A Modern Family: Perceptions of Parenting Abilities

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Abstract

Gay and lesbian couples are becoming more accepted by humanity in this day and age, which is shown by the recent legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States this year. Although these individuals and couples are receiving more approving attitudes by society than in the past, little is known about how people perceive them as parents. This research was conducted to examine individuals’ perceptions of the parenting abilities of gay, lesbian, and heterosexual parents. We predicted that participants would perceive heterosexual parents as having greater parenting abilities than homosexual parents. Participants responded to one of three scenarios: heterosexual parents, lesbian parents, or gay parents. Our results did not support our hypothesis. In our experiment there was not a significant effect of the sexual orientation of the parents on participant’s perceptions of parenting abilities. This research could be used as evidence that true equalization between straight, gay, and lesbian couples is a strong possibility in the foreseeable future. Future studies should strive to determine if there is a difference in parenting abilities between the three groups.
A Modern Family: Perceptions of Parenting Abilities

Homosexuality has been a controversial topic in our culture and society for many years. Individuals who live this type of lifestyle are constantly at risk of having to deal with issues such as prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and even abuse. Homosexuals often keep their sexuality private in order to avoid such issues, and this privacy helps because it allows them to not carry a stigmatizing label. These issues may not only affect homosexual individuals, but they can also affect their family members, particularly their children. According to researchers Murray and McClintock (2005), previous research shows that if parents choose to not reveal their sexual orientation, then their children may have lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau (2011) stated that there are nearly 120,000 homosexual parent households that are currently raising children (as cited in Herbstrith, Tobin, Hession-McInnis, & Schneider, 2013). From the recent legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015, it is a realistic prediction that this number will increase. The legalization of same-sex marriage has the ability to create a significant change in today’s society.

Due to the legalization of same-sex marriage, one might say people’s attitudes towards homosexuals are becoming more positive and accepting. However, is this most commonly the case? According to McCann and Delmonte (2005), “For many years, gay and lesbian parents and their children lived in secrecy for reasons including stigma, fear of harassment, legal concerns based on prior court cases challenging their rights to be parents, and societal concerns that gay and lesbian parenting leads to negative outcomes for children” (as cited in Herbstrith et al., 2013, p. 183). For individuals with deep-rooted traditional beliefs and concerns regarding the topic, homosexuality might be something that they can never perceive as acceptable. For others, they might not know enough information or they haven’t had enough real-world exposure to men and
women who live this lifestyle. Therefore, people’s negative perceptions of homosexuals might be the result of homophobia, or prejudice against homosexual people. Herek (2000) stated that heterosexual men were less supportive than heterosexual women regarding homosexual relationships and adoption rights for homosexual men, which implies that having a negative attitude toward gay men and lesbians is not an uncommon prejudice (as cited in Herbstrith et al., 2013). When examining traditional male-female roles in society, Parrot and Gallagher (2008) found that heterosexual women who possess traditional values about the true meaning of being a female, tend to have more prejudice toward lesbians than heterosexual females who do not hold traditional values (as cited in Herbstrith et al., 2013).

Nonetheless, there is reason to be concerned with how homosexual individuals are treated and perceived as members of society. As more and more homosexual couples are given the opportunity to be parents, questions regarding their parenting abilities and skills are raised. Some heterosexuals may argue that without the mother and the father figure, a child might not be able to grow, learn, and develop in the same ways that a child who has heterosexual parents. People such as teachers, psychologists, coaches, activity instructors, and physicians that are regularly involved in the lives of homosexual parents and their children may hold a negative stigma towards these family members due to the sexual orientation of the parents. This supports the need for more information regarding how individuals in society perceive homosexuals as parents, specifically how they view their parenting abilities.

A study conducted by Ross (1988), implied that research on children who live with their homosexual parents and partners has concentrated on three dominant fears that society holds about children who live in this kind of home environment: that the children themselves will become gay or lesbian, that they will be sexually molested by the homosexual parent or the
partner, and that children may be at risk due to the stigma of having homosexual parents. But the question still stands as to whether there is, in fact, evidence that homosexual parents have inadequate parenting abilities compared to heterosexual parents. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers inspect and review how prejudice affects relations between nontraditional families and society members, and also to educate members of society on homosexual prejudice and stereotyping. To help support the need for this kind of research, it is important to go back to previous literature.

Previous literature confirms prejudice against homosexual individuals as well as concerns regarding same-sex marriage. Research conducted by Herbstrith et al. (2013) was designed to measure pre-service teacher attitudes towards gay and lesbian parents. They did so using a 2 study-within subjects design. They used an implicit, explicit, behavior, and behavioroid measure, with the implicit and explicit measured in study one and the behavior and behavioroid measured in study two. The implicit attitudes were measured by the AMP (Affect Misattribution Procedure), which used responses to Chinese symbols that were paired with either a picture of a couple kissing or paired with families with children. There were 36 photos of couples kissing- 12 gay men, 12 lesbian women, and 12 heterosexual couples. There were also 36 photos of families with children- 12 with gay parents, 12 with lesbian parents, and 12 with heterosexual parents. Researchers also included 12 neutral slides to make a total of 84 picture trials. The photo was shown for a few seconds and then the Chinese symbol was shown and participants were told to rate the symbol as pleasant or unpleasant in a just a few seconds time. Due to the short amount of time, the answers would be instinctual and essentially from the individual’s subconscious.

The explicit measure was a questionnaire using Morrison and Morrison’s (2002) Modern Homo-negativity scale, which is used to assess attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. Results
from study one found that AMP ratings were higher, or significantly more unpleasant, for picture-symbol pairs with same gender photos than for pairs with heterosexual photos. They additionally found that photo-symbol pairs with gay male photographs were rated significantly more unpleasant than pairs with lesbian photographs. Furthermore, they also found that male participants rated gay men as substantially more unpleasant than lesbians. Male participants also rated gay men as more unpleasant than heterosexual men, which supports that there is a present negative attitude towards gay men. Additionally, female participants rated lesbians as significantly more unpleasant than heterosexual women, once again supporting the presence of homosexual prejudice.

In study two, they invited the same participants back from study one. Researchers created a hypothetical interaction between each participant and a fictional partner who was either a heterosexual or homosexual man. The participants were assigned a similar or dissimilar partner, and later were told they had the option to switch without penalty. The abandonment decision served as the behavior measure. Social distance was the behavioroid measure and it was determined by a questionnaire participants answered. The results of study two reveal that AMP scores were related to prejudice behavior. They also found that greater prejudice would be expressed towards gay partners than heterosexual partners. But overall, AMP ratings were more negative for homosexual primes, supporting the indication that people, in fact, do hold negative attitudes toward individuals who are lesbian or gay (Herbstrith, et al., 2013).

Other studies have found negative effects resulting from same-sex relationships and marriages. A study conducted by Goldberg and Kuvalanka (2012), found that 6% of their participants whose parents came out when they were adolescents revealed that they were struggling with complicated emotions regarding their parents’ divorce and their lesbian, bisexual,
or gay (LGB) parents’ consecutive relationships, implying that negative issues can arise from having a LGB parent or parents. Additionally, some individuals highlighted potential disadvantages associated with homosexual marriage, most importantly being that with marriage comes divorce; therefore, more children are at risk of having to deal with a potential parental divorce and the negative effects that divorce brings to families (Goldberg & Kuvalanka, 2012).

As stated in a publication by Ross (1988), “Not only is the homosexual family’s relationship with the community tenuous, the very nature of the family itself is fragile, with few traditional supports” (p. 229), which shows that there are negative perceptions regarding homosexual parents and their families.

Furthermore, previous research has shown that individuals view homosexuals’ parenting qualities in a negative manner. Morse, McLaren, and McLachlan (2008) wrote, “Public opinion increasingly accepts same-sex marriage, but this apparently positive attitude toward gay and lesbians is much weaker when rating the quality of same-sex parenting” (as cited in Frias-Navarro, Monterde-i-Bort, Pascual-Soler, & Badenes-Ribera, 2015, p. 157). In regards to our current research, this is a significant finding. These results imply that although society is becoming more accepting of homosexual couples, they still view traditional heterosexual parents as being better qualified to care for and raise children.

In the present research, we are examining the perceptions of parenting abilities of heterosexual and homosexual parents. We are conducting this research to gain better insight as to how society views homosexual parents, especially considering the effects on family structures that the same-sex marriage law will create in the coming years. Based on previous literature, we predict that participants will perceive heterosexual parents as having greater parenting abilities than homosexual parents.
Method

Participants

Individuals who participated in our study were undergraduate psychology students at Angelo State University. All participants self reported their sexual orientation, race, age, and gender. The experiment included 24 participants, which included 25% male participants and 75% female participants. The ages of the participants varied between 18 and 31 years of age ($M = 20.8$, $SD = 3.56$). In regards to sexual orientation, 83.3% of individuals identified as heterosexual, 8.3% of participants identified as bisexual, 4.2% of participants stated that he or she was undecided regarding sexual orientation, and 4.2% of participants chose not to answer. Our study included participants reporting the following racial identities: 4.2% of people were African American, 54.2% were Hispanic individuals, 4.2% were Asian American, and 37.5% were White or Caucasian participants. People who participated in our research were recruited from the Sona Systems program at Angelo State University, which is the online psychology recruiting system at this university.

Design and Procedure

Our research study was a between-subjects experimental design. The independent variable manipulated was the sexual orientation of the parents in the scenarios and the dependent variable measured was the perceptions of parenting ability. This was experimental research because there was a control group and experimental groups. The control group received scenarios of heterosexual parents and the experimental groups received scenarios of gay or lesbian parents, resulting in three separate conditions. The sexual orientations of the parents were manipulated using the scenarios, which were brief two-page written scenarios created by the experimenters. Each scenario entailed events of a typical day of the two parents and their one
child. There were three separate scenarios; one included heterosexual parents (James and Jill), one included gay parents (Jack and Bill), and one included lesbian parents (Jill and Judy). The scenarios were exactly the same except the parents’ names differed between the scenarios. Participants randomly received one of the three scenarios to read (please see Appendix A for the heterosexual parents scenario).

We measured individual’s perceptions and prejudices using our 14-item questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 10 questions regarding the scenario characters and situations. The questions were related to the events of the day in the scenario and the characters in the given scenario. Example questions regarding the scenario characters were: Do you think the parents’ sexual orientation has an effect on how others treat the child? Do you think the parents are successfully meeting the child’s basic needs? Responses were rated on a Likert-type scale to determine how negatively or positively participants perceived the parenting ability of the parents in the scenario and measured on a scale from 1 to 5: 1=Not at all, 2=Slightly, 3=Moderately, 4=Considerably, and 5=Extremely. An additional four questions asked about the participant’s demographic information, which included age, race, sex, and sexual orientation. The four demographic questions were placed at the end of the measure (please see Appendix B for the complete questionnaire).

The scenarios and questionnaire were administered during testing sessions that allotted up to 5 participants per session. Each researcher had four, 30-minute sessions a week. Research continued for a 3-week period. When participants arrived at the testing room, they were asked to sign a participant sign in sheet, choose a seat, and to please put away their cell phones. Participants were then told that they were participating in a study regarding parenting abilities. They were then told that they would be asked to read a 2-page scenario and upon completion of
the scenario they would be asked to answer a questionnaire regarding the scenario and also a few personal questions. Once the researcher explained this information, he or she would distribute the informed consent form to the participants and asked them to review and sign it if they were willing to participate. The informed consent papers explained the nature of the project, the procedure, discomfort and risks, benefits of participation, and confidentiality. After collection of all signed informed consent forms, participants were told that after they completed the questionnaire they were to place all papers in an envelope located on a table in the classroom. This ensured the participants’ confidentiality of their responses. They were also given the option to pick up a debriefing form upon exiting, which was located next to the envelope. Participants then received one of the three scenarios. Along with the scenario, the participant also received a questionnaire sheet that included the questions regarding the scenario and the demographics. Once participants finished reading the scenario, they would answer the questions that were provided in the survey. After completion of the questionnaire, participants placed their surveys into an envelope located on a table and were free to leave. Upon exiting the participants were asked if they had any questions and were thanked for their time and participation.

**Results**

We hypothesized that people would perceive heterosexual parents as having greater parenting abilities than homosexual parents. To test our prediction I used a Univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This test was used to compare effects of the sexual orientation of the parents (i.e., heterosexual, gay male, and lesbian) on perceptions of their parenting abilities. We averaged the responses to the first 10 questions of the survey in order to create our perception variable, which was used to determine how positive or negative participants perceived the parents’ parenting ability. When discussing our results, higher numbers reflect greater positive
perceptions of the parents. In our experiment, there was not a significant effect of the sexual orientation of the parents on participant’s perceptions of parenting abilities for the three conditions: \( F(2, 21) = .04, \ p = .97 \). Therefore, our independent variable (sexual orientation of the parents) did not have an effect on our dependent variable (participants’ perceptions). There was not a significant difference between any of the condition means. The heterosexual parent condition \( (M = 3.28, SD = .65) \), the female parent condition \( (M = 3.22, SD = .40) \), and the male parent condition \( (M = 3.29, SD = .44) \) did not significantly differ from one another. Taken together, these results suggest that the sexual orientation of parents does not have an effect on an individual’s perceptions of their parenting abilities. These results disprove our hypothesis.

**Discussion**

As previously stated, the hypothesis of our experiment was that individuals would perceive heterosexual parents as having greater parenting abilities than gay or lesbian parents. Our hypothesis was disproved based on the results we collected from the research. The sexual orientation of the parents in the scenario did not cause people to perceive the parents differently. There was not a significant effect of the sexual orientation of the parents on perceptions of parenting abilities for the heterosexual parents, the gay parents, or the lesbian parents. This implies that individuals viewed the gay and lesbian parents just as positively as they viewed the heterosexual parents. We found that individuals do not perceive heterosexuals as having greater parenting abilities than homosexual parents. Therefore, in contrast to our prediction, our findings suggest that society does not look down upon homosexuals who are raising children, but instead view their parenting abilities as good as a traditional (male-female) couple.

Our results contribute additional support to studies that have found positive attitudes towards the homosexual community, specifically homosexual parents. Before marriage was
legally allowed for homosexual couples, a study conducted by Patterson (2009) stated that “advocates of marriage equality have contended that marriage may indirectly benefit children by enhancing the social acceptance of their parent’s unions, thereby reducing the stigma to which children are exposed” (p. 35), which shows that some society members acknowledge that homosexual marriages can create positive results for their children (as cited in Golberg & Kuvalanka, 2012). Additionally, their results showed that almost 70% of their participants defined themselves as in favor of same-sex marriage. The fact that most participants from this previous study are supporters of homosexual marriage can be connected to the results of our study. If an individual is a LBG supporter, it makes sense that their perceptions of homosexual parenting abilities would be rated just as positively as heterosexual couples. Furthermore, increasing support for same-sex marriage could in fact be the cause of increasingly less negative perceptions of LBG parenting abilities and skills.

Our hypothesis was not supported perhaps due to limitations of our study. The first and most important limitation is our small sample size. For our particular research, it would have been beneficial for us to obtain a large sample size. A bigger sample is more representative of the population, and it also limits the effect of extreme observations. Additionally, a big sample is imperative in order to find a significant effect among variables. Our sample included only 24 participants. There could have been an effect, but since the sample size was so small it did not show a significant difference. Therefore, our results may not necessarily disprove our predication.

A second limitation was the time allotted to collect data. Our study had a small number of participants due to our small window of time to actually execute our experiment. Our data were collected over a 3-week period, with each member having only four 30-minute sessions a week.
If each researcher was given more opportunities each week to have participants, our sample size would have more than likely increased. Furthermore, if we were able to collect data over a longer period of time, this would have allowed more participants to sign up, resulting in a larger sample size.

A third limitation was our participants and how we recruited them. We recruited individuals to participate in our study who were strictly undergraduate psychology majors. This fact makes it difficult to generalize our findings to the broader population. Our participants were typically college age students, and from my personal experience this generation tends to have more liberal perceptions than previous generations. Additionally from my experience, psychology students are somewhat trained to view people and situations in a more liberal manner. There is a good chance that our sample is overall a more accepting group of individuals.

Finally, a fourth limitation involved our survey. This limitation pertains to the questions that we asked regarding the information from the scenarios. Some questions might not have related to our hypothesis as well as we had wanted, such as the questions that didn’t directly relate to parenting abilities. Therefore it would have been beneficial to create additional questions that better focused on the parents’ parenting abilities. Additionally, I believe that including photographs of the “family” along with the written scenario could have potentially been beneficial to our results because some people benefit from visual aids instead of just reading. Participant’s visualization of the family could help them create a stronger connection to the scenario and the characters.

There is one important alternate explanation for our results. Society is becoming more accepting of the homosexual community and society is starting to view homosexuals truly as people who are not so different from themselves (Golberg & Kuvlanka, 2012). Because of this
recent phenomenon, individuals now have the opportunity to regularly interact with homosexual parents and their children, which can lead to more positive perceptions and feelings towards LBG individuals.

Our findings contribute to the research literature in multiple ways. First, it is an examination of prejudice towards homosexual individuals, a section of humanity that has endured discrimination and stereotyping for centuries. Although there are numerous studies that show prevalent negative attitudes towards gay and lesbians, our study is, in my opinion, more valuable because our experiment shows the exact opposite results. This study can be added to the evidence of positive perceptions that society has towards the LBG community. Additionally, a significant amount of previous literature on homosexual couples has focused on their children’s outcomes instead of the reaction to parents themselves. Therefore, our research is valuable in the sense that it relates to perceptions of the parents’ abilities to raise children successfully. Although information regarding the children of homosexual households is important, information regarding the parents themselves is equally valuable.

It is crucial that future research discovers if attitudes towards homosexual individuals and couples are becoming more positive or if they are staying negative. I reviewed multiple studies that support positive attitudes as well as studies that show evidence of continuous negative attitudes. The reconciliation of these two opposing theories can help researchers to move on from this question in order to look at other aspects regarding the homosexual community in greater detail. Additionally, in regards to our current study, I believe future research concerning parenting abilities should focus on different age groups across the life span, because individuals being at different points in their lives could have a significant influence on their perceptions of current issues, such as the homosexual versus heterosexual parent controversy.
Our results reveal important aspects of society. Society does not view homosexuals as negatively as some of us believe that they do. The legalization of same-sex marriage is proof that perceptions of the LBG community are changing in a positive manner. Humanity is becoming more accepting of alternative ways of living. Individuals are starting to realize that homosexuals are people who are just as important as heterosexuals, and that discriminating and stereotyping these people doesn’t benefit society in any significant way. It is important to look at perceptions of specific individuals because in today’s society we are quick to judge people without truly getting to know the person. A lot of times our first perceptions and judgments of people are not always correct. Future research that can yield results implying that gay or lesbian parents have a significant amount of parenting skills and abilities can hopefully influence society to decrease any discrimination or reservations they may have regarding homosexual parents. This will help humanity to truly reach equality between all members of society. The results of our study show that equalization between straight, gay, and lesbian couples is not impossible, but instead probable.
References

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Scenario

The alarm went off promptly at 6:30 AM and James reached over to turn it off. James shook Jill a couple times and whispered good morning before rolling out of bed to start his shower. Five minutes later Jill was finally able to force herself out of bed to go start a pot of coffee. Once the smell of coffee filled the kitchen Jill went to wake up their 7-year-old child.

“It’s time to get up.” Jill gently shook her child’s shoulders. The child remained asleep. “It’s time to get up,” Jill repeated and shook the child again, a little more firmly this time. This time the child began to groan. “Good morning,” said Jill. The 7 year old groaned louder. “You need to get up and start getting ready.”

“No!” The 7 year old’s voice cracked like a whip.

“Yes,” said Jill. It was clear the child had awoken in a bad mood.

Once the child was up and getting ready for school Jill walked back into the kitchen to see James fixing breakfast. “Was there a problem?” James questioned. Jill explained that the child refused to get up to start getting ready.

At 7:15, when the child should have been finishing breakfast, James walked into the child’s room to see a half dressed 7 year old who was moseying around the room apathetically. “Why aren’t you ready?” James questioned.

“I can’t find my shoes!” the child yelled in a disrespectful tone. “I don’t want to go to school anyways!”

Once the child was fully dressed and scarfing down a rushed breakfast James and Jill were trying to put the child’s backpack together before the bus arrived. While shoving spirals and folders in the backpack Jill noticed that her child’s math homework wasn’t there, “Where is your math homework?”

“I didn’t do it,” mumbled the child through a mouthful of French toast. James and Jill both felt their already kindling annoyance begin to grow.

The bus pulled up in front of the house and the child ran out to meet it while trying to pull the backpack on and finish the mouthful of food at the same time. The child found a seat by himself on the crowded bus.

On the next stop, an autistic child stepped onto the bus. Once all the children saw the autistic child they scooted over towards the aisle making no room for the autistic child to sit with them. James and Jill’s child noticed that the autistic child was being treated wrong. As the autistic child started walking down the aisle, James and Jill’s child scooted towards the window and said, “Here, you can sit with me.”

Once the bus got to the school, the child went to the first class of the day.

“Alright class,” the teacher said to call attention to the class. “Everyone bring your homework to the front.” As everyone in the class rose from their seats clutching the papers they had finished the night
before, the child’s heart sank. It seemed as if Jack and Jill’s kid was the only one who hadn’t finished the homework.

The teacher noticed the child still sitting in the desk and asked, “Did you do your homework?”

“No,” said the child.

“Why not,” the teacher questioned.

“I just didn’t,” said the child.

“I see,” said the teacher. The teacher began on a lecture she had given many times on about the importance of homework and discipline and why students needed to develop good habits. It was all very condescending.

While listening to the teacher’s scolding speech, a sense of anger began to well up inside the child. As the teacher was saying something to the child it finally became too much.

“Shut up!” yelled the child.

The room went silent and tension in the room was palpable. “Go to the principal’s office right now,” said the teacher. During the meeting with the principal, the principal gave the child a slip to take home for the parents to read regarding the child’s behavior at school.

After the school day ended, the child walked over to the bus pickup. The child’s mind was on the slip from the principal. “Take this home and have your parents sign it,” the principal had told the child. The child was just about as stressed as a 7 year old could be.

On the way home, multiple children jeered and taunted the child for being nice to the autistic child earlier in the day. That wasn’t making the child’s day any better.

The child flung the backpack onto the hallway floor once getting home and thought about what to do next. The child always had very clear instructions to stay in the house until Jill got home from work. All of the events of the day swam before the child’s eyes and eventually the child decided that the best thing to do would be to leave and blow off some steam. The child decided to go play at a friend’s house.

When Jill got home, she saw the backpack on the floor. When picking it up the child’s folder fell on the floor and the slip from the principal slipped out of it. Jill decided to go up to the child’s room to ask about the slip. Jill noticed that the child wasn’t even home.

After 20 minutes the child got home and saw that Jill was very upset. Jill asked the child if the night’s homework assignment had even been started and learned that it hadn’t been. Jill decided to take the child to the grocery store and that they would decide the child’s punishment when James got home. At the grocery store the child saw a bag of candy and asked Jill if she could buy it. Jill told the child no, so the child decided to swipe all the candy from the shelves on the floor and started screaming and crying uncontrollably. Jill was so overwhelmed by this point she decided that the groceries would have to wait and took the child home.

James was home starting dinner when Jill and the child got home. Once they entered the house Jill sent the child to work on homework until dinner was ready so that she could discuss the child’s punishment.
with James. James and Jill felt like they needed to know the child’s side of the story before they decided on the exact punishment.

At dinner, James and Jill asked the child about the child’s day. The child revealed the day’s events: giving the autistic child a place to sit, not completing the homework the night before, being disrespectful to the teacher, getting sent to the principal’s office, getting bullied for being nice to the autistic child, and going to a friend’s house.

When dinner was over, James and Jill sent the child to go take a bath and get ready for bed. Once the child was in bed, James and Jill confronted the child on the decided punishment and then decided to read the child a bedtime story. After the bedtime story came to an end, James and Jill gave their goodnight hugs and kisses to the child and the child went to sleep.
Appendix B

Questionnaire

1. Do you think the parents are successfully meeting the child’s basic needs?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

2. How successful do you think the parents are at instilling healthy morals and values in the child’s life?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

3. Is the compassion that the child showed towards the autistic student influenced by the examples set forth by the parents?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

4. Based on the tantrum in the grocery store, do you believe punishment is the best decision?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

5. Do you believe the parents successfully showed compassion for the child by asking the child about his/her entire day before deciding on the punishment?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

6. Based on how the night ended, do you feel that the parents’ decision to end the night on a positive note was the right decision?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

7. Do you think the parents will implement appropriate punishment for the child?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

8. Do you believe the parents will be too aggressive with their punishment?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

9. Do you think the parents’ sexual orientation has an effect on how others treat the child?
   |   |   |   |   |
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

10. Do you believe that the parents’ positively influence the child’s self-esteem?
    |   |   |   |   |
    1  2  3  4  5
    Not at all  Slightly  Moderately  Considerably  Extremely

11. What is your age? ________

12. What is your sexual orientation?
    |   |   |   |   |
    1  2  3  4  5
    Heterosexual  Homosexual  Bisexual  Undecided  Prefer not to answer
13. What is your sex?

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14. What is your race?

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