested.

Mean level was computed by weighting every utterance from one to three by Delia's system and dividing by the total number of persuasive utterances. The mean level achieved by
kindergarteners and third graders was very low, as would be expected from the predominance of simple persuasive strategies across both age groups. The mean level for kindergarteners was 1.168 with a standard deviation of .134. The mean level for third graders was 1.2326 with standard deviation of .12. The difference between these means approached but did not reach significance ($t = 1.43, 30 \text{ df}, p = .163$).

These results give an indication of the nature of the persuasive strategies enacted by children in a persuasive consumer-request situation. Perhaps the most unique finding is that simple strategies predominate at both age levels. While third graders do produce more arguments, more different arguments, more personal appeals, and a higher level of strategy use, these results are not highly significant. These results suggest that while children might have the ability to produce more sophisticated or diverse arguments, they do not frequently do so in the consumer-request interactions.

**Preliminary analysis: strategic sophistication.** The dependent variable in this study was computed through analysis of the coded transcripts. Recalling that only two of the four content categories were relevant to the child's persuasive messages, the number of elaborated statements by the child were divided by the total number of the child's persuasive messages, to form a percentage of elaboration. Unexpectedly, a t-test between kindergarteners and third graders on the percentage of elaborated persuasive messages
revealed no difference ($t = 1.19, p = .224$). The two major categories composing this measure, elaborated product and elaborated personal appeals, were examined for age differences. It was noted that both kindergarteners and third graders heavily used the product category but significant age differences appeared in the use of the personal appeal category. When the proportion of personal appeals was computed a significant t score between kindergarteners and third graders was obtained ($t = 2.93, 30 \text{ df}, p = .006$). This proportion of personal appeals score was standardized within age groups. All future regression and correlational analyses use this standardized proportion of personal appeals elaboration score as the measure of the dependent variable, use of personal appeals.

Several types of personal appeals are summed to form the aggregate measure of proportion of personal appeals. Personal appeals can indicate the necessity, desirability or usefulness of a request. For example, "If you buy me a bike, I'll get to school faster" or "I can have someplace to put my books." Also a child might indicate a benefit that could accrue to the parent from granting the product request. "I'll help Dad fix the car with my tool set." Some statements indicate that both child and parent will benefit: "We can all play Hungry Hippo." Rather than benefit, some statements indicate that a product is needed to avoid threats to relationships or to maintain established ones: "I won't love you if . . . ,"
"I've just got to have one. All my friends do," or "I think it would be fun to play with my friends with a . . . ." At times a child will indulge in threats such as "I'll cry all Christmas day," bargains, "If I get this, it is all I want," promises, "I will be real good." Some children appeal to general principles with such arguments as "It's only fair," "X has one," and "You think everything is too much." Blame is shifted by some "You put it in the basement." Finally the speaker can attempt to articulate the perspective of the other such as "If you were a child . . . ." These then are the content categories which form the aggregate measure of personal appeals.

Preliminary analysis: social cognitive development.

Five measures of social cognitive development were used in this study. Each was highly correlated with age, as is shown by the significant t score values obtained when comparing the scores of kindergarteners and third graders: role-taking general (t = -3.9, 29 df, p = .00), role-taking specific (t = -4.54, p = .00), role-taking nonverbal (t = -5.28, p = .00), cognitive complexity differentiation (t = -4.30, p = .00), cognitive complexity abstraction (t = -4.61, p = .00). Measures of differentiation and abstractions were so highly correlated that the two were combined to reduce the variable set. The four measures of social cognitive development were correlated and submitted to a factor analysis within age groups to allow for the construction of a single,
overall measure of social cognitive development. A principle components factor analysis for each grade provided evidence that the scales of role-taking general, specific, nonverbal, and cognitive complexity together measure a common underlying dimension. The eigenvalue for the single factor solution for third graders was 2.15838 and accounted for 54.6% of the common variance; for kindergarteners, the eigenvalue was 2.2924 and accounted for 57.3% of the common variance. The factor loadings for each grade level indicate that the scales are working together to measure a common underlying dimension at each age, albeit slightly differently. See Table 2.

TABLE 2. Factor Loadings for Social Cognitive Development Measures at Two Grade Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Third Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role-taking general</td>
<td>.61476</td>
<td>.91002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-taking specific</td>
<td>.90487</td>
<td>.82028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-taking nonverbal</td>
<td>.70935</td>
<td>.41343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive complexity</td>
<td>.69677</td>
<td>.78771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor scores were computed for each subject within each age group based on the previously mentioned factor solutions. This it was felt would most clearly reflect the subtle
differences in loading evident at the two grade levels while also standardizing the measurement of social cognitive development.

**Preliminary analysis: Interactional Environment.** It could be argued that a mother's pattern of child rearing can vary with the age of her child, therefore a t-test of mean difference between scores on the two environmental variables by grade was performed. Results reveal no difference due to age of child (consumer skill, t = .03, p = .979). Therefore the four subtests were factor analyzed using the principal components model for all subjects combined (n = 32). Factor scores were computed and formed the measure of environment used in further analysis. The unifactorial results confirmed that these scales were measuring an underlying dimension (i.e., interaction environment). See table 3. The eigenvalue for dimension one was 2.64055 which accounted for 66% of the common variance. It was not surprising that the socio dimension of the family communication measure loaded negatively, but it was originally surprising that the consumer skill measure did. However, the items forming that dimension seem to be tapping a dimension of belief in television and its usefulness (i.e., "I think television ads can provide useful information about new products"). This was opposite of the distrustful attitude toward television and authoritarian information sources apparent in those scoring high on the family communication pattern-concept dimension and in those
indicating a distrust of television advertising to children.

TABLE 3: Factor Loadings for Environmental Measures Combined Across Two Grade Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family communication pattern-socio</td>
<td>.80491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family communication pattern-concept</td>
<td>-.70514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer skill</td>
<td>-.8314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Attitude</td>
<td>.9024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intercorrelations of variables.** The primary reason for analyzing all data within, rather than across age groups, is explicated in the following section. Briefly, the rationale is based on the very different pattern of correlations which characterize the kindergarten and third grade sample.

The raw score measures of the dependent and independent measures were intercorrelated using a Pearson product correlation. Since both social cognitive development (SCD) and persuasive personal appeals (PA) are highly correlated with age, their raw score correlations should be inflated by the variance with age. Thus, it is to be expected that the original correlations would drop when the effects of age are partialled out. Table 4 shows both the original and partial correlations.

The partialling out of age reveals an unusual pattern of correlations. When the effects of age were partialled out the
correlation between social cognitive development and interactional environment and between interactional environment and personal appeals became significant. Unfortunately, the correlation between personal appeals and social cognitive development then became nonsignificant. Due to this unusual pattern the investigator decided to examine separately the intercorrelations of variables at each grade level. If significantly different patterns of intercorrelations emerge, then separate analysis by grade level would be indicated.

TABLE 4. Correlations of Grade, Percentage of Personal Appeals, Social Cognitive Development, and Interactional Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>SCD</th>
<th>ENV</th>
<th>PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCD</td>
<td>.7519*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>-.1769*</td>
<td>.0983 (-.26*)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>.4715*</td>
<td>.2943*(.075)</td>
<td>.086 (.35*)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All starred correlations are significant at or beyond p = .05. Figures in parentheses are correlations with the effect of age partialled out.

In order to assure that all the scales used to correlate these variables are equivalent, standardized z-score measures of the dependent variable (PA) and standardized factor-score
measures of the independent variables (SCD, ENV) were used. As Table 5 indicates there are significant differences by grade in the pattern of intercorrelations.

**TABLE 5: Intercorrelations of Percentage of Personal Appeals, Social cognitive development, and Environment by Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarteners</th>
<th>Third Graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>SCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCD</td>
<td>.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENV</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All starred correlations are significant at or beyond p = .05*

As can be seen the correlation between environment and social cognitive development is, as expected, significant with kindergarteners. It is not with third graders although the correlation is in the expected direction (p = .23). The correlation between social cognitive development and the use of personal appeals is positive though insignificant for kindergarteners (p = .115) and negatively significant for third graders (p = .037). Environment correlates with personal appeals at near significance for kindergarteners (p = .09), although it does not for third graders (p = .37). Based on these results it was decided that separate regression
analyses should be conducted by age since it would seem that the variables are interacting in a very different manner at each grade level. This is consistent with a stage model of development which would suggest that the cognitive structures used to interpret the social world will change as the child develops.

Summary

Thus to prepare for the main analyses, each measure was standardized. The two independent variables were submitted to principal components factor analysis and when one dimension emerged factor scores were computed and were used for the main analyses. Social cognitive development was factor analyzed within age groups while environment was factor analyzed across the entire sample. The dependent variables were computed as a percentage of personal appeals and were transformed into Z-scores. Thus each measure is in comparable scalar terms.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Three variables were examined in the present study: cognitive development, interactional environment, and the proportion of personal appeals. It was hypothesized that social cognitive development and the interactional environment would be significantly correlated but would each be significant predictors of the criterion variable, proportion of personal appeals.

Regression analysis

The regression analyses were conducted separately by age group. Table 6 includes the results for the stepwise regression used for kindergarteners.

TABLE 6. Stepwise Regression Results for Kindergarteners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social cognitive development</td>
<td>.24043</td>
<td>.10136</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional environment</td>
<td>.14015</td>
<td>.11493</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall $F$ for the equation ($F = .844$ at step 2) was not significant. At step one, with only social cognitive development entering the equation, the overall $F$, at 1.579, was also nonsignificant. Neither social cognitive development nor environment were significant predictors of the use of personal appeals. Taken together social cognitive development and environment accounted for nearly 11.5% of the variance in the equation.

TABLE 7. Stepwise Regression Results for Third Graders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social cognitive development</td>
<td>-.50082</td>
<td>.20862</td>
<td>3.503</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional environment</td>
<td>.20513</td>
<td>.24875</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 7 indicates the results for the third graders are also nonsignificant. The overall $F$ for the equation for third graders was 1.82 at step 2. At step one with only social cognitive development entering the equation the $F$ value was 3.163. This is the closest value to significance in these two equations. However, this produced a negative beta weight indicating that people with high levels of social cognitive development were less likely to use personal appeals. Environment seemed a slightly better, though still nonsignificant, predictor for third graders than for kindergarteners.
Overall social cognitive development and interactional environment accounted for nearly 25% of the variance in the equation.

Multicolinearity between the independent variables can influence the predictive value of an equation when the two are entered. Two different processes can occur: redundancy and synergy. In redundancy the explanatory power of the first variable entered into the equation is reduced when the second variable enters. This occurs in the kindergarten sample. The F for SCD at step one is 1.579; at step two it is significantly reduced to .587. In the third grade analysis there is a reflection of synergy: the explanatory power of the first variable actually increases with the addition of a second. The F for SCD at step one is 3.163; at step two this is increased to 3.503. Therefore, not only does adding the variable interactional environmental increase the explanatory power of the entire equation, for third graders it actually increases the explanatory power of social cognitive development.

The hypothesis predicted that social cognitive development and environment would be significant predictors of the use of personal appeals. As indicated in Tables 6 and 7, the hypotheses were not supported for either age group.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results presented in Chapter Three are discussed in this chapter. The study reported here examined children's consumer-request strategies, and the relationship between these strategies and social cognitive abilities and the interactional environment of the child's home.

Theoretical Considerations

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the social cognitive ability and the interactional environment of a child is related to his or her use of consumer-request persuasive strategies.

The rationale for pursuing an investigation into persuasive strategies and cognitive and environmental influences was based on both methodological and conceptual issues. Theory suggests that social cognitive development is an important factor which may affect a variety of communicative skills such as referencing ability (Glucksberg et al., 1974), persuasive ability (Flavell et al., 1968) as well as the encoding and decoding process (Delia, Clark & Switzer, 1974). Yet, there appears to be a general lack of knowledge about how the relationship between social cognitive ability and persuasive strategies operates (Shantz, 1975). In fact, the
manifestation of social cognitive skill in communicative behavior is, according to Shangz (1975), one of the least explored areas of development. It is the unexplored link between social cognitive skill and persuasion that this study attempts to examine. The choice of the consumer-request situation allowed this study to focus on a specific situation (i.e., consumer requests) and to deal with the important public policy implications of the mother-child consumer-request situation.

Several methodological factors guided the design of the study. First, the interactional environment of the child has not been previously examined in light of the child's persuasive ability. Second, the measurement of social cognitive abilities has typically been based on one or, at most, two tests. This cannot fully tap the complexities of the social cognitive system in terms of content and structure. Using a battery of social cognitive tests allowed the investigator to use general and specific situations and to test the child both verbally and nonverbally. Third, much of the research on persuasion in children has relied on laboratory or interview data, rather than actual interactions. The testing of the hypothesized relationship between social cognitive ability and persuasive ability in a natural situation is a potentially useful extension of the research area.

It should be emphasized that this research is preliminary in nature. Given the limitation of research in this area, this
investigation into social cognitive development, interactional environment, and consumer-related persuasive strategies was an attempt to explore both the communicative behavior and its causes.

**Discussion of Results**

The findings that social cognitive ability and persuasion are highly age-related are essentially congruent with past research. These findings give increasing support to the theoretical position that social cognitive ability and persuasive skill are parallel developmental processes. The high correlation between social cognitive development and interactional environment at the kindergarten level indicates that the interactional nature of the home is most important at earlier ages. It is feasible that other socialization forces become more important as the child matures and the environment of the home is no longer such a major factor in social cognitive skill.

The hypotheses were not supported. Neither social cognitive development nor environment accounted for significant variance in the use of personal appeals as a persuasive strategy. This finding fails to support the hypothesis that social cognitive development and interactional environment relate to the use of persuasive strategies. This is surprising, but several explanations may shed light on the findings.

One tenable explanation is that social cognitive ability may be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the use
of high level persuasive strategies. This is consistent with Flavell (1977) who suggests, in the model of inference-making ability articulated in Chapter One, that the use of inference-making skills depends on a child's perception of the need to engage in high levels of perspective taking. At least four conditions of the present study may have encouraged the child to use his or her common rather than maximal social cognitive and persuasive ability.

It would seem the use of naturally occurring data, rather than role-playing situations encourages a predominance of statements at the simple level. Slightly over 80% of the kindergartener's utterances and almost 75% of the third grader's utterances were in the simple category. Comments were coded into the simple category when they were unelaborated statements of desire or were brief unelaborated answers to questions of the mother.

In order to answer the basic research question: What is the nature of mother-child consumer-request interaction? one must examine the persuasive strategies used by the child. However, research shows that children more frequently use their subtle strategies with peers or teachers than with parents (Flavell et al., 1968; Finley & Humphreys, 1974; Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan, 1977). Finley and Humphreys (1974) argue that the lack of knowledge of biases and weaknesses encourages greater use of the extant abilities of the child. Thus it may be that the use of mothers fails to maximize
social and strategic abilities.

It seems that in naturally occurring conversations, the statements of the child are markedly influenced by those of the mother. That is, in this sample of children's interactions, with their mother, the predominant pattern seems to be one of the mother introducing and the child responding. This is congruent with the work of Bruner (1978) who found a repetitive pattern between mother and child in the storybook reading situation. The mother would point or comment about the story and the child thus learned to focus attention on certain objects and to respond in the expected manner. However, it should be noted that in this study the mother initiated the interaction based on a set of instructions. The mother's attempt to question the child may have introduced a bias as the mother's influence on the conversation was maximized. This can only be determined by comparing the results of this study with naturally occurring conversations about products between mother and child. It would seem that future research needs to explore the feasibility of unobtrusive measures at home and in stores as the mother and child interact about products.

Also, the use of the Christmas wish list as the vehicle for obtaining interactions may not have encouraged the child. Since the child is aware that he or she will get something for Christmas, the wish list may be a time to simply state every possible dream. As such, this list could not be expected to be defended with the fervor a child might use to
express immediate desire for a toy at hand or a cereal in front of the child on the grocery shelf. These factors may have accounted for less than maximal use of ability.

It is possible that the nature and sophistication of third graders could be better tapped by refining the coding system to make finer distinctions between those strategies which are considered sophisticated. A post hoc comparison of the predictive ability of each type of personal appeal which had been summed to produce the aggregate category of personal appeals was conducted. It was expected that the separate regression analyses might reveal a clearer pattern of results. Table 8 reveals the results of that series of regression in terms of the beta weights for social cognitive development by grade level.

Although none of the beta weights in Table 8 were significant the results indicate that social cognitive development is predicting the use of different categories at different age levels.

At the kindergarten level, children use fewer types of personal appeal content categories; however, social cognitive development does predict positively the ones they will use. In the third grade, we find that children use a wide variety of personal appeals; however, the beta weights for third graders seem to predict what the highly developed socially
Table 8: The Influence of Social Cognitive Development on Individual Personal Appeal Content Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beta weights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial request</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive outcome or</td>
<td>none*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need for child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive outcome for</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive need or outcome for</td>
<td>.14958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive outcome for</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive outcome to</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both parent &amp; child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relational threats</td>
<td>.45204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and obligations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bribes, promises</td>
<td>.15936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appeals to general principles</td>
<td>.3656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take other's perspective</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blame</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Category not used by any child within the sample
child will not use: bribes and blame in particular. Third graders are more likely to use positive outcome to both parent and self and appeals to general principle. On the basis of the above one could suggest that certain personal appeals seem to lose favor with the older child. Strategies appear in the repertoire of third graders but are then minimized as the child matures. This supports the results of Finley and Humphreys (1974) who found that the number of strategies used by children actually decreased around age nine as children limited their use of such aversive strategies as threats or tantrums. It may be that clearer distinctions need to be sought as to what specific strategies enter the child's repertoire, when they enter, and when, if ever, they are dropped.

Alternately, it is possible that any one procedure to assess persuasive strategy of the child would be inadequate for describing much of the variability in strategy use. A third grader who is highly developed cognitively may, for example, be adept at leading the conversation to desired topics, executing long-range persuasive campaigns, and/or choosing very carefully the time and place of requests. None of these would be measured by the content code used in this study. Thus it seems possible that the difference between children of more and less developed strategic sophistication may not be adequately captured through analysis of their specific utterances at one point in time solely. A series of
measures are required.

Interactional environment has throughout this study failed to account for more than a miniscule amount of variability in the dependent variable. Since little research has been done in the linkage of environment and persuasion, it would seem to be important for future research to create variables which adequately tap the environment of the home at a situational level, as well as measuring the influence of environment apart from social cognitive development. The results of the present study indicate that, at least with kindergarteners, social cognitive development and interactional environment are significantly related. It would seem that the learning from the environment is represented by the variance shared with social cognitive development and that the unique influence of environment upon persuasion is minimal. Future research should concentrate on specifying how environment influences social cognitive development and how environment may be represented uniquely.

Finally, it should be noted that the results have been limited by the size of the sample. As always, it is possible that more data points would have allowed more significant results.

Implications for Future Research

Through this chapter a number of suggestions for future research have been made. They are summarized below:
1. Additional research into persuasive development and its causes should use naturally occurring situations and unobtrusive measures of the mother-child interaction.

2. Additional research aimed at developing content categories which take into account more than the nature of individual utterances is needed. Such aspects of persuasive strategy as campaign over time, choice of time and place of request, and topic control could provide more insight into how it is that persuasive strategies are manifest at different ages.

3. Additional research is needed to validate the presence of the relationship between environment and social cognitive development. It would be useful to determine in what respects environment has an impact above and beyond its influence on social cognitive development.

4. Additional research is needed to compare the persuasive skills of large numbers of children at a variety of ages.

**Public Policy Implications**

The data suggest that children's product requests are shaped and constrained by their interaction with their mother. Even young children use information about the product, such as its uses, suggested age range, difficulty of assembly and
cost, in their attempts to persuade. In fact, nearly 12% of the kindergarteners and 16% of the third graders statements provide information about the product desired. It would seem that, overall, mothers are not subjected to a large number of personal appeals (only 5 and 10% of the total conversation, respectively), but they are subjected to considerable pleading and begging (used by over 50% of the children) and statements of desire (used by over 65% of the children).

It was impossible to assess directly the influence of television on the products requested and the manner in which the products were requested. However, the phrasing of requests and the information offered about products seemed at times suspiciously like that from a commercial, for example, "It has 125 pieces," "It doesn't need a battery," "And it's lots of fun for the whole family."

Summary

The present investigation failed to find support for an hypothesized relation between social cognitive development and environment, and persuasive strategies. A discussion of tentative explanations and methodological considerations suggest that future research into the variables studied may broaden an understanding of the nature of the relationship between social cognitive activities and interactional environment and human communicative behavior.
APPENDIX A
PERMISSION FORM

Dear Mother:

This project asks about how you and your child talk about things—about things your child wants you to buy for Christmas, for breakfast, for birthdays, and others. This survey is being done for a doctoral student at Ohio State University for her dissertation research. All the information in this survey is strictly anonymous. I am interested in looking at trends across a number of children. No family names are ever used.

Please answer each question as honestly as you can. Of course, you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. The research project will involve an interview with you, one with your child, and a taped conversation between you and the child.

Signed: _______________________

Date: _______________________

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APPENDIX B

MOTHER'S INTERVIEW

Mother's Name ___________________________ ID# ___________ Date ______
Address ___________________________ Phone ___________

1. What is your child's full name?

2. What is (child's) birthdate?

3. What are the names and ages of all your sons and daughters?
   Sons  Daughters

4. What is your approximate age, and your husband's?
   Wife  Husband
   Under 21
   21-25
   26-30
   31-35
   36-40
   41-45
   46-50
   Over 50

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5. What is your husband's job?

6. What is your job?

7. What is your approximate family income?
   $7,000 or less
   $7,000 - $11,000
   $11,000 - $15,000
   $15,000 - $25,000
   Over $25,000

8. How many years of schooling have you had?

9. How many years of school has your husband had?

10. How many television sets are there in your home?

11. Is there a set which your child watches alone? (a set he primarily uses)

12. How often do you place restrictions on (read insert),
    regularly, sometimes, or never?
    a. Which programs your child can watch on TV
    b. When your child can watch TV
    c. How many hours each day your child can watch TV
13. About how many hours does your child spend watching TV on weekdays?
   before dinner _____
   after dinner _____
   yesterday _____

14. About how many hours does your child spend watching TV on Saturday?

15. About how many hours a day do you spend watching TV with your child?

16. About how many hours do you spend watching TV?
   before dinner _____
   after dinner _____

16. (Part 2)
   a. Where does your child primarily get his/her ideas for Christmas presents that he/she would like?

   b. Does he also get ideas from
      friends regularly sometimes rarely
      catalogues
      television
      brothers/sisters

17. Do you ever talk to __________ about commercials?
(Probe: What do you talk about? Anything else?)

18. How do you feel about TV commercials made for children?

(Probe: Anything else you like or dislike about TV commercials for children?)

19. How do you decide what to buy your child for Christmas

(Probe: What are the most important factors in your decision? Cost? How asked? Price ceiling? Source of information?)

Oral Aspect of Interview (to be tape recorded)

Communication strategies are language choices—both verbal and nonverbal—which children employ to accomplish a particular goal. They can include crying, affectionate behavior, direct and indirect asking, and the like. We are interested in the strategies that your child uses in making a request of you.

There are not many of us who have escaped falling victim to a child's knowledge of persuasive strategies. Think of the child who learns that his mother gets embarrassed when he cries in public—and then throws a tantrum in order to get what he/she wants.

The same child knows that he/she wouldn't get away with that at home, where he might have to adopt a more polite strategy. We know that children have the ability to persuade
people, but we know little about how they specifically manage
to do this and how it is related to the development of
communication competency. This is a major concern of our
study.

I would like to ask you about the strategies your child
uses to get his or her way when he or she is requesting you
to buy something for him/her? Candy, cereal, toys. What
does he do in the grocery or toy store? What about other
strategies such as staying up late? Watching a special TV
show? What does he/she do near a birthday or Christmas?

20. I'm going to read you some things people might possibly
do with their children. After I read each one, I'd like
you to tell me whether this is something you do with
(child), and if it is, how often you do it with him/her.

   a -- often - several times a week
   b -- pretty often - about once a week
   c -- sometimes - about every two weeks
   d -- not too often - once a month or less
   e -- almost never

20a. play games with him/her
     b. spank him/her
     c. tell your child he/she
        has been good
     d. punish him/her by taking
        away some privileges
     e. feel angry with him/her

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>play games with him/her</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spank him/her</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell your child he/she</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has been good</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punish him/her by taking</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>away some privileges</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel angry with him/her</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20f. hug or kiss him/her

g. make him/her feel guilty when do something wrong

h. take him/her to movies

i. tell child he/she can't buy certain things

j. ask child what his/her preference is when buying something for them

k. talk to him/her about how much products cost

l. talk to him/her about where different products can be bought

21. If you're like a lot of mothers, you probably go along with some of the things (child) wants to do and draw the line on others. Let's take clothing for example—the way he wants to dress. When the matter of clothing comes up, how often would you say you and (child) agree or disagree?

a — usually agree
b — sometimes agree
c — sometimes disagree
d — usually disagree

21a. clothing

b. choice of friends

c. bed time
21d. his/her choice of time of play

22. I'm going to read you some ways in which (child) might try to get you to buy different kinds of products. I'd like you to tell me how likely he/she is to try each of these ways. Think about how your child might try to get you to buy a toy. How likely is he/she to . . .

a -- very likely
b -- pretty likely
c -- not too likely
d -- not likely at all

22a. tell you his/her friends like it

b. promise to do some sort of work for you if you'll buy it for him/her
c. ask for it when the two of you are at the store
d. ask for it after he's/she's done some chores or been particularly well-behaved
e. ask for it after he/she has seen it advertised on TV
f. just ask you to buy it when you're at home
22. (Part 2) You said that (child) tries to get you to buy something by (strategy). How do you feel when he/she does that—does it bother you particularly, or do you think it's a good approach. (ASK ONLY FOR ITEMS THAT MOTHER SAID WERE AT ALL LIKELY, NOT "NEVER.")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a -- good approach - a good way to ask for things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b -- OK approach - I don't mind it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c -- bothers me a little - somewhat irritating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d -- bothers me a lot - irritates a lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22a. tell you his/her friends like it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. promise to do some sort of work for you if you'll buy it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ask for it when the two of you are at the store</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ask for it after being well-behaved or doing chores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ask for it after seeing it advertised on TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. just ask to have it at home alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. I'm going to read you a list of ways in which (child) may try and ask you to buy things for him/her. Please indicate how likely (child) is to ask for things using that type of approach and how you react to his/her use of that approach, that is, do you think it's an approach you like or does it irritate you?
HOW LIKELY TO USE APPROACH?

a -- very likely
b -- pretty likely
c -- not too likely
d -- not at all likely

23a. ask for product because brother or sister has one, likes it, etc.  

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b. gangs up on you with his/her brother and/or sister

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c. tries to go through his/her father

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d. says he/she will pay for it with own money

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e. ask when it would be hard to say no—like in front of people

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f. really pleads—asks over and over

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g. gives a bunch of ways they would use it

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h. seems to want something so he/she can be popular with friends

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WHAT IS YOUR REACTION?

a -- good approach
b -- OK approach
c -- bothers somewhat
d -- bothers a lot

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INTERACTION INFORMATION SHEET

Mothers must constantly deal with requests from their children to buy them products from toys to candy to cereal. I am interested in studying how children phrase their requests and what strategies they use to persuade mothers when their request is refused or when mother seems undecided.

Therefore, I am asking you to tape record a conversation between you and your child about what he/she wants for Christmas. I think a good cover story will be that the child is going to send a tape (instead of the more traditional letter) to Santa Claus. If they are too old to believe in Santa, perhaps they can be told that the tape is to help you (their mother) remember what they have asked for. Other children who also want to be in on the tape to Santa can be recorded on side 2. (Please have each child give his or her name and age before starting, so Santa won't get confused!) Before you begin taping give them some time to make a list or think about what they want to ask.

When you are both ready and interruptions can be kept to a minimum, begin. You may want to let the child introduce his or herself to Santa and then listen to how they sound on tape before proceeding. Please try to keep the conversation between five and fifteen minutes. However, do not worry if you are somewhat over that time.
I am very concerned that the children attempt persuasive strategies. I will ask you to respond in a way you might normally respond when your child asks you for a request at any other time of the year. In other words, I would like you to respond as you normally do when the child requests something of you.

Please try to respond in such a manner to the child's requests as to make the child give reasons for why he or she wants the gift and why they should be given that particular one. Of course, mothers typically respond in a variety of ways to child's product requests. Some examples we have found that mothers use:

- Why do you want that?
- Where did you see that toy?
- Why should Santa or Mom and Dad get that for you?
- What's good about this particular toy?
- How much do you want it?
- What would you be willing to do to help get that toy?

Finally in order to assure that the child is forced to attempt persuasion at least once, I would ask that you choose either the most outrageous gift request or at least one request toward the end of the discussion and tell the child that you don't think Santa would send that particular gift, but maybe the child can persuade Santa otherwise. Please choose one request which will force the child to use persuasion. Then let them try to persuade you to get them their
choice. Feel free to discuss their request as you normally would a major request at any time of the year. At the very end of the tape, the child may want to make a special plea to Santa, a comment on why they should get what they've asked for, or further requests. Let them end as they wish.

Please feel free to call if there are any problems (486-1441 or 422-3400). I will pick up the tape when it is finished.
APPENDIX D

CHILD INTERVIEW

(Tasks were typically accomplished in the following order)

Task 1: "What did you get for Christmas?

Probes: "Tell me everything you can remember that you got for Christmas." "What did your grandmother (siblings) get you for Christmas?" "Is that everything?"

Task 2: General role-taking

First the child was told the following story, using the pictures following this text. Female children were told of Jane, males of Jim. "This is (Jane, Jim)'s mother. She and J were walking to the grocery store when they found a dollar bill lying on the sidewalk. They decided to use the dollar to buy something for themselves at the grocery store. J found what he/she wanted almost as soon as they got to the store. He/she found a box of Alpha Bits cereal with a Captain America decoder ring right in the box. "Mom, this is what I want. Let's buy this box of cereal." But J's mother didn't think that it was a good idea. "No one else likes Alpha Bits and your Dad and I don't want a decoder ring. Why don't we buy something that we all can enjoy like a chocolate cake for dinner tonight." J really wanted the decoder ring and began to argue with mother. "I want
the decoder ring, we found a dollar and I get to spend it. You always get to decide what we will buy." By that time J was crying and yelling and other people in the grocery store were looking at J and his/her mother. Finally J's mother said, "put that box back on the shelf. We are going home. Wait till your father hears about this." And this is how J's mother looked then.

The following questions were asked:
Can you think of reasons why J wanted to buy the decoder ring?
Can you think of reasons why the mother wanted to buy the chocolate cake?
    Probe: Anything else?
If you were J's mother what would you say to J?
What happened to change the mother from this (first picture) to this (second picture)?
How do you think J's mother was feeling at the end of the story? Why?
What do you think she was thinking about what happened in the store?
What do you think the mother thought about the way the child behaved?
Why did the mother tell the child to put the box back that they were going home?
Probe: If needed: What's the most important difference between these two pictures?

Task 3: Specific role-taking

"I'll bet you ask your mother to buy you things sometimes. Do you do that?"

Are some times better than other to ask your mother to buy you something?

When you ask her to buy you something does she usually say yes or does she usually say no? When is she most likely to say yes? No?

Is she more likely to say yes when you've been good or when you've been bad? Why?

Is she more likely to say yes when you ask for a toy that costs five dollars or twenty-five dollars? Why?

Is she more likely to say yes when you tell her you saw it on television or that you played with it at a friend's house? Why?

Is she more likely to say yes when you ask for something in the store or at home? Why.

Task 4: Penny Game

"Would you like to play a game? Guess which hand has the penny." Investigator hides the penny seven times and allows the child to guess. The first three trials are positively reinforced as the investigator has a penny in both hands, the next three are negatively reinforced as there is no penny in either
hand, the final trial is positively reinforced. Then the child hides for seven trials while the adult guesses. The investigator attempts to guess incorrectly.

Task 5: Role-taking complexity

"I'd like for you to describe your mother to me. Imagine describing her to someone who has never met her and wants to know what kind of person she is. I don't really want to know what she looks like, but what she is like as a person."

Probe: "Anything else?"

Task 6: Conservation

Two glasses of water, one red and one blue, are placed before the child. Then the water from one glass is poured into three smaller glasses. The child is asked, "Is there more red water or more blue water?" "Why" or "Why not?" The water is then poured back into the large glass and the child agrees that the two large glasses have the same amount of water again. Then the water from the other glass is poured into the three smaller glasses and the child is then asked the same set of questions again.

The child is asked to draw a bent pipe cleaner on a piece of paper. The pipe cleaner is bent into an
arc. Then the investigator asks the child to draw what the pipe cleaner would look like if it were straightened out.

Task 7: Persuasive skill in role playing situation
"What is something you would really like to have?"
"Suppose you wanted (child's choice) for your room real bad. You are going to try to get your mother to buy one for you. Try to use every argument you can think of which might talk her into buying if for you. You can pretend I'm your mother. Go ahead and try to talk her into buying the (choice)."

Probe: "Is there anything else you can think of to say which might help to make her buy it?"
Figure 1
Figure 2
APPENDIX E
MOTHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Your Name____________Child's Name____________Child's Age____

In responding to this series of questions, please recall conversations between you and your child about what he or she wanted for Christmas. Focus on one conversation in order to answer the following questions.

If the questions or your answers seem misleading, irrelevant, or in need of comment, please feel free to put your comments in the margin. We'd be glad to know how you respond to this questionnaire. Please circle your answer.

(1) strongly disagree
(2) disagree
(3) somewhat disagree
(4) not sure
(5) somewhat agree
(6) agree
(7) strongly agree

1. I was keenly aware of how my child perceived me during the conversation.
   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   (6)   (7)

2. My mind wandered during the conversation and I often missed parts of what was going on.
   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   (6)   (7)

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3. Often in the conversation I wasn't sure what to say, I couldn't seem to find the appropriate lines.

4. I carefully observed how my child responded to me during the conversation.

5. Often I pretended to be listening to my child when in fact I was thinking about something else.

6. Often during the conversation, I wasn't sure of my role; that is, I wasn't sure how I was expected to relate to the child.

7. I listened carefully to my child during the conversation.

8. Often I was preoccupied in the conversation and did not pay complete attention to the other.

9. Often in the conversation I wasn't sure what my child was really saying.

10. Often in the conversation I was not sure what my child's needs were (e.g., reassurance, a compliment, etc.) until it was too late to respond appropriately.

11. During the conversation I was sensitive to my child's subtle or hidden meanings.

12. I was very observant during the conversation.
13. In the conversation I paid close attention to what my child said and did and tried to obtain as much information as I could.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

14. Often I felt sort of "unplugged" from the situation; that is, I was uncertain of my role, the motives of my child and what was happening.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

15. I really knew what was going on in the conversation; that is, I had a "Handle on the situation."

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

16. In the conversation I accurately perceived my child's intentions quite well.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

17. Often in the conversation I was not sure how I was expected to respond.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

18. In the conversation I was responsive to the meaning of the other's behavior in relation to myself and the situation.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

Please list for me what your child got for Christmas: (as well as you can remember).

Parents and Santa Claus: Grandparents, siblings, other relatives and friends:

Please put a check beside the three things your child got which you think he or she wanted the most.
For each of the following statements, please check the one space that matches how close the statement is to how you feel.

a -- a lot like me
b -- somewhat like me
c -- a little like me
d -- not at all like me

20. I think television ads can provide useful information about new products.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___

21. I feel I'm an excellent consumer.
   a)____  b)__  c)___  d)___

22. My husband and I usually say the same thing when our child asks us for a product.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___

23. In general, I'm bothered when my children ask me to purchase products.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___

24. I think watching advertising on television is helpful in learning about products.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___

25. In our family, my child usually asks me for things he/she wants rather than asking my husband.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___

26. I always like to have a household budget.
   a)____  b)___  c)___  d)___
27. My children usually have a better chance of getting the products they want by asking my husband than by asking me.
   a)   b)   c)   d)   

28. When my children ask me for something they've seen advertised on television, I usually talk to them about that advertising.
   a)   b)   c)   d)   

29. I check out new products by asking friends who have already bought them.
   a)   b)   c)   d)   

Below are a series of statements concerning TV advertising and the consumer. For each statement, please check one space to indicate how much you agree or disagree with it.

a -- strongly agree
b -- somewhat agree
c -- somewhat disagree
d -- strongly disagree

30. My child understands what commercials on children's shows are trying to do.
   a)   b)   c)   d)   

31. Commercials on children's shows are often deceptive (that is, untrue in ways which mislead children in important ways).
   a)   b)   c)   d)   

32. There are too many commercials on shows that children watch.
   a)   b)   c)   d)   
33. Commercials to children should be regulated by the government.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

34. My child likes many TV commercials.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

35. Commercials often make my child want the thing advertised.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

36. Commercials often persuade people to buy things they don't need.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

37. The advertisements, in general, present a true picture of the product advertised.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

38. Advertising is a fair price to pay for mass-media entertainment.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

39. Commercials to children should be regulated by advertisers themselves.
   a)   b)   c)   d) 

Here are some things that parents sometimes say in their family conversation while their children are growing up. Thinking back to the time when you were between the ages of 12 and 14 or so, how frequently did your parents do these things? For each thing, would you say they did it very often, often, sometimes, rarely, or never?
(1) - never
(2) - rarely
(3) - sometimes
(4) - often
(5) - very often

40. Say that their ideas are correct and you shouldn't question them.

41. Say that you should always look at both sides of an issue.

42. Answer your arguments by saying something like "You'll know better when you grow up."

43. Say that you should give in on arguments, rather than making people angry.

44. Admit that children know more about some things than adults do.

45. Talk at home about things like politics or religion where one person takes a different side from others.

Again, thinking back to when you were between the ages of 12 and 16 or so, how much did your parents emphasize the following things? Would you say very much, pretty much, somewhat, not too much, or not at all?
(1) - not at all
(2) - not too much
(3) - somewhat
(4) - pretty much
(5) - very much

46. Say that getting your ideas across is important even if others don't like it.

'(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

47. Emphasize that every member of your family should have some say in family decisions.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

48. Tell you that you shouldn't argue with adults.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

49. Say that the best way to stay out of trouble is to keep away from it.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Now, think about the things that you say to your own children. Thinking back to the conversations you have had with your child, how frequently do you do these things? Please answer the questions again to the left of your original answers (in the left margin). For example, how often do you tell your children that your ideas (those of you and/or your husband) are correct and that they shouldn't question them? or tell them to always look at both sides of an issue?
APPENDIX F

CONTENT CODING SCHEME FOR INTERACTION

I. Initial Request: The first time a desire for a product is mentioned and utterances contiguous to that request.

A. Simple requests

1. Unelaborated

   Could I have . . . .

   I want . . . .

2. Politeness Request

   Please (used in sentence such as Please could I have . . . .)

3. Pleas, begging, nagging including repeated statements

   Please, please I want . . . .

   I really want this an awful lot.

   I want it, I want it so much!

B. Elaborated initial requests

1. Product appeals

   A. Appeals which alleviate or eliminate negative aspects of the product

      I want a football helmet, it's not too much.

   B. Appeals which maximize positive aspects of the product such as appeals which state, defend or maximize the positive aspects of a product by giving attributes of the product, or expanded information about the product.

      A Hungry Hippo game, you play it . . . .

2. Personal appeals

   A. Statements which elaborate the necessity, desirability or usefulness for the child of
the request
If you buy me a bike, I'll get to school faster.

B. Statements which elaborate the benefit for the parent
I'd help Daddy with my tool chest.

C. Statements which indicate positive outcomes to both child and parent from the product.
If you get a game, we can all play.

D. Statements which elaborate on the usefulness of the product in maintaining associations or relationships or in which established relations are threatened by the refusal of or lack of the product.
I won't love you, if I don't get a . . . .
All my friends have . . . .
I think it would be fun to play with my friends with a . . . .

E. Bribes, personal threats, bargains; promises
I will clean my room if you buy me a . . . .
I won't be cruel to it if you get me a . . . .
I would help pay for a . . . .

II. Support for request: utterances by the child to support the initial request including answers to questions and counterarguments.

A. Simple support or extensions

1. Repetition

2. Simple answer to question which does not go beyond information requested
I saw it on TV. I just think it would be fun.
It smells good. Because I've been good.

3. Desire statements
I like it. I want it. It is nice.

4. Intensity
   I want it a lot.

5. Politeness
   Please

6. Simple affirmative or negative response to questions.

B. Elaborated support or answers to counterarguments. Volunteered information.

1. Product appeals
   a. Alleviate or eliminate negative aspects of product
      Cheaper train sets get torn up.
      It's really not too expensive.
   b. Maximize positive aspects of product or add information
      It has rivets. It has 398 pieces.
      You play it like this . . .
      And when you press the foot it wets.
   c. Change of request to make it more attainable
      How much is an old guitar?
   d. Alleviating effects of counterargument
      I'll help pay for it.
      That is not that much money.
      But Santa Claus gets it for free.
   e. Complete change of request in face of counterargument
      Then I want a Twister.
2. Personal appeals (Examples from Section I B 2 are valid when used after initial request.)
   a. Statements which elaborate the necessity, desirability, or usefulness of the product
      (Why want a gun?) So I can blast my sister.
   b. Statements which elaborate the benefit for the parent
      But if I had an oven I could help you cook.
   c. Statements which indicate positive outcomes to both participants from the product
      We can both use the (product name).
   d. Statements which elaborate on the usefulness of the product in maintaining associations or relationships or in which established relations are threatened
      They won't let me play unless I have a helmet.
   e. Bribes, personal threats, bargains; promises
      I will feed it myself.
   f. Appeals to general principles
      It's only fair; I've been good; You think everything's too much.
   g. Demonstrable attempts by persuader to take persuadee's perspective in articulating an advantage
      If you were a child, you would . . . .
   h. Blame: statements which attempt to shift responsibility for previous misbehavior or destruction onto others
      You put it in the basement.
      I didn't break it, my sister did.

III. Nonpersuasive statements by child
   A. Neutral facilitative statements
Oh . . . um . . . .

B. Question
Have you seen my Barbie doll?

C. Clarification
What do you mean?

D. Assertion
I don't want to talk anymore.

E. Irrelevant comments
(Why do you want it?) Under the tree

F. Comments about Christmas
Hello Santa,

G. Neutral/agree

H. Don't know/disagree

IV. Utterances by the mothers

A. Neutral facilitative statements including repetition of single words to encourage continuance; simple agreement/disagreement

yea/no/uhm/oh/I see

B. Questions

1. Product use questions: What is good about this toy? How does it work? What is it?

2. Product exposure questions: Where did you see it? Have you played with it? Do any of your friends have it?

3. General personal questions: Do you like to play with trucks?

4. "Want" questions: Why do you want this? What do you want the most? How bad do you want it?

C. Counterarguments

1. Product counterarguments: It costs too much.
It doesn't look safe.

2. Counterarguments about exposure: You just want it because your friends have it.

3. Personal counterarguments: You've got enough already.

4. Counterarguments about personal desire: You don't really want a toy that doesn't do anything, now do you?

5. Combination counterarguments: combining both product and personal issues to discuss the child's own limitation or limitations of the home with the individual product. You will hurt yourself with a tool kit. It is for small kids, ages 2 to 4. Where will you put it?

D. Leading Question: asked to move conversation to another topic, a command.

Tell Santa what you want. What else do you want?

E. Ambiguous questions about child's requests (i.e., neither product nor personal)

Why should Santa get this for you? What would you be willing to do to get this?

F. Christmas related comments

Santa doesn't have any of those. What if it's too big to fit into his bag?

G. Assertions, declarations

I don't know if I can buy you that.
LIST OF REFERENCES


