

PERCEPTIONS OF SPANISH AMERICAN MALE  
YOUTH CONCERNING FATHERS

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1964

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
May, 1972

Thesis  
1972  
B 873p  
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NOV 13 1972

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer is sincerely grateful to Dr. James Walters, Professor, Family Relations and Child Development, whose many helpful suggestions, guidance, and encouragement throughout the study made its completion possible.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. Nick Stinnett, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development, and Dr. Josephine Hoffer, Associate Professor, Family Relations and Child Development, for their time, encouragement, and comments in the critical reading of the manuscript.

A special thanks and appreciation are extended to the following: Mr. Thomas Lockwood, Director of Special Services of the Albuquerque, New Mexico Public Schools, for permission to conduct testing in the schools; Mr. W. D. Ford, Principal of Harrison Junior High School; Mr. Arlando Esparza, Principal of Washington Junior High School; and Mr. Otto Geer, Principal of Lincoln Junior High School, for their cooperation given in obtaining data for this study.

Appreciation is also expressed to the counselors for their cooperation and assistance in test administration; and to all the students who participated in this study.

Special recognition is expressed to my husband, Donald, and to my parents, for their continued patience, understanding, encouragement, and support throughout this study.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the largest ethnic subgroups in the United States consists of the Spanish American and/or Mexican American. Approximately 87 percent of the estimated total Spanish American group of five million reside in the Southwest. In New Mexico, Spanish Americans comprise 40 percent of the total population of the state (U. S. Census, 1970; U. S. Census, 1971).

Current research indicates that the structure of the Spanish American and/or Mexican American family has undergone considerable cultural change in the United States. This change has undoubtedly been influenced by the technological aspects of the United States. Samora (1966) noted that the structure of the family has undergone considerable change, undoubtedly influenced by urbanization and the culture of the dominant society. Dobrin (1971) also observed that economic conditions in the United States have changed some of the rigid family patterns in the Mexican American family.

Peñalosa (1968) reports that Spanish American family patterns are being modified in the direction of greater stability. The expanding economy and society are now providing more opportunities for personal expression, and also more situations for the development of self-esteem, particularly for the men. Since the patriarchal society was formerly based on the absolute economic dependence of the family on the father,

it is evident that an expanding and modernizing economy could be influencing the cultural change.

Grebler, Moore and Guzman (1970) found that among the Mexican American family the extended family household is extremely rare. According to Burma (1970), Spanish-speaking persons in the United States have had to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers and in so doing they have become at least partially acculturated to the American way of life. The transition from a folk to an urban existence has involved much breakdown of both the extended family and the nuclear family.

Knowlton (1961) further indicates that the Spanish Americans are undergoing great social and cultural changes. Since cultural changes among the Spanish American family have become more evident, the need for more research on parent-child relationships becomes apparent.

#### Need for Research

Peñalosa (1968) pointed out that family life has not been the principal focus of Spanish American research. Little is known about the Spanish American's family attitudes concerning role perceptions and role relationships. There is a particular need for research concerning the role perceptions of male youth since it is expected that the Spanish American is undergoing changes of the traditional patriarchal, authoritarian family. Such information would increase one's understanding of the Spanish American culture, and also be useful toward identifying the need for curriculum changes in family life education.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions pertinent to this study are presented to



clarify for the reader specific terms. The terms "Spanish American" and "Mexican American" will be used interchangeably in this study.

Spanish American: This term has referred traditionally to the descendants of New Mexico. González (1967) states that the term "Spanish American" may subsume three somewhat different groups: (a) the descendants of the Spanish Colonials; (b) the Mexican Americans, whose ancestors came more recently from Mexico; and (c) the Mexican nationals, of whom there are relatively few at the present time.

Spanish American male youth: Boys who identified themselves as Spanish American by Spanish surnames and/or by Spanish American or Mexican descent.

Mexican American: This term refers to people of Mexican descent.

Extended family: Basically, the extended family may include one or more relatives--the wife's unmarried sister or widowed father, for example, or even another nuclear family related to the head of the household.

There are two specific reasons why the criterion of using only Spanish surnames were not used in this study for the selection of subjects:

1. Many persons of Spanish American or Mexican descent may have acquired a non-Spanish surname through intermarriages.
2. Many persons with Spanish surnames may not be of Spanish American or even of Mexican heritage.

#### Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Spanish American male youth concerning fathers and to relate

these perceptions to various psychological and sociological factors which were found to be relevant in the literature.

The study was designed to examine the hypotheses that no significant differences exist in perceptions concerning fathers among respondents classified according to: (a) age; (b) classification in school; (c) number of siblings; (d) social class; (e) residence for major part of life; (f) type of disciplinary control in the home; (g) agent of discipline; (h) degree of closeness of relationship with the father; and (i) degree of childhood happiness.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Social and economic changes in the Western culture have brought about the possibility of increased time spent with the children by the father. As men assume increasing responsibility for child-rearing, the need for more research on the father-child relationship becomes apparent.

In the most extensive review of the literature on fatherhood to date, Benson (1968) points out that fatherhood has largely been neglected in social research. Peterson, Becker, Hellmer, Shoemaker, and Quay (1959) also suggested that the significance of the father in the formation of his children's personalities has not received adequate attention.

Limited research has been conducted concerning the psychological and social aspects of the parent-child relationships in the Spanish American and/or Mexican American family. Most of the research which has been conducted concerning parent-child relationships has been concerned with other ethnic groups. Walters and Stinnett (1971) in reviewing the literature during the last decade noted that the theory upon which research is based concerning parent-child relationships frequently ignores changes in roles among ethnic groups over periods of time. This further indicates a particular need for research concerning the fact that parents have a differential impact among various ethnic groups

(Walters and Stinnett, 1971).

Following are some observations evolving from the limited research on parent-child relationships in Spanish American and/or Mexican American families, and also from the research dealing with parent-child relationships in general.

#### Effects of Acculturation on Mexican American Family Structure

As in all phases of the Spanish American culture today, the family is on a continuum of acculturation (Saunders, 1954). Mead (1955) is also in agreement.

In the process of acculturation, families undergo circumstances which upset or seriously disrupt the orderly unit of the family. Hernandez (1967) found that in homes where the father is unable to provide an income that will support the family and the mother must go to work, the father's role as head of the family becomes a nominal one. Therefore, the mother is likely to expect to assume a more dominant role in family decisions.

Ramirez, Petersen, and Taylor (1971) found that the changes taking place in both the Mexican American male and female roles as a result of acculturation have made a particular impact toward having the husband share in the responsibilities of child-rearing. Their findings also indicated that acculturation has resulted in a decrease in the authority of the male and a tendency on the part of the females to compete for positions of influence in the family. Ramirez (1967) further emphasized that the Mexican American may be experiencing conflicts as a result of acculturation stress.

## Cultural Background and Possible Effects on Child's Personality

Although many factors must be considered in any attempt to determine cultural background influences upon children, the degree to which an individual's personality is affected is vitally important. In a study of cross-cultural comparisons of like-situated groups of Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans, Zurcher (1965) found that Mexican Americans were significantly more particularistic than the Anglo American. "Particularistic" was defined as the indication of exclusive attention or devotion to one's own culture which may be influenced by cultural background. Similarly, Nall (1962) compared the role expectations of Mexican American and United States high school students. His findings indicated that the Mexican American group exhibited a higher degree of particularistic-type role expectations than did the United States group, however, the Mexican Americans' role expectations were classified into three subgroups: (a) one oriented to Mexican patterns; (b) another to Anglo American patterns; and (c) the third exhibiting an emergent, but not transitional pattern.

These findings would indicate that an individual's personality is affected by the socio-cultural environment in which it is developed. Certain values are formed and the individual will expect certain role behavior in himself and in others to be shaped around these values.

## Father's Influence on Son's Relationship With Peers

There is considerable evidence contending that a boy's relationship

with his father may influence peer relations. A son's warm companionship with his father was found by Hoffman (1961) to be conducive to good peer adjustment. It is possible that this companionship gives the son a model for interaction with others. Benson (1968) has pointed out that the father may be of great importance in determining his son's acceptance in the peer group because the father promotes masculine habits that may foster or interfere with his acceptance by other boys.

Gray (1957) found boys who were rated high in acceptance by their peers to be strongly identified with the appropriate sex role which is a function of identification with the father. Similarly, Payne and Mussen (1956) observed that boys who were strongly identified with their fathers were calmer and more friendly in their social relationships than were boys who identified less thoroughly with their fathers. Carlson (1963) found children identifying with supportive parents to be more acceptable to their peers, more self-accepting, and less dependent upon current social relationships.

Helper (1955) observed that boys who conspicuously modeled themselves after their fathers were likely to be rated high in social acceptance and adjustment in high school. Similarly, boys who perceived themselves to be more like their fathers than their mothers were found to be regarded more favorably by their peers (Gray, 1959). Lynn and Sawrey's (1959) findings indicated how important the father is to the son; since they found that father-absent boys showed deficiencies in their peer adjustment.

#### Effects of Father-Absence

Various research studies have been undertaken in an attempt to

determine the effects of father-absence upon children, especially boys. Batt (1969) indicated that the Mexican American father's absence may preclude the possibility of the son to identify with a reasonable representation of the masculine role.

Benson (1968) has pointed out that sex identification may pose particular difficulties for the fatherless boy. Nash (1965) also indicated that boys reared without a father figure often fail to acquire masculine attitudes. However, Greenstein (1966) failed to find any significant differences between boys whose fathers were present and father-absent boys in any of the dimensions usually related to sex-typing.

Perhaps the discrepancy in the findings of the two studies above can be explained by a study by Biller (1968) whose results suggest that underlying sex-role orientation is more influenced by father-absence than are the more manifest aspects of masculinity. It appears that a vague or feminine orientation may persist even though a boy becomes masculine in certain aspects of his behavior.

Bach (1964) noted that father-absent children would see males in parental roles less often as disciplinarians and rule givers. Lynn and Sawrey (1959) further support these findings by indicating that father-absent boys are insecure in their masculinity which often leads to excessive forms of compensatory behavior. Therefore, it would appear that boys without stable father figures may find it difficult in adjusting to the masculine role.

The specific reason for the father's absence is another important factor which may influence its effect upon the children. Illsley and Thompson (1961) found that the father's death had little adverse effect upon children, whereas his absence due to separation or divorce was

more detrimental. Bernard (1956) indicated that the entrance of a new parent has a more adverse effect after the original parent's death than after divorce.

Another important factor in considering the effects of paternal deprivation is the age of the child. Blaine (1963) indicated that one of the most important and traumatic periods to lose a parent is between the ages of three and six. Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, and Landry (1968) agreed with this as they found that father-absence has a depressive effect throughout life, but the greatest effects occur during the early and middle years of childhood. Nash (1965) concluded that the preschool period is the most critical for the son's identification with the father and that permanent deficiencies may result if he is not present at this time.

Levin and Sears (1956) indicated that the son's aggressive behavior may be affected by father-absence. Their findings suggest that boys whose fathers live at home are more aggressive than boys who come from father-absent homes. This finding may be due to the fact that the father serves as an aggressive model for his son as is pointed out by Sears (1951).

Behavioral difficulties have also been related to father-absence. Palmer (1960) found that children with behavioral problems were more likely than those without manifest behavioral difficulties to have had extensive separations from their fathers, especially during the preschool years. Lynn and Sawrey (1959) showed that boys whose fathers were away for long periods of time evidenced poorer personality adjustment, greater immaturity, and poorer peer group adjustment than those whose fathers were present. According to Stolz (1954), war-separated



children displayed more serious behavior problems, more fears, and more tensions than boys who had not been separated from their fathers. In addition, there was consistent evidence that the father-separated boys had greater feelings of anxiety.

### Social Class and Child-Rearing

Social class is an often studied variable in research on child-rearing practices, but research has focused with greater emphasis on the mother's role in child-rearing. Therefore, an understanding of the effects of social class is essential to an understanding of the father's role.

Various research studies have indicated that child-rearing practices differ significantly according to socioeconomic class. Upper-middle class parents have been found to be more permissive than upper-lower class parents in controlling their children (Maccoby and Gibbs, 1964). Upper-middle class parents use reasoning and praise as methods of guidance more often, whereas upper-lower class parents employ techniques such as physical punishment, deprivation of privileges and ridicule.

Miller and Swanson and collaborators (1960) state that the middle-class parent values formal education, rationality, a reputation for controlled behavior, hard work, responsibility and saving. He is an internally controlled being and, in turn, tries to pass along these internalized controls to his children. The middle-class culture is achievement motivated and future oriented.

Rosen (1964) found that middle-class boys tended to evaluate their parent's ability, performance, and drive more positively than did boys

in the lower class. Middle-class fathers were more apt to be perceived as successful, ambitious, and smart. Boys in the lower class tended to perceive their parents as less secure than boys in the middle class. Middle-class boys were more likely than lower-class boys to report fathers who were interested in their school performance and more responsive to bids for attention.

Lower-class characteristics differ considerably from those of the middle class. Kamarovsky (1967) found that in the lower class, the goals of child-rearing include, for example, respectability, honesty, living a decent life, being a good citizen, and Christian. They want their children to be successful, but success is defined as a respectable job, a house, a neighborhood slightly above themselves in social status. Working-class parents emphasized "traditional" values of obedience, neatness, and respect for adults.

### Parental Behavior and Personality

#### Characteristics

The personality characteristics of the parents are influential in determining the behavior and personality of their children. As Radke (1946) has pointed out, what the parent actually is has much more influence upon the child than the specific type of disciplinary techniques he uses. The child learns from his parents not so much by being taught but by being exposed (Radke, 1946).

In studying the personality characteristics of parents, Peterson et al. (1959) found that both mothers and fathers of problem children were less well adjusted and sociable than parents in a non-clinic group.

The clinic parents were also more autocratic and experienced more disciplinary contention.

Becker et al. (1964) found both parents of children with conduct problems to be maladjusted. Although not significant, these results also suggested that healthy adjustment of the father may be even more critical than adjustment of the mother in determining personality problems in children. They concluded that future research should give more consideration to the father's influence in child development.

Investigating parental interest and children's self-conceptions, Rosenberg (1963) found that parental disinterest is associated with lower self-esteem in the child. Students who report punitive responses tend to have lower self-esteem than those who report supportive responses, but students who report indifferent responses have lower self-esteem than either of these groups. Apparently this lack of love seems to represent the most extreme form of rejection.

Further evidence of parental influence on self-concept is provided by the following studies. Jourard and Remy (1955) indicated that self-appraisal by children are highly related to their perception of their parents' appraisal of them. Also, Ausubel (1954) found that the level of children's aspirations and their ideational independence from their parents were related to the children's perceptions of their parents' valuation of them.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Subjects

The 204 Spanish American male subjects for this study included students of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades enrolled in three public junior high schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico in February, 1972. These schools were selected because of the large number of Spanish American boys enrolled in the junior high grades as compared to the other schools in the area. The participants were between 13 and 14 years of age.

Cooperation in administration of the questionnaire was secured from the respective principals of each junior high school. An explanation of the project was given and plans were made for the distribution and completion of the questionnaires during scheduled meetings with the assistance of the counselors in each school.

#### Measurement of the Background Variables

The first section of the instrument was composed of items concerned with background information of the respondents, including: (a) age; (b) classification in school; (c) number of siblings; (d) residence for major part of life; and (e) socioeconomic status. The McGuire-White (1955) Index of Social Status (short form) was used to assess the status of each respondent, based on the criteria of the subjects' (a) fathers'

occupations, (b) sources of income, and (c) levels of educational attainment. Also, included in the general information section of the instrument were the following items concerning the respondent's perceptions of his relationships with his parents adapted from Doyle (1968) but revised and expanded: (a) type of disciplinary control in the home; (b) agent of discipline; (c) degree of closeness of relationship with the father; and (d) degree of childhood happiness.

#### Description of the Instrument

A questionnaire entitled Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) by Itkin (1952) was used in this study. The (Form F) scale has been designed to measure attitudes toward fathers. The scale consists of 35 items, including 11 items answered "true or false," eight multiple-choice items, and 16 personality traits that are rated on a five-point scale from "possesses to a very great degree" to "possesses only to a very slight degree or not at all."

In order to ascertain the usefulness of Itkin's instrument with Spanish Americans, an item analysis of the instrument was undertaken utilizing a chi-square test. Only those items which differentiated high and low scoring students (upper quartile and lower quartile) were included in the final instrument. The findings of this analysis are reported in the Results chapter. A key of Itkin's weights are included in the Appendix.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Subjects

##### Background Information

A detailed description of the 204 subjects who participated in this study is presented in Table I. The respondents ranged from 13 to 14 years of age, with the greatest proportion in the age category of 14 years (53.43%). The respondents were in the seventh, eighth, or ninth grade with an equal proportion (40.69%) in the eight and ninth grades. The social class of most of the subjects was either lower-lower class (46.94%) or upper-lower class (44.90%), with very few (1.02%) in the upper-middle class. The highest percentage of the sample (63.86%) had lived in a town of over 50,000 population for the major part of their lives. Most of the subjects (58.33%) reported having four or more siblings in the family. Of the 45 students who experienced father-absence, 46.67 percent of them experienced the absence after the age of five years. In most cases the respondents reported that their fathers were absent from the home because of long hospitalization or for other reasons.

##### Family Relationships Information

In addition to the background information, the questionnaire also

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

Description	N	%
<u>Age</u>		
13	95	46.57
14	109	53.43
<u>Born in America</u>		
Yes	194	95.10
No	10	4.90
<u>Classification in School</u>		
7th grade	38	18.62
8th grade	83	40.69
9th grade	83	40.69
<u>Family Size</u>		
Only child	2	.98
1 sibling	6	2.94
2 siblings	37	18.14
3 siblings	40	19.61
4 or more than 4	119	58.33
<u>Head of Household Being One Other Than Father</u>		
Mother	28	62.22
Step-father	14	31.11
Brother	0	.0
Sister	2	4.44
Legal guardian or self	1	2.23

TABLE I (Continued)

Description	N	%
<u>Socioeconomic Status</u>		
Upper-middle class	2	1.02
Lower-middle class	14	7.14
Upper-lower class	88	44.90
Lower-lower class	92	46.94
<u>Residence</u>		
Farm or country	10	4.95
Less than 25,000 population	14	6.93
25,000 to 50,000 population	49	24.26
Over 50,000 population	129	63.86
<u>Father-Absence</u>		
From 0-1 years of age	7	15.56
2 years of age	6	13.33
3 years of age	5	11.11
4 years of age	6	13.33
5 years of age and over	21	46.67
<u>Reasons for Father-Absence</u>		
Separation	9	14.06
Divorce	11	17.19
Military service	11	17.19
Death	13	20.31
Long hospitalization or other	20	31.25



contained items which elicited the students' perceptions of their family relationships (Table II). The greatest proportion of the students (80.20%) reported their fathers' authority role as not very domineering. With regard to the type of disciplinary control in the home, the greatest percentage (68.78%) reported that it was average, while 3.90 percent reported that it was rough.

Most students (41.46%) reported their discipline to have come equally from their fathers and mothers. With regard to the closeness the student felt to his father, the greatest proportion (40.98%) reported average closeness. More students reported being above average in closeness to their fathers (31.22%) than below average (3.90%).

Most of the students reported their childhood as being very happy (38.05%) or average (31.22%).

#### The Item Analysis

A chi-square test was utilized in the present investigation to determine which items on Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) significantly differentiated those subjects scoring in the upper quartile and those subjects scoring in the lower quartile on the basis of total scores. All of the 35 items in the questionnaire were found to be significantly discriminating at the .001 level, suggesting its usefulness with Mexican American youth of the age groups represented in the present study.

TABLE II  
PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Description	N	%
<u>Perception of Father's Authority Role</u>		
Very domineering	31	15.34
Not very domineering	162	80.20
Rather submissive	9	4.46
<u>Type of Disciplinary Control in the Home</u>		
Rough	8	3.90
Somewhat severe	4	1.95
Average	141	68.78
Somewhat mild	37	18.05
Mild	15	7.32
<u>Agent of Discipline</u>		
Father	35	17.07
Father with some help from mother	41	20.00
Father and mother equally	85	41.46
Mother with some help from father	14	6.83
Mother	30	14.64
<u>Closeness With Father</u>		
Very close	34	16.59
Above average	64	31.22
Average	84	40.98
Below average	8	3.90
Very distant	15	7.31

TABLE II (Continued)

Description	N	%
<u>Perception of Childhood Happiness</u>		
Very happy	78	38.05
Somewhat above average	53	25.85
Average	64	31.22
Somewhat below average	8	3.90
Very unhappy	2	.98

Responses to Itkin's Attitudes Toward  
Parents Scale (Form F) Items

Most of the respondents considered themselves very close to their fathers, and felt that their fathers generally had good reasons for any requests they might make. The majority indicated that they would like to be the "same kind of parent" that their fathers had been. The majority believed that their fathers did not underestimate their abilities, were satisfied with them, had sufficient respect for their opinions, and were sufficiently interested in whether or not they had friends. The majority believed they were treated fairly, that their fathers were admirable and were among their best friends, and that their fathers considered the rearing of children the most important job in life.

In terms of getting along with their fathers, 37.75 percent responded "very well" and an additional 39.71 percent responded "well." However, the majority did not feel free to ask their fathers intimate questions. Only 5 percent of the youth studied did not respect their fathers while 21.78 percent idealized their fathers. The majority indicated that their fathers showed pleasure in what his children did and were generally inclined to think well of his children. In showing affection for his children, 49.51 percent reported that their fathers often did little things to show affection and an additional 20.10 percent reported that their fathers sometimes did little things to show affection. The majority indicated that their fathers enjoyed spending some of his time with his children.

The respondents generally rated their fathers as fair, unselfish, helpful, not sarcastic, considerate, not bossy, agreeable, kind, not

envious, affectionate, understanding, warm, not suspicious, sympathetic, courteous, and trustful. Responses to each item are presented in detail in Tables III, IV, and V.

#### Relationship Between Scores and Selected Background Variables

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine perceptions of respondents on Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) which were classified in terms of: (a) classification in school, (b) family size, (c) social class, (d) love of father, (e) childhood happiness, (f) agent of discipline, (g) type of discipline in the home, (h) degree of closeness to the father, (i) father's acceptance, and (j) domineering-submissive father. The results of these analyses are presented in Table VI.

Six of the variables investigated revealed significant differences. Those variables which were found to reflect statistically significant differences were then subjected to a Mann-Whitney U test to determine those particular relationships between categories within the variables which accounted for the significance revealed by the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance.

Social class, love of father, childhood happiness, agent of discipline, degree of closeness to father, and father's acceptance were significantly related to youth's positive perceptions of fathers.

A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that youth who were from the upper-lower class reflected more favorable scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 4.07$ ,  $p = .05$ ) than youth who were from the lower-lower class.

TABLE III  
 RESPONSES TO ITKIN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTS  
SCALE (FORM F) SECTION I

Item	<u>True</u>		<u>Uncertain</u>		<u>False</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I consider myself very close to my father.	147	71.71	51	24.88	6	3.41
2. My father generally has good reasons for any requests he might make.	160	78.05	36	17.56	8	4.39
3. I would like to be the same kind of a parent that my father has been.	123	60.29	68	33.33	13	6.37
4. I believe that my father underestimates my ability.	6	3.41	37	18.05	161	78.54
5. I believe my father finds fault with me more often than I deserve and seems never to be satisfied with anything I do.	8	4.39	33	16.10	163	79.51
6. I believe that my father has insufficient respect for my opinions.	4	2.44	35	17.07	165	80.49
7. In my estimation, my father is insufficiently interested in whether or not I have friends.	3	1.95	41	20.00	160	78.05
8. In my judgment, my father did not treat me fairly when I was young.	7	3.90	17	8.29	180	87.80
9. I believe that my father is one of the most admirable persons I know.	125	61.27	71	34.80	8	3.92
10. My father has been one of the best friends I have ever had.	123	60.59	71	34.98	9	4.43
11. My father considers the rearing of his children the most important job in life.	152	74.15	44	21.46	8	4.39

TABLE IV  
 RESPONSES TO ITKIN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTS  
SCALE (FORM F) SECTION II

Item	N	%
1. My father:		
Takes a very great interest in everything that concerns his children.	70	34.15
Takes a moderate amount of interest in things which concern his children.	94	45.85
Does not take very much interest in things which concern his children.	14	6.83
Takes little interest in things which concern his children.	23	11.22
Takes no interest in things which concern his children.	3	1.95
2. I get along with my father:		
Very well.	77	37.75
Well.	81	39.71
Fairly well.	41	20.10
Not very well.	3	1.46
Poorly.	2	.98
3. In regard to taking my father into my confidence, I:		
Feel free to ask him intimate questions.	43	21.18
Often ask him intimate questions.	38	18.72
Sometimes ask him intimate questions.	83	40.89
Rarely, if ever, ask him intimate questions.	34	16.75
Wouldn't think of asking him any intimate questions.	5	2.46

TABLE IV (Continued)

Item	N	%
4. Check whichever of the following terms best describes your feelings toward your father:		
I idealize my father.	44	21.78
I admire my father.	72	35.64
I respect my father.	76	37.62
I do not particularly respect my father.	8	3.97
I do not respect my father at all.	2	.99
5. Check whichever of the following descriptions most nearly fits your father:		
Is always critical of his children, and nothing his children do ever seems to please him.	1	.49
Is rather critical of his children, and is not often pleased by what his children do.	5	2.44
Is not very critical of his children, but on the other hand, does not show particular pleasure of what his children do.	42	20.48
Often shows pleasure at what his children do, and often praises them for their accomplishments.	125	60.98
Very seldom complains about his children, and is liberal in his praises of them.	31	15.61
6. I consider my father:		
Always willing to think only the best of his children.	46	22.66
Generally inclined to think well of his children.	108	53.20
Neither inclined to think only well or only poorly of his children.	42	20.69



TABLE IV (Continued)

Item	N	%
Sometimes inclined to be critical of his children.	4	1.97
Always ready to think only the worst of his children.	3	1.48
7. My father:		
Never does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	3	1.47
Seldom does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	10	4.92
Sometimes does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	41	20.10
Often does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	101	49.51
Is always doing little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	49	24.02
8. In my opinion, my father:		
Is so attached to his children that he wants to have them around all of the time.	20	9.76
Enjoys spending some of his time with his children.	119	58.05
Likes to spend a little of his time with his children.	59	28.78
Does not like to spend time with his children.	6	2.93
Dislikes very much spending any of his time with his children.	1	.49

TABLE V  
 RESPONSES TO ITKIN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTS  
SCALE (FORM F) SECTION III

Trait	N	%
1. <u>Fair</u>		
Very great degree	104	51.22
Greater than average degree	67	32.68
Average degree	27	13.17
Less than average degree	4	1.95
Very slight degree or not at all	2	.98
2. <u>Selfish</u>		
Very great degree	3	1.46
Greater than average degree	2	.98
Average degree	17	8.78
Less than average degree	57	27.80
Very slight degree or not at all	125	60.98
3. <u>Helpful</u>		
Very great degree	77	37.75
Greater than average degree	85	41.67
Average degree	32	15.69
Less than average degree	8	3.92
Very slight degree or not at all	2	.98
4. <u>Sarcastic</u>		
Very great degree	1	.49
Greater than average degree	5	2.44
Average degree	18	9.27
Less than average degree	60	29.27

TABLE V (Continued)

Trait	N	%
Very slight degree or not at all	120	58.54
5. <u>Considerate</u>		
Very great degree	89	43.41
Greater than average degree	77	37.56
Average degree	28	14.15
Less than average degree	7	3.42
Very slight degree or not at all	3	1.46
6. <u>Bossy</u>		
Very great degree	4	1.96
Greater than average degree	7	3.43
Average degree	17	8.33
Less than average degree	71	34.81
Very slight degree or not at all	105	51.47
7. <u>Agreeable</u>		
Very great degree	67	32.68
Greater than average degree	93	45.37
Average degree	36	18.05
Less than average degree	4	1.95
Very slight degree or not at all	4	1.95
8. <u>Kind</u>		
Very great degree	94	46.34
Greater than average degree	72	35.12
Average degree	33	16.10
Less than average degree	2	.98

TABLE V (Continued)

	Trait	N	%
	Very slight degree or not at all	3	1.46
9.	<u>Envious</u>		
	Very great degree	2	.98
	Greater than average degree	2	.98
	Average degree	13	6.34
	Less than average degree	57	27.80
	Very slight degree or not at all	130	63.90
10.	<u>Affectionate</u>		
	Very great degree	73	35.78
	Greater than average degree	88	43.14
	Average degree	36	17.65
	Less than average degree	5	2.45
	Very slight degree or not at all	2	.98
11.	<u>Understanding</u>		
	Very great degree	71	34.80
	Greater than average degree	94	46.08
	Average degree	31	15.20
	Less than average degree	7	3.43
	Very slight degree or not at all	1	.49
12.	<u>Cold</u>		
	Very great degree	3	1.46
	Greater than average degree	5	2.44
	Average degree	8	4.39

TABLE V (Continued)

	Trait	N	%
	Less than average degree	45	21.95
	Very slight degree or not at all	143	69.76
13.	<u>Suspicious</u>		
	Very great degree	3	1.48
	Greater than average degree	4	1.97
	Average degree	25	12.32
	Less than average degree	80	39.40
	Very slight degree or not at all	91	44.83
14.	<u>Sympathetic</u>		
	Very great degree	61	29.90
	Greater than average degree	83	40.69
	Average degree	44	21.57
	Less than average degree	13	6.37
	Very slight degree or not at all	3	1.47
15.	<u>Courteous</u>		
	Very great degree	108	52.68
	Greater than average degree	73	35.61
	Average degree	16	7.80
	Less than average degree	5	2.93
	Very slight degree or not at all	2	.98
16.	<u>Trustful</u>		
	Very great degree	123	60.30
	Greater than average degree	54	26.47

TABLE V (Continued)

Trait	N	%
Average degree	21	10.29
Less than average degree	3	1.47
Very slight degree or not at all	3	1.47

TABLE VI  
 KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF SCALE SCORES CLASSIFIED  
 BY SELECTED BACKGROUND VARIABLES

Background Variable	H	Level of Significance
Classification in School	5.54	n.s.
Family Size	6.77	n.s.
Social Class	29.49	.001
Love of Father	79.51	.001
Childhood Happiness	65.09	.001
Agent of Discipline	34.83	.001
Type of Discipline in the Home	3.42	n.s.
Degree of Closeness	82.09	.001
Father's Acceptance	24.60	.001
Domineering-Submissive Father	2.95	n.s.

A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that youth who stated they were very much loved by their fathers reflected more favorable scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 7.09$ ,  $p = .01$ ) than youth who rated their father's love as average. Also, youth who rated their father's love as above average obtained significantly higher scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 5.48$ ,  $p = .05$ ) than youth who rated their father's love as average.

Youth who indicated they were very happy during their childhood reflected more favorable scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 6.81$ ,  $p = .01$ ) than youth who rated their childhood happiness as average. Students who rated their childhood happiness as above average obtained significantly higher scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 5.10$ ,  $p = .05$ ) than youth who rated their childhood happiness as average.

A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that youth who reported that the agent of discipline was "mother only" reflected significantly less favorable perceptions of fathers than youth who indicated that the agent of discipline was: (a) father only ( $U = 4.68$ ,  $p = .05$ ), (b) father with help from mother ( $U = 4.80$ ,  $p = .05$ ), and (c) father and mother equally ( $U = 4.85$ ,  $p = .05$ ).

Youth who rated the degree of closeness to the father as above average reflected more favorable scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 5.26$ ,  $p = .05$ ) than youth who rated the degree of closeness as average. Students who rated the degree of closeness to the father as average obtained significantly higher scores on Itkin's scale ( $U = 5.22$ ,  $p = .05$ ) than youth who rated their degree of closeness as below average.

A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that youth who indicated their fathers were interested in how they were doing in school reflected more positive perceptions concerning fathers than youth who reported their



fathers were difficult to talk to ( $U = 4.50, p = .05$ ). Similarly, youth who indicated that their fathers were interested in all that they did reflected more positive perceptions concerning fathers than youth who responded that their fathers were difficult to talk to ( $U = 4.43, p = .05$ ).

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of Spanish American male youth concerning fathers and to relate these perceptions to various psychological and sociological factors.

The sample was composed of 204 junior high school students enrolled in three public junior high schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico, during February of 1972. The students were between 13 and 14 years of age.

The questionnaire submitted to the subjects consisted of an information sheet for securing background information, and the Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F), designed to measure attitudes toward fathers.

The chi-square test was used in an item analysis of the Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) to determine those items that significantly differentiated the subjects scoring in the upper quartile and the lower quartile groups on the basis of the total scale scores. Each of the items was found to be statistically discriminating at the .001 level.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine scores of respondents on Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) which were classified in terms of: (a) classification in school, (b) family size, (c) social class, (d) love of father, (e) childhood happiness, (f) agent of discipline, (g) type of discipline in the home,

(h) degree of closeness to father, (i) father's acceptance, and (j) domineering-submissive father.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine those particular relationships between categories within the variables which accounted for the significance revealed by the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance.

In general, the Mexican American youth who participated in this sample perceived their fathers in an exceedingly positive, loving manner. Those who indicated they were loved by their fathers very much or above average reflected significantly more favorable perceptions of their fathers than those who rated their father's love for them as average. Youth who indicated they were very happy during their childhood or above average reflected more favorable perceptions of their fathers than youth who rated their childhood happiness as average. Youth who rated the degree of closeness to the father as above average reflected more favorable perceptions of their fathers than youth who rated the degree of closeness as average, and youth who rated the degree of closeness to the father as average reflected more favorable perceptions of their fathers than youth who rated the degree of closeness as below average.

It is recommended that further studies be done in various sections of the country and with both junior high and high school youth in order that broader generalizations regarding male youths' perceptions of their fathers may be made.

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APPENDIX A





- \_\_\_ 11. Your father's work is: (Describe fully)
- 
- \_\_\_ 12. The main source of your family's income is:
- \_\_\_ 1. hourly wages, piece work, weekly checks
  - \_\_\_ 2. salary, commissions, monthly checks
  - \_\_\_ 3. profits or fees from business or profession
  - \_\_\_ 4. savings and investments
  - \_\_\_ 5. inherited savings and investments
  - \_\_\_ 6. private relief, odd jobs, seasonal working, share cropping
  - \_\_\_ 7. public relief
- \_\_\_ 13. If during your childhood, your father was absent from home for long periods, indicate how old you were when he was gone. \_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 14. If your father was absent for long periods, indicate the reason for his absence.
- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ 1. Separation       | ___ 4. Death                |
| ___ 2. Divorce          | ___ 5. Long hospitalization |
| ___ 3. Military service | ___ 6. Other                |
- \_\_\_ 15. In my home, I feel that I am loved by my father:
- a. very much
  - b. above average
  - c. average
  - d. below average
  - e. very little
- \_\_\_ 16. With respect to happiness, I consider my childhood to be:
- a. very happy
  - b. somewhat above average
  - c. average
  - d. somewhat below average
  - e. very unhappy
- \_\_\_ 17. In my family, the discipline I receive is mainly from:
- a. my father
  - b. my father with some help from my mother
  - c. equally my father and my mother
  - d. my mother with some help from my father
  - e. my mother
- \_\_\_ 18. I consider discipline in my home as:
- a. rough
  - b. somewhat severe
  - c. average
  - d. somewhat mild
  - e. mild

- \_\_\_19. I would rate the degree of closeness that I have with my father as:
- a. very close
  - b. above average
  - c. average
  - d. below average
  - e. very distant
- \_\_\_20. In regard to my father's acceptance of me, I find that my father (there may be more than one answer):
- a. is too busy to pay much attention to me
  - b. shows that he is interested in how I am doing at school
  - c. acts as though I were in the way
  - d. is interested in almost all that I do
  - e. is difficult to talk to
  - f. is not interested in what I say
- \_\_\_21. I would consider my father:
- \_\_\_ very masculine
  - \_\_\_ not very masculine
- \_\_\_22. In my own family, my father is:
- \_\_\_ very domineering
  - \_\_\_ not very domineering
  - \_\_\_ rather submissive
- \_\_\_23. I would consider myself:
- \_\_\_ very highly masculine
  - \_\_\_ highly masculine
  - \_\_\_ of average masculinity
  - \_\_\_ low masculinity
  - \_\_\_ very low masculinity

APPENDIX B

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Following is a list of statements which might be answered as true, false, or uncertain. If you believe the statement true of your father or your feelings toward your father, encircle the "TRUE" in front of the statement; if false, encircle the "FALSE" and if your answer might be "YES" and "NO" or "NOT CERTAIN," encircle "?".

- \_\_\_ 1. True ? False I consider myself very close to my father.
- \_\_\_ 2. True ? False My father generally has good reasons for any requests he might make.
- \_\_\_ 3. True ? False I would like to be the same kind of a parent that my father has been.
- \_\_\_ 4. True ? False I believe that my father underestimates my ability.
- \_\_\_ 5. True ? False I believe my father finds fault with me more often than I deserve and seems never to be satisfied with anything I do.
- \_\_\_ 6. True ? False I believe that my father has insufficient respect for my opinions.
- \_\_\_ 7. True ? False In my estimation, my father is insufficiently interested in whether or not I have friends.
- \_\_\_ 8. True ? False In my judgment, my father did not treat me fairly when I was young.
- \_\_\_ 9. True ? False I believe that my father is one of the most admirable persons I know.
- \_\_\_ 10. True ? False My father has been one of the best friends I have ever had.
- \_\_\_ 11. True ? False My father considers the rearing of his children the most important job in life.

In each of the following you are given a preliminary statement which can be completed in any one of five ways or a question which can be answered in any one of five ways. Check whichever one of the alternative choices most closely approximates your own opinion or feeling.

\_\_\_12. My father . . .

\_\_\_(a) takes a very great interest in everything that concerns his children.

\_\_\_(b) takes a moderate amount of interest in things which concern his children.

\_\_\_(c) does not take very much interest in things which concern his children.

\_\_\_(d) takes little interest in things which concern his children.

\_\_\_(e) takes no interest in things which concern his children.

\_\_\_13. I get along with my father . . .

\_\_\_(a) very well.

\_\_\_(b) well.

\_\_\_(c) fairly well.

\_\_\_(d) not very well.

\_\_\_(e) poorly.

\_\_\_14. In regard to taking my father into my confidence, I . . .

\_\_\_(a) feel free to ask him intimate questions.

\_\_\_(b) often ask him intimate questions.

\_\_\_(c) sometimes ask him intimate questions.

\_\_\_(d) rarely if ever ask him intimate questions.

\_\_\_(e) wouldn't think of asking him any intimate questions.

\_\_\_15. Check whichever of the following terms best describes your feelings toward your father.

\_\_\_(a) I idealize my father.

\_\_\_(b) I admire my father.

\_\_\_(c) I respect my father.

\_\_\_(d) I do not particularly respect my father.

\_\_\_(e) I do not respect my father at all.

\_\_\_16. Check whichever of the following descriptions most nearly fits your father.

\_\_\_(a) Is always critical of his children, and nothing his children do ever seems to please him.

\_\_\_(b) Is rather critical of his children, and is not often pleased by what his children do.

\_\_\_(c) Is not very critical of his children, but on the other hand, does not show particular pleasure of what his children do.

\_\_\_(d) Often shows pleasure at what his children do, and often praises them for their accomplishments.

\_\_\_(e) Very seldom complains about his children, and is liberal in his praise of them.

\_\_\_17. I consider my father . . .

\_\_\_(a) always willing to think only the best of his children.

\_\_\_(b) generally inclined to think well of his children.

\_\_\_(c) neither inclined to think only well or only poorly of his children.

\_\_\_(d) sometimes inclined to be critical of his children.

\_\_\_(e) always ready to think only the worst of his children.

\_\_\_18. My father . . .

\_\_\_(a) never does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.

\_\_\_(b) seldom does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.

\_\_\_(c) sometimes does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.

\_\_\_(d) often does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.

\_\_\_(e) is always doing little things for his children to show affection or consideration.

\_\_\_19. In my opinion, my father . . .

\_\_\_(a) is so attached to his children that he wants to have them around all of the time.

- \_\_\_(b) enjoys spending some of his time with his children.
- \_\_\_(c) likes to spend a little of his time with his children.
- \_\_\_(d) does not like to spend time with his children.
- \_\_\_(e) dislikes very much spending any of his time with his children.

Following is a list of traits of personality. If in your opinion your father possesses a trait in a very great degree, encircle the "A" in front of the trait. If he possesses the trait to a greater than average degree, encircle the "B"; if he possesses the trait to about an average degree, encircle the "C"; if he possesses the trait to a less than average extent, encircle the "D"; and if he possesses the trait only to a very slight degree or not at all, encircle the "E" in front of the trait.

- |        |           |               |
|--------|-----------|---------------|
| ___20. | A B C D E | Fair          |
| ___21. | A B C D E | Selfish       |
| ___22. | A B C D E | Helpful       |
| ___23. | A B C D E | Sarcastic     |
| ___24. | A B C D E | Considerate   |
| ___25. | A B C D E | Bossy         |
| ___26. | A B C D E | Agreeable     |
| ___27. | A B C D E | Kind          |
| ___28. | A B C D E | Envious       |
| ___29. | A B C D E | Affectionate  |
| ___30. | A B C D E | Understanding |
| ___31. | A B C D E | Cold          |
| ___32. | A B C D E | Suspicious    |
| ___33. | A B C D E | Sympathetic   |
| ___34. | A B C D E | Courteous     |
| ___35. | A B C D E | Trustful      |



APPENDIX C

SCORING KEY FOR ITKIN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDPARENTS SCALE (FORM F)

	T	?	F		A	B	C	D	E		
1.	4	3	2		20.	5	4	3	2	1	
2.	4	3	2		21.	1	2	3	4	5	
3.	4	3	2		22.	5	4	3	2	1	
4.	2	3	4		23.	1	2	3	4	5	
5.	2	3	4		24.	5	4	3	2	1	
6.	2	3	4		25.	1	2	3	4	5	
7.	2	3	4		26.	5	4	3	2	1	
8.	2	3	4		27.	5	4	3	2	1	
9.	4	3	2		28.	1	2	3	4	5	
10.	4	3	2		29.	5	4	3	2	1	
11.	4	3	2		30.	5	4	3	2	1	
	a	b	c	d	e	31.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	5	4	3	2	1	32.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	5	4	3	2	1	33.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	5	4	3	2	1	34.	5	4	3	2	1
15.	5	4	3	2	1	35.	5	4	3	2	1
16.	1	2	3	4	5						
17.	5	4	3	2	1						
18.	1	2	3	4	5						
19.	5	4	3	2	1						

VITA<sup>8</sup>

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Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF SPANISH AMERICAN MALE YOUTH CONCERNING FATHERS

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