

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
SCHOOL BEHAVIOR AND ATTENDANCE OF  
STUDENTS FROM LOWER AND MIDDLE  
CLASS HOMES AND THE EXTENT  
OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT  
IN THEIR SCHOOL  
EXPERIENCES

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In any society different families belong to different social classes. Children of these families with different backgrounds go to school, achieve and perform differently. In order to improve the schooling experiences of these children, school personnel have long made efforts to involve parents, particularly those from low income backgrounds, in school activities. Dobson and Shelton (1975) state:

Parent influence in the development of human efficacy has been established, both from theoretical perspective and empirical data. The physical, social, emotional, and intellectual components of every human being have been determined to some extent by the influence of parents or parent substitutes. Since parents play a vital role in the formation of each subsequent generation, an informed adult population appears to be a prerequisite to the attainment of a democratic society which both subscribes to and facilitates the realization that each human being should achieve his fullest potential (p. 7).

Gordon (1978) states:

The first goal of parent involvement is to improve the family capabilities to provide in the home the type of learning environment that accentuates the positive elements of the cognitive and emotional factor. . . . we believe that parent involvement enables children to achieve better and learn more. In other words, we assume that the behavior of parents and other family members influence child learning (p. 6).

Ebersole (1979) supports Gordon and states:

The ring of respect encircling students, and teachers, and parents is an essential relationship for effective learning. A break anywhere in the circle results in a breakdown in student performance. If there's close communication, cooperation, sincere caring, however, there seems to be no limit to what might happen - students learn more, teachers are more fulfilled, and parents feel better about their children and themselves (p. v).

Nebgen (1979) reports that the efforts of school personnel to involve parents have been most successful with middle class parents, who have had positive school experiences themselves and can communicate as equals with middle class school personnel. Such efforts, however, have not been particularly successful with low income parents who are primarily concerned about making ends meet, the daily reality these parents face is often far removed from the school program.

A review of the research by Lopate and others (1970) stresses that parent involvement can integrate the child's school and home life and provide him with a model of participation and control in a major area of his life. Dobson and Shelton (1974) stated:

. . . that an affective area that shows potential for enhancing the performance of economically deprived children is that improved self-concept resulting from active parent participation in the school experiences of their youngsters (p. 191).

#### Justification of the Study

This research study is an attempt to explore the extent to which parent involvement relates to the academic achieve-

ment, school behavior and school attendance of children coming from lower and middle class homes.

Fullmer and Bernard (1968) emphasize that the work of home and school are inseparable, for both are concerned with the directed learning process of children. Supporting Fullmer and Bernard, Hobson (1976) stated that

the essence of success in working with parents - no matter where they live or what their circumstances - is a spirit of cooperation with the shared purpose of meeting children's needs (p. 80).

And Schaefer (1971) reports:

That amount of parental involvement in the child's education may explain up to four times as much of the variance in the child's intelligence and achievement test scores at the age eleven as the quality of schools. Douglas, in a national sample of 5,000 children in England, found that parent interest and involvement in the child's education were far more important than the quality of schools, even after statistically controlling for family socioeconomic status (p. 19).

The National Education Association of the United States, in its 1972 issue stresses the point that, although the primary aim of parent involvement programs is to broaden the learning opportunities of each child through, increased personal attention and support, there are also advantages for the teacher, the school and the parent. The teacher has more time to devote to the professional aspects of teaching and is able to learn more about the individual children; the school is able to obtain skills and services from parents which might not otherwise be available due to financial limitations; and the parents are able to share in their child's development and to enrich their own lives through meaningful contributions to their community.

But, as Chilman (1966) emphasizes that, parental patterns most characteristic of the very poor are an anticipation of failure and distrust of middle class institutions such as school. Dobson and Shelton (1975) state that:

. . . many poor, both children and parents, often view the school with suspicion, if not hostility. The result produces a paradox; poor parents and children are pro-education though often anti-school. Too often, low income parents are silent bystanders in the educational experiences administered to their children. This has generated feelings of inadequacy, alienation and frustration which lead ultimately to feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness (p. 7).

As Haryou Act (1964) in a study of life in central Harlem reports that children growing up in the inner city tend to sense their parent's feelings of powerlessness and assume that they have very little or no control over their fate. Coleman et al. (1966) contended that the child's sense of control over his environment is one of the strongest factors influencing his achievement. This sense of control may be more important to achievement than school characteristics.

Cook and Apolloni (1975) report that:

The discipline of applied behavior analysis have provided the insight that the behavior of children is shaped and maintained to meet the requirements of an environmental context. Moreover, naturalistic observers in psychology have reliably reported that young children spend most of their time at home, with the parents. Therefore, if educators wish to modify attitudes, dispositions, habits or other areas of performance. The logical place to intervene is with the individuals most pervasive to children's lives - namely parents (p. 168).

Porwoll (1977) in his study of "student absenteeism" when dealing with personal and family factors which would

cause absence, concludes that personal factors such as: lack of motivation, poor self-image, mental and emotional handicaps and learning disabilities, and family factors such as marital problems in the home, unfavorable parental opinions toward school and erosion of parental control, have negative effects on student's school attendance rate. He also finds that a close home-school relationship will result in a high attendance rate.

Shelton and Dobson (1974) reported that:

Parent and teacher involvement through a series of home visits significantly increased the average daily attendance and achievement of students whose home were visited. They concluded that (1) perhaps the home visits implied a real interest or concern for the children and therefore created in the parent a more positive attitude toward school; (2) the home visits may have also created an interest in school on the part of the child; (3) through the home visitations, perhaps teachers learned of children's needs and interests and utilized these in relating curriculum to each individual child; and (4) perhaps the child felt the special concern and interest shown in him and therefore tried to fulfill the teacher's expectations (p. 195).

Schiff (1963), in his doctoral dissertation entitled "The Effects of Personal Contactual Relationships on Parents' Attitudes Toward Participation in Local School Affairs", indicates:

Analysis of gains on reading test revealed that pupils of the experimental groups improved to a significantly greater degree than did pupils of the control group. Increased parent contacts were thus significantly effective in terms of pupil achievement gains in reading.

The data indicated that school attendance . . . was significantly increased. The number and intensity of pupil behavior problems were reduced (pp. 202-203).

Parental involvement in the education of their children is further justified, since, from our society's perspective, parents are both morally and legally responsible for their children's performance, behavior, and development (Cooke, and Apolloni, 1975).

#### Statement of the Problem

This study was an attempt to investigate the relationship between academic achievement, attendance and school behavior of children from lower and middle class homes and the extent of parental involvement in the school experience of their children.

Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there any relationship between academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

2. Is there any relationship between school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

3. Is there any relationship between school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

4. Is there any relationship between academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

5. Is there any relationship between school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

6. Is there any relationship between school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences?

7. Is there any relationship between the involvement of parents in their youngsters' school experiences and their socio-economic status?

8. Is there any relationship between the academic achievement of children and their parent's socio-economic status?

9. Is there any relationship between the school attendance of children and their parent's socio-economic status?

10. Is there any relationship between the school behavior of children and their parent's socio-economic status?

#### Basic Hypotheses

This study proposed to establish a basis for the testing of the following hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

2. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

3. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement

of their parents in their school experiences.

4. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

5. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

6. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

7. There is no relationship between the involvement of the parents in their youngster's school experiences and their socio-economic status.

8. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.

9. There is no relationship between the school attendance of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.

10. There is no relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.

#### Definition of Terms

Academic achievement: Knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects as measured by California Achievement Test (1970).



Attendance: Number of days school has been in session minus the number of days student has missed classes.

School behavior: The student's feelings about himself and the way he reacts to his peers and school authorities, as measured by Jesness Behavior Checklist (1970).

Students: Fourth, fifth and sixth graders from an elementary school in a north central Oklahoma community.

Socio-economic status: This study is concerned with two social classes, lower class and middle class. In order to assign subjects to different social class levels three factors are used, as follows:

1. Income of the parent(s). Criterion for classification of parents according to their income is given in Figure 1.
2. Educational level of the parent(s). Criterion for classification of parents according to their education is given in Figure 2.
3. Occupational level of the parent(s). Criterion for classification of parents according to their occupation is given in Figure 3.

#### Parent Involvement

1. Involved: parents who were operating at one or more levels of Ira Gordon parent involvement model were considered to be involved parents.
2. Uninvolved: parents who were not operating at any level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model were considered to be uninvolved parents.

Lowest Fifth under - 7,611	Lower Class
2nd Fifth 7,612-14,238	
3rd Fifth 14,239-21,582	Middle Class
4th Fifth 21,583-31,363	
Highest Fifth 31,364 and over	Higher Class

Note: Total inflation rate between the years 1978 to 1980 was 19.1 percent, 7.6 percent for the year 1978-79 and 11.5 percent for the year 1979-80.

Figure 1. Money Income of All Households in the United States in 1978 Corrected for Inflation up to 1980.

Lower Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Less than seven years of school.</li> <li>b. Completed 7th-9th grade.</li> <li>c. Completed 10th or 11th grade, but have not completed high school.</li> </ul>
Middle Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. High school graduate.</li> <li>e. Completed at least one year of college, but not full college course.</li> <li>f. Completed a full college course.</li> </ul>
Higher Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>g. Completed a master program.</li> <li>h. Completed a doctorate program.</li> </ul>

Figure 2. Educational Level of Parent(s)

Lower Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Laborers except farm and mine.</li> <li>b. Service workers, including private household.</li> </ul>
Middle Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Operative and kindred workers.</li> <li>d. Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers.</li> <li>e. Clerical, sales, and kindred workers.</li> </ul>
Higher Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Manager, officials, and proprietors, except farmers.</li> <li>g. Professional, technical, and kindred workers.</li> </ul>

Figure 3. Occupational Level of the Parent(s)

#### Basic Assumptions

For the purpose of this study the following assumptions have been made:

1. Since this study was done in a small community, it was assumed that teachers have a valid knowledge of parent's income level, amount of education and kind of occupation and would report this information accurately.

2. School officials are eager to involve parents in the school activities.

3. As a law of nature parents regardless of race, color and socio-economic status love their children, have high aspirations for them and do anything that might help them to become successful individuals.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to some degree by each of the following:

1. The study was restricted to a student sample of 76; 27 fourth graders, 24 fifth graders and 24 sixth graders of a north central Oklahoma elementary school, which were randomly selected from a population of 148 students. The specificity and the small size of the sample is acknowledged to be a limitation of the study any generalization made from the study must be carefully evaluated with respect to the sample described.
2. Data on the socio-economic status of parents and the extent of their involvement in the schooling experiences of their children were obtained through teachers' responses to the appropriate questionnaires, so the accuracy of the data depends on the extent of teachers' knowledge of parents.
3. In developing the criterion for the classification of parents into lower, middle and higher socioeconomic groups, the change from five levels of income as it was reported in the February 1978 issue of Consumer Income Report to three levels of income was arbitrarily done by the investigator.
4. Parents in this study have been mostly low or uninvolved parents.
5. At the time of the data collection only 76 school days had passed from the academic year.

### Methodology and Design

In order to conduct the study 76 lower and middle class students were randomly selected from a population of 148 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students who were attending an elementary school in an agricultural community in north central Oklahoma. Ethnic groups of White, Black and American Indians were represented in the population of this study.

In collection data for this study, teachers identified parents as middle class or lower class, based on their level of income, education and occupation according to the criteria provided by the investigator. Data on parent involvement was gathered from the teachers' responses to a questionnaire which was developed by the investigator based on the four levels of Gordon's (1970) parents involvement model. To collect data on school behavior of the students the self-ratings form of the 1970 edition of Jesness Behavior Checklist was administered to all 76 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at the same time. For the use of this study the most recent academic achievement test scores of all of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students participating in the study on the 1970 edition of California Achievement Test were obtained from the school records. This test is administered to all of the students of the participating school once a year. For attendance which was measured by the number of days students had missed school minus the

number of days school had been in session, the data were obtained from the school records.

#### Format for Succeeding Chapters

Five chapters will fulfill the requirements of this study. Chapter I is the introductory chapter. Chapter II will be devoted to a review of the literature and related research. Chapter III discusses the instrumentation of the study. Chapter IV presents a statistical treatment of the data. Chapter V summarizes the entire study and gives conclusions drawn from the findings, makes recommendations in keeping with the conclusions and suggests areas for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature for the present study includes research studies that were concerned with parent involvement in the school. The studies are presented under the following headings: (1) parent involvement and academic achievement, (2) social class, (3) parent involvement and school attendance, (4) parent involvement and school behavior.

Efforts were made to gather and organize data and material which would permit an adequate description of the literature.

The reserach of the literature clearly demonstrated that when parents of school children are involved in the process of education their children are likely to demonstrate greater academic achievement. That is, as children see their own parents more involved in school affairs and openly participating in the educational process, these children will be encouraged to take a more active interest in school.

#### Parent Involvement and Academic Achievement

Sociological and psychological studies by Lewin (1971), Coch and French (1948), Blau (1967), and Getzels (1969)

substantiate the involvement of an individual in the process of establishing goals which are of concern to him will generally produce or increase the individual's commitment toward and pursuit of those goals. A survey study by Sheldon (1971) supported the hypothesis that both investment and involvement are associated with commitment to the organization. Sheldon concluded that, regardless of the other features of the relationship of the members of the organization, where there are investment and involvement, commitment is produced.

In expressing the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children, West (1967) states:

Perhaps Maycie Southhall expressed it best in quoting the words of a child speaking to his teacher in reference to his mother, the child said, 'How can you both teach me unless you know one another?' (p. 350).

Like Cohen and Rothenberg, Ware (1968) pointed out that with the rediscovery of the critical importance of the learning environment of the young child it is vital that home and school work together. Supporting Ware, Conant (1961) stressed that, no effort should be spared to enlist the support of parents in the education of their children.

In an attempt to apprehend the purposes that parents and other community citizens seek through involvement, the investigation by Cunningham (1970) and a national task force headquartered at the Ohio State University revealed these purposes to be: (1) to develop community understanding and support for educational objectives; (2) to supplement efforts



to school staff members in pursuit of educational objectives; (3) to articulate citizen expectations for schools, and (4) to insist upon accountability for educational objectives.

West (1967) identified four reasons that justify parental involvement: (1) it is a matter of democratic right; (2) research has shown conclusively that parents recognize the importance of education and are concerned for their children's educational progress; (3) the home offers a valuable resource to the school, and (4) greater home-school involvement may have a reflex effect upon the home.

Mclaughlin (1971), in reviewing Title I programs, cites the following assumptions underlying programs which support the participation of parents, especially lower class and black parents, in the affairs of schools:

1. Professionals tend to look at the home as the source of academic failure. It is thought that deficits in the home (rather than deficits in the school or innate ability) are the chief obstacles to academic achievement for lower class children (e.g. Goldbert: Taba). Their family environment do not furnish the skills and attitudes requisite to successful functioning in school (e.g. Ausubel and Ausubel). The argument thus, is that change in the family environment--specifically in ways that parents relate to children and the school--will enhance and facilitate children's academic growth (e.g., Barbrack, 1970).

2. A growing number of lower class parents, however, contend that the case of their children's failure lies not in the home or in the child but in the school. They are becoming increasingly frustrated and impatient with 'the system' and the failure of their children. In education as well as other areas, they are pushing for more initiative and greater involvement--for 'accountability'. In their view the teaching methods, curriculum and objectives of the school do not address the special needs of lower class children and in fact discriminate against them. . .

Lower class parents argue for a strong voice in determining what is taught in school, how it is taught, and who teaches it. They contend that the result of such involvement will be a more relevant and effective education for their children (pp. 1-3).

Grotberg (1972) stressed the opinion that as parents become involved in the programs for their children and learn how to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills, they foster their children's development and motivation toward school. Cloward and Jones (1963) also found the involvement of parents in school affairs to be positively correlated with their evaluations of the importance of education and their value of the school as an institution. Blau and Otis (1967) stressed that a family in which education is valued strengthens the motivation of children to acquire much education.

Georgia (1971) in stressing the importance of the parent-student-teacher relationship states that

From the day he enters kindergarten until the day he receives his high school diploma, the student is caught up in the complex student-parent-teacher relationship. From an educational standpoint, he must be the center of the relationship and, at its best this position at the center can provide him support that will allow and stimulate intellectual and emotional growth. At its worst, his position at the center can really mean being caught up in the middle, an unenviable position for anyone (p. 40).

He continues:

The parent and teacher each has his own unique view of the student. Using these views in a cooperative way can support and stimulate the successful student, can enable the parent and teacher to foresee possible difficulties that may develop in the future, and finally can help solve presently existing problems (p. 40).

He also holds that

Home and school share almost equally in the development of children into stable, self-confident adults able to face the complexities of today's world. Since neither parent nor teacher can accomplish the educational task alone, each must resolve to devote himself to the most creative cooperation possible, in this way making the parent-student-teacher triangle one of excellence (p. 40).

Lattimore (1977) describes her own recent experience with parents in class in the following manner:

The participation by the parents in the classroom has added greatly to my program, though there are times I feel like asking everyone over six years old to leave the room: The positive results I see are:

1. Parents see their own children more realistically.
2. The extra physical help is invaluable - more hands to do the work.
3. The public relations improve dramatically. Parents see the difficulties we face and criticize very infrequently.
4. Parents become very familiar with the curriculum and the total school program.
5. The children respond very well to new personalities and sometimes a certain parent can reach a child when nobody can (p. 17).

Adkins (1975) writes that it is time that the goals of the parents and the goals of the teachers be correlated and coordinated. She holds that an involved group of parents with an up-to-date understanding of how children learn is one of the strongest forces for improvement in any school. Adkins goes on to say:

When parents become involved in helping in the schools, they provide more opportunity for individualized learning. As they enhance the development of their children, they may have a tremendous impact on changing education. Today in the public schools there are developing more parent advisory councils. There is a need for parents, who know their own children best, to become involved in

planning for their education and in implementing the program (p. 3).

Willigine, Spence and Sadker (1972) in answering the question "Why is involvement in school valuable?" made the following statements:

1. Parent involvement can make schools and their programs more appropriate to the needs of the community.
2. Parent involvement increases community independence.
3. Parent involvement increases the sharing of responsibility in school administration.
4. Parent involvement yields increases resources for school activities.
5. Parent participation increases community competence.
6. Increased parental participation makes the school more approachable to other members of the community (p. 21).

Cloward and Jones (1963) stressed that all parents who were involved in the schools were likely to believe that the school and education could actually effect change in their children. Their participation in the school might have given them a greater sense of control over their own fate than the sense of control of those parents who were not involved in school matters. Cloward and Jones concluded that the sense of control over one's destiny is only one of a number of affective variables which have been found to significantly influence development. Other related variables such as self-esteem, motivation, level of aspiration, peer relationship, teacher attitudes, and the general school and home environment, were acknowledged as important factors in the child's development.

Zelman (1974) has suggested that educational administrators now favor more citizen participation in education. Taking their cue from social science research, the administrators tend to believe that giving "culturally deprived" parents feelings of control over the education of their children increased parent feelings of worth in educational issues and importantly, parent interest in their children's school work.

Given Rotter's (1966) hypothesis that he who thinks controls his own destiny, the use of parents in the classroom should be the goal of any program of involvement. Parents and teachers working side by side to help the child is the essence of a true partnership between the home and school. Some parents say that they are not equipped to assist in the classroom. It is true that some need training and guidance, but others are able without additional training to apply their talents in the classroom and are prepared to help in many classroom activities. Abbott (1973) suggested that in a program concerning community and parent involvement, all people who enter the classroom are seen as potential resources.

Stearns and Peterson (1973) have formed some impressions as a result of observing parent participation and their experience in compensatory education. They concluded that some parents have reservations about potential value of participating and that their participation often will fail to have any real impact on their children's achievement.

Parents may also be somewhat afraid of teachers and school personnel and are quite often uncertain of the response they can expect to receive once they enter the school. Parents are often under the pressure of meeting survival needs and experience feelings of psychological inferiority or social inferiority. Therefore, it must be demonstrated to parents that their participation is of value and at the same time one must help parent develop some confidence in the possibility that their contributions will be respected.

Brookover (1965) compared the development of three randomly assigned low-achieving junior high school student groups: one group received weekly counseling sessions; the second had regular contacts with specialists in particular interest areas; and the third group had parents who attended weekly meetings with school officials about their children's development. At the end of the year the first two groups showed no greater achievement as a result of their special treatment. However, the third group, whose parents had become more intimately involved in the school and in their children's development, showed heightened self-concept and made significant academic progress during the year.

The research reviewed indicated that when parents of school children are involved in the process of education, their children are likely to acquire greater achievement. Lopate (1969), from his analysis, concluded

This heightened achievement may be due to the lessening of distance between the goals of the school and the goals of the home and to the positive changes in teachers attitudes resulting from

their greater sense of accountability when parents of their students are visible in the schools. The child may also achieve better because he has increased sense of control over his own destiny when he sees his parents actively engaged in his school (p. 54).

There is much evidence supporting the thesis that parents who are involved in a direct way in their children's education tend to have children who achieve higher levels. Studies by Schiff (1963), Cohen (1969), and Muth (1971) have further established that even incidental involvement of parents in school affairs correlated with heightened pupil development.

#### Social Class

In countless studies it is documented that a strong relationship exists between all kinds of academic achievement variables and what has come to be known of socioeconomic status (SES). Indeed, the existence and strength of this relationship is so widely accepted that it is often cited as a self-evident fact. Boocock (1972) states that:

The family characteristic that is the most powerful predictor of school performance is socioeconomic status (SES): the higher the SES of the student's family, the higher his academic achievement (p. 36).

Welch (1974, p. 34) states "The positive association between school completion, family socioeconomic status, and measured ability is well known. Hennessy (1976) states:

One of the most consistent findings in educational measurement has been the relatively strong relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and level of performance on most measures of mental abilities (p. 1).

The performance of children from low socioeconomic status and minority groups on achievement tests have been quite well documented. Studies of achievement test performance and low social class status have provided a pictorial design which generally shows a deficit. Data in regard to school achievement of children on a national sample are massive. The findings of Coleman (1966) are consistent with earlier ones dealing with school achievement of disadvantaged children. Brazzul (1952) and Montague (1964) indicate social class and racial differences in favor of majority and high socioeconomic status groups. Charters (1963) states:

To categorize youth according to the social class position of their parents is to order them on the extent of their participation and degree of success in the American educational system. This has been so consistently confirmed by research that it can now be regarded as an empirical law. . . . SES predicts grades, achievement and intelligence test scores, retention at grade level, course failures, truancy, suspension from school, high school drop outs, and total amount of formal school (p. 739).

In summarizing the results of their now famous Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld and York, 1966) Coleman and his associates concluded:

Taking all of these results together, one implication stands out above all: that schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of an independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school (p. 325).

Coleman (1968) reported that, the median of the grades achieved by the sons in the lower class was C/D+ compared



with B/C+ for sons in the upper middle class. To explain the reason why there is such a difference in achievement of students from different social classes, he made the following statements:

- I. Parents attitudes and behaviors.
  1. Upper-middle class parents visited the school much more frequently than lower-lower class parents.
  2. Both sets of parents encouraged their sons to read but upper-middle class parents did more reading than lower-lower class parents.
  3. There was more often a place set aside in the home of the upper-middle class family as a study area for their sons and upper-middle class parents showed more tendency to provide assistance with required homework than did lower-lower class parents.
  4. More conversation occurred between parents and sons in the upper-middle class families than in the lower-lower class families. Upper-middle class parents talked more often with their sons about things that happened at school, for example about the kinds of things his class was doing or about special activities like movies or special programs he had seen at the school. When these boys had problems or troubles at school, upper-middle class parents were more inclined to talk with their sons about them. Also upper-middle class parents talked more often with their sons about college.
  5. Higher parental expectations relative to their son's educational achievement were observed for upper-middle class parents in terms of school marks, how much education their sons should have and the occupations they should pursue.
  6. Upper-middle class parents perceived themselves as having more positive school reinforcement behaviors than did lower-lower class parents. Also upper-middle class parents held more positive perceptions concerning their sons.
  7. Upper-middle class parents were more inclined to 'tell their son what was

expected of him and to see to it that he lived up to those expectations' than were the lower-lower class parents.

II. Sons attitudes and behaviors:

1. Sons in upper-middle class were members of many more young people's groups than were lower-lower class sons.
2. Upper-middle class sons spent more time studying things outside the school which did not constitute just the completion of school assignments. Uppermiddle class sons more often had school homework to do and devoted more time per week to their studies than did lower-lower class sons.
3. The two groups of sons differed significantly in their satisfactions with and interest in what went on in their classes at school. Nearly three-fourths of the upper-middle class sons were 'always' or 'most of the time' satisfied with and interested in what went on in their classes at school compared to less than half of the lower-lower class sons were only 'sometimes' satisfied with and interested in what went on in their classes at school (pp. 66-70).

Coleman believed that, if the parents in the lower lower class were able to internalize the same or similar school reinforcement behavior to those of parents in the upper-middle class, this should tend to diminish these (achievement) differences. He also made the following statement:

Parents of the lower-lower class recognized that education was the key to advancement for their sons and they wanted desperately to help. I am convinced that lower-lower class parents would welcome the opportunity to cooperate in helping their children succeed if they just knew what to do. The simple fact is that they don't know what to do because life in the public school for most of these parents was not a success story; rather it was one of frustration, disappointment, and defeat (p. 70).

School personnel must take the initiative with these parents

and it will not suffice merely to involve them in school affairs, they must also be encouraged to become actively involved in the community school program. A sincere and expressed concern from the school personnel for the welfare of the children will provide the necessary motivation for the involvement of these parents.

#### Parent Involvement and School Attendance

School attendance focuses on the degree of exposure of a student to the educational program. Though little evidence is available on the effect of absentee rates, it is logical to assume that excessive absence will have a negative effect on learning. Bartlett (1978) reports that until the last decade research did support the contention that little, if any correlation could be shown between school attendance and achievement in school subject matter. An analysis of twenty-four studies, dating back to 1924, shows an even split between those showing a relationship between attendance and achievement and those did not. He also reports that within the past ten years some half dozen studies have shown that a positive relationship does exist between attendance and specific subject matter and further that students with a lower absentee rate tend to develop a more responsible attitude; to display more satisfaction with school; and to achieve greater success in school endeavors. Bartlett in his conclusion made the following comment:

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time in order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional program, and to assist in keeping disruption of the educational environment to a minimum. While it is possible for an absent student to make up much of the school work missed, it is impossible to completely compensate for absence from classes. Students who have good attendance records are most likely to achieve higher grades, and enjoy school life to a greater degree (p. 3).

Research on the relationship between parent involvement in the school and student attendance is also limited. However there is an assumption that parental involvement in school raises the status of the school in the eyes of the child. A comprehensive study was conducted by the public welfare division of the St. Louis Board of Education (1961-1967) about the attitudes of parents toward education, school and school attendance and their effect upon the school attendance of children. The study showed 12 significant relationships between socio-economic factors and school attendance and a strongly significant relationship between overall attitude and school attendance. Hess (1969) emphasized that engagement of parents in the activities of schooling in a meaningful way would assist the student in developing more adequate and useful images of the school, of the teacher and of the student.

The purpose of Womack's (1973) study was to determine if a relationship existed between group parental involvement in classroom programs, pupil attendance and achievement. Findings of his study presented no evidence of significant relationship between parental involvement and pupil attendance

and achievement. But Kirby (1969) found that higher attendance of children was related to parent participation in school activities.

In relating school attendance to income, Sexton (1961, p. 98) reported that "The worst attendance record was found among the lowest income category of minority groups where under achievement was highest)."

#### Factors Associated with Non-Attendance

The problem of school attendance divides itself into two parts, namely, that of enrolling all of the children of school age, and that of keeping those enrolled in regular attendance. The first of these two phases of school attendance has been fairly well met for children of elementary school age through the operation of compulsory attendance laws and the development of public sentiment, but there are still enough children not in school so that there exists a very real problem which merits constant vigilance and improved methods (Otto, 1954).

Non-legal causes of non-attendance were investigated for the first time in 1915, as recorded in the studies of Irwin (1915) and Abbott (1917). These investigations which relied largely on statements made by pupils or parents showed that 50 percent of non-attendance was caused by illness of the child.

In the 1930's, investigators became more critical of students' and parents' reports. Increased home contacts

helped reveal the importance of such factors as neglect and socio-economic conditions.

In a study of non-attendance in Omaha, Sullenger (1935) reported non-cooperation of parents, lack of home supervision, and insufficient income as the major causes, and found a high correlation between low income status and absence. Wainscott (1935) stated that the most effective practice in preventing absences reported by principals was immediate contacting of the parent.

#### Medical Factors

Studies by Abbott (1917), Heck (1939), and the NEA (1950) indicated that illness is the most frequent cause of absence. In the Albuquerque study directed by Meeker (1970), however, there was found not to be a high correlation between the rate of absence and health factors.

#### Non-Medical Factors

From a study of factors associated with absenteeism from school Green (1963) concluded that absence was related to a number of variables, each of which is "symptomatic of an unfavorable adjustment between the learner and the educational and social environment in which he is operating." Social acceptance, and pupil-teacher relationships have been found to be especially significant in cases related to truancy. Cloward and Jones (1963) found pupil's fear of school, other people, failure and separation from their mothers as reasons for absence.

Other situational and personal factors have been identified as causes of absence. Cervantes (1965) concluded that the greater the number of negative factors, the greater the chances of poor attendance. He further stressed that if there was a primary relationship favorable to pupils attending school, all disadvantages are fairly readily overcome. This finding and that of Roberts (1965) both suggest the basic importance of primary reference groups, especially the family, favorable toward school attendance in shaping attendance behavior.

#### Parent Involvement and School Behaviour

Arsulich (1979) states that the proper functioning of any social system requires some regulation of its members. This is as true for a school system as it is for a society. Smith (1961) reports that for a school system to function properly the conduct of pupils must conform to conditions that are conducive to learning. Principals and teachers are by statutes and board regulations charged with responsibility for maintaining such order in the school.

Misbehavior has changed over the past few decades. In 1949, Henning conducted a study involving 255 high school principals and found that they rated the following as the most serious forms of misbehavior: lying, showing disrespect for faculty, petty thievery and congregating in the halls and lavatories. The recent Gallup poll (1979) reported that these increases have been noted not only in our

society as a whole but also on the elementary and secondary school campuses. Violent assaults on teachers and pupils, gang warfare, burglary, extortion and destruction of school property are included among the discipline problems of today.

According to Mayer (1976), the Senate's subcommittee on juvenile delinquency, vandalism alone is now costing American taxpayers about \$500,000,000 a year. He claims that as much is spent on patching up vandalism as is spent on textbooks. Some place the blame on the juvenile criminal justice systems. Others place the blame on parents, too much violence on T.V., compulsory school attendance, racial tensions, drugs, etc.

Teachers, in the NEA's 1976 nationwide survey on discipline and school violence, cite irresponsible parents and poor home conditions as the two major causes of discipline problems and violence in schools. However, they go on to list overcrowded classes, irrelevant curriculum, lack of teacher authority as other major contributing causes.

Dr. Owen Kiernan, Executive Secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, testifying before the Senate subcommittee (1975), listed six contributing factors in school violence: (1) lethargic courts which encourage youth to see themselves as not subject to legal control, (2) the openness and lack of control in schools, (3) excessive concern about student rights, (4) teacher apathy, (5) parent ignorance and indifference, and



(6) collateral educational influences such as T.V. and films which glorify violence and crime.

The National School Board Association (1977) organized an ad hoc committee on school discipline and surveyed a variety of schools regarding discipline and violence. They concluded that among the contributing factors to the problem are (1) large classes, (2) peer influence, (3) lax enforcement of rules, (4) incompetent and indifferent teachers, (5) poor communication between home and school, (6) poor home conditions, (7) weak controls in the schools, (8) emergence of student rights, (9) integration which has brought diverse cultures together, (10) weak administrative support and (11) irrelevant curriculum. Each of these probably do have an influence on some persons. Although many of these possible causes appear beyond the ability of educators to change, if parents and educators cooperate closely most of these contributing factors can be changed.

Feldhusen, Roeser and Thurston (1977) did regression analyses of their data to develop equations to predict social adjustment over a nine year period. Some of the best long range predictors were the original behavior status as identified by teachers, reading scores, and the father's educational level.

Duke (1977) stresses involvement of students, parents and the community in confronting and clarifying problems and in developing corrective measures. Arsulich (1979) also stressed the point that a low level of personal identi-

fication with the school and its goals among students, teachers, and parents are found positively associated with a high rate of vandalic behavior among students.

Avery (1978) described a humanitarian high school program which he developed in Sarasota, Florida. The purposes were described as "places to come and to go from, places in which together, to find support, to learn skills, to meet other people" (p. 331). Collaboration among students, community, parents, school board, staff and administration guided all efforts. School rules were cooperatively enforced, there was respect and trust expected from all involved. Avery reports that violence was reduced and there were few complaints from teachers and other school staff regarding student behavior. In order to overcome discipline problems at school, one of the Glasser's (1969) suggestions is that teachers and parents cooperate to control student's T.V. viewing.

The National School Board Association Ad Hoc Committee on Discipline (1977) studied the problems in schools throughout the U.S. and examined closely the schools in which successful programs to control violence, delinquency and vandalism were operating. They made six recommendations: (1) establish a school task force composed of parents, teachers, students, administrators, and school board members to survey the problem, (2) involve students, teachers, parents and administrators in developing discipline policies and procedures, (3) formulate and distribute written state-

ment of rules and policies for discipline, (4) provide in service training on discipline, (5) enforce the rules and prosecute all illegal actions, and (6) establish alternative educational programs.

In order to reduce the school behavioral problems Estes (1979) offers the following suggestions:

1. Involving community residents in workshops and study groups related to curriculum and school concerns.
2. Citizen advisory committees which are listened to when allowed to advise the school in the resolution of specific issues.
3. Parent visits/school conferences in the matter of reporting the progress of individual students to parents.
4. Informing parents of simple ways in which they can help their children succeed.
5. Encouraging children to write letters of self-evaluation to their parents.
6. Encouraging conferences with parents to discuss informally with teacher groups, and the administrator, how the school can best meet the needs of their children and the community (pp. 49-50).

Several writers call for a general humanization of the school and a restoration of a positive affective climate. Dececco (1975) in his large analysis of the "civil war in the high schools" argued that a humanistic climate must be restored, that schools have become cold, hostile places which breed crime and violence. He urged that there be open negotiation among students, teachers, parents, and administrators regarding school problems and the schools become true democratic institutions.

#### Summary of Literature Review

Studies reveal that involving the individual in goal

enacting processes tends to bring about a greater commitment on the part of the individual toward the institution for which the goals are established. Parents who are directly involved in their children's education seem to display a greater commitment to the educational organization and generally have children who achieve at higher levels.

Significant relationships have been found between school attendance and family attitude toward education. A high correlation has been found to exist between poor attendance and low socio-economic status. It was also concluded that the greater the number of negative factors, the greater the chance of poor attendance.

A strongly significant correlation has been found between social class and academic achievement, and one of the most consistent findings in educational measurement has been the relatively strong relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and level of performance on most measure of mental abilities.

In order to reduce behavioral problems in school, it is suggested that, schools with severe problems of violence, crime, vandalism and truancy should organize a task force of teachers, parents, administrators and students to survey the problems and develop plans for remedial programs.

There is substantial evidence supporting that schools which encourage parental involvement are more successful in educating children.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTATION

#### OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between academic achievement, school behavior, and attendance of students from lower and middle class homes, and the extent of parental involvement in the school experiences of these students.

In order to fulfill the requirements of this study, it was necessary to identify involved and uninvolved parents. It was also necessary to measure the academic achievement, attendance, and school behavior of the children of these parents. The procedure for sample selection and data collection are presented in this chapter.

The population of this study consisted of all 148 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students, in an elementary school in north central Oklahoma. The design of the study also required the inclusion of parents. Ethnic groups of Whites, Blacks and American Indians are represented in the population. The sample of this study consisted of 76 students who were randomly selected from the above population.

#### Independent Variables

The independent variables of this study are as follows:

1. Social Class. Teachers identified parents as middle class or lower class based on their level of income, education and occupation according to the criteria provided by the investigator (see Appendix A).

2. Parental Involvement. A questionnaire was developed by investigator based on the four levels of Ira Gordon's (1970) parent involvement model to identify the level of involvement of the parents, by the teachers' responses to the questionnaire. The levels of involvement are:

- a. parents as bystanders or observers,
- b. parents as volunteers,
3. parents as paid employees,
4. parents as decision makers

#### Description and Scoring of the Instrument

The parent involvement questionnaire is a checklist which has 36 items, nine items for each one of the four above-mentioned levels of Ira Gordon parent involvement model (see Appendix B). A score of five or more out of nine at any particular level indicates an active involvement of the parent at that level. A score of four or less at any level indicates that the parent is not involved at that level.

Items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29 and 33 correspond to the first level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model.

Items 2, 6, 10, 15, 18, 22, 26, 30 and 34 correspond to the second level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model.

Items 3, 7, 11, 14, 19, 23, 27, 31 and 35 correspond to the third level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model.

Items 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32 and 36 correspond to the fourth level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model.

### Reliability

When the questionnaire was developed, it was administered two times to 30 teachers within two weeks and a test-retest reliability was calculated. It was found that the probability associated with the occurrence of change in the level of parental involvement is less than .01. In fact the probability associated with  $x \leq 4$  is  $p = .001$ .

### Validity

The content validity of the instrument was approved by a jury of five professional educators.

After the parent involvement questionnaire was administered to the teachers and scored, it was found that some parents were not involved at any of the four levels of involvement and those who were involved, all were operating at the first level of Ira Gordon parent involvement model (parents as bystanders or observers). Then the study was continued with two levels of parent involvement, involved and uninvolved.

A. Involved parents. Parents who scored five or more at the first level of involvement were considered to be involved parents.

B. Uninvolved parents. Parents who scored four or less at the first level of involvement were considered to be uninvolved parents.

#### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables of this study are as follows:

1. Attendance: was measured by the number of days students had missed school minus number of days school had been in session. The attendance data were obtained from the school records (see Appendix C).

2. School behavior: to assess the school behavior of the students the self-ratings form of the 1970 edition of Jessness Behavior Checklist was administered to all 76 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students at the same time. While there was no time limitation after thirty minutes all of the students were through.

#### Description of the Checklist

The Jessness Behavior Checklist is designed to provide a systematic way of recording data about social behavior. Originally developed for use with delinquents in institutions, the checklist has now been modified to enable its use with persons of any age in a variety of settings. The checklist offers two methods for the measurement of social



behavior: self ratings and observer ratings. It consists of 80 items measuring 14 bipolar behavioral factors (see Appendix D).

The 14 behavior checklist scales are as follows:

1. Unobtrusiveness vs. Obtrusiveness (8 items). Unobtrusiveness is characterized by agreeable, inconspicuous, nonmeddlesome behavior. A low score is characteristic of loud, aggressive individuals who agitate, quarrel, and thrust their opinions upon others.

2. Friendliness vs. Hostility (5 items). Friendliness is defined as a disposition toward amiable cooperativeness, and noncritical acceptance of others. A low score is indicative of faultfinding, and disdainful, antagonistic behavior toward others, especially persons in authority.

3. Responsibility vs. Irresponsibility (9 items). Responsibility is indicated by adequate work habits, including promptness, initiative, and good care of equipment. Low scores suggest poor quality and low quantity of work performance.

4. Considerateness vs. Inconsiderateness (7 items). Considerateness refers to a tendency to behave with politeness and tact, and to show kindness toward others. A low score is indicative of callousness, tactlessness, and/or a lack of social skills.

5. Independence vs. Dependence (5 items). Independence characterizes persons who attempt to cope with tasks and make decisions without undue reliance on others.

Low scores characterize those who are not decisive or assertive, and who easily influenced by others.

6. Rapport vs. Alienation (5 items). Rapport is shown by those who interact easily with and have harmonious relations with persons in authority, such as teachers, counselors, therapists, etc. A low score is characteristic of those who avoid authority figures and do not appear to trust

7. Enthusiasm vs. Depression (5 items). Enthusiasm is characteristic of those who are cheerful, active, and involved with others. A low score indicates lack of interest, withdrawal from participation, and unhappiness.

8. Sociability vs. Poor Peer Relations (4 items). Sociability refers to the capacity for getting along well with others in groups. Low scores characterize those who do not cooperate well in group activities, and are not well liked.

9. Conformity vs. Non-Conformity (7 items). Conformity refers to the tendency to comply with accepted social conventions, laws or established rulse. Those who obtain low scores are prone to lie, steal, or otherwise disregard social or legal standards.

10. Calmness vs. Anxiousness (6 items). Calmness is defined by the presence of self-confidence, composure, personal security, and high self-esteem. Low scores characterize persons who lack confidence and appear anxious and nervous, expecially under stress.

11. Effective Communication vs. Inarticulateness (5 items). Effective communication refers to the capacity for clear expression, and the tendency to listen attentively to others. The person scoring low tends to avoid direct communication, does not express himself clearly, and/or does not attend to what others say.

12. Insight vs. Unawareness and Indecisiveness (6 items). Insight refers to accurate self-understanding and active engagement in efforts to cope with and solve personal problems. A low score is indicative of indecisiveness, little effort toward resolving personal problems, and inaccurate self-knowledge.

13. Social Control vs. Attention-Seeking (4 items). Social control is demonstrated by absence of loud, attention-demanding behavior. Those who are rated low tend to "horseplay," and display other loud, attention-seeking behaviors.

14. Anger Control vs. Hypersensitivity (4 items). Anger control is defined as the tendency to remain calm when frustrated. Low scores indicate a tendency to react to frustration or criticism with anger and aggression.

### Validity

Table I is a compilation of the validity values of both self-ratings and observer ratings forms of the checklist. Relationships between two independent observers (observer A vs. observer B) as well as those between the composite observer and self-appraisal scores are included. The validity

values in Table I are significantly different from zero. There is no single overall validity value reported for the checklist in its manual.

TABLE I  
VALIDITIES OF JESNESS BEHAVIOR  
CHECKLIST SCORES

Scale	Observer A vs. Observer B	Composite observer vs. Self-appraisal
Unobtrusiveness	.39	.35
Friendliness	.40	.22
Responsibility	.57	.45
Considerateness	.43	.37
Independence	.38	.10
Rapport	.39	.29
Enthusiasm	.46	.27
Sociability	.46	.32
Conformity	.36	.32
Calmness	.45	.23
Effective Communication	.44	.41
Insight	.52	.13
Social Control	.40	.29
Anger Control	.46	.39

### Reliability.

Test-retest reliability coefficients on a sample of 66 delinquent boys in a residential treatment program, evaluated at an interval of seven months, range from .09 to .51, with a median of .42, for the observer form and from -.05 to .58 with a median of .38, for the selfappraisal form.

### Norms

The norms presented in the manual are based on rating of 2,114 youths from 10-21 years old. Most of the youth are delinquents in two California Youth Authority Institutions.

3. Academic Achievement. Every year the elementary school staff administer the California Achievement Tests to their students. For the use of this study the most recent academic achievement scores of all of 4th, 5th and 6th grade students participating in the study on the 1970 edition of CAT, were obtained from school records (see Appendix C).

#### Description of California

##### Achievement Tests

California Achievement Tests are designed for measuring, evaluating and analyzing school achievement in terms of student performance in the basic curricular content areas of reading, mathematics, and language. The format of the test booklets is attractive. The print used is of the type and size found in the basal textbooks for corresponding grade levels.

### Reliability

Alternate-form reliabilities are reported for the total battery score, the three tests, the subtests and spelling. The alternate-form coefficients for the total battery range from .86 to .96, with median .93. For the reading, mathematics, and language tests, they are, of course, lower, ranging from .80 to .91, with a median reliability of .87 for language and reading and .855 for math. For the subtests, the median reliabilities are still lower, vocabulary .84; comprehension .79; computation, .81; concepts and problems, .82; auditing .44; mechanics, .84; usage .88; and spelling .78.

### Validity

Evidence of the content validity is based largely on the procedures followed in the development of the tests. Statistical data related to validity include intercorrelation coefficients for "typical grades of each level of form A" and item difficulties for individual items in both forms. The median of the within-grade correlations between reading and mathematics is .75; between reading and language, .79; and between mathematics and language, .75.

### Norms

The standardization sample was selected by a twostage method of stratified random sampling from public school districts enrolling more than 300 students and from Catholic

schools. The public school population was stratified according to geographic region, average enrollment per grade, and community type; and the Catholic schools, according to enrollment, geographic region, and type of school (diocesan or private). The sampling technique provided for proportionate representation in the national norms of minority group students in the total school population. The final standardization sample contained 203,684 students from schools in 36 states.

#### Statistical Treatment

Because of the nature of the data in this study, the statistical treatments were as follows:

1. The Point-biserial correlation was used to determine:
  - a. The relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parents socio-economic status.
  - b. The relationship between the school behavior of the children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  - c. The relationship between school behavior of the children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

The formula for point-biserial correlation is:

$$r_{pb} = \frac{Y_1 - Y_0}{S_Y} \frac{N_1 N_0}{N(N-1)}$$

where:

$Y_1$  = The mean of the values of the continue variable for person in dictomous category 1

$Y_0$  = The mean of the values of the continue variable for persons in dictomous category 0

$N_1$  = Number of persons in dictomous category 1

$N_0$  = Number of persons in dictomous category 0

$S_Y$  = The estimated standard deviation of the population for continue variables from which the sample was taken

$N$  = The total number of persons in the sample ( $N_1 + N_0$ )

The formula for the estimated standard deviation of the population is:

$$S_Y = \frac{\sum Y^2}{N-1} - \frac{(\sum Y)^2}{N(N-1)}$$

Then for testing the significance of  $r_{pb}$  at .05 level, the hypothesis that  $r_{pb} = 0$  can be tested by the t-test.

$$t = r_{pb} \frac{N-2}{1 - r_{pb}^2}$$

2. The Fisher exact probability test is used to determine:



- d. The relationship between the academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their social experiences.
- e. The relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

The formula for the Fisher exact probability test is:

$$P = \frac{(A+B)!(C+D)!(A+C)!(B+D)}{N!A!B!C!D!}$$

Where

A	B	total
		A + B
C	D	C + D
		N
Total	A + C	B + D

3. The Two-way Chi Square ( $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ) is used to determine:

- f. The relationship between academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
- g. The relationship between attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

- h. The relationship of the involvement of the parents in their youngsters' school experiences and their socio-economic status.
- i. The relationship between the academic achievement of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.
- j. The relationship between school attendance of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.

The computational formula for two-way chi square is:

$$X^2 = \frac{N (bc - ad - N/2)^2}{(a+b)(c+d)(a+c)(b+d)}$$

where a, b, c, d = the observed frequencies for each of the four cells of the 2 x 2 matrix (as shown below) , and

N = the number of cases.

		A		
		A <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>2</sub>	
B	B <sub>1</sub>	a	b	a + b
	B <sub>2</sub>	c	d	c + d
		a + c	b + d	N = a + b + c + d

## CHAPTER IV

### PROCEDURES, ANALYSIS AND TREATMENT OF DATA

This chapter contains a description of procedures used by the investigator to gather data for this study. In addition, this chapter contains the tabulated results of the data from the instruments described in Chapter III. The primary purpose for gathering data was to test the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
2. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
3. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
4. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from middle class homes

and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

5. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
6. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
7. There is no relationship between the involvement of the parents in their youngsters school experiences and their socio-economic status.
8. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.
9. There is no relationship between the school attendance of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.
10. There is no relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

#### Subjects

The 76 sample members of this study, were selected through a simple random selection from a population of 148 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle and lower

class homes who were attending an elementary school in an agricultural community in north central Oklahoma. Ethnic groups of White, Black and American Indians are represented in the population of this study.

#### Data Collection

Teachers identified parents as middle class or lower class, based on their level of income, education and occupation according to the criteria provided by the investigator. Data on parent involvement was gathered from the teachers' responses to a questionnaire which was developed by the investigator based on the four levels of Gordon's (1970) parent involvement model. To collect data on school behavior of the students the self-ratings form of the 1970 edition of Jesness Behavior Checklist was administered to all 76 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students at the same time. While there was no time limitation, after thirty minutes all of the students were through. Every year the elementary school staff administer the California Achievement Test to their students. For the use of this study the most recent academic achievement test scores of all of the fourth, fifth and sixth grade students participating in the study on the 1970 edition of CAT, were obtained from the school records. For attendance which was measured by the number of days school had been in session minus the number of days students had missed school. The data were obtained from the school records too.

### Testing the Hypothesis

The hypotheses of this study were tested by use of three different tests of statistical significance. The Fisher Exact Test (Siegel, 1956, pp. 96-105). The point-biserial correlation (Bruning & Kints, 1977, pp. 182-5) and the two-way Chi Square (Linton & Gallo, 1975, pp. 69-73). In the remainder of this chapter, each hypothesis is stated, and preceding it the statistic used to test the hypothesis is stated. The probability level for this study was set at .05. The magnitude of the obtained relationships are listed in the related tables.

1. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of the children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

To test this hypothesis, the sample was divided at the average grade level. Out of 29 lower class students, nine of their parents were considered to be involved in their child's school experiences and the remaining 20 parents were considered to be uninvolved.

After using the Fisher Exact Test it was found that there was no relationship between the academic achievement of the students from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table II).

2. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

TABLE II  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
OF THEIR CHILDREN: LOWER  
CLASS HOMES

Academic Achievement	Level of Parent Involvement	
Average grade level	Involved	Uninvolved
Above	0	8
Below	9	12

To test this hypothesis, the sample was divided at the median attendance score, and the Fisher Exact Test was used to analyze the data. It was found that, there was no relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table III).

TABLE III  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND ATTENDANCE OF  
THEIR CHILDREN: LOWER CLASS HOMES

Attendance	Level of Parental Involvement	
Median attendance score	Involved	Uninvolved
Above	3	11
Below	6	9

3. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

To test this hypothesis point-biserial correlation was used. It was found that, there is no significant relationship between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table IV).

TABLE IV  
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT,  
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT,  
ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

	Lower Class		Middle class	
	School Behavior	Academic Achievement	School Behavior	Attendance
Parental Involvement	-.22 <sup>a</sup> (27)	.60 <sup>b</sup> (1)	.12 <sup>a</sup> (45)	.0004 <sup>b</sup> (1)

<sup>a</sup> point-biserial correlation coefficient

<sup>b</sup> Chi square value

Degrees of freedom are reported in parentheses

4. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.



To examine this hypothesis the two-way Chi Square was used and it was found that there is no significant relationship between academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table IV).

5. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

To examine this hypothesis the two-way Chi Square was used and it was found that there is no significant relationship between the school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table IV).

6. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

To examine this hypothesis, the point-biserial correlation was used and it was found that there is no significant relationship between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table IV).

7. There is no relationship between the involvement of the parents in their youngsters school experiences and their socio-economic status.

To test this hypothesis, the two-way Chi Square was used and it was found that, there is a significant relationship between the involvement of the parents and their socio-economic status. Middle class parents tend to be more involved in the school experiences of their children, than lower class parents. The null hypothesis was rejected (see Table V).

8. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of the children and their parents socio-economic status.

To examine this hypothesis the two-way Chi Square was used and it was found that, there is a significant relationship between the academic achievement of children and their parents' socio-economic status. Students from middle class homes achieved significantly higher than the students from lower class homes. The null hypothesis was rejected (see Table V).

9. There is no relationship between the school attendance of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

To test this hypothesis the sample was divided at the median of the attendance score. There were 47 middle class students and 29 lower class students. Then the Chi square was used. It was found that there is no significant relationship between school attendance of children and their parents' socio-economic status. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table V).

TABLE V

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF  
THE PARENTS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT,  
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, ATTEND-  
ANCE AND SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

	Parent Involvement	Academic Achievement	Attendance	School Behavior
Socio-economic status of the Parent	4.01* <sup>b</sup> (1)	8.03* <sup>b</sup> (1)	.16 <sup>b</sup> (1)	.12 <sup>a</sup> (74)

<sup>a</sup> point-biserial correlation coefficient

<sup>b</sup> Chi square value

Degrees of freedom are reported in parentheses

\* significant relationship

10. There is no relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

To examine this hypothesis the point-biserial correlation was used and it was found that there is no significant relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parent's socio-economic status. The null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table V).

#### Summary

The ten null hypotheses of this study were tested and the results are reported in this chapter. It was found that there were no significant relationships between the variables of the null hypotheses I, II, III, IV, V, VI, IX and

X, but there were significant relationships between the variables of the null hypotheses VII and VIII.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to determine if there was a significant relationship between academic achievement, school attendance and school behavior of children coming from lower and middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

#### Summary

In order to conduct the study 76 lower and middle class students were randomly selected from a population of 148 fourth, fifth and sixth grade students who were attending an elementary school in a north central Oklahoma community.

To assess the extent of the involvement of parents in their children's school experiences a questionnaire was developed by the investigator and data relative to this variable was obtained from the teachers responses to this questionnaire. Teachers also identified parents as lower or middle class based on the criteria provided by the investigator. To collect data on academic achievement and school attendance of the students, scores on the 1970 edition of California Achievement Test and attendance scores were

obtained from the school records. The students' scores on the 1970 edition of Jesness Behavior Checklist provided the investigator with data on school behavior. Chapter III contains a complete description of all the instruments.

The results of this study support research and related literature on the existence of significant positive relationships: (1) between the socio-economic status of the parents and the academic achievement of their children, and (2) between the socio-economic status of the parents and the extent of their involvement in their children's school experiences. (Charters, 1963; Coleman, 1966; Coleman and Alwin, 1968; Bococock, 1972, Welch, 1974; Hennessy, 1976). It shows no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their children's school behavior and attendance. It also shows no significant relationship between the involvement of the parents in their children's school experiences and academic achievement, school behavior and attendance of the students from lower or middle class homes.

The major objective of this study was to test the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
2. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the

- involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
3. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  4. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of children from middle class homes and involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  5. There is no relationship between the school attendance of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  6. There is no relationship between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  7. There is no relationship between the involvement of the parents in their youngsters school experiences and their socio-economic status.
  8. There is no relationship between the academic achievement of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.
  9. There is no relationship between the school attendance of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

10. There is no relationship between the school behavior of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

Data was analyzed using Two-Way Chi Square, Point-Biserial Correlation and Fisher Exact Test. The level of confidence was set at the 0.05 level.

### Findings

The findings of this study are as follows:

1. No significant relationship was found between the academic achievement of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
2. No significant relationship was found between the school attendance of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
3. No significant relationship was found between the school behavior of children from lower class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
4. No significant relationship was found between the academic achievement of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
5. No significant relationship was found between the school attendance of children from middle class



- homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
6. No significant relationship was found between the school behavior of children from middle class homes and the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
  7. A significant relationship was found between the involvement of the parents in their youngsters school experiences and their socio-economic status.
  8. A significant relationship was found between the academic achievement of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.
  9. No significant relationship was found between the school attendance of the children and their parent's socio-economic status.
  10. No significant relationship was found between the school behavior of the children and their parents' socio-economic status.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings of this study:

1. The academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

2. The attendance pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower calss homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
3. The behavior pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
4. The academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
5. The attendance pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
6. The behavior pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
7. Middle class parents seem to be involved in their children's school experiences more than lower class parents.
8. Middle class fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seem to be achieving better than lower class students.

9. The attendance pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seems to be independent of their parents' socio-economic status.
10. The behavior of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seems to be independent of their parents' socio-economic status.

#### Theoretical Considerations of This Study

In any society different families belong to different social classes, children of these families go to school with different backgrounds, achieve and perform differently. Each individual is reared in a specific sub-culture that has its own style of interpersonal relations and intellectual operations. The burden for how an individual is developed rests with the general structure of society in terms of its demands upon the individual, especially during the process of socialization within the family. The writer believes that intellectual development of a child to a large extent depends on the experiences which he has in his home environment. Members of each social class act within the limits of their specific norms, customs and traditions. These sub-cultures facilitate development of differing kinds of intellectual capabilities.

It is acknowledged that the parents in this study have been low or uninvolved parents. It is also acknowledged that the criteria upon which parents in this study have been

assigned to different socio-economic levels were arbitrarily set by investigator.

In this study considering the following conclusions:

1. The academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
4. The academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
7. Middle class parents seem to be involved in their children's school experiences more than lower class parents.
8. Middle class fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seem to be achieving better than lower class students.

It can be said that since there was not a significant relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower class homes, the low involvement of their parent in their school experiences cannot be the only negative factor causing their low academic achievement. Also since there was not a significant relationship between parent involvement and the academic achievement of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes, the high involvement of their parents in their school experiences cannot be the only

positive factor causing their high academic achievement. In other words, parent involvement is only one of many elements that lower class students enjoy less, and middle class students enjoy more of.

Considering the following conclusions:

2. The attendance pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from lower class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
5. The attendnace pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.
9. The attendance pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seems to be independent of their parents' socio-economic status.

Although the lower class student were not achieving as well as middle class students, they all had very high attendance scoures. The point that students had high attendance rates, independent of their parents' socio-economic status and involvement in their school experiences could be attributed to various factors such as: compulsory attendance laws, the attendance policy of the school, and the fact that students were usually taken to school by bus or by their parents.

Considering the following conclusions:

3. The behavior pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth

grade students from lower class homes seems to be independent of the involvement of their parents in their school experiences.

6. The behavior pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students from middle class homes seems to be independent of their parents in their school experiences.

10. The behavior pattern of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students seems to be independent of their parents' socio-economic status.

Parent's involvement in the school experiences of their children and their socio-economic status are two of many factors affecting the children's behavior. Children at birth enjoy an unlimited natural, inborn thirst for learning and an unlimited potential for perceiving, behaving, and becoming whatever they might choose to become. But because each individual is reared in a specific sub-culture that has its own style of interpersonal relations and intellectual operations, how the individual behaves depends on how his/her unique behavior pattern is developed and that rests with the general structure of the immediate environment in terms of its demands upon the individual, especially during the process of socialization within the family.

Some of the reasons why middle class student perform better at school are: middle class parents have more time for their children, visit the school more frequently, encourage their children to read and do more reading themselves,

usually set a place aside for their children as a study area, talk with their children about what goes on at school more often and listen to their children, expect more of their children and set higher standards for them, have had positive school experiences and perceive themselves as having more positive school reinforcement behaviors.

#### Recommendations

The data from this study and the review of the related literature provide a basis for making recommendations to those who are responsible for teacher-training programs. The following recommendation is made:

Teachers during their training programs in college or through inservice training should be made aware of the fact that children from different social classes due to their life experiences and their uniqueness, learn, achieve, behave and perform differently. Teachers should not treat them equally and expect equal performances from them, because they are not equal to begin with. In order to succeed at school each requires a different amount of work and attention from their teachers. Like Paracelsus (1956) says, "Anyone who imagines that all fruits ripen at the same time as the strawberries knows nothing about grapes (p. xxiii)".

#### Recommendations for Further Research

1. Develop a study, based on the present study's review of literature and findings, to determine more precisely

the nature of the relationship between parents' involvement and the success their children have in their school experiences in an urban industrial community.

2. Develop a study to determine more precisely why parents are motivated at different levels to become involved with their child's education.

3. Repeat this study in both urban and rural communities, but collect data in last week of the academic year, administer parent involvement questionnaire to parents, and use the observer form of the Jesness Behavior Checklist.

4. Examine further the interrelationships between "low achievement" children, family size, and parent's income level.

5. Examine further the interrelationship between "low achievement" children, family size, and parental educational attainment.

6. Conduct a study to determine if busing effects parental involvement (parental involvement at varying levels, as defined in the present study).

It is the investigator's belief that educators should initiate parental involvement programs to develop the interest parents have in their child's education. Parents who are involved as bystanders, volunteers, trained workers, and those who are involved in the decision making process can together with the educators build strong families, facilitate children's efforts to reach their potentials, become more capable, develop positive attitudes towards school, and



in this manner contribute to raising the quality of community life.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to this realization and generate further research into the area of parental involvement with their children's education.

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APPENDIXES



APPENDIX A

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE PARENT(S)

## Socioeconomic Status of the Parent(s)

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name or Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Approximate income level of the parent(s).

Please check one of the three categories, based on the given criteria.

Lower Class       Middle Class       Higher Class

2. Educational level of the parent(s).

Please check one of the three categories, based on the given criteria.

Lower Class       Middle Class       Higher Class

3. Occupational level of the parent(s).

Please check one of the three categories, based on the given criteria.

Lower Class       Middle Class       Higher Class

APPENDIX B

PARENT INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

## Parent Involvement Questionnaire

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name or Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the following items that the parent of the above mentioned student has participated in this school year.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Usually attends PTA.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Makes costumes, dramatic sets, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. As an employee of the school takes attendance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. He/She helps school officials in developing new ideas and programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Attends scheduled parent teacher conferences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Volunteers to supervise playground activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. As an employee of the school takes monitoring responsibility.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. He/She is a member of school advisory committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Visits school when invited.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Volunteers for some responsibilities on a field trip.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. As an employee of the school duts, cleans, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. He/She is a member of curriculum planning committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Attends open house programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. As a teacher's aide maintains instructional file.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Calls on new parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. He/She advises school staffs about community conditions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Attends student performances.

- \_\_\_ 18. Presents interesting hobbies.
- \_\_\_ 19. As a teacher's aide locates, duplicates and distributes materials.
- \_\_\_ 20. He/She is a member of textbook committee.
- \_\_\_ 21. Attends parents day program.
- \_\_\_ 22. Provides transportation to athletic events.
- \_\_\_ 23. As an employee of the school helps as the nurse's aide.
- \_\_\_ 24. He/She suggests solutions to school problems.
- \_\_\_ 25. Attends "Back to School Night" programs.
- \_\_\_ 26. Telephones parents about absentees.
- \_\_\_ 27. As a teacher's aide prepares materials and sets up displays and demonstrations.
- \_\_\_ 28. He/She advises school staffs regarding budget priorities.
- \_\_\_ 29. Attends formal sessions conducted by the school.
- \_\_\_ 30. Shares vocational talents.
- \_\_\_ 31. As a teacher's aide tutors small groups.
- \_\_\_ 32. He/She assists in personnel selection and evaluation.
- \_\_\_ 33. Visits the teacher when teacher asks for it.
- \_\_\_ 34. Volunteers as room parent to assist in school parties, or other extra curricular activities.
- \_\_\_ 35. As a teacher's aide corrects objective tests.
- \_\_\_ 36. Participates in gathering of survey information regarding school programs.

APPENDIX C

MEASURES OF ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STUDENT

Measures of Attendance and Academic  
Achievement of the Student

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name or Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the blanks below:

1. How many days school has been in session \_\_\_\_\_?
2. How many days the student has been absent \_\_\_\_\_?  
ats \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Academic Achievement Test Score \_\_\_\_\_

VITA 2

Hadi Shakiba-Nejad

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, SCHOOL BEHAVIOR AND ATTENDANCE OF STUDENTS FROM LOWER AND MIDDLE CLASS HOMES AND THE EXTENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tehran, Iran, June 21, 1954, the son of Mr. and Mrs. M. T. Shakiba-Nejad.

Education: Graduated from Dr. Hashtroudy High School, Tehran, Iran, in May, 1972; received Bachelor's degree in English language from Translation College, Tehran, Iran in August, 1977; received Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in August, 1978; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1984.