

The Relation Between Values and Social Competence in Early Adolescence

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Examined relationships between the social competence of early adolescents, as viewed by different reference groups, and the values adolescents place on controversial social behaviors. Assessed social competence for 65 seventh- and eight-graders with self-ratings of perceived competence, peer sociometric status ratings, teacher ratings, and academic achievement tests. Ss also completed an inventory assessing their values toward controversial social behaviors. A factor reflecting adolescents' valuing of direct, constructive communication in social interactions was positively related to competence with all reference groups. However, a factor that reflected valuing conforming to adult norms was negatively related to status with peers but positively related to teacher ratings of competence. The role of social values in the developmental task of achieving autonomy in interactions with adults while maintaining positive social relationships with peers and adults is discussed.

The importance of social competence as both an index and a predictor of healthy psychological adaptation across the life span is well documented (Cowen, Pederson, Babigan, Izzo, & Trost, 1973; Coyne & DeLongis, 1986; Kohlberg, Ricks, & Snarey, 1984). Critical components of social competence are currently being identified and conceptualized with both children (Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown, 1986) and adults (Bond & Rosen, 1980), although less is known about social competence in adolescence. In adolescence, however, attaining social competence is a uniquely complex task that requires the development of sophisticated behavioral repertoires to meet the growing demands of peer relationships and educational/vocational challenges.

Ford (1982) defined social competence as "the attainment of relevant social goals in specified social contexts, using appropriate means, and resulting in positive developmental outcomes" (p. 323). This functional definition highlights both the subjective aspects of definitions of social competence and the fact that somewhat different behaviors, skills, and values may be related to adolescents' competence with different reference groups, such as adults and peers. This functional definition does not eliminate the need to study individual skill, developmental, and motivational factors that appear to be relevant to competence (Allen, Leadbeater, & Aber, 1987; Leadbeater, Hellner, Allen, & Aber, 1989) but it does require that the perspective from which social competence is defined be clearly stated.

In adolescence, social competence may have very different

meanings depending on the perspective from which it is assessed. For example, as influence over behavior shifts in adolescence from being primarily parental to a combination and interaction of parent and peer influences (Adelson, 1980; Berndt, 1979; Glynn, 1981; Mussen & Kagan, 1958), potential differences and conflicts between the behaviors valued by parents and by peers may become increasingly important. Lerner and associates (Lerner, Karson, Meisels, & Knapp, 1975; Lerner & Shea, 1982) have found areas of conflict in the social values of parents and adolescents more in "matters of style," such as dress and taste in music, rather than in fundamental moral values. Other research, however, suggests a broader range of potential conflicts between the demands of peer relationships and adult norms for adolescent behavior. Peer influences, for example, have been found to explain substantial variance in smoking, drug use, and delinquent behaviors (Krosnick & Judd, 1982; West, 1982). These studies suggest that the potential requirements for acceptance within at least some groups of adolescents might well increase the likelihood of behavior that most adults would consider maladaptive.

At the same time, areas of concordance between the values and demands of adults and peers do not disappear in adolescence (Conger & Peterson, 1984). Berndt (1979) noted that peer pressure may exist toward either prosocial or antisocial acts. Moreover, some adolescent characteristics, such as high levels of interpersonal understanding and positive communication skills, are related to competence with peers (Burleson, 1985; Kurdek & Krile, 1982) but are also likely to be valued by adults. Furthermore, social-cognitive skills appear to be related to social competence in adolescence as measured by both teacher and peer ratings (Ford, 1982). These findings suggest some overlap between behaviors that lead to competence with peers and with adults.

Adolescents' social values provide a potentially useful tool for increasing our understanding of the converging and diverging pulls of peer and adult relationships in adolescence. Beginning with early psychological and sociological research, values have

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been considered an important determinant of motivation toward a range of behaviors (Rokeach, 1968) and have been considered particularly relevant to adolescent social behavior (Cohen, 1955). More recently, researchers have recognized that values and goals of children and adolescents may play an important role in determining whether component social skills are actually translated into competent behavior (Dweck & Elliott, 1983; Parkhurst & Asher, 1985). These findings suggest that the social values of adolescents may sometimes be the mediating factors that determine whether peer influences lead an adolescent to engage in behaviors that will ultimately hinder the overall process of social adaptation. Understanding adolescent social values is one way of increasing our understanding of the processes by which adolescents address a primary developmental task: learning to manage the dual challenges of adult and peer expectations so as to achieve competence in social interactions with both groups.

In this study, we examined the social values of early adolescents and the relation of these values to adolescents' competence in social interactions with peers and with important adults in their lives (e.g., teachers). Competence with these groups was considered from the multiple vantage points of adolescents' self-perceptions, peer and teacher ratings, and objective measures of achievement. Given the focus on different perspectives on social competence in this study, social competence was conceptualized and measured broadly in terms of the attainment of a variety of social goals, ranging from peer status to freedom from behavioral and emotional problems to academic success in the social context of the classroom. We also assessed values toward discrete, controversial social behaviors and examined them for both their internal structure and their relationship to social competence with adults and peers as measured from a number of vantage points. Specifically, we addressed the following questions:

1. Can meaningful clusters of adolescent values toward relevant social behaviors be identified and measured?
2. Is there a relationship between adolescent social values and differing perspectives on social competence in adolescence, such as competence with peers and with teachers?
3. Are there differences between the values of adolescents that predict competence with peers and those that predict competence with teachers?

Method

Subjects

Sixty-five adolescents, 28 girls and 37 boys, who comprised the entire seventh- and eight-grade populations of a kindergarten through eighth-grade school in a White, working- and middle-class, urban neighborhood participated in the study. All participation was voluntary, and no one refused to participate.

Measures

We used five types of measures in this study: (a) the Adolescent Values Inventory, measuring adolescents' values and their perceptions of adults' values; (b) a measure of adolescents' perceived competence; (c) teacher ratings of adolescents' social competence; (d) peer ratings of adolescents' sociometric status; and (e) objective measures of academic

achievement. All competence measures were coded so that higher scores represented higher levels of competence.

Adolescent Values Inventory. We obtained adolescents' values toward relevant social behaviors from a 22-item questionnaire in which adolescents rated the extent to which they like or dislike it when other youths engage in specified behaviors. We selected behaviors to represent potential areas of disagreement and conflict between adolescents and adults or among adolescents in their behavioral norms. Behaviors were identified from prior research (e.g. Jessor & Jessor, 1977) and from discussions with adolescents, teachers, parents, and psychologists. Those behaviors that were most frequently mentioned and deemed potentially most important to adolescents' social competence were included in the inventory. Values toward a range of behaviors, such as smoking, fighting, doing well in school, and talking with other people about problems, were measured on a 4-point scale using a format similar to the Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1982). This format is designed to reduce the effects of a pull for social desirability. For each item, two stems were presented side by side, for example: "Some kids think a kid who smokes cigarettes is cool" and "other kids don't respect a kid who smokes cigarettes." Adolescents were asked to decide which stem best described them and whether the statement was *sort of true* or *really true* for them. A similar technique has been used successfully in uncovering relationships between values and adolescent problem behaviors (Allen et al., 1987).

Perceived adult values. We collected adolescents' perceptions of adults' values toward behaviors in the Adolescent Values Inventory in a similar format, in which students answered on the basis of their beliefs about "what adults like and dislike" in seventh- and eighth-graders' behavior, using the behaviors presented in the Adolescent Values Inventory.

Self-report ratings. The Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1982) is a 28-item self-report measure. It has four separate subscales that assess a child's self-perceptions in four domains: (a) general self-worth focuses on how a child feels about himself or herself as a person; (b) social competence focuses on the child's friendships and peer relations; (c) cognitive competence focuses on a child's academic performance and intelligence; and (d) physical competence assesses perceived skill at sports and games. Harter (1982) has reviewed research documenting the good reliability and factorial validity of these scales.

Peer ratings. Adolescents' *sociometric status* in school was derived from an instrument in which adolescents rated all other students in their classroom in terms of how much they liked them (1 = *do not like this person* to 5 = *like the person very much, as much as a best friend*). Ratings given to each adolescent by all other students in the same class were then summed and averaged to provide a measure of social acceptance. Although such a general measure does not capture the full multidimensional complexity of peer-rated status (cf. Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982), such ratings have high 5-month stability, and low ratings correlated highly with identifications of rejected children using a negative nomination procedure (Asher & Dodge, 1986).

Teacher ratings. The *quality of peer relationships* for each student was also rated by teachers on a 7-point scale (1 = *child is generally rejected or ignored by peers, has no friends, or unstable, nonmutual peer relationships* to 7 = *child is popular, gets along well with a wide range of classmates, and has several close friendships*). Similar ratings were obtained for children's (a) *classroom behavior* (1 = *child is repeatedly disrespectful to teacher and disruptive in class* to 7 = *child shows excellent self-control, is consistently respectful and very cooperative in class*) and (b) *mood/activity level* (1 = *child is often withdrawn, anxious or unhappy* to 7 = *child is consistently outgoing, confident, eager to participate in a variety of activities*). The same four teachers rated every child in the study (all taught each child in at least one subject), and ratings were then summed and averaged. High internal consistencies (Cron-

bach's $\alpha = .74$ to $.91$) for each dimension indicate a high degree of interteacher agreement.

Academic performance. Children's academic performance was calculated as the average of grades received in four core subjects: English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, and Science.

Achievement test scores. Student academic achievement was also measured using *t* scores from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Forms 7 and 8. These included measures of children's achievement in *Verbal Skills* (an average of language and reading scores) and *Math Skills*.

Procedure

All student self-report measures were obtained during two 45-min sessions during two school days in May by a graduate student and professor in psychology working together with school personnel. They administered the Perceived Competence Scale and the Adolescent Values Inventory on the first day and the perceived adult values questionnaire and the sociometric measure on the second day. All teacher ratings were collected within 2 weeks of the administration of the child measures. The most recently reported grades (from the previous quarter) and achievement test scores (from earlier in the school year) were obtained from school records for each student.

Results

Initial Analyses of the Adolescent Values Inventory

The first step in analyzing the measures of adolescents' values was to examine the psychometric characteristics of subjects' ratings of the 22 different behaviors presented to them. Table 1 presents adolescents' views of these behaviors (ordered from most to least valued) in terms of mean ratings, percentages of adolescents who rated liking the behavior as "sort of true" or "really true" for them, and percentages of adolescents who believed that adults moderately or strongly endorse the behavior. In addition to indicating significant variability in youths' answers, Table 1 suggests significant discrepancies between youths' responses and perceived adult values. For example, 54% of adolescents valued joking around a lot in class, whereas only 9% perceived that adults would value this behavior, and only 57% of adolescents valued always obeying parents' rules, whereas 97% perceived that adults valued this behavior. Thus, the data from the two measures indicate that a significant proportion of adolescents endorse behaviors that they believe adults do not support; however, the relative lack of variability on the adult measure limited its usefulness in further analyses.

The next step in the analyses of adolescent values was to examine the interrelationships among the values placed on the 22 behaviors presented. Of 231 possible correlations among Adolescent Values Inventory items, 91 were of an absolute magnitude greater than $.33$ (i.e., $p < .002$). Given these results, we next analyzed items in an iterated principal-factors analysis, varimax rotation, using squared multiple correlations as initial estimates of communality. Both a scree test and an interpretability criterion suggested the presence of two reliable and conceptually meaningful factors that accounted for 29% of the variance in the original correlation matrix. We created factor scores using unit weightings of standardized variables with loadings above $.35$. Use of unit weightings reduces the effects of error variance on a factor's composition, although it does not yield truly orthogonal factors (Kim & Mueller, 1978). A cut-off of

Table 1
Responses to Adolescent Values Inventory Items

Item content	Adolescent ratings			Percentage perceived adult endorsement
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Percentage endorsement	
Doing well on tests	3.28	.89	86	94
Talk to adults about personal problems	3.15	.94	78	95
Talk to friends about personal problems	3.14	1.01	80	86
Volunteering answers in class	2.95	.87	72	88
A boy fights to back up what he says	2.78	.91	65	49
Always obeying parents' rules	2.69	.98	57	97
A boy swears	2.60	1.06	57	8
Joking around a lot in class	2.52	.95	54	9
A girl diets to stay very thin	2.29	.96	37	82
Letting others copy answers on quizzes	2.29	1.03	43	9
A boy strives to excel at sports	2.28	.84	37	66
Talking back to teachers	2.26	1.15	45	3
A girl swears	2.22	.99	43	3
A girl strives to excel in sports	2.18	.85	31	66
A girl fights to back up what she says	2.12	.98	35	31
A boy diets to stay very thin	2.11	.92	29	66
"Telling" on someone who steals from someone else	2.08	1.02	34	63
Smoking cigarettes	2.02	.80	32	3
Skipping school	1.91	.98	25	3
Getting drunk	1.82	.92	25	5
Smoking pot	1.69	.90	32	3
Putting down other kids	1.69	.75	14	2

Note. Higher means reflect more strongly endorsed items. Percentages reflect combined moderate and strong endorsements of behaviors.

.35 was used because it yielded both the most interpretable and internally consistent factors.¹

The items that comprise each factor along with their associated loadings are presented in Table 2. The first factor has the highest loadings on items related to conforming to typical adult norms for adolescents, such as negative loadings on smoking marijuana or getting drunk and positive loadings on obeying parents' rules. In fact, for 12 of the 13 items loading on this factor, over 90% of the sample believed that adults would endorse the rule-oriented behavior. Consequently, we have labeled this factor *conforming to adult norms*. Each of the items loading on the second factor represents an example of direct and constructive or, for items loading negatively, indirect and hostile communication in everyday social interactions. We labeled this

¹ An iterated principal-factors analysis using an oblique rotation was also performed and yielded an extremely similar factor pattern to the one reported above, except that the two values factors had less nonoverlapping variance and were slightly less interpretable. Although orthogonally rotated factors are presented and used, virtually identical results were obtained in all analyses reported below using factors created from an oblique rotation.

Table 2
Factor Loadings of Adolescent Values Inventory Items

Behavior	Factor 1	Factor 2
Smoking pot	-.82	
Getting drunk	-.81	
Always obeying parents' rules	.80	
Skipping school	-.79	
Talking back to teachers	-.74	
Letting others copy answers on quizzes	-.72	
A boy swears	-.64	
Putting down other kids	-.59	-.56
Doing well on tests	.56	
Joking around a lot in class	-.54	-.39
Smoking cigarettes	-.50	
A girl swears	-.47	
A girl diets to stay very thin	-.35	
Talk to friends about personal problems		.78
Talk to adults about personal problems		.54
"Telling" on someone who steals from someone else		.37
A girl fights to back up what she says		-.52
A boy fights to back up what he says		-.56
Eigenvalue for each factor	4.40	1.99

Note. Only loadings with an absolute value greater than .35 are reported. Reported eigenvalues are based on the final iteration of the factor solution.

factor values toward *constructive and direct communication* in everyday social interactions. Items that loaded positively included behaviors such as talking with an adult or peer about a personal problem instead of keeping it to oneself. Items that loaded negatively included behaviors such as fighting with or insulting others instead of trying to get along with them. Adolescents generally perceived adults as favoring items loading toward constructive, direct communication and rejecting items reflecting indirect or hostile forms of communication, although there was much greater variability in perceptions of adults' values for items on this factor. Examination of internal consistency of these two factors revealed a Cronbach's alpha for Factor 1 of .92 and for Factor 2 of .80, suggesting a high degree of consistency for items within each factor. The two factors were significantly correlated ($r = .68, p < .001$), indicating the need to consider potential multivariate effects in further analyses.

Gender and Grade Effects for Adolescent Values and Social Competence

An examination of gender effects for the value factors and competence measures indicated that girls, relative to boys, more strongly favored direct, constructive communication (M girls = 1.72, and M boys = -1.30, $SD = 4.7$), $t(65) = 2.7, p < .01$, received better teacher ratings in classroom behavior (M girls = 5.42, and M boys = 4.41, $SD = 4.85$), $t(65) = 2.51, p < .05$, and perceived themselves as less physically competent (M girls = 2.54, and M boys = 3.00, $SD = 2.80$), $t(65) = 3.04, p < .01$. An evaluation of grade effects on the same set of variables revealed a main effect only for conforming to adult norms,

with seventh graders valuing this more than eighth graders (M seventh = 3.71, and M eighth = -3.55, $SD = 9.25$), $t(65) = 3.42, p < .01$. We found no significant interactions for gender or grade with any of the relationships between values and competence measures presented below.

Relationships Among Competence Measures

Table 3 presents correlations among different aspects of competence as measured from four different vantage points (self, peer, teacher, and objective ratings). As expected, the correlation matrix reveals significant cross-method relationships among variables designed to tap similar competence constructs. For example, there are significant correlations both among (a) peer, self-report, and teacher ratings of social competence with peers and among (b) self-reports, teacher ratings, and standardized tests assessing cognitive competence. In some instances, measures of different aspects of competence (e.g., social vs. cognitive) are related when provided by the same rater but tend not to be significantly related when provided by different raters. Overall, the pattern of correlations indicates that assessments of competence by different reference groups overlap somewhat but may also be quite distinct depending on the construct being measured.

Relationships Between Values Factors and Competence Measures

We examined the relationships between the two adolescent values factors and the various indices of competence using a combination of simple correlational and simultaneous multiple regression analyses. This combination was appropriate given the correlation between the two adolescent values factors as well as the goal of understanding both univariate and combined relationships between factors and the various domains of competence. We performed multiple regression analyses in which both values factors were used simultaneously to predict each competence variable taken individually in separate equations. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4 for those indices of competence that bore any significant relation to adolescent values in either univariate or multivariate analyses. We found no significant relationships between adolescents' values and perceived general or physical competence, or for verbal or math skills on academic achievement tests.

Examination of the correlates of peer and self-report variables suggests that a relative devaluing of adult norms and a positive valuing of direct, constructive communication relate to competence judgments provided by both the adolescents and their peers. It is interesting that the results are somewhat masked in the univariate correlations. It appears that the correlation between valuing direct, constructive communication and valuing adult norms reduces the explanatory power of these factors when they are only considered separately. One interpretation of these suppressor effects is that valuing direct, constructive communication is positively related to peer and self-rated social competence, except to the extent that it simply reflects a general acceptance of adult norms, which is negatively correlated with peer and self-rated social competence. Thus, young people who value direct, constructive communication but de-

Table 3
Intercorrelations of Competence Measures

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Sociometric status (P)	—	.49***	.07	-.03	.12	.52***	-.03	.31*	.12	.16	.14
2. Social competence (S)		—	.41***	.11	.27*	.47***	-.08	.26*	-.01	.06	-.11
3. General competence (S)			—	.40**	.18	.27*	.10	.30	.06	.20	.04
4. Cognitive competence (S)				—	.15	.16	.39**	.38**	.47***	.51***	.37**
5. Physical competence (S)					—	.08	-.32*	-.00	-.09	.13	.04
6. Peer relations (T)						—	.44***	.71***	.51***	.31*	.26*
7. Class behavior (T)							—	.60***	.77***	.43***	.35**
8. Mood (T)								—	.68***	.44***	.43***
9. Academic performance (GPA)									—	.70***	.68***
10. Verbal skills (A)										—	.71***
11. Math skills (A)											—

Note. P = peer rating; S = self-report; T = teacher rating; GPA = grade point average; and A = achievement test.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

value (relative to peers) adult norms have the highest ratings of competence with peers. These suppressor effects need to be interpreted cautiously, however, given the instability in regression coefficients created by the moderate collinearity between the two factors.

Table 4
Relationship of Adolescent Values Inventory Factors to Social Competence Indices

Index of competence	Values		R
	Adult rules	Constructive communication	
Peer ratings			
Sociometric status			
<i>r</i>	-.27*	.06	—
β	-.58***	.41**	.43**
Self-report ratings			
Social			
<i>r</i>	-.17	.20	—
β	-.55***	.60***	.47***
Cognitive			
<i>r</i>	.34**	.38**	—
β	.15	.26	.38**
Teacher ratings			
Peer relations			
<i>r</i>	.06	.30*	—
β	-.25	.47**	.36*
Class behavior			
<i>r</i>	.36**	.27*	—
β	.32	.05	.36*
Mood			
<i>r</i>	.24	.37**	—
β	-.00	.38*	.39*
Academic performance (GPA)			
<i>r</i>	.36**	.34**	—
β	.22	.17	.35*

Note. We used simple Pearson product-moment correlations to obtain *r*s. We used simultaneous regressions performed separately for each measure of competence to obtain β s and *R*s. Nonsignificant results are not shown for two self-report scales (general and physical competence) and for the two achievement test scores (verbal and math skills).
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To determine whether the suppressor effect found in multivariate analyses would be robust if analyzed using other techniques, we created a variable representing a Communication/Adult Norms balance score. This was done by subtracting the standardized Adult Norms score from the standardized Communication score. The resulting score can be interpreted as representing values in favor of direct, constructive communication that have been "corrected" for general orientation toward adult norms. This score was significantly positively related to both peer sociometric status ($r = .39, p < .002$) and self-ratings of social competence ($r = .36, p < .003$). These findings support findings from regression equations that values in favor of direct, constructive communication, after being corrected for the extent to which they reflect valuing adult norms, are consistently related to self- and peer ratings of social competence.

In contrast to peer and self-ratings, teacher-rated peer competence and mood were correlated with valuing direct, constructive communication but were not correlated with devaluing conforming to adult norms. Teacher ratings of adolescent classroom behavior and adolescents' grade point averages were related to the adolescent's positively valuing both direct, constructive communication and adult norms. Analyses of objective measures of academic achievement revealed no univariate or multivariate relationships between adolescent values and either verbal or math skills.

These analyses are consistent with a central hypothesis of this study: The relation between adolescents' values and their social competence will differ significantly depending on the aspect of social competence being measured. We performed a test of the significance of this difference using a multivariate repeated measures analysis to assess whether the relation of values to social competence differed depending on whether the measure of social competence used was teacher-rated classroom behavior or peer-rated sociometric status. This analysis revealed that the relation of values to teacher-rated classroom behavior differed significantly from the relation of values to peer-rated sociometric status (Wilks's λ for Type of Competence Rating [Adult vs. Peer] = .435), $F(1, 62) = 80.6, p < .001$. Subsequent analyses with each value measure examined individually revealed a significant effect of the type of competence rating (teacher vs. peer) for the relation between competence and valuing adult norms

Table 5
Summary of Relationships Between Adolescents' Values and Different Measures of Their Social Competence

Conforming to adults' norms	Direct, constructive communication	
	Strongly valued	Weakly valued
Strongly valued	Best classroom behavior (T) Best academic performance (S, T)	Lowest sociometric ratings (P) Lowest social competence (S)
Weakly valued	Highest sociometric ratings (P) Highest social competence (S)	Worst classroom behavior (T) Worst academic performance (S, T)

Note. T = teacher-rated; S = self-rated; and P = peer-rated.

(Wilks's $\lambda = .877$), $F(1, 62) = 8.69$, $p < .01$, but not for the relation between competence and valuing direct, constructive communication. Overall, these findings demonstrate that teacher and peer-ratings of adolescents' social competence are each related to adolescents' values, but in significantly different ways.

Table 5 illustrates the major relationships between values and different aspects of social competence in this sample. In summary, positively valuing direct, constructive communication was related to multiple measures of competence obtained from different perspectives, including self-report, peer and teacher ratings, and measures of competence with peers and with academic tasks. Valuing conforming to adult norms was also positively related to perceived and teacher-rated academic performance and classroom behavior but was negatively related to peer sociometric status and self-rated social competence in multivariate analyses.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that adolescent values can be used to shed light on the multiple facets of social competence in adolescence. The results suggest affirmative answers to all three questions addressed by this study: (a) It appears possible to identify and measure meaningful clusters of adolescent values; (b) adolescent values are significantly related to social competence measured from multiple perspectives; and (c) there are significant differences between the values of adolescents that relate to competence with peers and those that relate to competence as judged by teachers. Overall, these results suggest the virtue of Ford's (1982) definition of social competence, which requires that explicit value judgments be made prior to defining social competence for any given group or setting. The implications of each of these findings are discussed below.

The identification of measurable factors of values with internal consistency and face validity suggests that the Adolescent Values Inventory tapped a meaningful aspect of adolescent thinking about a variety of social behaviors. The internal consistency of the adult norms factor suggests that adolescents may, in part, organize their beliefs about some behaviors not so much

by their specific implications (e.g., the likely harmful effects of cigarette smoking) as by their overarching relevance to the adult world. The existence of a value factor about direct, constructive communication supports the findings of Burleson (1982, 1985) on the importance of verbal communication in the social development of adolescents. Adolescents who valued direct, verbal and constructive forms of communication most highly were also most likely to be rated as socially competent from multiple perspectives. An important qualification, however, to any interpretations of the factor analyses in this study is that the factors are based on both a small sample of adolescents and a limited sample of potentially important values of adolescents. Furthermore, the factors account for only a moderate percentage of the variance in these values. Replication of this factor structure using larger samples of adolescents and values is necessary before definitively asserting that these factors are useful beyond their role in data reduction and beyond merely suggesting ways that adolescents organize their thinking about socially relevant behaviors.

The results of this study support its central hypothesis that the correlates of competence with adults and with peers both converge and diverge in important ways in adolescence. The convergence of competencies with adults and with peers in adolescence is seen in the positive relationship between adult and peer ratings of competence and adolescents' valuing of behaviors that represent direct, constructive communication. The divergence in the correlates of competence with peers and with adults is seen in the differing relationships of adult and peer ratings of competence to adolescents' valuing conforming to adult norms. Whereas valuing conforming to adult norms was positively related to teacher ratings of competence in classroom behavior and academic tasks and to self-ratings of academic competence, it was negatively related to self and peer ratings of social competence in several analyses. Of course, this study was not intended to demonstrate the existence of a causal link between values and competence. In fact, it is quite plausible that values are related to competence at least in part because they are highly correlated with behaviors that directly affect social success. Even in this case, however, an adolescent's values provide an index of the degree to which he or she is oriented toward achieving competence with peers, adults, or both.

The differing relationships between adolescent values and social competence with adults and peers supports the notion that the process of achieving autonomy from adult norms while maintaining truly communicative relationships with both adults and peers is an important developmental task of adolescence. This interpretation is also supported by the finding that older students valued conforming to adult norms significantly less than younger students in this sample. This supports the hypothesis that the developmental progression for early adolescents is toward increasing autonomy with respect to adults' norms. In contrast, we found no developmental differences in adolescents' valuing direct, constructive communication. Findings with both value factors parallel and support research in familial contexts that has identified attaining autonomy from parents while remaining connected to them as an important adolescent developmental task (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; White, Speisman, & Costos, 1983).

The findings of this study are, of course, limited by its cross-

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sectional nature, the single sample of early adolescents studied, and the early stage of development of tools for measuring adolescent values. Further research is needed to address all of these limitations. For example, longitudinal studies are needed to begin to explore the possible causal impact of adolescent values on social competence with different reference groups. In addition, because this study examined only relatively common behaviors within a normal group of adolescents, it leaves open the question of whether other dimensions of values and relationships with competence might emerge in studies conducted with different populations of adolescents measuring values in regard to other behaviors (Allen et al., 1987). Similarly, future studies might examine the extent to which values can be used to illuminate the nature of relationships within the family, particularly the potential conflict between separating from parents while maintaining a solid connection to them. Both types of research are needed to further the development of a more comprehensive picture of the process of attaining social competence in adolescence.

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