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Student attitudes toward the elderly as a function of gerontological social work education

Ellenbrook, David Aaron, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1992
STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ELDERLY AS A FUNCTION OF GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

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

By

David Aaron Ellenbrook, B.S., M.A., M.S.S.W.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1992

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Approved By

Virginia K. Richardson
Adviser
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DEDICATION

To my aunt, Kathleen M. Gregoire, for having rescued and reared me.

To my great aunt, Annie Owens, who sensitized me to the plight of the aged.

To Maggie Kuhn, who radicalized me. And to all of those elderly clients I have worked with and learned from in the past, as well as those in the future who aspire to live and flourish in a society free of ageist attitudes.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Virginia Richardson, who provided guidance, encouragement, and intellectual stimulation throughout my doctoral education. Dr. Keith Kilty, for his support and sharing of statistical expertise. Dr. James Lantz for his introduction to existential theory on aging. Professors Hillquit Lynch, Juanita Sanford and Helen Kraft for their imparting of knowledge and concern for the welfare of others during my early years as a student of the social sciences. And Nancy Drake for her time and skills in preparing the final draft of this manuscript.
# VITA

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Major Field: Social Work

Studies in Sociology, Gerontology, Mental Health, Health Care, Social Work
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A Graying America

America is a graying society. In 1790, when the initial census was taken in the United States, the elderly accounted for about 50,000 persons; or, 2% of the 2.5 million Americans were age 65 or older. By 1980, there were 25.5 million older Americans, representing 11.3% of the population. If projections are accurate, by the year 2000, there will be 35.0 million older Americans, representing 13.1% of the population (Atchley, 1985). As the so-called "baby boom" generation enters old age, a dramatic jump in the rates will occur. By the year 2020, older Americans will number more than 50 million, representing 17.3% of the population. By 2050, the age 65 and older population will represent 21.7% of the American population, more than 67 million individuals (Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1987).

Attitudes Toward the Elderly in an Agrarian Economy

Attitudes toward America's elderly may be understood in part through this nation's historical movement away from a predominantly agrarian mode of
production and the extended family, toward a highly complex, urban, technical, post-industrial work setting within a nuclear, blended, or single-parent family system. This shift from an agrarian to a post-industrialized, for-profit economy has ushered in fundamental changes in American value systems.

In agrarian societies, land ownership provides the elderly with management positions of control over others. The elderly are not perceived as dependent but as continuing to participate in productive processes throughout their lives from increasingly important and powerful positions. They often own the land and manage production while younger family members provide the hard labor. As Williamson and his colleagues explained, "The institution of property rights gave the elderly considerable control over those who were younger; particularly their children" (Williamson, Evans & Powell, 1982, p. 5).

Fischer reported that land ownership significantly enhanced the elderly's economic power in the United States from colonial days through the eighteenth century (Fischer, 1977). Production and distribution of goods and services in agrarian societies are controlled and carried out by family or kinship units. The economic status of the elderly is strengthened by their ability to control economic resources and to participate in production. Their work tends to become less physically demanding as they age, but they continue to contribute to the efforts of production (Brown, 1990).

According to nineteenth century German sociologist F. Tonnies, this change in American values may be understood through the concepts of
"Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft," representing differing orientations societies and cultures assume as they move from a primary group focus toward a secondary group focus. The former concept, "Gemeinschaft," is representative of a societal situation where relationships are based on sentiment. In America "Gemeinschaft" was gradually replaced by a "Gesellschaft" orientation of a buyer-seller relationship based on individual interest. With this shift in the economic and cultural underpinnings of American society came changes in how the elderly perceived their life situation and how, in turn, society perceived the elderly.

Attitudes Toward the Elderly In an Industrial Economy

The early nineteenth century ushered in the industrial economy in America where primary value was placed on physical labor. As individuals left the farms and became employed in factories in the cities, dexterity, strength, and physical endurance were the most valued characteristics a worker could possess. This growing emphasis on physical strength was accompanied by the developing influence of capitalism within the American economy. Capitalism has historically determined the culture of American society. Transposed through culture (social production), it has influenced our social world by shaping society's attitudes, beliefs, and value systems, as well as the structure and utility of our social environments. As America developed from an agrarian to an
industrial economy, approximately from 1870 to 1900, the influence of capitalism became especially apparent.

The growth of capitalism within the American economy has fostered the belief that the elderly are a no deposit/no return generation. Since the elderly no longer take an active part in the labor force, America's capitalistic economy advocates discarding them as waste (Steep, 1984).

Emerging Attitudes Toward the Elderly in a Post-Industrial Economy

If economy shapes culture, a period of attitudinal change toward the elderly may be ushered in with the emergence of a post-industrial economy in America. During the industrialization period of American history (approximately 1870-1945), much emphasis was placed on the worker's need to possess physical strength, endurance, and dexterity in performing manual labor. These worker characteristics transferred into increased productivity, realized as increased profits. The labor needs of an industrial economy often eliminated the elderly from competing against younger workers for employment opportunities. The industrial economy influenced the construction of society's attitudes toward the elderly by devaluing roles that were not related to meaningful production in the marketplace.

With the introduction of a post-industrial economy in the latter half of the twentieth century, utilizing robots and computer technology, preferred laborer
qualifications of the industrial period have become increasingly obsolete. The post-industrial economy is service-based, with workforce needs increasingly being filled by laborers possessing information-processing and service skills rather than physical attributes. As a result of this change in capitalist needs for a different type of laborer, attitudes toward the elderly may also change. With a shrinking labor pool because of demographics and under-educated applicants, employers may come to view the elderly as an ever-important workforce to meet the needs of the post-industrial, service-based economy. Such a shift in labor market demand may shape the post-industrial culture toward developing more favorable attitudes regarding the elderly. Once again the elderly may be viewed as vital, productive members of society, without whom the economy would stagnate.

Some evidence of this phenomenon is already occurring in the labor market. In recent years, American corporations have been placing more emphasis on attracting the elderly into the marketplace. Fast-food corporations and department stores are two examples of this developing trend. This study examined, in part, second-year master's level business administration students' attitudes toward the elderly. These students, being trained as tomorrow's employers and "captains of technology," may reflect emerging positive attitudes toward the elderly in a service-oriented economy.
Ageist Attitudes in American Society

As the American economy shifted from an agrarian to a post-industrial mode of production, the perceived worth of the elderly gradually diminished. "The elderly are considered a low status group, because they are not part of the workforce and not functional to society in any meaningful way" (Hesse & Campion, 1984, p. 45). The elderly are not perceived in an industrial economy as being capable of competing against younger workers who are viewed as stronger, quicker, and more productive in producing a greater profit for the owners of industry. Once society had assimilated the value systems of an industrial economy, the elderly were no longer viewed in terms of ascribed status but rather achieved status. Likewise, "Social status can be determined by and attitudes furthered by institutionalized 'ageism'" (Levin & Levin, 1980, p. 46). This put the elderly in a distinctly disadvantageous position. Human worth was now equated with worth in the marketplace via one's labor capacity. This led to the emergence of prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination, and a labeling process against the elderly that partially explains the nature and origin of ageism in modern American society.

Ageist Attitudes Among Social Workers

A clear need exists for gerontological and geriatric social workers. In a 1982 Newsweek article, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Forecasting International, and Occupational Forecasting, Inc. all stated that by 1990 there would exist
700,000 employment openings for geriatric social workers. This placed geriatric social workers second in a list of the 12 fastest-growing occupations (Newsweek, October 1982). In spite of such employment opportunities, Lowy stated, "As has been evident throughout the history of American social work with the aging, the reluctance of the profession to assume a significant role and function in working with older adults has been as pronounced as the reluctance of social work professionals . . ." (Lowy, 1985, p. 394). Statistics from the Office of Career Services of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University lend support to Lowy's statement. Data gathered from this office indicate a reluctance on the part of undergraduate and graduate students to choose social work positions working with the elderly. Statistics from The Ohio State University College of Social Work also lend support to this observation, given that only 2.5% of graduating seniors and 1.5% of graduating MSWs (students obtaining Master of Social Work degrees) in academic year 1985-86 accepted positions working with the elderly. It is unknown how many had a preference to work with the elderly and how many simply needed a job upon graduation.

This reluctance on the part of social work students is not limited to the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University. A publication entitled Face of the Nation: Statistical Supplement to the Eighteenth Edition of the Encyclopedia of Social Work, p. 123, stated that in 1984, only 5.1% of master's-level students were enrolled by primary concentration in gerontological social
work. A comparison of 1980-81 and 1983-84 studies of gerontological education in graduate schools of social work reveals that there appears to have been a decrease in the number of students specializing in gerontology. Meeting the elderly population’s social and psychological needs in the near future with qualified social workers is of urgent concern to our profession and to society.

The past several years have seen tremendous growth in the field of aging that has left social work in a catch-up position. Other professionals, including psychologists, counselors, sociologists, and clinical nurses, have taken active roles in educating practitioners to work in this field, as evidenced by the number of gerontological journals recently introduced within these professions. Unless this trend is reversed, social work runs the risk of losing its historical role in the field of aging (Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1987).

**Summary**

America’s capitalist values, beliefs, and attitudes have fostered a throw-away culture. Used cartons, leftovers, and out-of-date objects all are thrown away without a second thought. "Planned obsolescence--the idea that what is not new is not desirable--is the belief of the industrial world. It is a way of life many have grown up taking for granted over the last few decades" (Steep, 1984, p. 31). As society has modernized, we have come to view the elderly as objects rather than as individuals. Viewing the elderly as objects has often left them with feelings of uselessness, loneliness, alienation, and fear. No longer
do the traditionally ascribed roles and accompanying status provide for integration and recognition within the community.

As American culture evolved from an agrarian economy to a for-profit, industrial economy, American values have changed accordingly. McTavish reported in his review of the literature on perceptions of older persons:

Most investigators report findings which support the view that attitudes toward the elderly are most favorable in primitive societies and decrease with increasing modernization to the point of generally negative views in industrialized Western nations (McTavish, 1971, p. 91).

This value shift de-emphasized the importance of traditional roles and positions of power previously occupied by the elderly. In modern society one’s identity and sense of self-esteem are determined significantly by one’s participation in the labor force. Participation in the labor force denotes "paying one’s way," as money now equates status in the community. This places the elderly at risk once they are no longer active in the production of goods. Not only do they experience a loss of monetary income upon retirement, but in addition are often viewed as a drain on the nation’s finite resources (Woodruff & Birren, 1975).

This situation gives rise to intergenerational conflicts concerning employment opportunities, social security taxes, increasing Medicare benefits, and rising health care costs. This conflict of interest creates a mind-set of "us" versus "them." As with other forms of social conflict, age conflicts between
generations involve struggles over scarce resources or over values. Age inequalities are a major source of such conflicts (Coser, 1956; Rex, 1961; Foner, 1974; Foner & Kertzer, 1979; Lenski, 1966).

If one's labor determines, in part, one's assigned status in society, this creates a method for capitalism to maintain its existence as well as a mechanism to reward the laborer psychologically. If one is to feel positive about oneself as a worker, it is necessary to feel negatively about those individuals not engaged in the production of capitalistic products. This explains why modern society has come to devalue the elderly. Values, beliefs, and attitudes such as these have manifested themselves as prejudices, stereotyping, and discrimination against the elderly in American society.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of this study was whether education as an intervention can change attitudes toward the elderly of second-year, master's level social work students (MSW IIs) with gerontology specialization. Does exposure to gerontological social work courses and field practice experience with the elderly change attitudes toward the elderly held by students? Kosberg and Harris's review of the social work literature on attitudes toward elderly clients "found many studies in which social workers often have negative feelings about the elderly . . ." (Kosberg & Harris, 1978, p. 68). Professionals have received little education about the aging process and the elderly. This lack of knowledge has
fostered adherence to stereotypes (Almquist, Stein & Weiner, 1981). Kosberg and Harris suggest that all schools of social work would do well to institute required courses in social gerontology. Mandatory courses in gerontology would stimulate the interest of social workers in academic practice, sensitize all students to the characteristics and needs of the elderly, and explore the personal attitudes of students toward the elderly. This recommendation is predicated on the belief that education can change students' attitudes (Kosberg & Harris, 1978).

The social work profession has attempted to address this timely problem since 1981 when the National Committee for Gerontology in Social Work Education recommended to the Council on Social Work Education that graduate programs in social work establish a curricular review to determine appropriate directions for their faculty and students to correct this negative bias toward the elderly. In response to this, some graduate social work schools have decided to initiate a curricular concentration in gerontology. Other programs have chosen to promote the integration of content on aging into regular course offerings or have developed a combination of both approaches (A Curriculum Concentration in Gerontology for Graduate Social Work Education, Schneider, 1984). Social work educators do not know whether gerontological education courses and gerontological field placement settings have been effective as an intervention to lessen ageist attitudes on the part of graduate-level social work students. This question of intervention effectiveness through gerontological
education represents an important gap in social work evaluative research. If research demonstrates that ageist attitudes continue to exist in spite of the above educational interventions, social work educators may want to conduct additional research to ascertain whether social work students are completing programs with negative attitudes toward other populations in society, such as women or minority groups. The possibility of such negative attitudes toward client populations has grave implications for when social work students will assume positions as policy planners, researchers, educators, or practitioners.

Significance of and Justification for This Study

Social work as a profession has acknowledged that many social workers possess the same ageist attitudes toward the elderly as society in general. A review of social work literature supports this assumption, demonstrating that these negative attitudes impact on the quality and quantity of social work services provided to the elderly.

The profession has attempted to address this issue through recommending that graduate schools of social work integrate materials on the aged into MSW curricula or establish specialization tracks for students intending to work with the elderly. Research to date is absent on whether this intervention is effective in changing ageist attitudes among graduate-level social work students.
George Getzel, author of *Critical Themes for Gerontological Social Work Practice*, has called for corrective action in an ageist society, stating, "An advocacy perspective remains a major focus of gerontological social work" (Getzel, 1985, p. 9). Kuypers and Bengtson's model of social reconstruction lends itself to gerontological social work advocacy by offering intervention points into the social breakdown model to enable elderly persons to become less susceptible to the impact of negative labeling. The specific interventions they call for are often provided by social workers in society. The question presenting itself is: How can social workers deliver services--i.e., practice, policy formulation and planning, perspectives on human behavior in the social environment, and unbiased research--when they themselves hold a negative bias toward the elderly? This question makes implementing and testing of interventions such as those suggested by Kuypers and Bengtson most timely and significant to the purpose of this study and the social work profession.

Implications of This Study

The implications of this study are important for social work knowledge-building, education, and administration. This study lends support to the social reconstruction model and its assumption of education as an effective change intervention into ageist social systems. This study also indicates that specialization courses in gerontology and field placement experience act as an effective change intervention on the assumed negative attitudes held by MSW
II students. If the results of this study support the stated research hypothesis that education and field practice experience as an intervention changes social work students' attitudes toward the elderly, the Ohio State social work program will want to continue offering an aging specialization track. The current findings are also of interest to administrators who are considering hiring master's level social workers to work with elderly clients. Such administrators would want to know whether the experimental group of MSW II students experienced positive changes in attitudes toward the aged upon completion of the MSW specialization. Such a finding would imply that these social workers would carry fewer negatively biased attitudes toward the elderly into a practice setting.

If, however, this study concludes that the experimental group specializing in gerontology continue to possess negative attitudes toward the elderly upon completion of the treatment, the College of Social Work will want to consider alternate intervention approaches, such as altering field practice settings and/or adding additional courses in aging or additional content within existing courses directed toward increasing students' knowledge of ageism and self-examination of their own attitudes toward the elderly.

Research Procedures

One experimental group and two comparison groups were formed for this study. The experimental group consisted of MSW II students who had self-selected to specialize in gerontological social work. The two comparison
groups consisted of second-year MSW students who were not specializing in gerontological social work and second-year MBA students who presumably had little or no interest in social work. The experimental group was administered a pretest before the treatment intervention and a posttest afterward. The MSW II comparison group were also administered a pretest and posttest instrument in a classroom setting, but received no treatment intervention. The comparison group consisting of MBA II students received only the posttest instrument in their student mailboxes to be returned to the researcher.

The treatment intervention administered to the experimental group consisted of two gerontological social work courses and a field placement experience working with the elderly. The courses, SW 751.02, and SW 889, focused on administration, planning, clinical, and practice issues pertaining to the elderly. Coursework consisted of assigned readings, agency visits, lectures, and discussion for three hours per week over 20 weeks. The field placement experience was within a community-based social service agency for the elderly under the supervision of an adjunct faculty member; its time frame was also 20 weeks, with 24 clock hours per week of practice experience.

Various statistical tests were utilized to test the major and minor hypotheses presented in the study. The proceeding chapters are organized under the following headings: Chapter II, Literature Review; Chapter III, Research Design and Methodology; Chapter IV, Presentation and Analysis of Data; and Chapter V, Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review examines various contemporary studies on the topic of attitudes toward the elderly. Information was obtained from the following search bases: Social Work Research and Abstracts, Socio File, Psy Lit, Social Sciences Index, Age Line, Med Line, and Dissertation Abstracts Index. This chapter contains eight sections. Section 1 summarizes pioneering work by Tuckman and Lorge (1953) in developing one of the first scales for assessing attitudes toward the elderly, and six literature reviews conducted from 1973 through 1988 on the topic of ageist attitudes. Section 2 presents a national review of studies regarding the public's attitudes toward the elderly. Section 3 reviews the literature from 1980 through 1990 for post-intervention studies on health care providers', adults', students', adolescents', and children's attitudes toward the elderly. Section 4 reviews the literature on social workers' attitudes toward the elderly from 1970 through 1990. Section 5 reviews the various explanations for social workers' negative attitudes toward the elderly. Section 6 summarizes and synthesizes the literature review. Section 7 discusses the
significance of the current study. Section 8 presents a theoretical explanation for ageist attitudes.

Section 1:

Summaries of Six Previous Literature Reviews

No literature review would be complete without acknowledging Tuckman and Lorge (1953) as among the earliest pioneers to conduct extensive investigations on attitudes toward the elderly. In their classic study, Tuckman and Lorge developed one of the first instruments to measure attitudes toward the elderly, consisting of 137 "yes" or "no" statements reflecting negative misconceptions and stereotypes regarding the elderly. The most frequent criticism of their scale was its failure to control for response set effects inherent in a "yes" or "no" type of response. Such measurements and instruments were inadequate to accurately assess attitudes and formulate tentative hypotheses (Bennett & Eckman, 1973; McTavish, 1971). Nevertheless, this instrument was used most frequently in early studies on attitudes toward the elderly.

Tuckman and Lorge's (1953) findings concluded that graduate students demonstrate a significant acceptance of stereotypes about the elderly, characterizing the elder years of life as a period of economic instability, failing health, loneliness, resistance to change, and diminishing physical and cognitive abilities. In concluding their study, Tuckman and Lorge stated that negative
attitudes toward the elderly ". . . indicate that old people are living in a social climate which is not conducive to feelings of adequacy, usefulness, and security and to good adjustment in their later years" (Tuckman & Lorge, 1953, p. 260).

After the groundbreaking work by Tuckman and Lorge and others, researchers have struggled to improve research methods and instruments for assessing ageist attitudes. Numerous studies have been carried out and much has been written on this subject. To date six major literature reviews have been conducted on attitudes toward the elderly from 1971 through 1988 (Bennett & Eckman, 1973; Brubaker & Powers, 1976; Green, 1981; Kite & Johnson, 1988; Lutsky, 1980; McTavish, 1971). The following summaries present salient findings from these six reviews. Each review demonstrates a developing maturity in research efforts toward a more scientific approach to the understanding of attitudes toward the elderly.

**McTavish Review**

McTavish's (1971) review concluded that the majority of studies to date had focused on development of research instrumentation or construction of measurements to assess perceptions of the elderly. A variety of instruments had been developed, including questionnaires, sentence completion tests, trait rating scales, semantic differentials, and projective techniques, to ascertain whether generalized conceptions of the elderly existed. However, McTavish was critical of the narrow range of existing instruments, stating that they presented
little information about the elderly and thus caused a respondent to make judgments based on stereotypes.

**Bennett and Eckman Review**

Bennett and Eckman (1973) concluded that the elderly and young mutually hold negative views toward the aged. They found that negative views toward the elderly are affected less by age than by by-products of aging, such as isolation, inactivity, ill health, and institutionalization. The reviewers suggested that additional longitudinal studies and cross-cultural, controlled experiments be conducted and that a set of reliable, valid, and standardized measures be developed to broaden current research methodologies before definite conclusions could be drawn.

**Brubaker and Powers Review**

Brubaker and Powers (1976) reviewed 47 studies in their literature review on attitudes toward the elderly. Only 21 of the 47 studies incorporated an aged population sample. From these 21 studies, it was concluded that the institutionalized, ethnic, and dependent aged often hold negative attitudes toward the elderly. The independent, better educated, and higher occupation groups of elderly individuals were found to hold more positive attitudes toward the elderly.
Brubaker and Powers (1976) recommended that a research distinction be drawn between a "generalized old" stimulus (such as a question about elderly persons in general) and a "personalized old" stimulus (such as a question about one's grandfather). This, they believed, would allow for a distinction between positive and negative characteristics of the elderly. They also concluded, contrary to previous assumptions, that some elderly individuals may perceive themselves in favorable terms rather than adopting the negative stereotypes assigned to them as they withdraw from productive roles in society.

**Lutsky Review**

Neil Lutsky (1980) determined that the "mean" of all studies reviewed balanced out to neutral attitudes toward the aged. He noted that a significant amount of diversity and complexity in attitudes is a function of object and perceiver characteristics, as well as method of research. He warned that gerontologists should not assume the general public holds negative attitudes toward the elderly. Lutsky (1980) asserted that, in fact, neither positive nor negative attitudes influence behavior or psychological states of mind; rather, contact and education can improve attitudes of the elderly or else they will internalize negative stereotypes. Little difference exists between an individual's evaluations of younger and older persons when age alone is accounted for.
Green Review

Susan Green (1981) concluded that, although most survey studies using traditional measures demonstrate negative attitudes toward the elderly, some recent studies that are person-specific have viewed the elderly more positively than when the elderly were viewed as a "generalized other".

Weinberger and Millham (1975) directly tested Green's hypothesis and found that generalized attitudes toward the elderly were more negative than generalized attitudes toward the young. In a personalized comparison, attitudes were more positive toward the elderly than toward the young. No relationship was reported between rating of the generalized and the personalized elderly person; this suggests that simple changes in target descriptions can elicit different responses. The "generalized other" lends itself to negative cultural stereotyping of the aged. Other recent studies have demonstrated that factors such as gender, race, and appearance also affect attitude reaction to questions regarding the elderly.

Green's (1981) literature review has indicated that the setting in which research respondents view the elderly is also central to their reactions. This context may vary between the respondent's having contact or no contact with the elderly stimulus, whether the relationship is one of cooperation or competition, and whether the research task emphasizes the instrumental or affective domain. Green pointed out the extreme importance of the situation in influencing individual behavior. She claimed that current research on attitudes
toward the elderly had progressed from earlier studies dealing with general impressions of the elderly to studies with greater specificity for variables, situations, and individuals.

**Kite and Johnson Review**

Kite and Johnson (1988) examined, through a meta-analysis of existing literature comprising 43 studies, whether attitudes toward elderly individuals are more negative than attitudes toward younger individuals. The reviewers concluded the answer is yes. However, as Green (1981) and Lutsky (1980) have pointed out, perceptions of the elderly are influenced by such factors as research design, measuring instrument, and setting. The public appears to hold a multiplicity of attitudes regarding the elderly. Kite and Johnson (1988) found the elderly to be negatively judged across all rating dimensions (particularly in competence and physical attractiveness) when a generalized elderly target was presented to the respondent, when comparisons were drawn between groups, and when the setting was non-work related.

Kite and Johnson (1988) also found, as Green (1981), McTavish (1971), and Brubaker and Powers (1976) had found, that personalized stimuli regarding the elderly may lead to more positive views toward the elderly. This is most evident in studies using between-subject designs, with just the opposite true of within-subject designs. It also appears that the elderly are viewed more favorably when the respondent rates only one personalized person rather than
two differing in age, thus making it less likely that the rater will resort to stereotypes of the elderly. Kite and Johnson (1988) suggested, as Green had (1981), that further research should move beyond considering whether elderly persons are perceived more negatively than younger persons. The question they bring forth for further research is to determine the conditions under which differences in attitudes toward older and younger persons occur. It appears from the literature that variables in addition to age have significant influence upon perceptions of the elderly.

Section 2:

Attitudes of the Public Toward the Elderly

The only major study to date of the public’s attitudes toward the elderly was the Harris National Council on Aging Survey, published in 1975. The Harris (1975) study has been described as "the most exhaustive general survey of attitudes toward aging" (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1981, p. 16). A total of 4,254 individuals were interviewed in 1974 from a representative sample of Americans aged 18 and over and a purposive sample of Americans aged 55 and older. Younger respondents associated the elderly with such activities as "watching t.v.", "sitting and thinking", "socializing with friends", "sleeping", and "gardening and raising plants".
Elderly self-reports demonstrated the exaggeration of the belief that individuals 65 years of age and over spend their time watching t.v., sitting and thinking, sleeping, and doing nothing. The elderly respondents were less willing to accept these activities as typical of older persons. Elderly individuals, under the category of "Other Activities," were most frequently perceived by younger persons as somewhat "physically active" and seldom, if at all, "sexually active" (Harris, 1975).

The Harris (1975) survey established that the public believes the elderly experience economic, social, health, and crime difficulties. Again, self-reports of personal experience showed that the elderly are not as concerned about economic and social problems as the general public believes them to be. The elderly more frequently attributed few employment opportunities and a lack of feeling needed to most individuals over 65. Most Americans believe that employers discriminate against the elderly, and that the elderly retire for personal reasons, although they can perform as well on the job as when they were younger. When respondents were questioned regarding the changing nature of old age, most believed that older persons are better educated, healthier, more financially secure, living longer, and more likely to live alone than they were 10 to 20 years ago.

In summary, the Harris (1975) survey suggested that the American public possesses both accurate and inaccurate information about elderly individuals and aging. The survey indicated that Americans tend to overestimate the
problems elderly persons experience and the degree to which those 65 and older engage in passive activities.

Section 3:

Post-Intervention Studies of Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Health Care Providers' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Research Designs and Sample Sizes

The current literature review has yielded 26 post-intervention studies on health care providers from 1980 through 1990. The research subjects were drawn from practicing health care providers and students enrolled in health care education. Six of the 26 studies used an experimental design (Chandler, 1985; Chandler, Rachal & Kazelskis, 1986; Green, Keith & Pawlson, 1983; Nnewihe, 1985; Nolan, 1985; Robins & Wolf, 1989) with Ns ranging from 41 to 148 subjects. Eleven studies used a quasi-experimental design (Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson, 1990; Barbiere, 1989; Wilson & Glamser, 1982; Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson, 1985; Eggleston, 1988; Galbraith & Suttie, 1987; Gomez, Otto, Blattstein & Gomez, 1981; Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers, 1985; Johnson & Wilson, 1990; Lacey, 1990; Mann, Bomberg, Holzman & Berkey, 1988) with Ns ranging from 14 to 193 subjects. Two additional quasi-experimental studies (Lockwood, 1986; Roberts-Rudd, 1984) incorporated qualitative interviews as a second measuring instrument.
Two evaluative/descriptive studies (Adelman, Hainer, Butler & Chalmers, 1988; Smith, Marcy, Mast & Ham, 1984) had subject Ns ranging from 48 to 280. Two longitudinal studies (Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers, 1985; Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson, 1985) were conducted over three- and four-year time frames. One study (Wirth, 1987) employed a one-group research design. Two studies (Nolan, 1985; Roberts-Rudd, 1984) used a test/posttest/posttest research design. The populations in the quasi-experimental studies were obtained through convenience sampling and self-selection.

Instrumentation

The following instruments were used in measuring health care providers' attitudes toward the aged: Rosencrantz and McNevin's Attitude Test, Aging Semantic Differential Test, Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz, Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale, Opinions About Old People Questionnaire, Oberleder Attitude Toward Aging Scale, Tuckman-Lorge Attitude Toward Old People Scale, and a multi-dimensional questionnaire.

Independent Variable

The independent variable in 24 of the post-intervention studies reviewed was operationalized either singularly or in combination with education, clinical practice, and/or activities with the aged. The dependent variable was
represented by measurable change between pretest and posttest scores measuring subjects' attitudes toward the elderly.

**Data Analysis**

The reviewed studies employing statistical analysis uniformly utilized the .05 level of statistical significance. The following statistical tests were most frequently used to measure change in the respondents' attitudes toward the elderly: One-way analysis of variance, F-test, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, Matched T-Test, Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis, Schneff's Multiple Comparison procedure, and the Student T-Test.

**Specialization Track Programs**

The literature was reviewed to determine whether aging, as a specialization track in an educational setting, is effective in changing students' attitudes toward the elderly. Health care students and providers were the only population found in the literature review for whom this question had been addressed.

Mann, Bomberg, Holzman & Berkey's (1988) quasi-experimental study of dental students enrolled in geriatric specialization courses found that they held no more positive attitudes toward the elderly than non-geriatric specialization students. Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers (1985) analyzed the development and evaluation of a geriatric component in a pharmacy curriculum; the researchers found that students' knowledge of the
elderly increased, along with favorable changes in their attitudes toward the elderly. Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson (1985) found, in their quasi-experimental study of a nursing school program incorporating a geriatric curriculum, that four-year degree nursing students completed the program with more positive attitudes toward the elderly than did three-year degree nursing students.

This potpourri of positive and negative findings regarding the utility of geriatric concentrations within college curricula suggests the need for much more research into this area. It is hoped that the current study will add to this body of knowledge. A description of the studies yielding this puzzling mixture of conflicting information, as well as other studies not involving gerontological concentrations, follows.

**Medical Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

Green, Keith & Pawlson (1983) studied 148 third-year medical students who were divided into an experimental and a control group. The experimental group participated in a rotation of primary care experience with the elderly. The students completed a multidimensional questionnaire on two occasions eight weeks apart. Highly significant correlations were found between expressed intentions to work with the elderly and positive feelings about previous professional contact with the elderly, previous personal contact with the elderly, belief that working with the elderly is rewarding, a high degree of comfort in working with the elderly, and positive stereotypes about the elderly.
Wilson and Hafferty's (1983) study used a quasi-experimental design on 14 self-selected medical students and a comparison group of 28 subjects. Repeated analysis of variance on a pretest and posttest sentence completion instrument lent support to the hypothesis that a seminar on aging during the first year of medical school may have beneficial effects throughout the length of a medical school program. The comparison group was found to remain more negative over time.

Another study of medical students by Smith, Marcy, Mast and Ham (1984) involved 175 subjects drawn from 10 medical schools on a voluntary basis. Rosencranz and McNevin's Attitude Test and the Aging Semantic Differential Test were used to obtain pretest and posttest scores. The educational intervention was operationalized by case modules containing an introduction, objectives, pretest, posttest, study questions, references, readings, audiovisuals, and a text with cases for discussion. T and F statistical tests were used to analyze the effectiveness of the intervention. Findings revealed that education significantly increased students' knowledge base but failed to influence students' attitudes toward the elderly.

A quasi-experimental study of fourth-year medical students by Murden, Meier, Bloom and Tideiksaar (1986) viewed the effects of a required geriatric clerkship on 114 students. A t-test found that students in the experimental group experienced significant improvement in knowledge of the elderly but not
in attitudes toward the elderly. The comparison group had experienced no increase in knowledge of the elderly upon completion of the posttest.

An evaluative/descriptive study by Adelman, Hainer, Butler and Chalmers (1988) investigated attitudes toward the elderly of 48 medical students. The independent variable consisted of a series of lectures and intergenerational activities with well elderly individuals. Through an analysis of questionnaire response rankings and interviews upon completion of the intervention, it was determined that attitudes toward the elderly can be positively affected late in medical school by a well elderly experience.

An experimental study by Robins and Wolf (1989) of 193 medical students found that a practice-based educational intervention in which the students interviewed volunteer nursing home residents significantly changed pretest attitudes for the positive, based on scores obtained from two geriatric patient vignettes. The intervention enhanced the students' ability to identify and respond therapeutically to elderly patients' hypothetical underlying expressions of concern, which prepared students for patient-centered geriatric interviewing.

Osteopathic Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

A study conducted by Wilson and Glamser (1982) used a quasi-experimental design with 61 osteopathic students who were administered the Aging Semantic Differential Scale and Facts on Aging Quiz. The intervention consisted of three hours of classroom material, a visit to a nursing home, and
a visit to a congregate housing facility for the elderly. A t-test was used to analyze the data gathered from the research instruments. Findings revealed mild but significant improvement in knowledge and positive attitudes toward the elderly. Two weaknesses were present in the study: Classroom lectures might have given students the knowledge necessary to correctly answer questions on the Facts on Aging posttest. Also, the absence of a comparison group posed a threat to the validity of the research findings.

Physicians' Assistants' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

A study by Johnson and Wilson (1990) investigated 20 physician assistant students who were exposed over a 16-week period to a two and one-half hour lecture weekly providing biological, psychological, and social information regarding the elderly. One interview with a healthy elderly individual in the community was also required. The intervention was measured by an instrument developed by the researchers, consisting of knowledge-based questions and sentence completion. Findings were statistically analyzed for significance using the F and t-tests. The posttest yielded a mean improvement of 6.17 % from pretest scores. Younger students demonstrated a more positive change than older students. The weaknesses of the study were the absence of a comparison group, the brief time frame of the intervention, and the small size of the sample population.
Nurses' and Nursing Assistants' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Nnewihe's (1985) dissertation studied whether registered nurses' attitudes toward the elderly could be changed using the Person Centered Gerontological Nursing (PCGN) format. The PCGN is based on Rogers' (1979) person-centered therapy and Norton's (1965) conceptualization of geriatric nursing as "reablement". Four groups of registered nurses and patients were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups. From this convenience sample, 49 RNs and 80 patients were selected. Each group was administered Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz and Eilor and Altfeld's Attitudes Scale as a pretest and posttest instrument. Data analysis revealed the potential of the PCGN educational intervention to increase nurses' knowledge regarding the elderly.

Nolan's (1985) dissertation studied the effect of game simulation in increasing positive attitudes among health care workers in long-term care facilities. The research employed an experimental design with 65 subjects--nurse's aides, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses--randomly selected from the staffs of two hospitals in a large, metropolitan community. The control group completed Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The experimental group completed Kogan's instrument, took part in the game simulation, then completed Kogan's instrument again and once again three weeks later. A non-parametric statistical analysis of the data revealed no significant differences in attitudes between the experimental and control groups or between the immediate and three-week posttests of the experimental group.
Significant correlations were found between attitudes and age, education, length of employment in setting, and length of time working with elderly. A positive correlation existed between attitudes toward the elderly and education. A negative correlation existed between age and attitudes scores of older workers. A negative correlation also existed between attitudes and length of time employed in a hospital setting. A positive correlation was discovered between attitudes and length of time the caregiver had worked with the elderly.

Chandler's (1985) dissertation employed an experimental design to determine whether a five-hour adult educational program could improve attitudes of nursing personnel employed in long-term care facilities. Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz and Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale were used to measure the subjects through pretest and posttest scores. Contrary to evidence presented in Chandler's literature review, Chandler found the nursing personnel to be either neutral or positive in their attitudes toward the elderly. Other significant findings included no differences in attitudes between skilled and intermediate facility employees. No differences existed between the experimental and control group in their attitudes toward the elderly.

A year later, Chandler, Rachal and Kazelskis (1986) studied attitudes toward the elderly of 10 registered nurses, 21 licensed practical nurses, and 70 nursing assistants. The experimental design used Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz and Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The experimental intervention consisted of seven 60-minute meetings consisting of lectures, films,
group discussions, activities, games, and narratives about being old. Statistical analysis using a t-test and ANOVA found no significant difference in attitudes between the experimental and control group on both pretest and posttest. Participation in the educational program did not increase positive attitudes toward the elderly. Most staff were found to be neutral in attitudes. Registered nurses appeared to be the most positive. On Palmore's test, licensed practical nurses were the least positive, while on Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale, nursing assistants were found to be the least positive.

In Eggleston's (1988) dissertation, geriatric nurses' attitudes toward the elderly were studied through a pretest and posttest educational experiment. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, with non-randomized comparison groups, each with 41 subjects. A one-way analysis of variance test was used for data analysis. Findings revealed no significant differences between pretest and posttest mean scores in nurses' attitudes toward the elderly, supportive care behaviors, age of care providers, or level of education.

**Nursing Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

Gomez, Otto, Blattstein and Gomez (1981) studied 82 nursing students, drawn from a convenience sample, who were administered Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale before and after a three-week, eight hours per week, clinical experience of caring for the ill elderly in nursing homes. A two-by-two mixed ANOVA design was utilized. Results revealed a significant increase in
positive attitudes toward the elderly. Caucasians and older subjects were found to be more positive in their attitudes toward the elderly than African Americans and younger subjects. A weakness of the study was the small number of African Americans in the convenience sample--only 18 compared to 59 Caucasians.

Roberts-Rudd's (1984) dissertation studied whether a curricular unit would impact on nursing students' attitudes toward the elderly, intentions to work in a nursing home, and beliefs about the elderly and about clinical practice in nursing homes. Subjects were drawn from 50 student nurses who volunteered to participate in the study. The design was quasi-experimental, with data collected in a pretest and posttest, and again two months later. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale was used to measure change in attitudes toward the elderly. A free-response questionnaire was also designed to collect qualitative data on beliefs. Results demonstrated students' attitudes toward the elderly did, in fact, become more positive upon completion of the treatment; however, decay occurred between the two time-lapsed posttests. Most of the decay arose from negative items on the instrument. The elderly were found to be the least preferred population of patients to work with among students who did not plan to work in nursing homes nor in facilities primarily caring for the elderly. Practice site did appear to influence student attitudes toward nursing practice in a nursing care facility.
Lockwood's (1986) dissertation studied the effect of a geriatric nursing course on sophomore nursing students' attitudes toward the elderly within differing degrees of independent geriatric settings. The study employed a pretest and posttest design. Students were divided into three groups, each working with three different levels of independent elderly individuals within a clinical facility. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale, Palmore's Facts on Aging Quiz, and the Muller-Doder Revision Test were used to measure student nurses' attitudes. Qualitative data were gathered from interviews with eight students chosen at random from each of the three groups. Lockwood hypothesized that nurses assigned to residents of independent geriatric settings would be more positive in their attitudes and perceptions of the elderly. The theories of classical conditioning and cognitive dissonance were employed to support Lockwood's hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested using an analysis of variance procedure. Results demonstrated no significant differences among groups regarding attitudes and perceptions at the .05 level of significance.

Wirth's (1987) dissertation studied the effects of a simulation game on the attitudes of junior-year nursing students. Wirth conducted a quasi-experimental, one-group study. The convenience sample of 11 female students varied in age from 20 to 34 and represented four cultural origins. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale served as the pretest and posttest instrument. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test demonstrated that posttest scores were significantly higher than pretest scores. The Eta provided a curvilinear relationship between age
and attitudes toward the elderly. Wirth used the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance test to determine that an association existed between attitudes held by the experimental group and their cultural background and prior experience with the elderly.

A study of nursing students by Downe-Wamboldt and Melanson (1985) employed the Opinions About Old People instrument to ascertain the longitudinal effectiveness of a three- versus four-year nursing program where aging content was built into the curriculum. The independent variable was aging content offered through an integrated curriculum of the life span. An analysis of variance and Scheffe's multiple comparison procedure were used to analyze the data. Mean scores of the four-year students at the completion of the program reflected more positive attitudes than negative toward the aged. The three-year nursing students' attitudes did not change significantly at the .05 level.

Galbraith and Suttie (1987) studied 86 nursing students using the Oberleder Attitude Toward Aging Scale. The educational intervention consisted of a course with aging content including physiological, sociological, and psychological aspects of aging, as well as a clinical experience with the elderly. Data analysis using a T distribution and Wilcoxon matched-pairs revealed a highly significant change in attitudes had occurred. The results supported the hypothesis that an holistic approach to gerontological education can promote a positive change in students' attitudes toward the elderly.
Barbiere (1989) examined changes in knowledge levels and attitudes regarding the elderly among 59 student nurses enrolled in a planned educational intervention. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale was used as pretest and posttest instrument. Participation in the educational intervention was found to be associated with significant increases in knowledge level and positive attitudes toward the elderly.

Lacey's (1990) dissertation explored, through a quasi-experimental study, whether geriatric coursework and extensive clinical experience in an undergraduate nursing program would influence students' attitudes toward the elderly. The experimental group was assigned to a long-term clinical experience; the comparison group received the traditional clinical experience. Instruments used to measure attitudinal change were the Tuckman-Lorge Attitude Toward Old People Scale and a career goals questionnaire. No significant change in attitudes was noted upon completion of the posttest; however, positive attitudes did increase for both groups. Most subjects indicated they would not choose to work with the elderly as a career goal.

Downe-Wamboldt and Melanson (1990) examined the effects of a baccalaureate nursing program on students' attitudes toward aging and the elderly. Seventy-five students completed an Opinions About Old People Questionnaire at the beginning and completion of the program. The students held more positive than negative attitudes toward aging and the elderly;
however, the program appeared to have had a minimal effect on altering student attitudes.

**Dental and Dental Hygiene Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

A study by Mann, Bomberg, Holzman and Berkey (1988) surveyed 280 students enrolled in 14 dental schools, six of which offered no geriatric specialty, and eight of which did. The Rosencranz and McNevin Aging Semantic Differential test, consisting of 32 bipolar pairs of items, was used to survey the students' attitudes toward the elderly. A t-test and the Newman-Kevis test at the .05 level of significance were used to determine whether a difference in educational program was significant in predicting students' attitudes toward the elderly. Findings revealed no difference in attitudes, regardless of the type of educational program. One weakness of the study was its emphasis on the pathological aspects of aging instead of normal, healthy aging. A strength of the study was its cross-sectional population of students surveyed from four regions of the United States.

**Pharmacy, Nutrition, and Health Education Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

Pharmacy, nutrition, and health education students' attitudes toward the elderly were studied by Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan and Myers (1985) over a three-year period. Each of the three student populations was exposed
on a weekly basis to two one-hour classes and a three-hour, community-based experience with the elderly. The educational intervention consisted of a classroom course emphasizing psycho/social aspects of aging, medications, nutrition, and health education. The lectures were team taught, including outside speakers. Students also participated in a practice experience consisting of two interviews with an elderly person in a long-term care facility and two interviews with an active, socially engaged elderly person in a community setting. Significance tests at the .05 level were used to measure pretest and posttest differences. A semantic differential instrument and vignettes were used to measure for change in attitudes toward the elderly. Findings demonstrated a gain in information regarding the elderly, which resulted in a positive change in attitudes toward them. A strength of this study was its replication over a three-year period; longitudinal studies of attitudes toward the elderly have seldom been conducted.

**Patient Educators' and Inservice Trainers' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

A study of attitudes toward the elderly among 98 health professionals working as patient educators and inservice trainers was conducted by Gardner and Perritt (1983). The following professions were represented in the total study population: Nursing, 57%; social work, 12%; occupational therapy, 5%; physical therapy, 5%; and health education, 8%. Geriatric training consisted of
instruction, didactic presentations, videotapes, and large- and small-group discussions over four days. Participants were given Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale before and after the training. An analysis of variance and t-test of scores from Kogan's scale revealed an increase in positive scores. Negative scores were found to decrease, but not to the point of significance. More positive and less negative attitudes were discovered to bear a positive correlation with one to five years of work experience. After 10 years of work experience, both patient educators and inservice trainers were found to have negative attitudes toward the elderly. Results lend support to the hypothesis that geriatric education can be an effective intervention with health care professionals.

**Summary of Findings**

Considering the different kinds of research design, the different populations studied, the different instruments and statistical techniques employed, as well as the brevity of most of the studies, it is difficult to generalize regarding the results of these studies of health care professionals' attitudes toward the elderly. Much more standardized, long-term research is needed before conclusions can be drawn.

With the above caveat in mind, several of the studies described above produced significant positive correlations between interventions regarding the elderly and growth of positive attitudes toward them.
Highly significant positive correlations were found in Green, Keith and Pawlson's (1983) study between attitudes toward the elderly and level of education, age, length of time spent working with the elderly, intentions of working with the elderly, positive feelings about professional contact, a high degree of comfort with the elderly, and positive stereotypes regarding the elderly. One negative correlation was found in Nolan's (1985) study between attitudes toward the elderly and length of time employed in a work setting dealing with the aged.

Ten quasi-experimental studies found a positive change in attitudes upon administration of the posttest instrument (Barbiere, 1989; Galbraith & Suttle, 1987; Gardner & Perritt, 1983; Gomez, Otto, Blattstein & Gomez, 1981; Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers, 1985; Johnson & Wilson, 1990; Roberts-Rudd, 1984; Wilson & Glamser, 1982; Wilson & Hafferty, 1983; and Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson for fourth-year nursing students, 1985). Seven quasi-experimental studies (Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson, 1990; Lacey, 1990; Lockwood, 1986; Mann, Bomberg, Holzman & Berkey, 1988; Murden, Meier, Bloom & Tideiksaar, 1986; Wirth, 1987; and Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson for third-year nursing students, 1985) found no significant change in attitudes upon administration of the posttest instrument. One experimental study (Robins & Wolf, 1989) found positive changes in attitudes, while four other experimental studies (Chandler, 1985; Chandler, Rachal & Kazelskis, 1986; Nolan, 1985;
Eggleston, 1988) found no significant change in attitudes upon administration of the posttest instrument.

**Adults' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

Only one post-intervention study was located examining adults' attitudes toward the elderly. Glass Jr. and Knott (1982) conducted an experimental study of 89 adult volunteer learners in North Carolina. Seventy-three were assigned to the control group. The 16-member treatment group was assigned to six two-hour sessions on aging employing a variety of teaching methods. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale was used to measure pretest/posttest attitudes. Least-squares statistical analysis determined that the experimental group experienced a small positive change in attitudes toward the elderly.

**High School and College Students' Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

The current literature review yielded only three post-intervention studies conducted between 1986 and 1990 on high school and college students' attitudes toward the elderly.

The first study, by Murphy-Russell, Die and Walker (1986), showed that contact with an elderly couple can be quite helpful in bringing about more positive attitudes among high school students. For this quasi-experimental study, 84 high school students were divided into one experimental and two comparison groups. An educational intervention, consisting of three workshops,
was then provided to the experimental group. The first workshop was designed as a peer discussion group regarding the elderly; the second involved interviews with an elderly couple; the third showed a film dispelling common myths about aging. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale was administered as a pretest/posttest to the three groups. In addition, the experimental group also received Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale as a posttest to each of the three workshops. The study indicated that the complete set of workshops was effective in generating a positive change in attitudes toward the elderly, as were the workshops individually. The greatest change-producing workshop provided direct contact with an elderly couple. The effectiveness of the workshops was statistically obtained using an analysis of covariance F-test between groups at the .05 level of significance.

Kremer (1988) randomly assigned 30 students in psychology courses at a university to two test conditions. One group received only negative information about the elderly; the other received negative as well as other information regarding the elderly. The educational intervention consisted of a lecture, videotapes, discussion, and financial information that represented the negative information given to students. Data were gathered using Attitudes Toward Older Adults, consisting of 13 items and an 18-item general life satisfaction inventory. Study design allowed for a pretest and posttest comparison three-by-three mixed design with three repeated measures on one factor. An analysis of variance F test was used to analyze data. Findings
revealed that negative information had little effect on attitudes toward older adults. Attitudes about the students' own futures declined significantly only in response to discussion of finances.

Katz (1990) studied 116 college students in a pretest/posttest comparison study over one semester. Each student was enrolled in an interdisciplinary course in gerontology. The Aging Opinion Survey, consisting of 45 items, was administered to the student population. Statistical analysis was conducted using a t test for significance. Results revealed: Positive change occurred in attitudes toward older persons in general and toward familiar older persons. Only personal anxiety was not significantly affected in a positive direction; this feeling seems most resistant to change through education. Katz concluded that gerontological education may be considered a positive bio/psycho/social intervention. Weaknesses of the study included absence of a comparison group, lack of personal contact with the elderly, lack of randomization in selecting test subjects, and gender imbalance caused by 94% of the subjects being female. Strengths of the study included the multicultural mix of the subjects and diversification of course materials and presentation methods.

Adolescents' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Two post-intervention studies on adolescents were located during the current literature review. Anderson's (1980) dissertation investigated the effects
of gerontological education, self-attribution information, and intergenerational interaction on adolescents' attitudes toward the elderly. Eighty-nine adolescents aged 16 to 18 were drawn from students enrolled in a Roman Catholic high school. The subjects were pre-assigned to one of three groups, with the treatment intervention randomly assigned to each group by the researcher. Group 1 was tested for the effect of a gerontological course. Group 2 was tested for the effects of the course plus self-attribution information. Group 3 was tested for the effects of the course plus the intergenerational interaction. Group 4 was the control, consisting of students randomly assigned from the three pre-assigned groups.

Three scales were used to measure attitudes toward the elderly: Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale, the Semantic Differential Old People Scale, and Opinions About People, Form A. Data were analyzed by analysis of covariance.

Eight of the nine analyses demonstrated no significant findings. The only attitudinal scale that demonstrated significance was between Group 1 (who received the gerontology course) and Group 4 (the control). Anderson believed the lack of significance resulted in part from the subjects' increased anxiety about aging, the variables' not being powerful enough to change attitudes about the elderly, and the lack of specificity in defining the concept "attitudes toward the elderly".
Another study, by Allen, Allen and Weekly (1986), found that classroom instruction, coupled with activities involving the elderly, is an effective intervention in promoting positive attitudes toward the elderly among seventh and eighth graders.

Allen, Allen and Weekly studied attitudes toward the elderly of 38 gifted seventh and eighth graders using a pretest/posttest quasi-experimental design. The educational intervention was a nine-week course. The first three weeks involved readings, films, guest speakers, and discussion. The next two weeks involved preparations to reminisce with elderly persons regarding significant events in their lives. During the final four weeks, students conducted reminiscence interviews with the elderly. The instrument administered to the students, an attitudes scale developed a priori for this age group, consisted of 13 items with domains on intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of aging. Findings were analyzed using ANOVA and a t-test. Results implied an intergenerational project can have a positive influence on gifted students' attitudes toward the elderly. A weakness of the study was the lack of tested validity of the research instrument.

**Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly**

**Research Designs and Sample Sizes**

The current literature review has yielded nine post-intervention studies on children's attitudes toward the elderly from 1981 through 1988. Most research
Subjects were convenience samples drawn from various classroom settings. Seven of the nine studies used an experimental design (Adams, 1983; Beeghly, 1982; Carstensen, Mason & Caldwell, 1982; McGuire, 1988; Rich, Myrich & Campbell, 1983; Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper & Sherock, 1977; Towry, 1986). One used a pre-experimental design (Dellmann-Jenkins, Lambert, Fruit & Dinero, 1986). Another employed a post-only group design (Rowe, 1981). Sample sizes in the experimental studies ranged from 28 to 381. The majority of the cited studies involved children of pre-school age through sixth grade.

A brief overview of the nine studies located during the literature review of children's post-intervention attitudes toward the elderly follows.

Description of Studies

Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper and Sherock (1977) studied an experimental population of 108 kindergartners through sixth graders. The Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly instrument was used to gather pretest and posttest attitudes. The intervention curriculum included three lessons on the aging process and an elderly volunteer to work with the children. Multiple regression analysis and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed the curriculum had been effective in fostering positive attitudes toward the elderly.

Rowe's (1981) dissertation studied the effect to which children's cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward the elderly were influenced by a curriculum intervention. A random sample of students was drawn from 12
classes within the Phoenix City School District. The intervention, in the form of four one-hour curriculum interventions over two weeks, was administered to the experimental group, then the experimental and control groups were administered the Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly test in a posttest-only group design. Differences in the dependent variable were tested using Multivariate Analysis of Variance and univariate F tests in a groups-within-treatments analysis. A Chi-Square test was employed to test for differences in children's preferences for being with individuals from four life stages. Statistical differences were found in boys' and girls' preferences for being with persons from the four life stages. Girls scored higher in preference for contact with elderly individuals.

A study by Carstensen, Mason and Caldwell (1982) viewed 26 children in an experimental group with ages ranging from six to nine years. The educational intervention consisted of two months of volunteer tutoring by members of the American Association of Retired Persons. The researchers used the Children's Assessment of Old People Scale to measure the children's attitudes. Results were statistically analyzed using an analysis of variance method. Findings supported the researchers' hypothesis that such an intervention would be effective in promoting more positive attitudes.

Beeghly's (1982) dissertation examined whether illustrations influence children's attitudes toward the aged. An attitudes scale created by Beeghly served as the pretest/posttest instrument. Subjects consisted of 150 third
graders attending two elementary schools. Boys and girls were randomly assigned to six treatment conditions over four classroom sessions. Results of the 2 × 2 × 3 unbalanced analysis of variance demonstrated that the type of illustration, gender of subject, and gender of elderly protagonist made no difference in the subjects' attitudes toward the elderly. Beeghly met with 12 of the subjects to discuss their posttest responses. Most stated their responses had been based on previous personal experience.

Rich, Myrich and Campbell (1983) used an experimental design to demonstrate the effectiveness of their independent variable on third graders attending two elementary schools. Their intervention, a counselor-led guidance unit on aging persons, consisted of eight 30-minute sessions employing visual aids, media resources, and invited older adults. With an experimental group of 39 and a control group of 59, the children were administered the Children's Perceptions of Aging and Elderly Inventory. Results were statistically tested for significance using a t-test. Findings revealed that an eight-week, counselor-led guidance unit was effective with third graders attending two schools.

Adams' (1983) dissertation tested the sociological principle of whether increased interaction with the elderly increases children's positive attitudes toward the elderly. Two instruments were employed: The Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly test and Children's Familiarity With the Elderly Questionnaire. Twenty-nine subjects of kindergarten age were assigned to the experimental group, and 24 to the control group. Two elderly volunteers spent nine weeks
interacting with the experimental group. After administration of the posttest, a t-test, Chi Square, and two-way ANOVA using the CAET as a repeated measure, Pearson r Simple Correlation, one-way analysis of variance, Scheffe Post Hoc quantitative data, and anecdotal notes were utilized to analyze the data.

Results indicated no significant differences in attitudes toward the elderly between the experimental and control group on either the pretest or posttest. A highly significant relationship was found between children’s prior acquaintance with the elderly and their attitudes as measured by the CAET and CFEQ. Observations and anecdotal notes by the investigator demonstrated a significant association between increased interaction with the aged and positive attitudes toward them.

Dellmann-Jenkins, Lambert, Fruit and Dinero (1986) used the Children’s Attitudes Toward the Elderly scale to measure change in attitudes of 30 children aged 3 and 4. The intervention consisted of three-hour sessions four days per week with classroom activities about the elderly, as well as daily contact with elderly volunteers and interaction with the elderly in an adult day care center. Results revealed that 3 and 4 year olds’ perceptions about the way elderly persons look and behave appeared to have been altered in a positive direction.

Towry’s (1986) dissertation randomly assigned 12 fourth grade classrooms (381 students) to the following conditions: Instruction on aging from an older volunteer; instruction on spelling from an older volunteer; instruction
on aging from a classroom instructor; and no intervention (the control group). All students were pretested and posttested using a modified version of the Tuckman-Lorge Old People Questionnaire, a knowledge survey, and an attitude test created by Towry. Data collected from the 381 subjects demonstrated an increase in all three scores for all three treatment groups. A significant difference (.05 level) was found between the participants and the control group. Results indicated that the presence of an older person in the classroom had a positive effect on the children's attitudes, more so than the treatment method.

McGuire's (1988) dissertation tested to determine whether instructional information regarding the elderly would promote positive attitudes toward the elderly among preschoolers. An instructional unit was taught to the experimental group; no instruction was provided to the control group. Both groups received Children's Attitudes Toward the Elderly and the Semantic Differential Old People Scale as pretest and posttest instruments. Results demonstrated that preschoolers in the experimental group developed significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly than preschoolers in the control group. The study demonstrated that educational instruction is able to change negative attitudes toward the elderly among preschoolers.

**Summary of Findings**

Eight of the nine studies revealed a positive change in children's attitudes upon administration of the posttest instrument (Adams, 1983; Carstensen,
Mason & Caldwell, 1982; McGuire, 1988; Dellmann-Jenkins, Lambert, Fruit & Dinero, 1986; Rowe, 1981; Rich, Myrich & Campbell, 1983; Seefeldt, Jantz, Galper & Sherock, 1977; Towry, 1986). The exception was a study by Beeghly (1982), who found no significant change in attitudes on the part of his subjects. A significant correlation was found to exist between the female gender and positive attitudes in Rowe’s (1981) study.

Section 4:
Review of Social Workers’ Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Non-Experimental Studies of Social Workers’ Attitudes Toward the Elderly

No post-intervention studies were found in the literature review examining helping professionals’ attitudes toward the elderly. The literature search did, however, provide numerous descriptive studies on helping professionals’ attitudes toward the elderly.

Descriptive studies conducted from 1969 through 1990 have indicated that helping professionals, including social workers, hold either neutral or negative attitudes toward the aged. Social workers in early descriptive studies were found to perceive the elderly as rigid in personality, slow in responding to treatment, passive, and non-verbal (Coe, 1967; Garfinkel, 1975). Butler (1975) has noted that mental health professionals, psychologists, psychiatrists, and
psychiatric social workers are inclined not to treat older persons because of stereotypical attitudes toward them. Numerous studies have demonstrated that despite training in social work, psychology, and religion, these professionals have received an inadequate education about the aging process and the elderly (Almquist, Stein, & Weiner, 1981; Baker, 1984; Coccaro & Miles, 1984; Lowy, 1979; Storandt, 1983; Olsen, 1982).

In response to social workers' negative attitudes toward the elderly, articles were being written as early as the 1960s encouraging practitioners to set aside their ageist beliefs and enter the field of working with the elderly (Posner, 1961; Soyer, 1969; Wasser, 1964).

According to Kosberg and Harris (1978), early descriptive studies of social workers' attitudes toward the elderly were limited to social workers employed within interdisciplinary settings (usually nursing homes) with other mental health and health care professionals. Kosberg and Harris found that these studies had failed to obtain sufficiently large samples of social workers from whom to generalize their findings. A second weakness noted was the failure of various researchers to ascertain whether the social workers who participated had, in fact, been trained in social work, and if so, at what level of social work education.

Not until the 1980s did the literature review provide dissertation studies descriptively assessing social workers' attitudes to the exclusion of other mental health and health care professionals. Studies have found that social workers
who choose to work with the aged hold more positive attitudes toward them than social workers preferring not to work with them (Greene, 1983; Zofnass, 1982; Brown, 1987; Vickers, 1990). If attitudes influence behavior, it becomes central to social work research on aging that empirical findings be employed toward providing effective interventions through social work education and field placement.

No studies were located testing the effectiveness of combined interventions of social work education and field practice experience in changing social work students’ attitudes toward the elderly. It was the intent of this study to test for just such a relationship among second-year, master’s level gerontological social work students.

Exploratory/Descriptive Studies of Social Workers’ Attitudes Toward the Elderly

Kosberg and Harris (1978) surveyed the literature and found the following six studies demonstrating that negative attitudes toward the aged are held by professionals and non-professionals alike in multiple helping professions.

Research conducted by Kahana and Coe (1969) studied the professional staff, including social workers, in a nursing home. They discovered negative attitudes toward the residents on the part of professional staff, including social workers. Kahana and Coe attributed their findings to the professionals’ view of
the elderly as difficult to work with and the professionals' inability to manage the residents.

Wolk and Wolk (1971) explored attitudes toward the elderly of social workers, psychologists, and nurses in a nursing home. They concluded that nurses generally held positive attitudes, younger professionals held less negative attitudes than older professionals, and attitudes of those who had actually chosen to work with the elderly were the least negative of all. This finding supported belief in a positive relationship between desire to work with an elderly population and positive attitudes toward that population.

Another nursing home study, by Kosberg, Cohen and Mendlovitz (1972), surveyed attitudes of supervisory staff and found that the social work supervisors surveyed held more positive attitudes than the registered nurses, whose perceptions, in turn, were more positive than those of supervisors who were non-professionals. Formal education was found to be associated with positive attitudes; chronological age and time employed in the facility were found to have no association with attitudes.

Burger (1972) studied caseworkers' attitudes toward elderly clients. It was assumed that a worker's attitudes would influence his or her ability to provide effective care. Findings indicated that attitudes toward the elderly were generally more positive than negative, with workers aged 30 and above who had had some graduate education offering the most positive responses. The
caseworkers believed that troublesome characteristics of their elderly clients acted as barriers to communication.

In Kosberg's (1973) study, social workers were seldom found as professional staff members in geriatric facilities. Kosberg attributed this phenomenon to the tendency of social workers to view such institutions negatively. He perceived geriatric institutions as leading to stereotyping of the elderly as too difficult to work with, and change too difficult to achieve. Kosberg noted that social workers employed within this environment are forced to confront their own mortality and thus avoid such work settings.

Thorson, Whatly and Hancock (1974) measured cognitive and affective attitudes of social workers and nurses toward aging and the elderly. They found that younger workers possessed the most positive attitudes toward the elderly, followed by middle-aged workers, then older workers. They also found a positive relationship between attitudes held by these two professional groups and the morale of their clients. This finding was significant in that it supported the belief that attitudes held by professionals affect their clients, or at least the morale of their elderly clients.

Descriptive Dissertation Studies of Social Workers' Attitudes Toward the Elderly

In a descriptive dissertation study by Greene (1983) designed to identify some of the attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics of social workers
working with the elderly, two groups of caseworkers were studied, one with a geriatric caseload and the other with a non-geriatric caseload. The geriatric caseworkers indicated a preference for working with the frail elderly and a negative preference for working with younger clients. The non-geriatric caseworkers generally expressed a negative preference for the frail elderly and a preference for young married couples. No one factor appeared to differentiate the two groups as significantly as their level of death anxiety.

Williams' (1982) dissertation studied social workers' attitudes toward the elderly and factors believed to be related to those attitudes, including: The worker's relationships with grandparents and great-grandparents at four periods in life, perceived closeness to elderly individuals at four periods in life, knowledge of aging, and education in gerontology. The study was comprised of 127 master's level social workers aged 30 to 50 who had a minimum of two years' post-master's degree practice experience. Data were collected through a seven-part, 20-page mail-out questionnaire. All respondents were involved in direct service delivery. Two groups were created: Group 1 consisted of 34 social workers who practiced with the elderly; Group 2 consisted of 93 social workers who did not practice with the elderly. To correct for earlier studies containing social desirability effects in responses, Williams included other age groups in addition to the target group.

Findings indicated no significant relationship between the factors viewed and attitudes toward the elderly, with the exception of frequency of contact with
a great-grandparent at age 6. Group 1 reported more often a favorable relationship with a grandparent at age 18, and reflected a higher participation rate in gerontological continuing education courses and conferences on aging. The mean score of Group 1 was also significantly higher for knowledge of the elderly.

Zofnass's (1982) dissertation used a convenience sample of 123 hospital-based, master's level social workers from five major teaching hospitals to study attitudes toward the elderly. Research instruments included three attitudinal scales, demographic information, and eight age-grouped case vignettes. Findings determined that hospital-based social workers hold more negative attitudes toward the elderly than toward younger adults. Not surprisingly, social workers with positive attitudes toward the elderly wish to spend more time with this population than social workers with negative attitudes.

Brown's (1987) thesis studied the relationship between attitudes toward the elderly and social work career preference. The major research question investigated attitudes of social work students toward the elderly. These attitudes were found to vary from slightly negative to slightly positive. Female students demonstrated more positive attitudes toward the elderly than male students. Interaction with the elderly was found to be associated with more positive attitudes toward them. Students who expressed a preference to work with younger clients held more negative attitudes toward the elderly than those who preferred to work with the elderly.
Vickers' (1990) dissertation studied social workers' attitudes toward the elderly and contact with elderly individuals through a sample survey. Assessment instruments included the Aging Semantic Differential and an intergenerational contact measure developed and field tested by Vickers. The research instrument was mailed to 538 members of the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Vickers obtained a 68% response rate. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in attitudes scores among differing demographic subgroups. Significant differences were found, however, among intergenerational contact scores, with higher scores recorded by the Gerontology and Administration Specialty Certification/Training and Medical/Health Care Work Setting subgroups.

Section 5:

Explanations From the Literature Review for Ageist Attitudes Among Social Workers

One question emerges when reviewing the social work literature: Why do social workers appear to hold negative attitudes toward the elderly? The literature offers a number of possible explanations for these attitudes and for the reluctance of many social workers to work with elderly clients. First, working with the elderly may seem the antithesis to effective social work practice (Kosberg, 1977). Social workers are trained and dedicated to effecting
improvement in their clients' ability to function; too often they view the elderly as unable to respond to treatment.

Another possible explanation is the belief that the effects of professional intervention with such a clientele will necessarily be brief and that such work is an inefficient use of professional skills and manpower. Crane (1975) has reported that many physicians evaluate patients for treatment in terms of the psycho/social aspects of their illness and the probability that the patient will be able to recover physically and function in customary roles. If the physician judges the patient unable to function at his or her previous level, often the physician withholds treatment. It may be that social workers make the same initial assessment of elderly individuals and likewise withhold treatment interventions.

Kosberg and Harris (1978) stated that many social workers, being goal-oriented, do not understand that with an elderly client, goals may be obtained but not as quickly as with younger clients. Social workers' expectations should be adjusted to take into account individual client strengths and environmental resources. Rather than immediate and significant change, moderate alterations in behavior, condition, and level of functioning should be anticipated. Professional practice with an older client who may be ill or dying demands a maturity and a humanism consistent with social work's professional values.

Social work with the elderly often involves exposure to serious illness and death. This situation may be unattractive to many workers because it reminds
them of their own eventual mortality. This is revealed further in the attitudes many social workers hold toward extended care facilities and the high turnover of social work staff in these facilities. Social workers' attitudes toward these facilities may be projected onto the residents, who redefine their situation in life as truly hopeless, with no possibility of enhanced social and physical functioning. Kosberg stated that professionals are also influenced by the belief that individuals who work in these facilities are somehow less professional and competent than their colleagues (Kosberg, 1973). Lowy and Schonfield stated that professionals' personal feelings about their own parents and older relatives can conflict with their dealings with an elderly patient/client (Lowy, 1979; Schonfield, 1982).

Another partial explanation may be that social workers and others in helping professions come into contact primarily with ill and multi-problem elderly clients. The recently graduated social worker may be highly idealistic about working with this population, but is pressured by older workers to become realistic and realize that little, if anything, can be done to help them.

Social workers' negative as well as positive attitudes are shaped by a multiplicity of sources. Some of these attitudes have been shaped by society's perceptions of the elderly, some by one's professional education, and some by personal experience. Causal factors contributing to social workers' negative attitudes toward the elderly thus may include perception, professional education, and personal experience (Kosberg & Harris, 1978).
Section 6:

Summary of the Literature Review

Non-Social Work Literature

Literature reviews conducted from 1956 through 1988 on attitudes toward the elderly among non-social workers (Bennett & Eckman, 1973; Brubaker & Powers, 1976; Green, 1981; Lutsky, 1980; Kite & Johnson, 1988; McTavish, 1971), as well as Harris' national survey conducted in 1975, have found that the most prevalent attitudes range from neutral to negative. Often the elderly are not assessed negatively on the basis of age exclusively, but on the by-products of aging. This was very apparent in the Harris (1975) survey on public attitudes toward the elderly. The context within which the elderly are presented to the evaluator also influences attitudes toward them. According to Kite and Johnson (1988), certain perceptions are associated with the aged and appear to affect respondents' opinions of the elderly. Significant differences have been noted in attitudinal reactions to the target subject when the elderly person is presented in the form of a "personalized other" or "generalized other" (Brubaker & Powers, 1976; Green, 1981; Kite & Johnson, 1988).

Green (1981) and Kite and Johnson (1988) have claimed that the setting or situation in which the elderly are framed is crucial to the assessment they receive. There has been a general recognition of weaknesses in research instruments, designs, and measuring techniques (Bennett & Eckman, 1973; Kite
& Johnson, 1988; McTavish, 1971). More recent studies have moved beyond a singular assessment of attitudes to include specific conditions and correlations associated with attitudes toward the elderly. Still more recently, within the past decade, post-intervention studies have been used to determine the effectiveness of various interventions in promoting a positive change in attitudes toward the elderly.

Significant correlations have been found between positive attitudes toward the elderly and level of education, age, length of time employed with the elderly, intention of working with the elderly, positive feelings about the elderly, high degree of comfort with the elderly, and female gender (Green, Keith & Pawison, 1983; Nolan, 1985; Roberts-Rudd, 1984; Rowe, 1981).

In the past decade, 15 quasi-experimental post-intervention studies have found positive changes in subjects' attitudes toward the elderly, while eight have found no change in the experimental population. Experimental studies have produced 11 positive findings and three findings of no change in attitudes toward the elderly.

Among the three quasi-experimental, post-intervention studies reviewed on students enrolled in geriatric education programs, one found no change in attitudes (Mann, Bomberg, Holzman & Berkey, 1988). The second study, by Downe-Wamboldt and Melanson (1985), found both a positive change and no change between two student nurse populations. The third study, by Hurd,
Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers (1985), obtained positive posttest results among pharmacy students.

Five post-intervention studies viewed attitudes and knowledge for posttest differences. All five demonstrated significant gains in the subjects' knowledge of the elderly (Barbiere, 1989; Hurd, Bootman, Richey, Sheehan & Myers, 1985; Murden, Meier, Bloom & Tideiksaar, 1986; Smith, Marcy, Mast & Ham, 1984; Wilson & Glamser, 1982). However, two of the five found no significant change in the subjects' attitudes toward the elderly (Murden, Meier, Bloom & Tideiksaar, 1986; Smith, Marcy, Mast & Ham, 1984).

From the small number of studies available for review, it does appear that increased knowledge promotes a change in attitudes among specialization and non-specialization populations. A statistical review of the post-intervention literature finds that 70.2% of the studies produced positive changes in the subjects' attitudes toward the elderly. With some degree of caution, one could describe this finding as slightly significant in terms of arguing for the effectiveness of education, activities, and practice experience in promoting a positive change in attitudes toward the elderly.

Social Work Literature

Significant differences in research designs, instruments, samples, and data analysis employed in studies of social workers' attitudes toward the elderly prevent definitive conclusions and generalizations about the characteristics of
social workers that accompany positive and negative attitudes toward elderly clients. The literature review demonstrates that social work as a profession has offered little by means of research regarding its practitioners' attitudes toward the aged.

Some tentative generalizations may be drawn, however, from the meager amount of social work research to date. Kosberg and Harris (1978) concluded in their survey of research findings that helping professionals hold negative attitudes toward the elderly. Kahana and Coe (1969) found negative attitudes among social workers in nursing homes and attributed this negativity to perceptions of the aged as being difficult to work with. Other research efforts have found that social workers electing to work with the elderly hold more favorable attitudes toward the aged than social workers not electing to work with the elderly (Brown, 1987; Greene, 1983; Vickers, 1990; Wolk & Wolk, 1971).

Zofnass (1982) found, in her research involving a large sample of 123 hospital social workers, that most held negative attitudes toward the elderly in comparison to their attitudes toward other age cohorts.

Some characteristics have been determined to demonstrate positive and negative relationships to social workers' attitudes toward the elderly. Kosberg, Cohen and Mendlovitz (1972) determined in their research that education, age, and time employed in a facility bear no correlation to attitudes toward the elderly. Thorson, Whatly and Hancock (1974) found that younger social workers hold more favorable attitudes toward the elderly than middle-aged or
older workers. Also, attitudes held by a worker do affect the morale of the client. Williams (1982) concluded that a positive correlation exists between frequency of contact with great-grandparents and a positive attitude toward the elderly. Brown (1987) found that female social work students hold more positive attitudes toward the elderly than male social work students. A positive correlation was also found between frequency of interaction with the elderly and attitudes toward them.

Research into social workers' attitudes toward the elderly continues to strive for methodological maturity. Ageism as a social phenomenon has progressed through typical developmental stages of inquiry. Initially, ageism was studied by social work researchers from a pre-experimental/exploratory methodology. Later, more elaborate descriptive research designs were developed to explore for associations between variables and the influence of the context in which the elderly were viewed. These early research efforts have provided a foundation upon which a more methodologically mature approach to scientific inquiry may be constructed.

In conjunction with research methods, the acquisition of a theoretical knowledge base from which to better understand the individual, social, and psychological conditions influencing attitudes toward the elderly will allow for the posing of more precise research hypotheses. Only through such an evolutionary course of research and theory utilization will social work as a profession be able to understand the multiple dimensions of attitudes toward the
elderly and offer an effective intervention toward promoting positive attitudes among social workers.

Methodological Weaknesses

The current literature review has demonstrated how little is actually known regarding the conditions that explain differences in attitudes toward the elderly held by the public, various age cohorts, students, social workers, and other professionals addressed in this review. A virtual dearth of research has been conducted to date on this topic. The absence of adequate research efforts has contributed to the following methodological shortcomings: An insufficient number of studies employing differing designs, shortage of attitudinal measuring instruments, shortage of longitudinal studies, unidimensional instruments, knowledge-based instruments posing as attitudinal-based, variability in length of intervention period, inadequate methods of data collection, difficulty in comparing studies, failure to account for subjects' personality and social history with the elderly, lack of replication, too few experimentally designed studies, absence of post-intervention social work studies, differences obtained when viewing the "generalized" versus "personalized" elderly, small sample sizes that limit findings, and sampling procedures that are confined to a narrow range of population groups. The culmination of such methodological weaknesses has made it difficult to ascertain the meanings and significance of findings on
attitudes toward the elderly and to test existing theoretical hypotheses as well as to formulate new ones.

**Theoretical Weakness**

With the exception of dissertation studies, few studies cited in the literature review provided any theoretical framework upon which hypotheses had been formed and tested. Such disregard for theory-based research may account, in part, for the lack of continuity in research endeavors on attitudes toward the elderly and the development of effective interventions to promote more positive attitudes.

**Section 7:**

**Significance of the Current Study**

The literature search yielded no post-intervention studies testing for the effects of gerontological social work education and field practice experience as an intervention to change students' attitudes toward the elderly. It is clear from the literature review that this is the next stage for social work research on ageism. Social work educators/researchers must determine what interventions are effective in changing negative attitudes toward the elderly among students and practitioners of social work. Social work researchers must also determine
under what conditions attitudes toward the elderly are formed and within what contexts they differ.

This study was useful in demonstrating the utility of the recommendation from the National Committee for Gerontology in Social Work Education to the Council on Social Work Education that graduate programs in social work establish a curriculum correcting students' negative biases toward the elderly. The current study tested the assumption in Kuypers and Bengtson's (1973) social reconstruction model that education and direct intervention are required to counter the effects of stereotypes about the elderly.

Social workers have assimilated the medical profession's perspective regarding the elderly, with some additional characteristics. The elderly are viewed as senile, unreliable, unable to learn new things, or to change their ways. They are seen as dependent, lacking in family or social supports, isolated, and dwelling in the past. They are thought to be unable to make choices or to solve problems by themselves (Lowy, 1979; Silverstone & Burack-Weiss, 1983).

Thorson, Whatly and Hancock (1974) have demonstrated how a professional's negative attitudes affect the morale of the clientele with whom he/she works. Negative attitudes likewise appear to influence the helper's willingness to provide needed referrals and interventions (Kosberg & Harris, 1978).
Section 8:

Theoretical Orientation Toward Understanding Ageist Attitudes

The Social Breakdown Model

The social breakdown and reconstruction syndrome models may be used as theoretical frameworks for understanding, explaining, and intervening into the phenomenon of ageism and its resultant attitudes.

The social breakdown model was initially conceived by Zusman (1966) as a syndrome model to explain mental illness. Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) borrowed and modified it to explain the labeling processes that are applied to the elderly population. Society's ageist attitudes result in the elderly being viewed as incompetent.

The process begins when the elderly internalize society's negative identification of their personhood. Then they go on to express their negative identity in behaviors that further exacerbate the way society views their personhood. Thus, the elderly tend to adopt negative definitions about themselves and to perpetuate the various stereotypes directed against them, and this only reinforces society's beliefs. In this way, the elderly actually collaborate with the enemy in producing stereotypes. This, theorists believe, leads to a "vicious spiral of negativism" (Kuypers & Bengtson, 1973).

As American sociologist Charles Cooley has stated, if individuals perceive themselves as others in society perceive them, then it follows that the
individual's self-concept is formed through interactions with others. If these others label certain populations in negative ways reflective of their attitudes and prejudices, then the labelled populations come to view themselves accordingly.

The model of social breakdown not only explains disengagement but also the loss of morale and life satisfaction that seems to be related to social isolation. Thus, the elderly who encounter societal prejudices about aging internalize the negative labels assigned to them and project this negative image through their behavior. Society, in turn, responds with negative feedback to the elderly person. Once this cruel process has begun, it reinforces everyone's conception of incompetent elderly and ensures additional difficulties for them. As is the case with any age cohort, the elderly, when faced with such life stresses as role loss, health issues, and economic difficulties, reach out to others for support and advice. Their request for assistance is interpreted by society as an indication of their failing capacity. To evoke additional interaction, the elderly gradually adopt some of the negative characteristics ascribed to them, thus slipping deeper into a dependent status as the cycle is repeated. "Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) assert the continuing adherence to the middle-age values of visible productivity so prevalent in American society practically assures an invitation to involvement in the breakdown syndrome" (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1986, p. 106).
The Reconstruction Syndrome Model

Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) developed the reconstruction syndrome model as an approach toward lessening the probability of social breakdown among the elderly. They suggested that interventions into the social breakdown cycle should provide opportunities for elderly individuals to enhance their sense of competence in appropriately structured environments that are free from general societal values. Improvement of environmental supports and facilitation of personal strengths will assist the elderly in gaining insight into the labeling process and result in increased self-confidence that empowers them to risk independent decisions.

In summary, the forces that eventually lead to social breakdown can be eliminated within a positive interactive environment. Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) believe that the place to begin is at the micro/individual level, since it is unlikely that the macro/society will make available alternate environments.

Summary of Models

In reviewing the social breakdown and social reconstruction models, it is apparent that negative labeling of the elderly occurs in American society. Sources of negative labeling are associated with the ways in which American society tends to respond to the elderly as a group. First the elderly internalize the identity that society defines for them. Then they act out the part that reinforces society’s false and negative image of them. Intervention in this cycle
of negative identification and association can occur at the micro/individual and macro/societal levels through competency building, validation, liberation, advocacy, and education toward lessening and eliminating ageist attitudes and actions on the part of individuals and society.

This study proposes that education may be used as an intervention to change ageist attitudes among social work students. As the social reconstruction model implies, interventions into such systems as social work education should prove effective in changing ageist attitudes. Several studies of helping professionals have demonstrated how knowledge promotes more factual and favorable attitudes toward the elderly (Glass & Knott, 1982; Hickey, 1976; Holtzman, Beck & Ettinjer, 1981; Monk & Kaye, 1982; Talmer, Mayer & Hill, 1977; and Winn, Elias & McComb, 1978). Knowledge translated through education should be based upon social facts rather than cultural biases toward the elderly. Gerontological social work education should debunk societal stereotypes and present students with verifiable information regarding the reality of the aged in American society. Gerontologists and the elderly alike must continue to challenge the social breakdown process that perpetuates myths, stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, culminating in ageism toward the elderly.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Quasi-Experimental Design

The research design chosen for this study was the non-equivalent comparison group, one of the most widespread quasi-experimental designs used for educational research. The design requires that a pretest, an intervention or treatment, and a posttest be administered to an experimental and a comparison group that do not have pre-experimental sampling equivalence. The groups constitute naturally assembled collectives, such as classrooms, as similar as availability permits, yet not so similar that one may dispense with the pretest. The assignment of the intervention (the independent variable, or "X") to one group or the other is assumed to be random and under the experimenter's control (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 47).

It is accepted within quasi-experimental design that the subjects may be self-selected, the experimental group having deliberately sought out exposure to the intervention, with no comparison group available from this same population of seekers. In this case the assumption of uniform regression between experimental and comparison groups becomes less likely, and
selection maturation interaction becomes more likely (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The quasi-experimental design approximates the experimental design, except the subjects self-select; therefore, the sample population was not randomly selected for this research.

**Nonequivalent Comparison Group Design**

The nonequivalent comparison group design used for this study may be diagrammed in the following manner:

```
O  X  O

O  O
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O = Group

X = Intervention

**Quasi-Experimental Research**

Campbell and Stanley (1963) stated the following in regard to quasi-experimental designs:

1. The purpose is to probe cause and effect ("if/then") to establish causality.
2. The researcher deliberately manipulates a treatment (independent variable) to see whether it causes a change in the dependent variable (effect).

3. Control the treatment and extraneous variable to control the dependent variable.

Population and Sample

Three census populations were used to form an experimental and two comparison groups. All subjects were either second-year master's level (MSW II) students enrolled in the College of Social Work, or second-year master's level (MBA II) students enrolled in the College of Business Administration, at The Ohio State University. The first population group consisted of 10 MSW II students who had self-selected into the gerontological specialization courses and field placement that constituted the treatment intervention. This population furnished the experimental group. The second population group consisted of all MSW II non-gerontological specialization students. This population furnished the first comparison group. The third population group consisted of all MBA II students. This population furnished the second comparison group. From these three census populations, those students who voluntarily participated in the study formed the three sample populations.

The study's pretest sample population included a total of 133 respondents. Of this number, 10 respondents accounted for the experimental
group, and the remaining 123 respondents comprised the first comparison group. The study's posttest sample population included a total of 184 respondents. Of this number, 9 respondents accounted for the experimental group, 93 the first comparison group, and 51 the second, posttest only, comparison group. The second comparison group contained a population of 125 potential respondents who were solicited to participate in the study, but a total of 51 chose to do so, forming the sample population by completing and returning the research instrument by mail. Nine respondents from the experimental population completed both pretest and posttest instruments to form a sample population, as well as 80 respondents from the first comparison group.

The sample population did not differ significantly on any socio/demographic characteristics, with the exception of gender. Females represented 73.4 % of the sample population and males 26.6 %. The mean age of the sample population was 29 years, with a median of 27 and a range from 21 to 60 years. Caucasians represented the majority of respondents by race, with 92.4 % of the total sample population. Afro/Americans, Orientals and others constituted 7.6 % of the remaining sample population. Slightly more than one-half of the respondents were single in marital status. One-third (33.2 %) were married, and 10.3 % were either divorced, separated, or widowed. The majority of the sample population (41.8 %) were Protestant, one-quarter (25 %) were Catholic, and the remainder identified with "Other" or listed no religious
affiliation. A majority of the sample population (35.9%) claimed an annual family income of $46,000 or over. The median family income fell between $36,000 and $45,000 for 14.7% of the sample population. Most of the respondents comprising the sample population could, in summary, be characterized as being predominantly graduate school students, 27 years of age, female, Caucasian, married, Protestant, and upper-middle class.

**Rationale for MBA II Comparison Group Population**

The researcher’s rationale for selecting MBA II students as a posttest comparison group was four-fold: (1) The MBA II comparison group increased sample size, allowing for a comparison of MSW II and MBA II students if no significant differences in attitudes toward the elderly existed among MSW II students; (2) This group served as the only posttest population to account for the interaction of selection and the independent variable, which presented an external threat to research design; (3) Thorson (1975) demonstrated in his study of four academic groups that business majors are the most negative in their attitudes toward the elderly, with social work students being the least negative of the four academic populations studied; and (4) To determine, in a post-industrial economy, what attitudes are held toward the elderly by MBA II students enrolled at The Ohio State University. Attitudes held by this population often influence, through economics, the social construction of attitudes in the culture.
Control for Internal Validity Threat to Design

The primary threat to internal validity, using the non-equivalent
comparison group design, is the interaction of maturation and selection.
Maturation is viewed as the processes within the subjects operating as a
function of the passage of time. For instance, students' growing older over a
period of time would make them significantly less negative in their attitudes
toward the elderly (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The researcher assumed that
the maturation/selection threat was minimized by the homogeneity of the
experimental and MSW II comparison group members. Both groups consisted
of MSW II students who were similar in socio-demographic and academic
characteristics. The only significant interaction between selection and
maturation that could have differentiated the two groups was the experimental
group's self-selection into gerontological social work as an area of
specialization. All non-gerontology specialization MSW II students were asked
to participate in the pretest/posttest only comparison group. The researcher
assumed the threat of maturation to have been further minimized by the adult
age of the participants and by the brevity of the study (20 weeks) that did not
allow a sufficient amount of time for the subjects to absorb either prejudices or
positive attitudes toward the elderly.
Control for External Validity Threat to Design

The primary threat to external validity, using the non-equivalent comparison group design, is the interaction between selection and the independent variable (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The researcher attempted to minimize this threat through use of a posttest-only comparison group of MBA II students. This comparison allowed for the direct measure of the independent variable, to indicate whether it had an independent effect upon the group not sensitized by the pretest. No inferences were drawn from the study beyond the sample population.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that attitudes may be measured.

2. It was assumed that a score on Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale is an adequate measure of a respondent's attitudes toward the elderly.

3. It was assumed that most MSW II and MBA II students hold negative to neutral attitudes, beliefs, and value systems toward the elderly, as American society does.

4. It was assumed that MSW II students harboring negative attitudes toward the elderly upon graduation will carry these attitudes into professional practice.
5. It was assumed that social workers are among the primary providers of social services and social work interventions to the elderly.

6. It was assumed that a gerontological specialization is a more effective means for eliminating student bias toward the elderly than an integrative approach as recommended by the Council on Social Work Education.

**Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to MSW II and MBA II students attending The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, between September 1991 and March 1992.

**Limitations of the Study**

1. Because the original data from Kogan's (1961) study were limited to college students, this study was also limited to college students.

2. The experimental group were self-selected, not randomly assigned by the researcher. No generalizations or inferences were drawn beyond the sample population.

3. It was not known whether gerontology faculty members in the College of Social Work ever influence first-year MSW students to specialize in aging. If this influence is present, one must assume that
a random possibility exists that a student might be exposed to a gerontology faculty member in one of the first-year courses.

4. This study did not generalize the idea that all elderly individuals participate in or are affected by the ideas underlying the social breakdown model. For the purpose of this study, the researcher was concerned with that population of elderly individuals who are affected by the dynamics presented in the social breakdown model.

**Definition of Terms**

Key terms used in this dissertation may be defined as follows:

**Social Work:** According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), "social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favorable to this goal. Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques . . ." (Barker, 1991, p. 221).

**Gerontological Social Work:** "An orientation and specialization in social work concerned with the psycho/social treatment of the elderly--the development and management of needed social services and programs for the older population and for older individuals" (Barker, 1991, p. 93).

**Field Placement:** "A part of the social work student's formal educational requirements, consisting of ongoing work in a relevant community social
agency. The MSW student typically is given a work assignment (of 16 to 20 hours weekly) in one agency during the first training year and in a different agency during the second year. The student is closely supervised by agency personnel and has an opportunity to integrate, utilize, and apply classroom content to practical experiences" (Barker, 1991, p. 84).

Education:

1. "The aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior of positive value in the society in which he lives" (Dictionary of Education, 1973, p. 202).

2. "Ordinarily, a general term for the so-called 'technical' or, more specifically, classified professional courses offered in higher institutions . . . ." (Dictionary of Education, 1973, p. 202).

Attitude:

1. "A learned predisposition to react consistently in a given manner (either positively or negatively) to certain persons, objects or concepts. Attitudes have cognitive, affective and behavioral components" (Wolman, 1973, p. 34).

2. "A disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event. People can hold attitudes of varying degrees of favorability toward themselves and toward any discriminable aspect of their environment" (Corsini, 1987, p. 97).
3. "Possibly the most important distinguishing feature of attitudes is that they are necessarily evaluative or affective . . . . Attitudes are most commonly measured through analysis of patterns of response to questionnaires and other self report techniques. These fall into two major groups: (a) Scales which present directional statements of opinion and (b) Scales which present non-directional concepts and require the respondent to evaluate them" (Eysenck, Wurzburg & Berne, 1979, p. 95).

Ageism:

1. Ageist attitudes and prejudices amount to ageist thinking and actions. Ageism has been described in the following way by Butler and Lewis:

   Ageism can be seen as a process of systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people that are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender. Old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills . . . . Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves; thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings. (Butler & Lewis, 1973, p. ix)

2. Maggie I. Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers organization that advocates for the elderly, describes ageism in the following way:

   . . . built in responses of our society to persons and groups considered to be inferior . . . of status, the right to control their own destinies and to have access to power, with the end result of powerlessness . . . social and economic discrimination and deprivation of the contributions of many competent and creative persons who are needed to deal with our vast and complex problems . . . individual alienation, despair, and hostility. (Kuhn, 1974, p. 1)
Hypotheses of the Study

This study was designed to measure the independent treatment effects of classroom and field practice education to test for a change in attitudes toward the elderly among master's level gerontological social work students. The major hypotheses may be stated in the null form as follows:

Major Hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MSW II non-gerontological specialization students, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest.

**Hypothesis 2:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest.

**Hypothesis 3:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II non-gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest.

**Hypothesis 4:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students exposed to gerontological social work courses and field practice experience and MSW II students not exposed to
gerontological social work courses and field practice experience, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest.

**Hypothesis 5:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses and field practice experience, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest.

**Hypothesis 6:** No significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses and field practice experience and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses and field practice experience, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest.

**Minor Hypotheses:**

Some of the following minor hypotheses were developed by the researcher, with brief rationales presented. Others have been tested in previous studies and found to demonstrate a relationship to one's attitudes toward the elderly.

**Hypothesis 1:** A correlation exists between knowledge of gerontological social work and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale.
As one's knowledge base increases, one's prejudices and stereotypes regarding the elderly are replaced by a factual base from which to view the elderly.

**Hypothesis 2:** A correlation exists between a clinical social work concentration and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

The researcher believed that administration and planning concentration MSW II students would hold more negative attitudes toward the elderly than clinical concentration MSW II students. Administration and planning concentration students would be similar in attitudes to Business Administration students, whom Thorson (1975) found to hold negative attitudes toward the elderly.

**Hypothesis 3:** A correlation exists between religiosity and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

The researcher believed that the more frequent a student's exposure to the elderly in religious-oriented activities, the greater the chance of the student's possessing positive attitudes toward the elderly. Students who attend religious activities frequently may, in fact, practice the Biblical dictate to "honor thy elders."

**Hypothesis 4:** No correlation exists between age and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale.
Hypothesis 5: No correlation exists between gender and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

Hypothesis 6: No correlation exists between academic major and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

Hypothesis 7: No correlation exists between professional experience with the elderly and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

Hypothesis 8: No correlation exists between positive feelings toward grandparents and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale.

Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale

Nathan Kogan constructed a 34-item Likert scale for the measurement of attitudes toward the elderly (Kogan, 1961). First, a set of 17 items demonstrated negative attitudes about the elderly. Then a second set of 17 positive items reversed the content of the first set. Construct validity for Kogan’s instrument was established by borrowing items from ethnic minority scales and substituting the term old people (Kogan, 1961). The instrument for the current study also borrowed from other attitudinal scales, thereby partially disguising the logical opposites. Other items were developed by face validity
based on the item's manifest content, according to the intuition of the researcher and others regarding stereotypes and feelings about the elderly.

Kogan (1961) administered his scaled instrument to introductory psychology students at Northwestern University [two male samples (N = 128 and 186)] and Boston University [one sample (N = 168, 87 males and 81 females)]. Kogan's instrument contained six response categories: 1. strongly disagree, 2. disagree, 3. slightly disagree, 4. slightly agree, 5. agree, and 6. strongly agree. A neutral score of 4 was used when a respondent failed to respond to an item. Negative and positive means were made comparable by subtracting the positive means from 8.00. By this process, higher mean values represented more unfavorable attitudes for both positive and negative items. Using this method, means, standard deviations, item-sum correlations, and matched-item pair correlations were calculated (Thorson, 1975).

In viewing personality traits for relationships to attitudes toward the elderly, Kogan found a weak correlation (.28) between authoritarianism, as measured by the F scale, and negative attitudes toward the elderly. This finding indicates that the more authoritarian individuals are, the more unfavorable they are in their attitudes toward the elderly. Unfavorable attitudes toward the elderly were also found to be associated with feelings of anomie and with negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities and physically disabled groups. In addition, nurturance as a personality characteristic was significantly correlated with scores
on Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale: Respondents who were more
nurturant held more favorable attitudes toward the elderly (Thorson, 1975).

Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale was initially developed to
demonstrate the correlation between personality correlates and attitudes toward
the elderly. However, most researchers since 1961 have used it to demonstrate
correlations between attitudes and demographic characteristics, such as age,
race, gender, and education, rather than personality characteristics (Thorson,
1975).

Reliability of Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale

Thorson (1975) cited Kogan’s (1961) presentation of data demonstrating
the scale’s reliability coefficients and interscale correlations for the three samples
of psychology students mentioned above. Using the Spearman-Brown
procedure to calculate odd-even reliability coefficients, Kogan demonstrated a
range from .66 to .83. A consistent trend toward greater reliability for the Old
People - Scale, as compared to the Old People + Scale, was found to exist.
The strength of the Old People - Scale’s reliability coefficient implied that few
modifications were required. Kogan modified the scale for four items for future
use. Old People + Scale items provided reliability levels ranging from .66 to .77.
Product-moment coefficients between Old People + Scale and Old People -
Scale items ranged from .46 to .52 in all three samples; each was significant
beyond the .01 level.
In a separate study, Thorson (1975) cited Kogan (1961) as having:

... administered his scale on 204 old people and 168 young adults. The odd-even reliability coefficients ranged from .73 to .82 on the Old People + and from .75 to .84 on the Old People - Scale. Interscale correlations for the Old People Scales ranged from .41 to .60. All correlations were found to at or beyond the .01 level of significance. (Thorson, 1975, p. 24)

Kilty and Feld (1976) conducted a study utilizing Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale and found that correlations between item scores and total test scores varied from .09 to .70.

Ellington (1978) reported an additional study of the reliability of Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale by Hicks, Rodgers, and Shemberg of the Psychology Department at Bowling Green State University. This team of researchers found a reliability coefficient of .65 when employing Kogan's scale (Hicks, Rodgers, and Shemberg, 1976).

Validity of Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale

Thorson (1975) stated, in reviewing the validity of Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People Scale, that Silverman (1966) had conducted a study in which he tested for validity in terms of the degree to which the scale related to the subject's preference for associating with the elderly in actual behavioral situations. Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale and the Ford Social Desirability Scale (Ford, 1964) were administered to 67 male and 22 female Introductory Psychology students attending the State University of New York.
Three months later the same students were informed of a possible part-time employment opportunity as an interviewer on a large research project. Those students who expressed an interest in possible employment were requested to complete a questionnaire in which they were asked to rank their preference for interviewing the following groups of people: 1. professionals, 2. white collar workers, 3. skilled workers, 4. unskilled workers, 5. retired persons, 6. housewives, 7. high school students, 8. college students, 9. business executives, and 10. small businessmen. Higher ranked scores were assumed to demonstrate stronger inclinations to avoid contact with the elderly.

Forty-three of the 89 students who completed Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale initially also completed the questionnaire. A negative correlation (-0.25) between scores on Kogan's Old People Scale and a measure of social desirability was found for the total sample and was significant at the .05 level. Silverman (1966) summarized:

A significant correlation was obtained between scores on Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale and a measure of social desirability with 89 undergraduates, . . . with the variance contributed by social desirability partialled . . . the scale was capable of predicting preference for associating with the aged in an actual behavioral situation. (Silverman, 1966, p. 88)
**Instrument Used for This Study**

**Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale - Modified Version**

The pretest/posttest instrument used for this study consisted of three sections: A slightly customized version of Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale, a questionnaire to gather socio-demographic information from the respondents, and a group of true/false statements to test respondents' level of knowledge regarding the elderly (see Appendices A and B for a copy of the instrument used for this study).

The researcher added 10 additional dummy items to Kogan's original scale to attempt to mask the attitudes being measured. It was hoped that the additional items would strengthen the validity of the instrument both by limiting respondents' awareness of the attitudes being measured and by limiting their ability to self-correct responses on the posttest.

**Questionnaire and True/False Statements**

An exploratory/descriptive questionnaire was included in the instrument to gather socio-demographic and knowledge-based information from the respondents. The questionnaire section provided data on possible correlations between the following variables and the respondents' attitudes toward the elderly: 1. age, 2. income, 3. religion, 4. religiosity, 5. marital status, 6. gender, 7. ethnic group membership, 8. life experience with the elderly, 9. professional experience with the elderly, 10. number of previous college-level courses.
focusing on the elderly, 11. comfort level with the elderly, 12. positive feelings toward grandparents, 13. field placement setting, 14. social work concentration, and 15. the last four digits of the respondent's social security number.

The third and final section of the instrument measured the respondent's knowledge base about the elderly through a series of true/false statements. The statements were taken from classroom and field placement activities during the treatment intervention.

**Administration of the Instrument**

The MSW II experimental and comparison groups were both administered the instrument at the commencement of Autumn Quarter, 1991, which marked the beginning of the intervention time frame. Then the experimental group received the intervention, consisting of Autumn and Winter Quarters (20 weeks) of gerontological social work courses and a 20-week field placement experience working with the elderly. During the final week of Winter Quarter, 1992, the MSW II experimental and comparison groups were administered the instrument once again. At this time, all MBA II students received a copy of the posttest in their student mailboxes, and those who chose to take part completed the instrument and returned it to the researcher.

The instrument was color-coded to indicate whether it represented the pretest or posttest instrument and to which of the three groups it had been administered. Respondents were tracked by the last four digits of their social
security numbers. This method allowed the researcher to match pretest with posttest responses.

**Treatment Intervention**

The independent variable, education, was defined as follows by the three gerontological courses offered by the College of Social Work that served as the treatment intervention from Autumn Quarter, 1991 through Winter Quarter, 1992:

**Social Work 750.02 - Social Welfare Policies Affecting the Elderly**  
Autumn Quarter, 1991

*Time Frame:* 10 weeks


*Course Outcomes:*

1. Knowledge of the demography of aging and future implications of these trends.
2. An appreciation of the cultural, political, economic, and historical context of aging policy.
4. An understanding of potential programmatic changes and their implications.
5. Knowledge of the federal, state, and local agencies involved in the implementation of social policies and programs for the aged.
6. An understanding of the responsibilities of public, private, and voluntary sectors in meeting the needs of vulnerable individuals.
7. An appreciation for the complexity of providing long-term care services (health and social) to older Americans.

8. An understanding of the implications of aging policies for ethnic groups, minorities of color, and women. (Tinia M. Bradshaw, Course Syllabus, Autumn Quarter, 1991).

Social Work 751.02 - Social Work Practice with Older Adults
Winter Quarter, 1992

Time Frame: 10 weeks

Course Description: Theoretical perspectives relevant to the aging process are examined; review of special concerns and treatment modalities unique to adults in middle and later years. (College of Social Work Bulletin, 1991-92)

Course Outcomes:

1. Be able to understand the purposes, nature, and domain of social work in this specialized area, to examine key values and grapple with ethical dilemmas that arise in social work practice in this field.

2. Be able to demonstrate sensitivity to how members of socially and culturally oppressed and diverse groups are treated as clients and consumers in this field of practice.

3. Be able to comprehend the particular roles of the social worker in this specialized area, including major features of interprofessional collaboration and team participation.

4. Be able to demonstrate knowledge of special approaches to assessment, intervention, and evaluation used by social workers in this field based on knowledge of the special biological, social, and psychological needs and problems of older adults.

5. Be able to integrate a practice perspective specific to this field within an overall social work practice frame of reference.

6. Be able to show increased awareness of the traditional stereotypes, values, and fears associated with aging.
7. Be able to demonstrate expertise with interventive strategies and treatment techniques relevant to human services personnel in work with older adults on both clinical and social policy levels.

8. Be able to apply intervention strategies specifically developed for use with older women and minorities. (Virginia Richardson, Course Syllabus, Winter Quarter, 1992)

Social Work 889 - Field Practicum II: Clinical
Autumn Quarter, 1991, and Winter Quarter, 1992

Time Frame: 20 Weeks

Course Description: Designed to permit students to achieve greater autonomy and to maximize skill development in the integration of social work theory and practice. (College of Social Work Bulletin, 1991-92)

Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. Provide opportunities for students to test and apply theoretical knowledge through assigned practice and experiences with individuals, families, and groups.

2. Provide opportunity to demonstrate acceptance, identification with, commitment to, and integration of social work ethics and values.

3. Demonstrate the ability to develop meaningful relationships, show respect for others, a professional demeanor, and effectiveness in interpreting social work roles and functions.

4. Demonstrate dependability in all areas of assignments with flexibility in meeting pressures.

5. Develop a continuing awareness of one's pattern of behavior as it influences all areas of professional intervention and functioning.

6. Provide opportunities for students "to help" through the use of professional relationships with individuals, families, and groups and to emotionally invest oneself with awareness and disciplined use of self.
7. Provide opportunities to use basic skills of interviewing and collecting and interpreting of significant information necessary to engage clients’ participation in the problem-solving process.

8. Explain to others his/her theoretical knowledge and understanding of human behavior as the usefulness of a theory is determined both by the power of explanation as well as effectiveness of techniques for modification, remediation, and change.

9. Provide opportunities to intervene with diverse population groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, and social conditions of the oppressed.

10. Recognize the significance of continued professional development. (Course Syllabus, Autumn Quarter, 1991 and Winter Quarter, 1992)

Social Work 889 - Field Practicum II: Social Administration
Autumn Quarter, 1991 and Winter Quarter, 1992

Time Frame: 20 Weeks

Course Description: Designed to permit students to achieve greater autonomy and to maximize skill development in the integration of social work theory and practice. (College of Social Work Bulletin, 1991-92)

Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. Social Problem and Policy Analysis

   Proficiency measures include the ability to:

   a. Identify primary and secondary sources of information.

   b. Assess the validity and reliability of the information.

   c. Utilize the information to analyze the problem/policy issue.

   d. Identify and assess alternate approaches to change in the problem/policy as well as factors influencing the various approaches to change.

   e. Develop and present findings or recommendations to appropriate decision-making bodies.
2. **Program and Organization Design**

The ability to plan and develop supports for the process by which a new or modified service program is developed. Proficiency measures include the ability to:

a. Identify and assess the context in which the program design and implementation are to take place.

b. Prepare a written program design or proposal for review in accordance with established guidelines.

c. Assist in developing strategies on achievement of planned outcomes.

d. Negotiate inter-organizational exchanges for cooperation and contractual relations.

3. **Analysis of Program Operations**

The ability to engage in organizational analysis, monitoring and assessment of agency performance. Relevant tasks and practice competencies include the ability to:

a. Identify performance information requirements and develop appropriate information collection procedures.

b. Assess the relative effectiveness of various structural arrangements.

c. Analyze manpower need, resources, and personnel practices.

d. Assess various dimensions of the organizational climate and their implications for performance.

e. Analyze a task group decision-making activity in terms of leadership styles, communication patterns, influence, and related aspects of group interaction.

f. Identify resources and develop plans for organizational and management development efforts.
4. Organizational and Personnel Development

The ability to engage in organizational development and training activities for the purpose of improving staff performances and program effectiveness. Relevant tasks and practice competencies include the ability to:

a. Design staff performance review procedures and criteria for assessment.

b. Plan, participate, and conduct meetings, including the ability to develop an agenda, clear definition of purpose and structure follow-up activities.

c. Design a program orienting new staff.

d. Develop personnel policies, procedures, and administrative manuals.

e. Design and participate in implementing staff training and professional development activities.

5. Program Management

The ability to engage in operation management activities and tasks. Practice competencies include the ability to:

a. Identify the resources needed for organizational maintenance and program execution.

b. Collect and analyze information on service costs, levels, and needs.

c. Prepare a program and line item budget.

d. Assess the costs and benefits of alternative technologies and approaches to service delivery.

e. Work with board members, staff, and community groups in interpretation of agency programs and issues in service delivery.

f. Prepare informational materials and develop public information projects.

g. Assess fiscal constraints and alternatives for implementing change in program or personnel.
6. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Relevant tasks and practice competencies include the ability to:

a. Identify information needs and program improvement goals which can be addressed through monitoring and evaluation methods.

b. Develop a plan for undertaking one or more of the following types of activities:

1. Information System Design
2. Assessment of Program Effort
3. Assessment of Program Effectiveness
4. Assessment of Program Efficiency
5. Assessment of Impact in Program Budget Cuts

c. Participate in the implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities.

d. Assess the factors which influence the utilization of information and findings from monitoring and evaluation activity. (Course Syllabus, Autumn Quarter, 1991 and Winter Quarter, 1992)

Range of Field Placement Settings

The experimental subjects were placed into the following agencies for the 20-week period of the treatment intervention, providing social services to the elderly:

1. Outpatient Medical Clinic, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Columbus, Ohio

Objective: Diagnosis and treatment for psychiatric/physical disorders. (CALLVAC Directory of Human Services, 1991)
2. **Older Adult Services, Family Services of Springfield and Clark Counties**, Springfield, Ohio
   
   Objective: Case management/outreach services for persons 60 years and older. Program includes assessment, development of a service plan, linkage with needed services, advocacy and follow-up, and in-home services. (Agency brochure, 1992)

3. **Judge Nicholas Residential Treatment Center**, Dayton, Ohio
   
   Objective: The facility provides numerous clinical social work services, including milieu group treatment, group counseling, individual counseling, and family counseling. (Agency brochure, 1992)

4. **Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services**, Findlay, Ohio
   
   Objective: The agency offers a wide range of comprehensive, community-based care to individuals and families with diverse mental health and substance abuse problems. (Agency brochure, 1992)

5. **Social Services, Riverside Methodist Hospitals**, Columbus, Ohio
   
   Objective: To assist elderly medical patients and their families with social, psychosocial, and economic problems connected with the patients’ illnesses or diagnoses. (CALLVAC Directory of Human Services, 1988)
6. **Franklin County Office on Aging**, Columbus, Ohio

Objective: A central intake point for seniors with long-term care needs. Information and assessment to seniors for home-delivered meals, personal care aides, respite workers . . . homemaker services and medical escort . . . . (CALLVAC Directory of Human Services, 1988)

7. **Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging**, Columbus, Ohio

Objective: To help elderly people maintain their independence in the community through the development of a comprehensive and coordinated service system. (CALLVAC Directory of Human Services, 1988)

8. **Northwest Counseling Services**, Columbus, Ohio

Objectives:

1. Provide support and education for family caregivers of elderly relatives.

2. Link older adults with needed services to facilitate independence.

3. Provide assessment and treatment for mental health, personal adjustment, and family problems through outpatient counseling.

4. Enable older adults to remain independent in their own home by providing a person to share it with them; to provide low-cost housing. (CALLVAC Directory of Human Services, 1991)
9. **Senior Adult Center**, Miamisburg, Ohio

Objective: Dedicated to providing high-quality programs and services to adults aged 55 and over. Services include home delivered meals, transportation, and legal aid. (Agency brochure, 1992)

10. **St. Rita's**, Lima, Ohio

Objective: Provides help to persons in dealing with problems or changes resulting from illness or injury. Social workers provide confidential support, counseling, education and referral for patients, families, and other support persons. (St. Rita's Medical Center, 1992)

**Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable was represented by attitudes toward the elderly held by the experimental group before and after exposure to the independent variable (gerontology courses and field work with the elderly). A pretest was administered to the experimental group to determine a baseline for the dependent variable prior to exposure to the independent variable. A posttest was then administered to measure any change in attitudes at the completion of the coursework and field experience. This measure was then compared to the pretest-posttest scores of the MSW II comparison group and the posttest-only scores of the MBA II comparison group.
Method of Gathering Data

In Summer Quarter, 1991, permission was requested from College of Social Work faculty members to allow the researcher to administer the pretest/posttest instrument in all second-year required courses enrolled in by MSW II students during Autumn Quarter, 1991 and Winter Quarter, 1992. The administration of the instrument required approximately 20 minutes of class time. This method of administering the instrument afforded the total population of MSW II students an opportunity to participate in the study.

In Autumn Quarter, 1991, permission was requested from the College of Business Administration to solicit for student participation in the study. All MBA II students received the instrument in their student mailboxes during the final week of Winter Quarter, 1992. Each student received an introduction to the proposed study, an appeal from the researcher for the student's participation, a statement of endorsement from a faculty member of the College of Business Administration, instructions on how to complete the instrument, and the instrument itself. The instrument was to be returned to the researcher via a prepaid, self-addressed envelope that was also enclosed in the packet. The researcher prepared for the possibility of a low response rate from the MBA II comparison group by placing a reminder request letter into their student mailboxes within three days of their receipt of the instrument.
Treatment of Data

Data collected from the research instrument were scored, coded for each respondent, and keyed into a computer for analysis using the SPSSX statistical package. The major hypotheses of the independent and dependent variables were statistically analyzed using the Independent and Matched Pairs t-test. These two statistical procedures allowed for analysis of within and between pretest and posttest group differences on Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The same procedure was used to analyze the knowledge-based pretest and posttest group scores. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to test the minor hypotheses for relationships of significance.

An F-test was used to statistically compare the three groups' variance on posttest scores. An alpha coefficient reliability analysis was established to demonstrate the instrument's reliability. A socio/demographic profile of the experimental and comparison groups was presented through the use of descriptive statistics. The .05 alpha level was used to establish which relationships were statistically significant.

Human Subject Protection

All requirements and conditions set forth by the Human Subject Program Guidelines at The Ohio State University were met to assure the protection of human subjects participating in the study.
CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The presentation and analysis of the data in this chapter contains five sections following the introduction. Section one presents a socio/demographic profile of the sample population. Section two presents the results of statistical tests conducted on the study's major hypotheses. Section three presents the results of statistical tests conducted on the study's minor hypotheses. The fourth section presents the study's significant findings from an analysis of variance in attitudes toward old people. The final section presents a summary of the five sections discussed in Chapter IV.

The Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale consists of 17 positive and 17 negative items. The instrument is scored using a Likert-type scale with response choices ranging from one, for "strongly disagree," to seven, for "strongly agree." Kogan's (1961) method of scoring responses requires each respondent's positive mean item score to be subtracted from eight. The obtained value is then recorded for the purpose of data analysis. Kogan (1961,
p. 47) states, in regard to his scoring method, "By this step, higher mean values reflect more unfavorable attitudes for both positive and negative items."

An inter-item reliability analysis was conducted on the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale instrument. An alpha level of .82 was established for pretest and posttest responses.

Data collected in the study were coded and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. All major hypotheses presented in the study were tested at the .05 level of statistical significance. For convenience, sample populations will be labeled as follows for statistical representation in the tables throughout Chapter IV: Group A, the experimental population of ten MSW II gerontology specialization students; Group B, a first comparison group of 123 MSW II non-gerontology specialization students; and Group C, a second comparison group of 51 MBA II students.
Section 1

Socio/Demographic Variables

Table 1
Respondents by Academic Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Major Area of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Social Work Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Social Work Clinical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social Work Gerontology Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social Work Gerontology Clinical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A contained an even distribution of five administrative and five clinical gerontological social work respondents. Group B contained 104 clinical social work respondents, constituting a majority of the group's 123 subjects. Group C contained 51 MBA II business administration respondents, without regard to specialization.
Table 2
Age of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Absolute Frequency</th>
<th>Relative Frequency (Percent)</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 21 to 25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 35</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean Age = 29
Range of Age = 39

The mean age for all groups was 29 years, with a median of 27 and a range from 21 to 60 years.

Table 3
Gender of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Females represented 73.4% of the sample population and males 26.6%.

Table 4
Race of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Afro/American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Oriental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Caucasians represented the majority of respondents by race, with 92.4% of the total sample population. Afro/Americans, Orientals and others constituted the remaining 7.6% of the sample population.
Table 5
Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Separated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly more than one-half of the respondents were single in marital status. One-third (33.2 %) were married, and 10.3 % were either divorced, separated, or widowed.
### Table 6

Religious Affiliation of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Jewish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the sample population (41.8 %) were Protestant. Nearly one-quarter (24.5 %) identified themselves as Catholic, and 5.4 % identified with the Jewish faith. Twenty-one respondents (11.4 %) identified with other religious affiliations, and the remaining respondents (16.8 %) claimed no religious affiliation.
Table 7

Income of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>0 - 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>16,000 - 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>26,000 - 35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>36,000 - 45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>46,000 - Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of the sample population (35.9 %) claimed an annual family income of $46,000 or over. The median annual family income was between $36,000 and $45,000 for 14.7 % of the population. The remainder of the sample population (47.8 %) reported incomes ranging from 0 to $35,000 per family annually.
Section 2

Major Hypotheses

Kogan Pretest Scores

The first hypothesis of the study stated that no significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MSW II non-gerontological specialization students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest. Scores for each group were tabulated and a mean determined. An independent t-test calculated that a statistical difference does indeed exist between Groups A and B in pretest scores on attitudes toward the elderly. The independent t-test produced a t-statistic of -2.79, with standard deviations of 11.46 and 15.58. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a 2-tail probability of .006 is six chances out of a thousand that the two sampling populations were drawn from the same distribution. The significantly more positive attitudes exhibited by Group A were anticipated by the researcher, given the group members' self-selection to specialize in gerontological social work. The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected, because a statistical difference in pretest attitudes toward the elderly was found to exist between Group A and Group B. An analysis of Group A and Group B pretest means appears in Table 8.
The study's second hypothesis stated that no statistical difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest. Scores for each group were tabulated and a mean determined. An independent t-test calculated that a statistical difference does indeed exist between Group A and Group C in pretest scores on attitudes toward the elderly. The independent t-test produced a t-statistic of -4.79, with standard deviations of 11.46 and 17.29. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of -4.79 is 0%. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected because a statistical difference in pretest attitudes toward the elderly was found to exist between Groups A and C, with Group A showing more
positive attitudes toward the elderly. An analysis of Group A and Group C pretest means is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Experimental and MBA Comparison Groups:
Pretest Means on the Kogan Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Pretest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>79.50</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>-4.79</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>106.86</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

The study's third hypothesis stated that no statistical difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II non-gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest. Each of the two groups' scores were tabulated and a mean determined. An independent t-test calculated a t-statistic of -4.95, with standard deviations of 15.58 and 17.29. The calculated t-value demonstrated that a statistical difference existed in pretest scores on attitudes toward the elderly between Groups B and C. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of -4.95 is 0%. The null hypothesis was accepted
because no statistical difference was found to exist between Groups B and C in attitudes toward the elderly. An analysis of Group B and Group C pretest means appears in Table 10.

Table 10

MSW and MBA Comparison Groups: Pretest Means on the Kogan Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Pretest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>93.59</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>-4.95</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>106.86</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

Kogan Posttest Scores

The study's fourth hypothesis stated that no significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students exposed to gerontological social work courses and field placement and MSW II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses and field placement, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest. Because of the pretest differences between Groups A and B, it was necessary to employ an analysis of covariance statistical procedure. This procedure allowed for the
control of pretest differences in determining whether a statistically significant change had occurred on the Kogan scale between Groups A and B upon administration of the posttest. The statistical analysis yielded an F statistic of 1.10 with a level of significance at .298. The F-value demonstrated that no statistical difference existed in posttest scores on attitudes toward the elderly between Groups A and B. The probability of differences occurring by chance with an F-statistic of 1.10 is approximately 30%. The average beta weight per item was established at .77. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted because no statistical difference in posttest attitudes toward the elderly was found to exist between Groups A and B. The analysis of covariance is presented in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11

Experimental and MSW Comparison Groups:
Analysis of Covariance on Kogan Adjusted and Estimated Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Observed Mean</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
<th>Estimated Mean</th>
<th>Raw Residual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84.44</td>
<td>89.85</td>
<td>84.44</td>
<td>.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89.58</td>
<td>84.17</td>
<td>89.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* n=9 for posttest sample population
** p < .01
Table 12
Experimental and MSW Comparison Groups:
Significance of Analysis of Covariance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean of Squares</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups A &amp; B</td>
<td>244.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>244.31</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study's fifth hypothesis stated that no significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest. Posttest scores on the Kogan scale were tabulated and means determined for each group. An independent t-test was calculated to be -3.27, with standard deviations of 27.22 and 17.29. The t-value demonstrated that a statistical difference existed in posttest scores on attitudes toward the elderly between Groups A and C. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of -3.27 is approximately 0%. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected because a statistical difference in posttest attitudes toward the elderly was found to exist between Groups A and C. Table 13 presents an analysis of Group A and Group C posttest means.
Table 13
Experimental and MBA Comparison Groups: Posttest Means on the Kogan Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Posttest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84.86</td>
<td>27.22</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>106.86</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

The study's sixth hypothesis stated that no significant difference exists in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses and field placement and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest. The groups' posttest scores on the Kogan Scale were tabulated, and means were determined for each group. An independent t-test was calculated to be -5.63, with standard deviations of 17.78 and 17.29. A t-value of -5.63 demonstrated that a statistical difference did indeed exist in posttest scores on attitudes toward the elderly between Groups B and C. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of -5.63 is 0%. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected because a statistical difference in posttest attitudes toward the elderly was found to exist between
Groups B and C. An analysis of Group B and Group C posttest means is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Posttest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89.58</td>
<td>17.78</td>
<td>-5.63</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>106.86</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

A paired t-test was conducted on Hypotheses One and Four to determine whether a statistically significant change had occurred within Group A's and Group B's attitudes toward the elderly upon completion of the treatment intervention. The paired t-test calculated the pretest and posttest means for each group. The calculation for Group A produced a t-statistic of -.63, with a standard deviation of 24.24. This t-statistic demonstrated that no significant change had occurred in Group A's attitudes toward the elderly. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of -.63 is approximately 55%. A t-statistic of 2.37 was then calculated for Group B, with a standard
deviation of 14.06. This t-statistic demonstrated that a significant change in a positive direction had occurred in Group B's attitudes toward the elderly. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-statistic of 2.37 is approximately 2%. An analysis of Group A's and Group B's paired t-test sum of means is presented in Table 15.

Table 15
Experimental and MSW Comparison Groups:
Paired t-test on the Kogan Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Pretest Group Mean</th>
<th>Posttest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>79.33</td>
<td>84.44</td>
<td>24.24</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>93.31</td>
<td>89.59</td>
<td>14.06</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

A change in attitude occurred for Group B between pretest and posttest. An additional set of paired t-tests were calculated to determine within which set of items on Kogan's scale the change had occurred. Tables 16 and 17 present Group A and Group B pretest and posttest means of variance for Kogan's 17 positive and 17 negative items. First, two means were tabulated for Group A pretest and posttest scores, then a paired t-statistic was calculated. The paired
t-test calculated a t-statistic of -.55, with a standard deviation of 13.90 for positive items. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-value of -.55 is approximately 6%. Group B means were then tabulated, and a t-statistic of 3.00 was obtained, with a standard deviation of 7.97. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-value of 3.00 is approximately 0%.

A second paired t-test was then conducted on the instrument's 17 negative pretest items. A statistical calculation of Group A scores produced a t-statistic of -.86, with a standard deviation of 23.56. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-value of -.86 is approximately 4%. A calculation of Group B scores produced a t-statistic of 2.02, with a standard deviation of 15.41. The probability of differences occurring by chance with a t-value of 2.02 is approximately 5%. An analysis of the findings is presented in Tables 16 and 17.

A statistically significant change had occurred for Group B on both positive and negative Kogan items. Group B became more positive toward the elderly and less negative over the intervention time frame.
Table 16
Paired t-test on Kogan's Scale of Positive Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Pretest Group Mean</th>
<th>Posttest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46.22</td>
<td>48.78</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>50.13</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>.00**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01

Table 17
Paired t-test on Kogan's Scale of Negative Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>Pretest Group Mean</th>
<th>Posttest Group Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>D.F.</th>
<th>2-tail Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>112.67</td>
<td>119.44</td>
<td>23.56</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>128.31</td>
<td>124.83</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ .05
Section 3

Minor Hypotheses

The calculated data from the minor hypotheses tested in this study are presented in Table 18. The table presents the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale and the r value obtained for each of the eight compared variables. The Pearson r statistic was calculated from the pretest scores obtained from Groups A, B, and C. As previously noted, because of the method of scoring on Kogan's scale, lower scores indicated more positive attitudes, while higher scores indicated more negative attitudes toward the elderly. Thus, a negative correlation of scores on Kogan's scale indicated a more positive attitude toward the elderly.

Since Minor Hypothesis One was stated as a directional hypothesis, .01 was established as the level of statistical significance. The study's first minor hypothesis stated that a positive correlation exists between knowledge of gerontological social work and attitudes held toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. It is apparent that Minor Hypothesis One can be rejected, as a Pearson r of -.17 is shown. The hypothesis would be accepted at the .05 level of statistical significance. Note that a negative Pearson r correlation on the Kogan scale represents a more positive attitude toward the elderly. This results in a negative correlation on the
Kogan scale and the variable being tested for an association implies a positive attitude toward the elderly.

The study's second minor hypothesis stated that a positive correlation exists between a Clinical social work concentration and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson $r$ of -.17 indicates that this hypothesis should be rejected because no association appears to be present between positive attitudes toward the elderly and track specialization in social work.

The study's third minor hypothesis stated that a positive correlation exists between religiosity and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson $r$ of .19 indicates that this hypothesis should be accepted as an association appears to be present between positive attitudes toward the elderly and religiosity.

The study's fourth minor hypothesis stated that no correlation exists between age and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson $r$ of -.14 indicated that this hypothesis should be accepted, since no association appears to be present between positive attitudes toward the elderly and age.

The study's fifth minor hypothesis stated that no correlation exists between gender and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson $r$ of -.24 indicated that a significant relationship exists between a student's gender (female) and
positive attitudes toward the elderly. The non-directional hypothesis can be rejected at the .05 and .01 levels of statistical significance.

The study's sixth minor hypothesis stated that no correlation exists between academic major and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson r of -.37 indicated that a significant relationship does indeed exist between a student's academic major and positive attitudes toward the elderly. The non-directional hypothesis can thus be rejected at the .05 and .01 levels of statistical significance.

The study's seventh minor hypothesis stated that no correlation exists between professional experience with the elderly and attitudes held toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson r of .17 indicates that this hypothesis should be accepted. An association appears to be present between positive attitudes toward the elderly and professional experience with the elderly.

The study's final minor hypothesis stated that no correlation exists between positive feelings for grandparents and attitudes toward the elderly, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale. The calculated Pearson r of .05 indicates that this non-directional hypothesis should be accepted. No association appears to be present between positive attitudes toward the elderly and positive feelings for grandparents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kogan by Variable</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Pearson r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerontological Knowledge</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Specialization</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Major</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Experience</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with Grandparents</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .01

Section 4

Analysis of Variance in Attitudes Toward Old People

One-way analysis of variance tests were conducted to determine whether significant differences in attitudes toward the elderly existed between the study's experimental and comparison sample groups, according to various socio/-
demographic characteristics. Analysis of the significant findings is presented in
the following tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3360.45</td>
<td>672.09</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>.046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>51779.55</td>
<td>290.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>55140.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Weekly</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>92.62</td>
<td>16.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Weekly</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>99.78</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Weekly</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>104.21</td>
<td>23.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Weekly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>95.57</td>
<td>20.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Weekly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106.67</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or More Weekly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>104.00</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Weekly</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>96.50</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
Table 19 demonstrates that score variations on the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale were in part a function of religiosity. Those 93 respondents who never participated in weekly church-related activities held the most favorable attitudes toward the elderly, with a mean score of 92.62. Those respondents who participated from one to five or more times per week in church-related activities held significantly more negative attitudes toward the elderly, with a mean score of 102.05. It may be concluded from the data presented in Table 19 that, as church-related activities increased among the sample population tested, attitudes toward the elderly became more negative. The F ratio calculated is 2.310, which could be achieved by chance only four in a hundred times.
Table 20

Analysis of Variance - Attitudes Toward Old People by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3187.17</td>
<td>3187.17</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>.001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>51952.83</td>
<td>285.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>55140.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>103.41</td>
<td>18.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>93.99</td>
<td>16.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>96.50</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p ≤ .001

Table 20 demonstrates that score variations on the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale were in part a function of gender. The one-way analysis of variance provides evidence that the female sample population, with a score of 93.99, held significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly than did the male sample population, with a score of 103.41. The F ratio
calculated is 11.16, which could be achieved by chance only one in a thousand times.

Table 21
Analysis of Variance - Attitudes Toward Old People by Comfortableness With Elderly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3363.14</td>
<td>1121.05</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.009**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>50341.79</td>
<td>284.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>53704.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Comfortable</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>90.82</td>
<td>15.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99.95</td>
<td>16.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Comfortable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97.84</td>
<td>19.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Uncomfortable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>107.00</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>96.39</td>
<td>17.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01
Table 21 demonstrates that score variations on the Kogan Attitude toward Old People Scale were in part a function of comfortableness with the elderly. It appears from the one-way analysis of variance that as the sample population's level of comfort with the elderly decreased, so did their attitudes toward the elderly. Those 65 respondents in the sample population who felt very comfortable with the elderly held the most positive attitudes. Additionally, the comfortableness variable on separate one-way analysis of variance tests was found to have reached a level of statistical significance for Group A of .0043 and for Group B of .0382. It may be concluded from the data presented in Table 21 that as comfortableness with the elderly decreased among the sample population, attitudes toward the elderly also became more negative. The F ratio calculated was 3.9416, which could be achieved by chance only nine in a thousand times.
Table 22
Analysis of Variance - Attitudes Toward Old People by Frequency of Monthly Personal Contact with the Elderly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6752.47</td>
<td>1350.49</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>.0003***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>48387.53</td>
<td>271.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>55140.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Monthly</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92.70</td>
<td>14.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Monthly</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>103.63</td>
<td>17.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Monthly</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>99.42</td>
<td>19.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Monthly</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>102.33</td>
<td>15.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Monthly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>86.42</td>
<td>11.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or More Monthly</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>90.45</td>
<td>15.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Monthly</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>96.50</td>
<td>17.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001
Table 22 demonstrates that variation in score on the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale is in part a function of monthly personal contact with the elderly. Those 48 respondents in the sample population who had three or more personal contacts with the elderly per month appeared to hold more positive attitudes toward the elderly than those with fewer or no contacts per month. Direct contact with the elderly may serve to eliminate or neutralize negative stereotypes and biases or to promote positive attitudes toward the elderly. The data do indicate that as contacts with the elderly increase, so do favorable attitudes. The F ratio calculated is 2.3843, which could be achieved by chance only four in one hundred times.
Table 23
Analysis of Variance - Attitudes Toward Old People by Professional Contact With the Elderly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>F Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2572.67</td>
<td>857.56</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.035*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>51980.74</td>
<td>293.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>54553.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>90.11</td>
<td>15.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>99.00</td>
<td>20.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99.10</td>
<td>16.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>97.00</td>
<td>14.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>96.68</td>
<td>19.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Table 23 demonstrates that variation in score on the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale is in part a function of professional contact with the elderly. Those 44 respondents who had frequent professional contact through
their occupational roles with the elderly appeared to hold more positive attitudes toward the elderly than those with fewer or no contacts. Direct contact with the elderly may serve to eliminate or neutralize negative stereotypes and biases or to promote positive attitudes toward the elderly. The data do indicate that as contacts increase, so do favorable attitudes. The F ratio calculated is 2.92, which could be achieved by chance only four in one hundred times.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed the scoring and coding procedure employed in the utilization of the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale, identification of sample group populations, a descriptive summary of the respondents' socio/demographic characteristics, statistical test and findings regarding the major and minor hypotheses, and significant findings of variance within sample group populations. Chapter V will present the study's summary, discussion and conclusions.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a 20-week curriculum specialization in gerontological social work education and field practice experience was an effective intervention in changing attitudes held toward the elderly. The experimental group was represented by 10 MSW II gerontological specialization social work students attending The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, in the Autumn Quarter of 1991. The purpose of the study was to demonstrate the utility of the recommendation in 1981 by the National Committee for Gerontology in Social Work Education to the Council on Social Work Education that proposed graduate programs in social work education establish a curricular that corrects students' negative biases toward the elderly. Little is known regarding whether specializing in gerontological social work affects how students feel, behave, and practice toward elderly clients. No post-intervention studies were found in the current literature review testing the effectiveness of a gerontology specialization program in changing social work students' attitudes toward the elderly. It was the focus of this study
to test for just such a relationship among second-year, master-level
gerontological specialization social work students.

Theoretical Orientation

The study utilized the social breakdown and reconstruction syndrome
models as theoretical frameworks from which to test, understand, and explain
the phenomenon of ageism and the resulting negative attitudes held by social
work students. Kuypers and Bengtson's (1973) social breakdown and
reconstruction models explain the labeling process by which society assigns
negative stereotypes to the aged, which results in their being labeled as
incompetent. This labeling process is initiated when an elderly individual looks
to society for continued role inclusion upon retirement from the labor force.
When inclusion is denied by society, the elderly often experience anomie.
These feelings of normlessness experienced by the elderly then act to reinforce
society's negative view of the elderly. This ongoing cyclical process eventually
impacts upon the self-concept of the elderly individual. The elderly individual's
sense of identity begins to incorporate the negative perceptions held by society.
The elderly then adopt the negative characteristics and behaviors expected of
them by society. Confronted with such stressful developmental life situations
as role loss, health issues, and economic difficulties, the elderly seek advice and
support from society in coping with and adjusting to their new status in society.
Their request for assistance is perceived by society as validation of their
diminishing capacities. To secure societal interaction and approval, the elderly eventually accept the negative characteristics ascribed to them. This acceptance of an incompetent personhood affords the aged a role and set of behaviors expected of them at the expense of their individuality. The aged may find a negative identification preferable to a state of anomie. Thus, such culturally transmitted age expectations lead the elderly to accept negative definitions about themselves, which, in turn, reinforces society's beliefs. Through this process, the elderly, in fact, collaborate with their oppressors in producing stereotypes. Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) state that the end product of this process is a "vicious spiral of negativism" spinning the elderly on a slippery slope toward dependent status, as the cycle of ageism is repeated.

Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) developed the reconstruction syndrome model as an interventionist approach toward decreasing the probability that the social breakdown phenomenon will occur. The authors have suggested interventions into the social breakdown cycle that will provide opportunities for the aged to strengthen their sense of competence. Environmental supports and facilitation of individual strengths will aid the elderly in achieving insight into the labeling process and result in enhanced self-confidence that empowers them to risk self-determined behaviors and decisions.

From this perspective, the forces that lead to social breakdown can be eradicated within positive and supportive social environments. The current study has explored and tested whether education may be used as an effective
intervention to change ageist attitudes among second-year, master-level gerontological specialization social work students. As suggested by the social reconstruction model, interventions into such systems as social work education should prove effective in changing ageist attitudes. A positive change in attitudes toward the aged among gerontological social workers will produce more supportive and effective practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and educators to reshape the systems and environments that impact negatively upon the aged and the labeling process by which society and the aged view and define their personhood.

**Major Hypotheses Discussed**

This study examined the following major questions: (1) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MSW II non-gerontological specialization students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest? (2) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest? (3) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II non-gerontological specialization students and MBA II students, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale pretest? (4) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students exposed
to gerontological social work and field placement courses and MSW II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses or field placement, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest? (5) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II gerontological specialization students and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest? (6) Does a significant difference exist in attitudes toward the elderly between MSW II students not exposed to gerontological social work and field placement courses and MBA II students not exposed to gerontological social work courses, as measured by the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale posttest?

**Discussion of Minor Hypotheses**

This study examined the following minor questions: (1) Does a positive correlation exist between knowledge of gerontological social work and attitudes toward the elderly? (2) Does a positive correlation exist between a Clinical social work concentration and attitudes toward the elderly? (3) Does a positive correlation exist between religiosity and attitudes toward the elderly? (4) Does no correlation exist between age and attitudes toward the elderly? (5) Does no correlation exist between gender and attitudes toward the elderly? (6) Does no correlation exist between academic major and attitudes toward the elderly? (7) Does no correlation exist between professional experience with the elderly and
attitudes toward the elderly? (8) Does no correlation exist between positive feelings toward grandparents and attitudes toward the elderly?

Discussion of Methodology and Assumptions

The research design employed for this study was the non-equivalent comparison group. The design required that a pretest, an intervention, and a posttest be administered to an experimental and a comparison group that did not have pre-existing sampling equivalence. This design is often used in educational research where the subjects are self-selected. In the present study, the experimental group, gerontological social work students, deliberately sought out exposure to the intervention. The following methodological assumptions were made:

1. It was assumed that attitudes may be measured.

2. It was assumed that a score on Kogan's Attitude Toward Old People Scale is an adequate measure of a respondent's attitudes toward the elderly.

3. It was assumed that most MSW II and MBA II students hold negative to neutral attitudes, beliefs, and value systems toward the elderly, as American society does.

4. It was assumed that MSW II students harboring negative attitudes toward the elderly upon graduation will carry these attitudes into professional practice.
5. It was assumed that social workers are among the primary providers of social services and social work interventions to the elderly.

6. It was assumed that a gerontological specialization is a more effective means for eliminating bias toward the elderly than an integrative approach as recommended by the Council on Social Work Education.

Discussion of Research Instrument

The Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale was one of three instruments used in this study. The Kogan scale consists of 34 Likert-type questions containing 17 positive and 17 negative opposite items measuring the respondents' attitudes toward the elderly. A second instrument was created to ascertain the respondents' knowledge of the elderly. Twenty-five gerontological knowledge-based questions were developed from course materials the respondents were exposed to over the 20-week intervention period. The third and final instrument contained survey questions that gathered socio-demographic information regarding the respondents.

Discussion of the Sample Population

The three sample group populations consisted of: Ten self-selected MSW II gerontological social work students who formed the experimental group;
a second comparison sample population of 123 volunteer MSW II non-
gerontological social work students; and a third sample comparison population
of 51 volunteer MBA II students (posttest only). The experimental group was
exposed to a 20-week intervention of gerontological social work education and
field practice experience with the aged.

The three sample population groups differed significantly on the socio/-
demographic variables of gender and marital status. The second comparison
group of MBA II respondents were represented by 46 % more males than
contained in the two MSW II groups. Twenty-five percent more MBA II
respondents were single than those respondents in either of the two MSW II
groups. No differences were found to exist among the sample populations in
age, race, religious affiliation, income, or religiosity.

Discussion of Statistical Tests

The statistical tests utilized in the study were the analysis of covariance,
Cronbach’s reliability analysis, F-test, independent t-test, paired t-test, one-way
analysis of variance, and the Pearson product moment correlation. The
statistical level of significance for testing the major research hypotheses was
established at .05. Minor hypotheses were tested at the .05 or .01 level of
significance, depending upon whether they were directional hypotheses.
Discussion of Findings

The major conclusion drawn from the study is that a 20-week specialization track in gerontological social work courses and field practice experience failed to demonstrate statistically its effectiveness as an intervention technique in changing the experimental group members’ attitudes toward the elderly. The same outcome of analysis has been noted in several previous studies cited in the literature review of other post-intervention studies (Beeghly, 1982; Chandler, Rachal & Kazelskis, 1986; Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson for third-year nursing students, 1985; Downe-Wamboldt & Melanson, 1990; Lacey, 1990; Lockwood, 1986; Mann, Bomberg, Holzman & Berkey, 1988; Murden, Meier, Bloom & Tideiksaar, 1986; and Wirth, 1987).

The major finding from this study is that positive change in attitude is more difficult to achieve among students who have self-selected to work with the elderly and already possess positive attitudes toward them. Previous studies lend support to this conclusion. Several studies to date have determined a significant correlation exists between social workers’ preference to work with the elderly and the possession of positive attitudes toward them (Brown, 1987; Greene, 1983; Vickers, 1990; Wolk & Wolk, 1971; and Zofnass, 1982). To the researcher's knowledge, the experimental group examined within this study have displayed the most positive attitudes published using the Kogan Attitude Toward Old People Scale.
A statistically significant positive change in attitudes toward the elderly may be difficult to achieve among self-selected gerontological social work students. However, the study did demonstrate a trend toward providing evidence of the experimental group's increase in gerontological knowledge. This trend might have proved statistically significant if a larger number of experimental subjects had been available.

A significant change in attitudes toward the elderly occurred among the study's first comparison group of MSW II non-gerontological specialization social work students. This result indicates a positive change in attitudes may be obtained through generic course content among MSW II students who hold relatively favorable attitudes toward the aged.

The significantly higher negative scores obtained by the second, posttest only, comparison group of business students lend support to the theoretical underpinning of the study presented in Chapters I and II. Thorson (1975) found that among several academic disciplines, business students held the most negative attitudes toward the aged. Capitalism-based economies often manufacture a social, political, and economic culture in which many of the aged who are no longer participating in the labor force are devalued as individuals and thus stereotyped within a negative framework. Few social roles in capitalistic societies provide a sense of meaningful status for many elderly individuals upon retirement. This phenomenon historically has been particularly true for males, who more often define their self-worth by their occupational role
and resulting contribution to society's material goods. When one ceases to engage in materialistic production and consumption, often one is redefined as unproductive and a drain upon society's limited resources. According to Kuypers and Bengtson’s (1973) social breakdown and reconstruction syndrome models, when society assigns negative stereotypes to the elderly, this often results in the elderly identifying with such stereotypes, which in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy or a vicious cycle of ageism.

The study produced weak to moderate levels of correlation coefficients for some minor hypotheses associated with attitudes toward the elderly. The squaring of each correlation demonstrated the small percentage of the variance in attitude accounted for by the comparison variable. Several of the minor hypotheses examined did yield statistically significant associations for the three sample populations examined in the study. A significant association was found to exist between attitudes toward the elderly and the respondent's gerontological knowledge. This finding has been replicated in studies by Murden, Meier, Bloom and Tideiksaar (1986) and Wilson and Glamser (1982).

Religiosity was found to demonstrate a negative association with attitudes toward the elderly. A one-way analysis of variance identified those respondents who never attended church-related functions as holding the most favorable attitudes toward the elderly.

Gender was determined to be significant as a variable in terms of association with attitude. Female respondents were found to hold significantly
more positive attitudes than male respondents. Brown (1987) found female social work students demonstrated more positive attitudes toward the elderly than did male social work students. A gender difference may exist in part due to the traditional role of females as care givers to the aged in society. If, as Adams (1983) has noted, increased interaction with the aged leads to more positive attitudes toward them, it could be expected that the time spent by females in care giving activities results in increased favorable attitudes toward the elderly.

Academic major demonstrated that social work students hold significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly than do business students. Thorson's (1975) study of attitudes toward the elderly determined that social work students possessed the most positive attitudes of several academic majors represented, and business students held the least favorable attitudes toward the elderly.

Professional contact with the elderly was associated in the current study with positive attitudes toward the elderly. Green, Keith and Pawlson (1983) found in their experimental study highly significant correlations between expressed intentions to work with the aged and positive feelings about previous professional contact with the elderly. A one-way analysis of variance determined those respondents who reported the most frequent professional contact with the elderly held the most favorable attitudes toward them. Additionally, the Pearson r analysis determined the following variables: marital status, comfortableness with the elderly, number of gerontology courses taken
in the previous six months, total number of gerontology courses taken, monthly personal contact, and monthly professional contact each demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with positive attitudes toward the elderly. Single respondents were numerically more negative in their attitudes toward the elderly than other marital status classifications. Those respondents who expressed the highest level of comfortableness with the aged held the most favorable attitudes toward them. The experimental group exhibited their highest level (.81) of association on this variable in relationship to a positive attitude toward the elderly. A Pearson r of .81 explains approximately 66 % of the variance in group A’s population. Green, Keith and Pawlson (1983) found a high degree of comfort among third-year medical students and their possessing favorable attitudes toward the elderly. As the number of gerontological courses taken by the respondents increased, so did the respondents’ positive attitudes toward the aged. The more frequent monthly personal and professional contact with the elderly the respondents reported, the more favorable attitudes toward the elderly they demonstrated. Green, Keith and Pawlson’s (1983) study found a positive relationship between attitudes toward the elderly and previous personal contact. Adams (1983) found that increased interaction with the elderly leads to children developing positive attitudes toward the elderly. Brown’s (1987) study determined that interaction with the elderly among social work students is associated with more positive attitudes toward them.
The following variables were found to demonstrate no statistically significant relationship with positive attitudes toward the elderly: age, race, religion, relationship with grandparents, and income. Previous studies (Johnson & Wilson, 1990; Nolan, 1985; Gomez, Otto, Blattstein & Gomez, 1981; Rowe, 1981; Wolk & Wolk, 1971; Thorson, Whatly & Hancock, 1974; and Williams, 1982) have found age, race, and relationship with grandparents to be associated with attitudes toward the elderly.

Possibly educational interventions different from the ones utilized in this study are required when attempting to increase already positive attitudes toward the elderly among social work students who have self-selected to work with the elderly.

Implications

The implications drawn from this study are numerous and significant for social work education at The Ohio State University, College of Social Work. The study determined that a 20-week specialization track in gerontological social work courses and field practice failed to be effective as an intervention technique in changing the experimental group's attitudes toward the elderly. The resulting implication from this finding is that change may be more difficult to obtain when students have self-selected to work with the elderly and already possess positive attitudes toward the aged. This raises the question of where the upper limit to positive attitudes toward the elderly should lie. Once students
already possess highly positive attitudes toward the aged, will a positive change result in their holding a positive bias toward the elderly? This would not be a desirable outcome for gerontological social work education.

The experimental group’s increase in gerontological knowledge holds a second implication for social work education. This finding implies that gerontological social work educators should consider placing more course content and field practice emphasis on knowledge-building. Less emphasis may need to be placed on the assumption that gerontological specialization social work students hold unfavorable or neutral attitudes toward the aged. Correction of this assumption on the part of gerontological social work educators would allow for more efficient and effective learning objectives to be achieved. Specialization programs would be advised to focus less on the debunking of negative attitudes perpetuated through stereotypes and myths regarding the elderly. Gerontological social work educators should then direct more of their pedagogical energy toward enhancing practice methods, clinical skills, and policy issues. A change of course content focus in such a direction would maximize the specialization program’s effectiveness and efficiency in producing specialization students grounded in gerontological social work knowledge.

The first comparison group of MSW II non-gerontological specialization social work students demonstrated a numeric increase in positive attitudes and a decrease in negative attitudes toward the elderly over the time frame of the study. This change of attitude may imply adequate attention and course
content are being presented to students not specializing in gerontological social work. Generic course materials appear to be sufficient to dispel initial ageist attitudes students may hold toward the elderly. The comparison group did not experience a significant increase in knowledge of the aged over the course of the study. This outcome would be expected, given the group's non-specialization in gerontology and lack of exposure to the intervention. This finding may imply that attitudes toward the aged may change favorably without a significant increase in knowledge of the aged. It is unknown whether the comparison group experienced a similar positive shift in attitudes toward other groups who are discriminated against. The obtained finding may represent the success of social work educators in attempting to sensitize students to identify and confront negative biases they may hold toward particular groups in society.

Gender was found to be significantly associated with positive attitudes toward the aged. This may imply that female gerontological social work students hold fewer negative biases toward the aged than their male counterparts. It is noteworthy that most practicing gerontological social workers are female. Negative attitudes, in addition to lower salaries, may be a factor in why male social work students tend not to specialize in gerontological social work. Agencies providing services to the aged would be well-advised to assess carefully male social workers' attitudes toward the elderly prior to considering them for employment.
Academic major was found to be associated with attitudes toward the elderly. Social work students hold significantly more positive attitudes toward the elderly than do students majoring in business administration. This finding holds important implications for the hiring of administrators of agencies providing services to the aged. These agencies and their clientele may be better served by social work administrators who develop and implement policy decisions based on expert knowledge of the aged rather than preconceived negative notions regarding the elderly.

Religiosity was found to be associated with attitudes toward the elderly. Those respondents who participated the least in religious functions held the most favorable attitudes toward the aged. This appears to indicate that a high level of religiosity does not necessarily translate into benevolent, unbiased attitudes toward the elderly. Prospective employers of gerontological social workers in church-operated social service agencies and long-term care facilities should not assume, because of an applicant's participation rate in religious activities, that he or she would necessarily possess positive attitudes toward the aged. The public would do well not to make this assumption as well when selecting facilities to provide services to their elderly relatives. They would be better advised to inquire whether the social workers rendering services have received training in working with an aged population.

Professional contact with the aged appears to be associated with positive attitudes toward the elderly. This finding implies that those social workers who
have frequent professional contact with the elderly through their occupational role are likely to hold favorable attitudes toward them. Graduate schools of social work may make use of this finding when screening applicants who apply to gerontological social work programs. Those undergraduate students with prior work experience with the aged may have fewer negative stereotypes of the elderly at the onset of their professional training.

Other variables found to be associated with holding favorable attitudes toward the aged were: marital status, comfortableness with the aged, monthly personal contact, and the number of previous gerontological courses completed. Marital status may be explained by the fact that it is more likely that married females may have participated in providing care for elderly parents, in-laws, or relatives than single-status female and male students.

As with professional contact, it appears that a higher frequency of monthly personal contact is associated with positive attitudes toward the elderly. The more frequently a student is exposed to the elderly on a monthly personal basis, the more positive they are in their attitudes toward the aged. This implies that the greater the exposure of students to the elderly, the more probable it is they will possess positive attitudes toward them. Exposure to the aged may function to highlight similarities and lessen differences between age groups. Stereotypes regarding the aged may be more difficult to maintain once a student has had sufficient contact with the aged to give up blanket generalizations and learn that they possess a broad range of personality
characteristics. Prospective gerontological students who participate in intergenerational activities and organizations may possess more favorable attitudes toward the aged and be better suited for graduate study in gerontological social work.

One of the most salient findings of association with positive attitudes toward the elderly was the level of comfortableness with the aged expressed by experimental group members. A Pearson r value of .81 was determined for the relationship between comfortableness and positive attitudes toward the aged. Comfortableness with the elderly appears from the study's findings to be the single best and most reliable predictor of gerontological social work students' holding favorable attitudes toward the elderly. If students feel at ease with the elderly, it is less likely they will possess negative opinions and attitudes toward them that would make interpersonal interaction less than comfortable.

In summary, the findings of this study appear to imply that gerontological social work education at The Ohio State University, College of Social Work, is effective in maintaining the pre-existing positive attitudes students hold toward the elderly upon entrance into the program. Although not statistically significant, a numerical trend was demonstrated that the gerontology program is also effective in increasing the gerontological knowledge base of students. The first comparison group of second-year MSW students not specializing in gerontology became numerically less negative and more positive toward the elderly over the 20-week intervention period. Students who possess pre-existing favorable
attitudes toward the aged may not, in fact, become significantly more positive in their attitudes without becoming positively biased toward the elderly. A positive bias toward the elderly could render future social workers ineffective in maintaining an objective attitude in working with elderly clients.

A high frequency of personal or professional contact with the elderly appears to influence the development of positive attitudes toward the elderly. Contact with the aged may account for the high degree of comfortableness expressed by the experimental group members. Or a state of comfortableness with the aged may lead to increased interaction with the aged.

The socio/demographic characteristics that provide a profile of those respondents who hold the most positive attitudes toward the elderly can be described as: (1) self-selected to work with the aged, (2) female, (3) married, (4) infrequently participates in church-related activities, (5) has frequent professional and personal contact with the aged, (6) is enrolled in or has previously completed gerontology courses, and (7) self-describes a high level of comfortableness with the aged.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based upon the results obtained from this study.

(1) Future studies of attitudes held toward the elderly by master-level gerontological social work students must attempt to incorporate more than any
single program. The inclusion of several programs would afford the researcher a larger sample size from which statistical inferences could generate findings not limited exclusively to sample populations. This approach would also provide feedback to social work educators as to the effectiveness of current approaches to gerontological social work education.

(2) Longitudinal studies must be conducted to ascertain whether gerontological social work students experience a change in attitude toward the elderly after several years of professional practice. Do social workers' attitudes toward the elderly change as they themselves age? Do social workers experience a change in attitude toward the elderly if employed in a setting where co-workers hold negative stereotypes of the elderly?

(3) Qualitative studies must be conducted to determine attitudes held toward the elderly. It is suggested from the current study that a qualitative approach be utilized to understand what reasons underlie social work students' having such a high degree of comfortableness with the elderly. What prior events in a student's social history explain the significance of this association? Qualitative studies would also be useful toward learning more about how attitudes are formed and change. Do social work students obtain increased knowledge of the aged through cognitive techniques, such as a structured classroom setting, or do they learn from an affective modality via field placement experience? Do students construct attitudes toward the aged based on
knowledge or feelings about the aged? Often, attitudes are shaped in part by feelings that are difficult to explore in closed-ended response instruments.

(4) Additional research with social work students must be conducted through the use of multiple instruments from which to measure attitudes toward the aged. Such instruments must be multi-dimensional in form and allow for the comparison and contrast of attitudes when the target is presented to the respondent as a "generalized" or "personalized" other representing the elderly individual in society. Do social work students respond to questionnaires regarding the elderly in terms of the collective but practice in field placement settings from an individualized approach? From this perspective, research could render quite different results from what actually occurs in reality.

(5) Race, cultural, and minority group status must be explored among social work students to determine whether and how such factors influence attitudes toward the elderly.

(6) Additional studies need to be conducted to test the validity of assumptions presented in Kuypers and Bengtson’s social breakdown and reconstruction syndrome models. Are interventions other than education effective in changing social work students’ attitudes toward the elderly?

(7) Meaningful roles must be created for the aged in capitalistic societies where the elderly will be viewed positively as productive members of society upon disengagement from the labor force.
Social work students and the aged must work together to promote positive attitudes toward the aged and strive for the elimination of ageism in American society.

Social work, like other social sciences, has only begun to explore a more complete theoretical comprehension of the phenomenon of ageism. Social work educators are in the infancy stages of developing research methodologies that will provide an understanding of interventions that are effective in developing and changing attitudes toward the elderly among social work students. With continued research efforts through a variety of methodologies and theoretical frameworks, new and revised constructs will be developed that provide distinct social work contributions toward the profession’s ability to investigate, explain, and predict the phenomenon of ageism. This course of scholarly conduct will allow social workers to do what they do best: Translate knowledge into practice for today’s aged and the generations to follow.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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Lockwood, Margaret. (1986). *The effect of a course of study on nursing students' attitudes toward and perceptions about older persons who are living in residential gerontological settings.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Ohio.


APPENDIX A

ATTITUDES INSTRUMENT FOR MSW II STUDENTS
Thank you for your time and cooperation in participating in this study. Your identity is not required for the purpose of this research. The results of this study are being used for research purposes only and is ABSOLUTELY ANONYMOUS.

The following faculty members from the College of Social Work have endorsed this study and encourage your participation in it: Drs. Keith Klity, James Lantz, and Virginia Richardson.

Please complete the attached questionnaire and attitudinal inventory. The instrument should not take more than 15 minutes to read and complete. Please follow the directions on the attached pages for each section. Please do not skip any items.

Please complete the following:

SECTION I:

1. Age: __________

2. What is your sex? Male: ___________ Female: ___________
(Circle one)


5. Religious Affiliation: Protestant: ___________ If Protestant what denomination

       Catholic: ___________ Jewish: ___________ Other: ___________ None: ___________

6. How would you describe your level of comfortableness with the elderly?

7. To what extent have you had professional contact with the elderly?

- Frequently: 1
- Sometimes: 2
- Seldom: 3
- Never: 4

8. How would you describe your relationship with your grandparents?

- Very Good: 1
- Usually Good: 2
- Fair: 3
- Usually Not Good: 4
- Never Good: 5

9. Family Income Annually:

- $0 - $15,000: 1
- $16,000 - $25,000: 2
- $26,000 - $35,000: 3
- $36,000 - $45,000: 4
- $46,000 - over: 5

10. Frequency of your participation in church related activities per-week:

- None: 1
- One: 2
- Two: 3
- Three: 4
- Four: 5
- Five or more: 6

11. How frequently on a monthly basis do you have personal contact with an elderly individual?

- None: 1
- One: 2
- Two: 3
- Three: 4
- Four: 5
- Five or more: 6

12. Which of the following social work concentration track(s) are you enrolled in?

- Administration & Planning: 1
- Clinical: 2
- Gerontology Specialization: 3

13. Print the name of your field placement setting.

__________________________

14. What are the last four digits of your social security number?

__________________________
15. **How many gerontological courses have you taken in the past?**

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<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

16. **How many gerontological courses have you taken in the previous six months?**

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<th>Options</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Four or more</td>
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17. **How many times on a monthly basis do you have professional contact with an elderly individual?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Two</td>
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<td>Three</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four or more</td>
<td>6</td>
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SECTION II:

On the following pages, you will find a number of statements expressing opinions with which you may agree or may not agree. Following each statement are six numbers as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate which of the above responses you agree or disagree with for each statement by circling the appropriate number. The researcher is interested in your attitudes in a number of areas. Please give careful consideration to each statement, there are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers -- the only correct responses are those which represent your opinions. Do not skip any items.

1. There is something different about young people; it's hard to figure out what makes them tick.  
   - Disagree 1 2 3 5 6 7

2. Most elderly people would prefer to continue working as long as they possibly can rather than be dependent on anybody.  
   - Disagree 1 2 3 5 6 7

3. Most young people make excessive demands for love and reassurance.  
   - Disagree 1 2 3 5 6 7

4. If elderly people expect to be liked, their first step is to try to get rid of their irritating faults.  
   - Disagree 1 2 3 5 6 7

5. It is foolish to claim that wisdom comes with the elderly years of life.  
   - Agree 1 2 3 5 6 7

6. It would probably be better if most elderly people lived in residential units that also housed younger people.  
   - Disagree 1 2 3 5 6 7

7. Most elderly people seem to be quite clean and neat in their personal appearance.  
   - Agree 1 2 3 5 6 7

8. You can count on finding a nice residential neighborhood when there is a sizable number of elderly people living in it.  
   - Agree 1 2 3 5 6 7

9. There are a few exceptions, but in general most elderly people are pretty much alike.  
   - Agree 1 2 3 5 6 7
<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Elderly people have too much power in business and politics.</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Most elderly people make one feel ill at ease.</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Most elderly people bore others by their insistence on talking about the “good old days.”</td>
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44. Most elderly people prefer to retire as soon as pensions can support them.  
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SECTION III:

On the following pages, you will find a number of True or False factual statements regarding the elderly. Proceeding each statement please indicate your answer by circling the T or F to indicate a True or False response to each statement. Do not skip any statements.

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Thank you for your participation in this study!
APPENDIX B

ATTITUDES INSTRUMENT FOR MBA II STUDENTS
Thank you for your time and cooperation in participating in this study. Your identity is not required for the purpose of this research. The results of this study are being used for research purposes only and is ABSOLUTELY ANONYMOUS.

The following faculty member from the College of Business has endorsed this study and encourages your participation in it: Dr. H. Randolph Bobbitt.

Please complete the attached questionnaire and attitudinal inventory within the next two days. The enclosed instrument should not take more than 20 minutes to read, complete, fold and insert into the postage paid mailer. If you will, then deposit it at your nearest postal box. Your participation and response time in returning the instrument is critical to the research process. Please follow the directions on the attached pages for each section. Please do not skip any items.

Please complete the following:

**SECTION 1:**

1. **Age:**

2. **What is your sex?**
   
   (Circle one)
   
   Male......................................................... 1
   Female...................................................... 2

3. **Are you:**
   
   White/Caucasian................................. 1
   Black/Afro-American.............................. 2
   Oriental................................................. 3
   Mexican-American/Chicano.................... 4
   Other...................................................... 5

4. **Marital status:**
   
   Single...................................................... 1
   Married.................................................... 2
   Divorced.................................................. 3
   Separated............................................... 4
   Widow/Widower......................................... 5

5. **Religious Affiliation:**
   
   Protestant.............................................. 1
   If Protestant what Denomination
   
   Catholic................................................. 2
   Jewish.................................................... 3
   Other..................................................... 4
   None..................................................... 5
6. How would you describe your level of comfortableness with the elderly?

- Very Comfortable: 1
- Comfortable: 2
- Somewhat Comfortable: 3
- Very Uncomfortable: 4

7. To what extent have you had professional contact with the elderly?

- Frequently: 1
- Sometimes: 2
- Seldom: 3
- Never: 4

8. How would you describe your relationship with your grandparents?

- Very Good: 1
- Usually Good: 2
- Fair: 3
- Usually Not Good: 4
- Never Good: 5

9. Family Income Annually:

- $0 - 15,000: 1
- $16,000 - 25,000: 2
- $26,000 - 35,000: 3
- $36,000 - 45,000: 4
- $46,000 - over: 5

10. Frequency of your participation in church related activities per-week:

- None: 1
- One: 2
- Two: 3
- Three: 4
- Four: 5
- Five or more: 6

11. How frequently on a monthly basis do you have personal contact with an elderly individual?

- None: 1
- One: 2
- Two: 3
- Three: 4
- Four: 5
- Five or more: 6

Please go to the following page.
SECTION II:

On the following pages, you will find a number of statements expressing opinions with which you may agree or may not agree. Following each statement are six numbers as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<td>6</td>
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Please indicate which of the above responses you agree or disagree with for each statement by circling the appropriate number. *The researcher is interested in your attitudes in a number of areas. Please give careful consideration to each statement, there are no "correct" or "incorrect" answers -- the only correct responses are those which represent your opinions. Do not skip any items.*

1. There is something different about young people; it's hard to figure out what makes them tick. Disagree Agree

2. Most elderly people would prefer to continue working as long as they possibly can rather than be dependent on anybody. Disagree Agree

3. Most young people make excessive demands for love and reassurance. Disagree Agree

4. If elderly people expect to be liked, their first step is to try to get rid of their irritating faults. Disagree Agree

5. It is foolish to claim that wisdom comes with the elder years of life. Disagree Agree

6. It would probably be better if most elderly people lived in residential units that also housed younger people. Disagree Agree

7. Most elderly people seem to be quite clean and neat in their personal appearance. Disagree Agree

8. You can count on finding a nice residential neighborhood when there is a sizable number of elderly people living in it. Disagree Agree

9. There are a few exceptions, but in general most elderly people are pretty much alikes. Disagree Agree
10. Elderly people have too much power in business and politics.  
   Disagree Agree
   1 2 3 5 6 7

11. Most elderly people make one feel ill at ease.  
   Disagree Agree
   1 2 3 5 6 7

12. Most elderly people bore others by their insistence on talking about the "good old days."  
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<td><strong>24.</strong> Butler's &quot;Life Review&quot; is an assessment tool used in evaluating the elderly's level of psychological functioning.</td>
<td>T   F</td>
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<td><strong>25.</strong> The Social Services Block Grant provides Federal funding for social services to the elderly.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your participation in this study!

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APPENDIX C

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL LETTER
ACTION OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

With regard to the employment of human subjects in the proposed research protocol:

91B0142 ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ELDERLY AS A FUNCTION OF GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION, Virginia E. Richardson, David A. Ellenbrock, Social Work

THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES REVIEW COMMITTEE HAS TAKEN THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

___ APPROVED  ___ DISAPPROVED

___ APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS*  ___ WAIVER OF WRITTEN CONSENT GRANTED

* Conditions stated by the Committee have been met by the Investigator and, therefore, the protocol is APPROVED.

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to retain a copy of each signed consent form for at least four (4) years beyond the termination of the subject's participation in the proposed activity. Should the principal investigator leave the University, signed consent forms are to be transferred to the Human Subjects Review Committee for the required retention period. This application has been approved for the period of one year. You are reminded that you must promptly report any problems to the Review Committee, and that no procedural changes may be made without prior review and approval. You are also reminded that the identity of the research participants must be kept confidential.

Date: August 30, 1991  

Signature: [Signature]

(Chairperson)