The child gently held the kitten and pulled a thorn out of its paw.

Kind
Do parents make spontaneous inferences or judgments about child behavior?

Do such inferences vary by CPA risk status?

Do such inferences vary by behavior valence?

Do such inferences vary by the extremity of behaviors?

Mass testing of Child Abuse Potential (CAP) Inventory (Milner, 1986)

Invited participants to computerized STI portion of study

Final Sample Characteristics
- 191 participants (age $M = 19.15$ years, 49.7% male, 92.1% single, 63.4% Caucasian)
- 107 Low-Risk Students (CAP $M = 43.5$)
- 84 High-Risk Students (CAP $M = 275.4$)

Dependent Variables (DVs):
- Word Recall
- Exact-Match Recall
- Valence-Match Recall

Independent Variables (IVs):
- CAP Risk Status (low, high)
- Child Gender (male, female)
- Sentence Type (control, vague, evident)
- Word Valence (positive, negative)

CAP Risk Status x Child Gender x Sentence Type x Word Valence factorial ANOVA
- Regression analysis results differed only slightly from ANOVA results
Results: Study 1

Exact-Match DV
- **Savings effect** for evident behaviors
  - Evident \( M = .32 \); Vague \( M = .26 \); Control \( M = .26 \)
- Savings effect **DID NOT** vary by CAP risk status
- Savings effect qualified by unanticipated Sentence Type x Word Valence x Child Gender Interaction
  - No savings for positive traits; especially strong savings for negative traits and female photos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>Vague</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valence-Match DV
- Frequency of valence matches for evident and vague behaviors relative to control condition **DID NOT** vary by CAP risk status
- Sentence Type x Word Valence – valence-match savings effect for vague and evident behavior, only for negative traits
- Sentence Type x Child Gender – valence-match savings effect for vague and evident behavior only for female photos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vague</td>
<td>.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evident</td>
<td>.78</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Methodology: Study 2

- Similar to Study 1 except:
  - Parents from general population
  - Administration of STI portion and CAP Inventory
  - Location
  - Compensation ($20)

Final Sample Characteristics:
- 68 valid participants (age \( M = 33.11 \), 66.2% female, 50% single, 30.0% married, 62.2% African-American, 26.5% Caucasian)
- 43 Low-Risk (CAP \( M = 81.8 \))
- 25 High-Risk (CAP \( M = 253.7 \))

IV's, DV's, and analytic approaches duplicated those used in Study 1

Results: Study 2

Exact-Match DV:
- **No evidence** of a savings effect

Valence-Match DV:
- Cap Risk Status x Sentence Type x Word Valence interaction
Valence-match savings effect for vague and evident behaviors only for low-risk parents when they viewed negative child behaviors.

**Conclusions**

Both studies found evidence of spontaneous trait inference-making:
- Most clear for negative behaviors,
- Valence-match DV
- Hints at possibility that judgments about children may be more evaluative than semantic.

Risk group differences not especially evident & not in direction that might be expected from results of Farc et al. (2008)
- No greater tendency to make spontaneous negative inferences among high-risk parents than low-risk parents.
- In fact, quiet the opposite outcome emerged in Study 2 on the valence-match measure.

**Questions That Lead to Future Directions**

- Why didn’t the parental risk group effects match the effects suggested by Farc et al’s results?
  - Perhaps parental risk group effects emerge only when perceivers have an inference goal (as in Farc et al.) not when spontaneous inferences are assessed (as in this thesis).
  - Suggests a study manipulating processing goal (some receive impression set).

- Why was there a difference between low and high risk parents in Study 2?
  - Differences among parent groups with computers or the tasks used – paradigm effects may have masked effects for high risk parents.
  - Suggests Paradigm Modification
    - Simplify behavioral stimuli
    - Provide extra processing time
    - Use recognition task.
Why was there a difference in the results between valence-match and semantic-match coding schemes?

- Distinction between evaluative inferences and trait (semantic) inferences
- Some people (e.g., parent sample) may be more likely to rely on evaluative inference schemes
- Some stimuli (e.g., children) may be more likely than others (e.g., adults) to prompt evaluative than semantic inferences

Suggests studies that manipulate

- Inference type (evaluative vs. semantic)
- Participant type (educated vs. less educated; parent vs. demographic matched non-parent)
- Stimulus type (child vs. adult)

Questions That Lead to Future Directions

Thank You.