

# Characteristics of Successful Boarding Home Parents of Eskimo and Athabascan Indian Students

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful boarding home parents for Athabascan Indian and Eskimo students. The applied research objective was to develop improved methods of boarding home parent selection. The theoretical objective was to develop a model defining psychological characteristics of whites who are effective in these types of cross-cultural assistance relationships.

Using the framework of social exchange theory, interviews were held with 28 boarding home students and 30 boarding home parents to determine the rewards and costs perceived in the relationship and through what behaviors the successful boarding home parents increased students' rewards and reduced their costs.

Preliminary research suggests that the dimensions of communicated warmth and perceived demands might be fruitful in distinguishing the psychological characteristics of effective and ineffective whites in other types of cross-cultural relationships with Athabascan Indians and Eskimos.

### *Caractéristiques de bons "parents" ayant en pension chez eux des étudiants esquimaux et athabascans*

Le but de cette étude est d'identifier les caractéristiques des personnes rencontrant le succès ou l'échec dans leur expérience de "parents" ayant en pension chez eux des étudiants indiens athabascans et des étudiants esquimaux. Le but de la recherche appliquée est de développer de meilleures méthodes de sélection de "parents" pour les pensionnaires. L'objectif théorique était de développer un modèle pour définir les caractéristiques psychologiques des blancs qui sont efficaces dans ce genre de relation d'assistance à des personnes de culture différente.

En employant les lignes de la théorie de l'échange social, on a interviewé 28 pensionnaires et 30 "parents" pour déterminer la récompense et le coût aperçus dans la relation et par quel comportement les "parents" obtenant de bons résultats ont augmenté la récompense des étudiants et ont réduit leurs dommages.

Une recherche préliminaire donne à penser que les dimensions de la chaleur communiquée et des exigences aperçues pourraient être fructueuses pour distinguer les caractéristiques psychologiques des blancs obtenant un succès ou un échec dans d'autres genres de relations inter-culturelles avec des indiens athabascans et des Esquimaux.

### *Características de los patronos de casas de pupilos con éxito para los estudiantes esquimales y atabascos*

La finalidad de este estudio era la de identificar las características de los patronos de casas de pupilos con

éxito y sin éxito para los estudiantes esquimales y atabascos. El objetivo aplicado de la investigación era el de desarrollar mejores métodos para la selección patronos de las casas de pupilos. El objetivo teórico era el desarrollar un modelo que definiera las características sociológicas de los blancos que son efectivos en estos tipos de relaciones de asistencia interculturales.

Usando el marco de la teoría del intercambio social, se entrevistaron a 28 estudiantes pupilos y a 30 patronos de casas de pupilos con el fin de determinar las recompensas y los costos que se perciben en estas relaciones, y a través de qué comportamiento los patronos con éxito aumentaban las recompensas de los estudiantes y reducían los costos.

Las investigaciones preliminares señalan que la dimensión del calor comunicado y las exigencias por parte de los patronos podrían ser fructíferas para distinguir las características sociológicas de los blancos aptos e ineptos, en otros tipos de relaciones interculturales con los indios atabascos y esquimales.

**L**ITTLE ATTENTION HAS been given to the difficulties that develop in interpersonal relationships involving whites with Athabascan Indians and Eskimos or to ways to successfully resolve them.<sup>1</sup> This study explores these issues in an exceptionally intimate and ambiguous cross-cultural relationship—that of boarding home parent to an Athabascan Indian or Eskimo adolescent of high school age.

The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful boarding home parents in order to develop improved methods of parent selection.<sup>2</sup> This study also attempted to develop a more general theoretical model defining psychological characteristics of whites who are effective in a helping relationship with Athabascan Indians and Eskimos.

A period of exploratory research, devoted to interviewing experienced program personnel and to reviewing case histories, provided surprisingly few clues to parental success. While much research literature suggests that middle-class child rearing methods in general tend to result in higher levels of mental health and achievement (Hess 1970), exploratory work suggested no relationship between social class and boarding home parent success. Similarly, an initial hypothesis was that boarding home parents from the student's ethnic group, especially relatives, would be more successful. Again, while some students were happy with these parents, others were not because of the frequent disruption in urban Native homes and because relatives often imposed excessive chores on them as kinship obligations.

The difficulty of finding fruitful differentiating criteria suggested that this study should confine itself to develop rather than to test hypotheses concerning

characteristics of successful parents. These hypotheses often arose late in the research; thus, it was impossible to collect systematic statistical data on parental attributes which later seemed possible indicators of a critical personality or behavioral dimension. For this reason, the typology of successful and unsuccessful parents, which is developed in this paper, should be regarded only as a theoretical model to be tested in subsequent research.

### *Background Information*

Alaska's Boarding Home Program was established in 1966 for the purpose of providing a secondary school of education for village students rather than sending them to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding schools in Oklahoma and Oregon. In 1970-71, the year of this study, the program involved 1,100 students. Of these 64% were Eskimo and 20% Athabascan Indian. Boarding home programs in other areas affect even more students; for example, Canada's program includes more than 5,000 students.

Boarding home family selections are made by a local coordinator through a screening interview with parents. In 1970-71, families were paid \$150 per month to cover the expenses of caring for a student.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Social-reinforcement exchange theory provides a conceptual tool that is useful in identifying which factors lead to the success or failure of any interpersonal relationship (Thibaut and Kelley 1959). A successful relationship is defined as one where both participants positively evaluate the relationship and maintain it. Generally stated, the basic proposal of social exchange theory is that a dyadic relationship will be positively evaluated and maintained when the rewards or positive reinforcements which each participant receives from the relationship exceed his costs or negative reinforcements.

Applied to the particular relationship between boarding home parent and student, social exchange theory thus defines the successful boarding home parent in terms of the boarding home student's satisfaction with the parent and desire to stay in his home. This theoretical framework also suggests that the fundamental research problem in identifying characteristics of successful and unsuccessful parents is to determine which rewards and costs are available to students in the relationship and through which behaviors successful and unsuccessful boarding home parents deliver rewards and costs. Obviously, the student's behavior or delivery of rewards and costs to the parent also influences the

success of the relationship, and the relationship cannot be considered successful if the boarding home parent is dissatisfied and terminates it. However, the purpose of this study was to characterize successful parents, not successful students. Thus, the relevant research question is not what are the characteristics of students who deliver higher rewards to parents but rather what are the characteristics of parents who perceive higher rewards and lower costs in similar student behavior. For this reason, this study also explored the rewards and costs available to boarding home parents and which kinds of parents were more satisfied, given typical student behavior.

Applying social exchange theory to a cross-cultural relationship suggests that misinterpretation of rewards and costs, where members of different cultures place different symbolic meanings on the same behavior, may be especially likely to prevent the development of successful relationships. Lateness, for example, may be perceived as status-reducing and hence punishing in one culture but will have no such symbolic meaning in another (Hall 1959). To explore the possibility that transcultural signal crossing was undermining the boarding home parent-student relationship, this study attempted to determine which specific behaviors of boarding home parents and students were used as social signs to indicate their rewards and costs.

### *Methodology*

Since the theoretical framework of the study suggested the need to obtain parents' and students' perceptions of rewards, costs, and the behaviors signifying them, interviews were selected as the major method of data gathering. The semistructured interview given to boarding home parents explored the rewards which parents anticipated in the relationship through questions such as "What type of student did you have in mind when you applied to the program?" Costs and the behavior on which perceptions were based were explored primarily through the lengthy answers which parents gave to the question "What problems have you had with your student?"

The semistructured interview given to boarding home students attempted to explore students' rewards and costs by such questions as "What things did you like and dislike about the parents?" Boarding home students were interviewed by Native college students, often in their native language. However, students often refused to criticize parents, partly due to cultural norms of indirection in expressing disapproval (Parker 1962). During the course of the project, it became evident that students were more likely to criticize parents through

indirect, written messages. For example, several Eskimo students chose to inform their boarding home parents that they were unhappy by writing them a letter. For this reason, program reapplication forms were revised to enable students to write an evaluation of the home.

In view of the students' reluctance to criticize parents, it was important to select a contrasting sample of successful and unsuccessful parents for the interviews. The interviewer could then attempt to determine differentiating characteristics. A behavioral measure of student dissatisfaction—the student's termination of the relationship by leaving the home—was used to identify unsuccessful parents. Although in some cases students left for reasons unrelated to the behavior of the boarding home parent, the transfer or drop-out situation provided a means of identifying a large group of unsuccessful parents. Where students transferred to and remained in a different boarding home, the new boarding home parents provided examples of successful parents with the same students and comprised the successful parent sample. The group of successful parents was enlarged by interviewing parents whom students rated as "very good" on their reapplication forms and to whom they were planning to return.

The sample consisted of a total of 30 boarding home parents and 28 students who were interviewed. Information was also obtained by attending parents' meetings, accompanying program coordinators on parental visits, and interviewing students' relatives and friends.

### *The Reward Dimension: Affection and Approval*

For both boarding home students and parents, the primary rewards available in the relationship appeared to be emotional rather than material. For the student, tangible rewards such as an expensive home and food tended to be of little importance since students preferred their customary life style. Securing affection and approval from the parents, in contrast, was extremely important. White boarding home parents represented the dominant culture, and students viewed their feelings as a test of the student's personal worth. Moreover, affection from the boarding home parents was especially valuable in the period of emotional deprivation caused by leaving the village primary group.

For boarding home parents as well, material rewards were only rarely of significance since the parent could make little profit and the student's school obligations prevented extensive household service. Boarding home parents sought the rewards of being liked by a member of a culturally different group and receiving the student's gratitude, which validated their self-images as

civic-minded, generous people. Many parents were uneasy about relating to a minority group member and viewed the students' feelings toward them as a test of whether or not they (the parents) were really unprejudiced. When the student behaved in ways that the parents interpreted as signs of rejection—staying away from the home, not speaking to them, refusing to display gratitude—boarding home parents became unnerved. Indeed, the extent to which the self-esteem of apparently successful, established adults could be shaken by what they perceived to be the rejection of an Indian or Eskimo adolescent was unexpected. As one former boarding home mother confessed with agitation, "Two years later I still worry about what I did wrong."

Some social behavior that parents interpreted as signs of rejection and ingratitude indicated just that. For example, desiring to obtain immediate affection and to enhance their self-image, many parents played "Lord of the Manor" and "Lady Bountiful." They could not understand then why students showed so little appreciation for their gifts of expensive clothes, record players, and trips. Yet, for the student, fears of dependency and feelings of status loss mingled with enjoyment of the material objects. As one student put it, "It's nice but there's nothing you can do for them. They do everything for you." In order to avoid feeling dependent, students might act as if the gift were of little consequence—since "all white people are rich"—or attempt to redefine the relationship as an equal exchange by accusing the parent of making money by keeping them.

In other instances, parents perceived rejection in behavior that actually had other meanings. The behavior that convinced many parents of the student's dislike was his desire to spend as much time as possible in the city with his friends and as little time as possible at home with them. Yet, the student's withdrawal from the home appeared to have other bases and was only occasionally due to personal dislike of the parents. Students, for example, tended to have intense fears of making a mistake, breaking something, or hurting someone in the boarding home. As one student put it:

I didn't want to become involved in family activities because I felt out of place in being in a home where all the people were white and I was Native. I didn't know how to act so I just didn't want to get involved. So what I did most of the time I'd want to get away from the home and get outside . . . so I wouldn't be burdened with how I should do things while I'm staying in the home.

Possibly such fears also had subconscious bases, such as aggressive feelings against whites or anxiety that their own parents had given them away. A number of observers have commented that Eskimo parents may

threaten to give children to a white family if they do not behave (Briggs 1970; Milan 1964).

While such pressures pushed the student away from the boarding home, the student's search for emotional support during the crisis of leaving primary group ties for a demanding new environment pulled him toward peers and toward anyone from his home. While physically remaining in the city, students attempted psychologically to go home by haunting urban Native families, Native hospitals, and the bars where they knew that people from home would eventually come.

Boarding home parents also tended to misperceive rejection in the students' reluctance to talk to them, especially to discuss personal problems. Again, this problem appeared in part attributable to differences in cultural norms concerning how personal topics should be discussed and with whom it is appropriate to discuss them. Westerners tend to equate directness with sincerity while Indians and Eskimos tend to equate it with boorish disregard for another's feelings (Wax and Thomas 1961). Thus, those questions which parents perceived as indicating their interest and concern were perceived by students as invasions of privacy or even cross-cultural voyeurism. Boarding home parents tended to desire a confidante style of parent-child relationship, which is a cultural ideal, if often unrealized. Indian and Eskimo students, in contrast, tended to view discussion of personal problems as inappropriate in a relationship between parents and adolescents; such topics were discussed only with peers (Chance 1966).

While some boarding home parents did reject students, boarding home students similarly were likely to misinterpret the parents' behavior. Indeed, several experienced boarding home students remarked that one of their greatest early troubles was thinking that the parents "were prejudiced when they really weren't." Many parents communicated unintentional but powerful messages of rejection through their desire to "improve" the student with tutoring, dental work, and other "advantages." Civic-minded parents often regarded the student as a piece of clay which they would mold into a "Native leader" or a "Native college student" or, at the very least, a "Native beauty contest winner." Realizing that the people who were trying so hard to change him were well-intentioned (instead of uncaring), the student might become convinced that he was really inadequate.

Attempts by boarding home parents to limit students' eating was another social sign that students seemed to associate with lack of affection. Indian and Eskimo students come from a hunting culture where food can be scarce, and food anxieties are prominent (Murphy and Hughes 1965). Eating is one of the great delights of life, and affection is often expressed in the tangible form of food (Briggs 1970). Students were accustomed to eating large quantities of food, especially meat, and to

eating whenever they were hungry. Unaccustomed to planning and budgeting food, a student might consume at one sitting a whole bag of cookies and several bottles of pop which had been implicitly intended for the whole family to share. Interpreting this behavior on the basis of their own cultural norms, parents often regarded the students as greedy, and some even went so far as to lock refrigerators and cupboards. Thus, boarding home students frequently complained that they were "all the time starving" in the boarding home and regarded parents who limited food as stingy in affection as well.

In spite of the potential for misinterpreting each other's behavior, many boarding home parents did succeed in creating rewarding relationships of reciprocal affection. First, these successful parents were highly demonstrative. They often greeted students with direct, indeed sentimental, expressions of affection. As one parent said in a matter-of-fact way, "When we sat down together that first night, I told him I loved him and I cared about him." When asked how she could tell someone she had just met that she loved him, the boarding home mother laughed at the question, "It's very easy. You just come out and say, 'I love you.' You say it with feeling in your voice. It's a feeling from the heart." More sophisticated parents tended to be embarrassed by such open demonstrativeness but appreciated its importance. As one boarding home father explained:

You feel sort of silly telling a 15-year-old girl that you love her. But you've got to do it. They don't have the history of relationships that you have with your own children. They don't know how you feel about them unless you tell them directly.

This demonstrative warmth convinced the student that he was liked and prevented him from later interpreting unfamiliar aspects of the parent's behavior as prejudice and rejection.

Second, while they expressed great warmth, these parents tended to be unconcerned about whether the students openly returned their affection or gratitude. They perceived gratitude, for example, in indirect signs, such as the students' performance of unsolicited chores. These parents' security about reciprocated affection was important because it seems possible that Eskimo and Indian adolescents, for different reasons, are ambivalent both about expressing and being the object of affection. Eskimo parents treat small babies with warmth and indulgence, but overt displays of affection are not common between parents and older children (Briggs 1970). Indeed, the lack of overt affectionate display is a sign of the child's maturity. Proud of his new status, the Eskimo child may overtly reject parental affection while covertly desiring it. Among Athabascans, the development of ambivalent attitudes toward affection seems to

have different dynamics. Hippler (1973) suggests that Athabaskan child-rearing patterns result in a modal personality with vague but persistent feelings of affection hunger together with a defensive, suspicious world view that causes rejection of affection.

Thus, a few perceptive parents noted that students responded to their hugs not with returned embrace or even accepting relaxation, but rather with bodily tension. The successful parents, however, did not feel rejected and did not emotionally withdraw. Rather, they laughed about the student's unresponsiveness. "He lets me hug him with one arm," observed one boarding home mother, "but not with two. I guess that's reserved for his own mama."

The successful parents, in short, were thick-skinned. They were often unaware of emotional undertones that in fact did indicate the student's ambivalence toward them. When aware of negative feelings, they did not perceive them as costly but dismissed them as "teenage ups and downs." Especially in the later phases of the relationships, when students might withdraw because of fears that their new love for the boarding home parent indicated disloyalty to their own parents, these parents' lack of concern with reciprocated warmth helped to maintain a rewarding and affectionate relationship.

#### *The Cost Dimension: Behavioral Control*

For both boarding home parents and students, costs occurred primarily in terms of the control dimension of the relationship. When the students did not conform to their rules, boarding home parents suffered disruption in the household and anxiety over the student's welfare. Boarding home students evaluated their costs in the home largely in terms of the parents' attempts to change their behavior and restrict their freedom. The most frequent complaint of students was that parents were "too strict" and "bossy."

The power aspects of the relationship tended to create high costs for students and parents because of cultural differences—both in defining the behavior that requires regulation and also in the ways social controls are expressed. In a small village where everyone knows everyone else, there is little need to restrict an adolescent's freedom of movement and association. In the city, parents worried about urban dangers and typically attempted to regulate large areas of the student's behavior that were previously unstructured, for example, where he went and whom he went with. Secondly, a cardinal premise of interpersonal relationships among more traditional Indians and Eskimos, such as students from remote villages, is that one does not directly interfere with another's behavior, even that of a child (Helm 1961; Nelson 1969). As one boarding home

student put it, "No one in Wainwright tells the other person what to do." Thus, it was not only the household rules but also the ways in which parents expressed them—as direct demands—that created high costs for the student. What the parent perceived as self-evident norms of urban living, the student perceived as unjustified coercion.

Successful boarding home parents reduced students' costs in part by making fewer absolute demands on them. These parents did not feel it was necessary, for example, to correct *all* behavior which was inappropriate by western norms. As one father remarked, "She spits when she's nervous. It's funny in such a pretty little girl." Nor did they attempt to change the student's behavior when the goals could be accomplished by other measures. As one pointed out, "Why fuss because he won't eat vegetables? Give him a vitamin pill."

However, the key to reducing the costs to the student was not so much making fewer demands as in expressing these demands indirectly to preserve the student's feeling of autonomy. Thus, when asked what rules they had for the student, successful parents frequently avowed that they "didn't have any," although further discussion made their implicit standards evident. These successful parents used diverse indirect methods to influence the student's behavior. For example, some pointed out that students perceived rules as arbitrary dictates because they did not understand the reason for the rule. Explaining, for example, that in the village one must fear wild animals and in the city one must fear wild people made the student feel he was making the decision to come home at night. These parents also used ostracism and joking, which are indirect methods of social control typical of the student's village, to inform students that they had violated prohibitions. As one parent summed up, "I don't order. I ask. I don't demand. I suggest."

#### *A Typology of Boarding Home Parents*

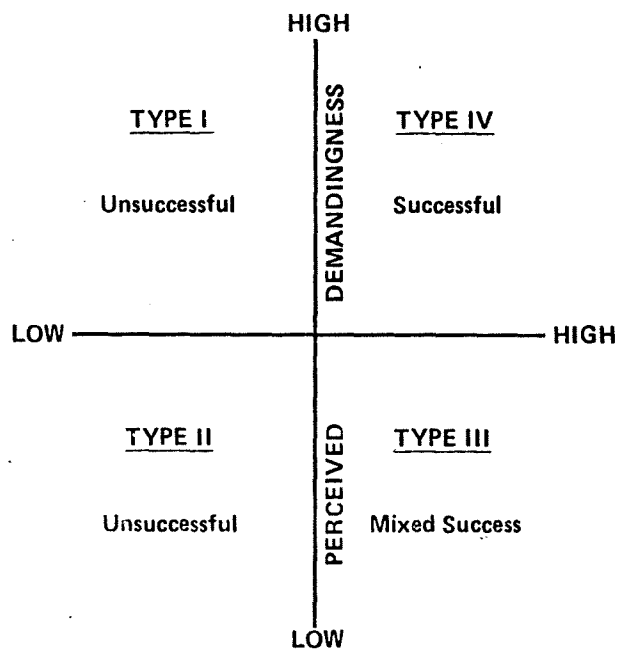
The interviews suggested that two dimensions of boarding home parent behavior, one corresponding to rewards provided and the other to costs imposed, may be used to distinguish successful from unsuccessful parents. The most important characteristic of boarding home parents appeared to be the ability to *communicate warmth*, to reward the student with affection and approval. Warmth has been found to be a central dimension of parental behavior and is consistently related to the mental health and achievement of natural children (Arkoff 1969; Morrow and Wilson 1961). Rogers (1961) suggests that such an emotional quality is the core of any type of helping relationship—the most

significant factor in determining whether the relationship leads to the maturing of another individual.

This dimension has been labeled "communicated" warmth to emphasize that, in a cross-cultural relationship involving a minority group member, warmth must be expressed in a style that a person of a different cultural background, who may expect prejudice and rejection, can understand. Thus, it was those white boarding home parents who were demonstrative, indeed sentimental, who were able to convince Indian and Eskimo students that they were approved of and accepted.

The second important dimension of boarding home parent behavior was the *perceived demandingness* of the parent. This dimension has been labeled "perceived" to emphasize that, for more traditional Athabaskan Indians and Eskimos who retain norms of noninterference, the style in which demands are expressed is as important as their absolute level. A control factor, called "permissiveness-restrictiveness" or "democratic-authoritarian," is usually found to be an important dimension of parental behavior (Arkoff 1969). However, the level of control that leads to greater satisfaction varies among different social classes and cultural groups, depending on their

FIGURE 1. A TYPOLOGY OF BOARDING HOME PARENTS



- Type I: Low warmth-high demandingness
- Type II: Low warmth-low demandingness
- Type III: High warmth-low demandingness
- Type IV: High warmth-moderately high demandingness

attitude toward authority and their degree of internalized control (Meade 1967).

For Athabascan Indians and Eskimos, a moderate degree of demandingness which was expressed indirectly seemed characteristic of successful parents. While demandingness corresponds to the cost dimension, parents with the lowest levels of demandingness were not the most successful, because insufficient structuring of an unfamiliar cultural situation created costs external to the relationship for the student. Where parents did not attempt to influence the students, such students were likely to get into trouble and to feel generally dissatisfied.

These two dimensions may be used to construct a typology of successful and unsuccessful boarding home parents (see Figure 1). While signifying "ideal types," this category system does correspond to frequently observable syndromes of parental behavior and may be useful in boarding home parent selection.

*Type I: Low Communicated Warmth-  
High Perceived Demandingness*

These boarding home parents were the least successful, because they offered the fewest rewards and imposed the highest costs. Of the parents interviewed, ten parents were clearly in this category.<sup>3</sup> All were white with the exception of one upwardly mobile Aleut couple. These parents ranged widely in socioeconomic status in part because the group seemed composed of two subtypes with different backgrounds.

One of these groups, represented by eight parents, tended to be lower middle class, in some cases with a classic authoritarian personality pattern. They were extremely anxious about the issue of their power over the student and felt that any compromise undermined their authority. They usually held rigid middle-class values—punctuality, cleanliness, church attendance, family togetherness. These parents sometimes held prejudiced attitudes but masked them by extravagant protestations of positive regard for Natives who belonged to their ingroup, such as their church. These parents could be identified in a screening interview through their general coldness and their rigidity in discussions of hypothetical problem situations.

The second subgroup of parents in the Type I category were middle or upper middle class. Their lack of demonstrative warmth stemmed not so much from judgmental coldness as from embarrassment at sentimentality. Their demandingness took the form of pressure for achievement rather than conformity to middle-class values. While only two parents interviewed were in this group, apparently this was because such parents had been enthusiastic participants when the

Boarding Home Program began but had withdrawn in later years because the experience was unsatisfying.

*Type II: Low Communicated Warmth-  
Low Perceived Demandingness*

This category of boarding home parent corresponds to the popular community stereotype of the "bad" boarding home parent who takes the student for the money, doesn't care about him, and allows him to run wild. While such parents would be unsuccessful, no parents were found who could be placed in this category. Possibly Boarding Home Program personnel are especially sensitive to such parents and screen them out. Alternatively, the popular stereotype might result from community misperception of Type I parents. Students often rebelled at their harsh directives and may have given the appearance of being allowed to run wild.

*Type III: High Communicated Warmth-  
Low Perceived Demandingness*

Of the five boarding home parents who fell into this category, all were Indians and Eskimos who retained a largely village life style while living in the city. This group included single Indian and single Eskimo women who supported themselves partly through program stipends, two Eskimo women married to white men, and an Eskimo couple. In these homes, students were often able to speak their native language, eat customary foods, and visit with a constant stream of neighbors and people from the village.

Interestingly, these Indian and Eskimo boarding home parents communicated warmth without the explicit demonstrativeness that seemed necessary for white parents. Since behavioral expectations were congruent, parents' perceived demandingness was low. For example, these parents found it only natural that the student should spend little of his time at home with them. They might profess to always know where the student was, but when asked where the student was at that time they were vague.

The success of these parents was mixed. Of the families interviewed, in two cases the students had transferred to and remained in their home; in one, the student had transferred from their home, and in two, both processes occurred. The weakness of these parents was partly due to frequent family instability and partly to their difficulty in controlling student behavior. Precisely because the student was so comfortable with them, he was more likely to do as he pleased. Like village parents, these parents often were not accustomed to interfering directly with an adolescent's behavior.

The ethnic group identity and life style of these parents make them easy to identify in a home interview. These parents may be successful for certain types of students, for example, less acculturated students who are not behavioral problems or adult male students where close parental supervision is inappropriate.

*Type IV: High Communicated Warmth-  
Moderate Perceived Demandingness*

These parents were the unambiguously successful group. Of the ten families interviewed in this category, all were white. The parents ranged widely in socioeconomic status, number of children, and other demographic characteristics.

Since the behavior of these parents has been described, only a few points about identification during a screening interview need be made. The demonstrative warmth of these parents was evident in observing their relationships with their own family members and also in the way they responded to the interviewer. Their ability to demand appropriate behavior in ways which allowed the student to feel autonomous could be determined in discussions of how to handle hypothetical problem situations that typically arise with boarding home students.

*Conclusion*

Interpersonal behavior may be represented in large part by an affect dimension and by a control dimension (Heller, Davis, and Myers 1966). This study raises the possibility that, in a cross-cultural helping relationship involving whites with Athabascan Indians and Eskimos, the affect dimension should be defined in terms of communicated or demonstrative warmth. The control dimension should be defined in terms of perceived demandingness. The central psychological characteristic of whites who establish successful relationships may be high demonstrative warmth which communicates a rewarding affect. The second important psychological characteristic may be moderate perceived demandingness, reducing costs both by providing structure in an unfamiliar cultural situation and by avoiding feelings of autonomy loss.

Substantial empirical studies are needed to determine if these dimensions apply to other cross-cultural relationships involving whites with Athabascan Indians and Eskimos. These interpersonal dimensions, however, have also been found useful in classifying effective teachers of Indian and Eskimo students (Kleinfeld 1972b). Empirical tests concerning the warmth dimension of the model in a cross-cultural teaching

relationship suggests its importance to teacher success (Kleinfeld 1973a, 1973b). In analyzing the characteristics of successful psychiatrists with Indian and Eskimo adults, Richard (1972) has independently developed a model with similar dimensions and similarly suggests that a high degree of friendliness and a moderately high degree of dominance are characteristics of the successful therapist. Further research will indicate the fruitfulness of such a psychological perspective on the cross-cultural helping relationship.

NOTES

1. Discussions of research methodology in ethnographies of Eskimo and Indian groups may very briefly consider the interpersonal relationship between the cultural group and the anthropologist (Vallee 1967; Murphy and Hughes 1965; Briggs 1970). In addition, one excellent study is available which analyzes the difficulties American Indians and whites have in simply talking to each other (Wax and Thomas 1961). A few others give practical suggestions to whites working with Indians and Eskimos in such roles as community change agent (Pollaca 1962), doctor (Kemnitzer 1967), or teacher (Bureau of Indian Affairs 1970).
2. This paper is adapted from a more comprehensive study (Kleinfeld 1972a), which contains detailed analyses of problems which arise in the relationship and case studies of successful and unsuccessful parents. A guidebook for boarding home parents, *Getting to Know You*, is also available.
3. The number of families in these categories do not add to the number of families interviewed because, in initial interviews, while the category system was being developed, data needed to place families in categories were not obtained.

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