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ATTITUDES OF YOUTH CONCERNING FATHERS:  
A RACIAL COMPARISON

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## CHAPTER I

### ATTITUDES OF YOUTH CONCERNING FATHERS:

#### A RACIAL COMPARISON

##### Introduction

There are more similarities between black families and white families than there are differences, but the literature indicates that differences exist. As a minority group, black Americans comprise ten percent of the general population and have had ancestors in this country for 350 years, but they still have not been accepted into the white culture for several reasons: (1) the contrast in physical characteristics which is a psychologically constant reinforcement to the belief that there are deeper differences; (2) white people's fear of the black male; (3) intellectual errors which originated in slavery that blacks, especially black males, are simple, highly sexual, low in intelligence, and lazy; (4) prejudice which creates unequal opportunities and results in poverty. It is ironic that white men forcibly brought blacks to the United States and subjected them to slavery in a manner that made it impossible to continue their African culture, and then refused to permit them entry into the country in which they are forced to reside (Frazier, 1939).

Recently there has been a trend for young black people to stop trying to gain acceptance into the white world and to revive their ancestral African heritage. Although the reasons for this attempt, the

desire to raise the self-concepts of black people and to give children a culture with which to identify, are desirable and admirable, the movement may broaden the gap between black and white America. More studies of black family life will hopefully contribute better understanding of black America and may narrow the gap between black and white America.

#### Need for Research

The need for this study is based on limited research in two areas: black American family life and fathers. Most research uses all white subjects or if blacks are included, it is assumed no difference exists. However, few studies focus on black Americans. In view of cultural differences, it is erroneous to assume research findings about white families necessarily apply to black families.

Traditionally, research on parent-child relationships centers on the mother. One review of literature reveals fifteen times as many articles on mothers as fathers (Eron, 1961). Yet research indicates many behavior problems are related to father-child relationships (Becker, Peterson, Hellmer, Shoemaker, and Quay, 1964). The Industrial Revolution separated male-female roles to the extent that child-rearing became almost exclusively the mother's job (Fullerton, 1970). Yet, available research indicates fathers have important effects on children.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate perceptions of black American youth toward their fathers and to relate these perceptions to various sociological and psychological factors. The hypotheses to be examined are: (1) there are no significant differences between the

perceptions of black and white youths concerning their fathers; (2) there are no significant differences between perceptions of male and female students; (3) there are no significant differences between perceptions of middle and lower class students; (4) there are no significant differences between adolescents' attitudes toward their parents and the following variables: (a) age, (b) grade in school, (c) number of siblings, (d) residence, (e) severity of discipline control in the home, (f) agent of discipline, (g) degree of closeness to father, (h) and degree of childhood happiness.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### The Role of the Father in the American Family

An examination of the functions of the father reveals that the most obvious one is that of provider. Mead (1970) notes the nurturing of man for woman and her children is peculiar to humans and is the thing that separates human beings from animals. Her observation is easy to accept; yet, there is more to fatherhood than his role as a provider. He serves as a model for sons and daughters in their sex-role identification, thus affecting their personalities and mental health. The father also serves certain sociological functions as well.

#### Theory of Identification

Regardless of the motives involved in the process of identification--fear of aggression, fear of loss of love, status seeking, love--a child's primary sex model is his same sex parent. Even though there is evidence that male children identify with a masculine stereotype rather than the individual ways their fathers carry out the role (Lynn, 1962), fathers are still the primary model for their sons, demonstrating by living what a man is and does and delineating the subtle differences between what is and is not acceptable within the realm of masculinity. Although a girl's primary model for sex-role identification is her mother, her father defines her femininity by the way he treats her, and

by his very presence, providing an object for comparison to her mother's femaleness. He further defines femininity in that fathers serve as their daughters' primary male love object, which leads to a heterosexual love relationship with a male peer (Leonard, 1966).

#### Effects of Strong and Weak Identification

Although information about identification is limited, the effects of poor identification are numerous. Poor sex-role identification is related to homosexuality (Nash and Hayes, 1965), neurotic dependence on mother (Levy, 1943), immaturity and poor sexual adjustment (Winch, 1950), personality problems (Cortes, Fleming, and Elyse, 1968), behavioral problems (Palmer, 1960), delinquency (Warren, 1957), and poor peer relationships (Lynn and Sawrey, 1959). Conversely, strong sex-role identification is related to good reading skills (Mercer, 1960), academic success (Shaw and White, 1965), personality characteristics such as leadership, friendship, and ability to face problems (Gray, 1957), peer acceptance (Gray, 1959; Helper, 1955), and emotional stability and adjustment (Mussen, 1961). Because boys are more susceptible to parental influence than girls (Walters and Stinnett, 1971), and to paternal deprivation (Sears, 1951), it follows that the effects of a weak father figure may be greater on boys than on girls. Many of the studies mentioned above were conducted with an all male sample; and in others which included girls, the correlation between poor identification and the variable was significant for boys only.

#### Factors Related to Strong Identification

A knowledge of the vast effects of poor identification lead to a

review of factors which foster strong father identification. The most outstanding factor is warmth or closeness to father (Greenstein, 1966) coupled with paternal dominance (Hoffman, 1961), girls being more dependent on warmth and boys more dependent on dominance (Hetherington and Frankie, 1967). Hetherington and Frankie (1967) report a preference for culturally accepted masculine and feminine roles and behavior is related to warm father-son interaction, while other research reports a positive relationship between father closeness and sex typing deviation (Greenstein, 1966). Perhaps the discrepancy can be explained by the research which identifies a relationship between satisfactory identification and father's perceived dominance relative to mother. Biller's study (1960) points out that paternal dominance is related to a masculine self-concept. Similarly, Leighton (1971) reports that in normal families the father is dominant, while mothers are dominant in families who seek counselling for emotional problems of a child. Hoffman's research examined the relationship between dominance and warmth.

When father is more powerful than mother, disciplines his children, and has a warm companionship with them, the boys-- and to a lesser extent the girls--will have self-confidence and feel accepted by others, show a positive assertiveness in the peer group, have skills, like others, be well-liked, and exert influence (Hoffman, 1961, p. 104-105).

Mussen and Distler (1960) also find warmth and dominance coexisting to foster sex-role identification.

Kindergarten boys highly identified with their fathers saw them as both punitive and threatening and nurturing and rewarding (Mussen and Distler, 1960, p. 96).

Thus, research indicates that a strong male sex-role model is warm toward his children and at the same time, is dominant relative to the mother.

### Father's Influence on Mental Health

Although the mother's influence is usually linked to mental health, the father's role in the development of healthy emotions cannot be overlooked. Certain personality characteristics of fathers have been linked to schizophrenia. The father of schizophrenes is typically "weak, passive, retiring, and immature" according to Gerard and Siegal (1950). Kohn (1949) describes him as a weak authority figure and McKeown and Lhyatte (1954) use the words superficial and indifferent. Almost opposite words are used by Litz, Parker, and Cornelison (1956) when their research reports him "domineering, sadistic, and rejective." By any of the descriptions, the father of schizophrenics is typically a poor identification model, failing to be dominant and warm, which is probably the significance of the relationship between schizophrenia and paternal characteristics.

### Sociological Analysis

From a sociological viewpoint, the father serves certain functions in the American family. Due to his instrumental orientation, he is the link between family and community. Within society, he is the stabilizer, it being his responsibility to represent the larger social order and to police the family to do likewise.

. . . social stability depends upon harmony between family and society, which is rooted in a particular type of family organization. A prominent feature of this system is the authority of the father. . . (Benson, 1968, p. 16).

Also, man in his instrumental orientation balances out the expressive orientation of woman.

Thus it (instrumental orientation) serves an adaptive social function, while expressiveness fulfills the need for morale

and cohesion and serves an integrative function (Benson, 1968, p. 21).

This sociological analysis is supported by more psychologically oriented research which reveals that father absence is related to a tendency toward delinquency in boys (Warren, 1957), conceivably because there is no stabilizer. Similarly, paternally deprived boys who are without the instrumental balancing influence, are more dependent on peers (Carlson, 1963), a fact which indicates excessive expressiveness.

#### Father Absence

Three out of five Negro children grow up in two-parent families. Of the remaining forty percent, one out of six is fatherless (Bernard, 1967). Rohrer and Edmonson's study of the eighth generation of Negroes in New Orleans identifies one group as the matriarch (1960). In these female-headed families, there is obviously no male figure; and furthermore, the attitude toward male children is much the same as that toward males in general--disgust, hatred, and disrespect. The gang, which over-exaggerates masculinity as compensation for insecurity, serves as the model of masculinity for boys from matriarchal families (Rohrer and Edmonson, 1960). The need for identification with the gang has been cited as a major cause of delinquency (Miller, 1958). Therefore, a review of the literature on father absence is particularly pertinent to a study of black adolescents' attitudes toward their fathers.

#### Child Development Theory and Supporting Research

According to child development theory, the critical age for sex-role identification is early childhood, and boys usually solidify their identification a little later than girls. The natural model for sex-role

identification is the same sex parent, although substitute models such as grandparents, uncles, and teachers may serve in the absence or failure of the parent. In keeping with child development theories, Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, and Landry (1968) found that early and middle childhood is the most detrimental time for a father's absence. Similarly, in studying the effect of a father's working nights, a temporary absence, on a sample of girls, Landry (1969) found that the cognitive development of girls under nine years of age was depressed. Also, Hoffman (1961) reports that sex-typed behavior is disrupted if the father leaves before the boy is five years old. In support of the theory that other males than the father can serve as models, Santrock (1970) finds that father-absent boys without a substitute male model in the home are more dependent than father-absent boys with a substitute.

#### Factors Affecting the Influence of Father Absence

Research has identified several factors which affect the influence of father absence. As reviewed above, the critical age is early childhood. Also, the reason for the father's absence is significant. Illsley and Thompson (1961) report that in families broken by the father's death, there is little impact on the children if the home stays intact. The same is not true if the cause of separation is divorce or desertion.

Sex and sibling composition are other influencing factors. Father absent boys are more dependent, less aggressive, and have a less masculine orientation, than father present boys, while father absent girls are only more dependent (Santrock, 1970). Hoffman (1971) reports in a study of male and female seventh graders, that father absent boys are less aggressive and were less developed in moral internalization than

father present boys, although there was no relationship between father absence and the listed characteristics for girls. Sears (1951) conducted a study of aggression, using doll play and says prolonged father absence affects boys, but not girls. Thus, research indicates that in terms of aggressiveness, boys are more affected by father-absence than are girls. The conclusion cannot be drawn that girls are not affected.

Sibling composition influences the effects of father absence, as Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, and Landry (1968) point out when they report that in the two child family, the greatest differences between children in father present families and children in father absent families are produced when the child has an opposite sex sibling. Also, father absence effects are strongest in three child families, less in two child families, and minimal in one child families. Males are affected more in a two child family, and females in a one child family. Also, only girls are affected more than only boys (Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, and Landry, 1968). Palmer (1960) reports that among Navy officers' children, oldest male children, only male children, and oldest children are most affected by father absence.

#### Effects of Father Absence

Masculinity of boys can be studied from several angles: overt masculinity, masculine preference, and masculine orientation of self-concept. Many boys with low masculine self-concepts are overtly masculine, perhaps in an effort to achieve peer acceptance. Biller (1968) finds father present boys had a more masculine orientation, although they were not observed as behaving in a more masculine manner. Barclay and Cumusano (1967) find no difference in overt masculinity between

father absent and father present boys. They conclude that the lack of difference may be due to compensatory overt masculinity on the part of father absent boys. In the doll play technique for projecting aggression, father absent boys mentioned less often the common maleness of themselves and the father doll (Sears, 1951). Santrock (1970) reports that father absent boys have a less masculine orientation.

Considerable evidence indicates a relationship between father absence and peer relationships of boys. It has been theorized that fathers serve as sex models for boys, teaching them what behavior is acceptable to peers (Benson, 1968). Therefore, father present boys have a better opportunity to learn acceptable behavior. Mitchell (1967), in studying delinquent boys, found father absence to be related to peer rejection. Similarly, Lynn and Sawrey (1959) report father absent boys are more likely to have poor peer relationships. Because sex appropriate behavior is related to peer acceptance, Gray (1957) found that sex appropriate boys had qualities of high leadership, high friendship, and low withdrawal. The opposite was true of low sex appropriate boys, and the higher in sex appropriate behavior, the higher the acceptance by peers.

Particularly interesting to a study of black adolescents is research by Biller (1968) on father absence in lower class black and white boys. As expected, he found that father absent boys have a less masculine self-concept, although there may not be a difference in more manifest areas of masculinity. White father present boys have the most masculine orientation, and white father absent are the same as black father present youth in masculine orientation. The over-all lower masculine orientation can, perhaps, be explained by the facts that black men are often denigrated in our society, lowering their children's respect for them,



and that substitute models may be more scarce among black Americans. Thus, race may be a factor influencing the effects of father absence.

In the absence of a father, the mother's influence becomes even greater. Her ability to maintain a stable home is a critical factor influencing the effects of father absence. In fact, more delinquents come from homes where parents quarrel excessively than from father absent homes (McCord, 1962). Pederson (1966) found a critical factor in determining emotional effects of father absence to be the mother's emotional health. Palmer's study of Navy officers' children also reports the effects of father absence on the children were related to the adjustment of the mother (1960).

Although early father present boys experience the most damage by father absence, the damage can be offset by the mother's encouragement (Biller, 1971). Biller found the amount of encouragement for masculinity to be related to the degree of masculine orientation. Thus, results of father absence may be curbed by the mother's altering child-rearing practices (Hoffman, 1971).

### Family Life Among Black Americans

#### Family Life Under Slavery

In studying the black American family, one must understand the conditions and the impact of slavery on culture and consequently, on family life. Initially, family life was disrupted in that captured slaves were permanently separated from their natural families. Upon arriving in America, conditions and circumstances of slavery prevented reestablishment of the strong family institution slaves enjoyed in Africa.

The institution of slavery had an obliterating effect on African culture as well as on African family life. Slaves were from different tribes with cultures as dissimilar as different nations. Not only was communication difficult and sometimes impossible, but religion, family patterns, customs, and moral beliefs were varied. Furthermore, there is evidence that the whites attempted to separate, through selling and trading with other plantations, people of the same tribe in order to squelch organized rebellion (Frazier, 1939).

A critical factor in the obliteration of the African family institution was that the obliterated institution was not replaced by another. The natural replacement would have been the family of the white culture into which Negroes were transplanted. Negroes failed to adopt the family patterns of the white culture because the master race saw marital unions between slaves at best as temporary and at worst as breeding operations to be manipulated for the benefit of the master (Frazier, 1939). At this point it is necessary to understand that slavery stripped Negroes of self-respect and independence, leaving them totally dependent upon their masters. Therefore, family life became what masters perceived it to be and what they allowed it to be. The whites further contributed to weak and temporary family life by separating families through selling, sexually exploiting Negro women, and selecting mates for slaves according to their own benefit. The over-whelming effect of the master's attitude toward marital relationships between his slaves is supported in cases of slaves who under the master's encouragement, developed strong family organization with the male as head of the family (Frazier, 1939).

Slavery made it very difficult for Negro men to play a stable and dominant role in the family. Their very physical existence depended on

being the kind of person their masters wanted them to be. Bernard (1967) termed it "perpetual childhood" and it meant the whites wanted black men to be simple, ignorant, and dependent on the master for his every need. The whites further stifled his masculine role by treating women as heads of families: rations were distributed to women; children belonged to women; women were the communicants between families and the master; and slave records list families under the female's name (Frazier, 1939). The importance of men was further damaged in that Negro women could sometimes win extra rations or luxuries for children by tolerating sexual advances.

Emancipation was a crisis in the lives of blacks. Those who in slavery had failed to develop family organization broke the loose ties which had bound them in slavery. Without the imposed regulations of the master, men left their families to look for excitement and new experience. Families which under slavery had managed to attain a degree of solidarity in family life continued living much as before emancipation. The authority of the father was established and male-female roles were traditionally divided into homemaker and provider. On the other hand, the Negro women left husbandless often entered into casual sexual relationships which resulted in a family of one female and several children; thus, the matriarch began (Frazier, 1939).

#### Black Families Today

There is no such thing as a typical black family any more than there is a typical white family. It has previously been accepted that black families are much the same as white families when social class is the same. However, Bernard (1967) points out that there are two distinct

cultures or strands among black Americans that cross social class lines and are more important in affecting family life than occupation, income, and education, which usually determine social class. One culture is the acculturated which has internalized middle class white values and is oriented toward stability, morality, and above all, respectability. The second culture is the externally adapted which is hedonistic, uninhibited, and to the acculturated, unrespectable (Bernard, 1967). Lewis (1955) in his study of black families of Kent, says black families are classified as respectable and unrespectable. Similarly, Rohrer and Edmonson (1960) classify the orientations of the eighth generation of blacks in New Orleans as family, middle class, gang, matriarchal, and marginal, classifications which one could categorize as acculturated or respectable, or as externally adapted or unrespectable. Thus, several studies support Bernard's theory of two strands among black Americans.

Accepting Bernard's (1967) terms, acculturated and externally adapted, and realizing the influence of social class on life style (Frazier, 1957), family life among black Americans may be classified using the following categories: lower class externally adapted, middle class externally adapted, middle class acculturated, lower class acculturated.

#### Lower Class Externally Adapted

The matriarchal family, which began during slavery, is common among the externally adapted lower class. The "unnatural superiority" (Drake and Clayton, 1962) has been propagated by many the same conditions which created it in slavery: the closer contact of women with the white world; fear of the Negro male's sexuality; superior economic

opportunities of women; the relatively higher value placed on motherhood above wifehood; and the opportunity of women to develop such characteristics as independence, perseverance, and courage which men were discouraged from acquiring (Frazier, 1939).

Marital relationships among the externally adapted lower class are often unstable (Drake and Clayton, 1962). The premium placed on love in a male-female relationship makes it acceptable to terminate a relationship when love is no longer present (Bernard, 1967). Problems of poverty, poor housing, and frustration jeopardize a marriage. Rodman (1964) reports desertion is a solution to the economic pressures of a family on lower class men for whom employment is scarce and when available, the wages are inadequate. A good wife, according to the sub-culture is loyal, shares her income, and above all, does not spend money on other men. A woman's concept of a good husband is that he is sexually satisfying, works when he can, does not beat his wife without provocation, and does not blow his money on gambling, drinking, or other women (Drake and Clayton, 1962).

The quality of fatherhood among the externally adapted lower class ranges from indifference and not living with the child to living with the child and caring about him. The most common seems to be living with the child at times, but not particularly concerned about him (Drake and Clayton, 1962). The same conditions which make it difficult to be a stable husband make it difficult to be a stable father. Fatherhood, unfortunately, is seen among some men as an expression of hostility to the world or as proof of virility. The quality of relationship with the child is largely dependent upon the father's relationship with his mother (Bernard, 1967).

Much of the parenting of the lower class externally adapted has the effect of training the child for defeat and failure in the world (Bernard, 1967). Parents see children as inherently bad, transferring this perception to the child (Rainwater, 1965). Growing up without a father or with a weak one is psychologically damaging. The effects of a dominant mother and weak or absent father is particularly hazardous for a male child (Bernard, 1967).

In spite of the many problems of child-rearing in the lower class, lower class parents, especially mothers, have high, even unrealistic goals for their children. Verbally, they value much the same for their children as middle class parents, although many situations of lower class life frustrate their achieving these goals (Bernard, 1967).

#### Middle Class Externally Adapted

Frazier (1957) uses the word "bourgeoisie" for the externally adapted of the middle and upper class. The bourgeoisie includes the professionals, racketeers, entertainers, and athletes who make large amounts of money and are oriented toward conspicuous consumption as well as the less wealthy middle class who strive to appear they are wealthy through conspicuous consumption.

The bourgeoisie, in their attempt to enter white middle class, have become "exaggerated Americans" (Frazier, 1957), copying to the minutest detail what they believe to be middle class society. They are externally adapted in that they are oriented to hedonism and conspicuous consumption, the importance of their profession lying mainly in its income and not in its nature or the amount or quality of achievement. The result is a rather superficial and meaningless life which, of course,

affects the family. Children in bourgeoisie families are few and when present are often catered to and pampered to the extent of being harmful. Husband-wife relationships are fragile with infidelity common. The husband's role is mainly one of provider; and the wife, if she is not a professional or entertainer, spends her time furthering social contacts (Frazier, 1957).

#### Acculturated Middle Class

Acculturated middle class black families are quite similar to white families of the same social class. Much value is placed on home ownership, hard work, education, morality, and above all, maintaining respectability (Lewis, 1955). Members of the acculturated middle class shun the externally adapted and their deplorable public conduct--boisterousness, drinking whiskey in public, sexual indiscretion, and lack of control (Drake and Clayton, 1962).

Because of the premium placed on respectability, family life is stable in that there is little divorce or desertion. Acculturated middle class parents encourage their children to study hard, obey adults, stay neat and clean, and avoid aggression. Education for their children is very important. Much effort is dedicated to providing children with the opportunities to develop to their fullest extent (Bernard, 1967).

#### Acculturated Lower Class

The acculturated lower class has many the same values and aspirations for their children as the acculturated middle class. They are faced with the serious problem of having to live in crowded, stifling conditions close to the externally adapted whom they shun. They are

concerned about the influence of the externally adapted on their children, and if possible, a few acculturated lower class will group and isolate themselves (Bernard, 1967).

#### Child-Rearing and Social Class

Considering the different life styles of middle and lower classes, it is logical that a difference in values for children would produce different child-rearing practices. The difference in values between the social classes can be explained by the fact that people value what they themselves have experienced as rewarding (Kohn, 1959). A review of the effects of social class on child-rearing is especially pertinent to a study of black families because inequality of opportunity has produced a large percentage of black American families in the lower social class.

Duvall (1946) classified conceptions of parenthood into traditional and developmental, traditional parents valuing conformity and respectability--how a child behaves; and developmental parents placing value on the development of the child and inner control--how a child is. She reports lower class parents tend to be traditional, while middle class parents tend to be developmental. Another study found lower class parents value obedience, cleanliness, neatness, honesty while middle class value curiosity, self-achieved control, and happiness. Lower class parents value conformity and outward behavior in an attempt to maintain respectability, while middle class parents, for whom respectability is not a problem, are free to be interested in how their children are developing. Similarly, the success in the occupations of lower class fathers is dependent upon being conforming and dutiful, while middle class fathers are more likely to achieve success by being creative and



analytical (Aberle, 1952). Therefore, they value personality characteristics they have experienced to produce success.

In actual practice, middle class parents are more permissive in sex training (Littman, Moore, Pierce-Jones, 1957) and more tolerant of aggression against the parents (Maccoby and Gibbs, 1964). Working class parents punish children for the potential consequences of behavior, and middle class parents punish for their interpretation of the child's motive, consistent with their respective values of respectable behavior and of inner control (Kohn, 1963). Similarly, the parent-child relationships of the working class seek to maintain order and obedience, while those of the middle class are more accepting and equalitarian (Bronfenbrenner, 1968). Also consistent with respective lower and middle class values, lower class parents use more physical punishment and middle class parents use more praise and reasoning (Maccoby and Gibbs, 1964). Although there are social class differences, there are more similarities than differences between the social classes. Littman, Moore, and Pierce-Jones (1957) found only twenty-one differences between the classes out of one hundred eight comparisons.

Turning specifically to the father in lower and middle classes, fathers of the lower class perceive their parental role to be one of financial responsibility and limit setting, while middle class fathers shift the emphasis from financial responsibility, perhaps because they are more secure about fulfilling that responsibility, to support. Because male-female roles are more differentiated in lower class, fathers see child-rearing to be the mother's responsibility and are less involved in parenting than middle class fathers. Consequently, lower class mothers are less satisfied with their husbands as fathers

(Brofenbrenner, 1968), wanting them to be more helpful in constraining children.

Studies have found lower class children to have less positive attitudes toward their parents, especially fathers (Smith, 1969), and Medennus (1965) has associated this negative attitude to delinquency. Rosen reports middle class boys rate parents higher in competence, security, and especially, in parental acceptance and interest, than lower class boys (1964). Smith's study (1969) found that the difference in attitudes toward parents was not a result of differences in child-rearing practices, such as degree of affection or amount of physical punishment, but of a subjective evaluation of the father's social class or prestige.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Subjects

This study was undertaken utilizing 114 black and 137 white students 13 to 18 years old. The subjects in this study were boys and girls who were students at the following Oklahoma schools: Guthrie Public School, Coyle Public School, and Langston Elementary School. These schools were chosen because of a high percentage of black students and because the investigator had been a teacher in the area.

At Langston and Crescent, the questionnaire was given to black students only. At Guthrie and Coyle it was given to both races with a secret method for identifying black and white subjects. The fact that the questionnaire would be analyzed separately for black and white students was kept secret at the request of the school administrations. In Coyle, the entire junior and senior high school was used, and at Guthrie, the questionnaire was given to three sections of each of the following courses: English I, English II, English III, and English IV. English classes were chosen because all students are required to take English; and therefore, English classes are representative of the student body. Also, different levels of English classes were selected to make possible an examination of responses classified according to age. Of the four schools, 114 useable questionnaires were obtained from black students and 137 from white students.

Questionnaires were excluded if the student was married, failed to complete the questionnaire, was born out of the United States, or had never known his father well enough to answer the questions.

#### Measurement of Variables

Information about age, sex, number of siblings, social class, and residence was obtained from a three page information sheet. Social class was determined using the short form of the McGuire-White Index of Social Status (1955) which is based on (1) father's occupation, (2) source of income, (3) and father's education. Information about (1) type of discipline control in the home, (2) degree of childhood happiness, was obtained from questions revised and adapted from a study by Doyle (1968).

#### Description of Instrument

Attitudes toward fathers were measured by a questionnaire entitled, Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) by Itkin (1952) which consists of eleven items in which the respondent replies in terms of true, false, or uncertain; eight multiple choice items; and fifteen graded scale responses to perceived personality traits of the father which range from "possesses the trait to a greater than average degree" to "possesses the trait to a very slight degree or not at all." Itkin (1952) established the reliability of the instrument by the split-half method, the reliability coefficients ranging from .79 to .97.

The scale was also subjected to an internal consistency analysis in which responses to each item of the respondents falling in the upper twenty-five percent were compared with the responses to each item of the

respondents falling in the lower twenty-five percent. Because Itkin's respondents were white Americans, the validity of the instrument with black Americans was assessed by an item analysis using a chi-square test. All items were significantly differentiating between high and low students (upper and lower quartile). Therefore, all questions were used in the analysis of data.

#### Administration of the Instrument

At Langston, Coyle, and Guthrie, the questionnaire was administered in the classroom setting by the researcher and two assistants. The purpose of the study and the importance of obtaining accurate information was stressed. The questionnaire was read aloud to discourage indiscriminate answering by students with poor reading skills. Also, assistants were present to help students individually with questions they did not understand.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of the Subjects

A detailed description of the background of the subjects is presented in Table I. The 251 subjects ranged from 13 to 18 years old with the majority (81.6%) being 15 years old or older. Approximately half of the respondents were female (45.82%) and half were male (54.18%). Similarly, approximately half were white (54.58%). The largest group of respondents (47.54%) had four or more siblings and lived in lower middle (30.68%) or upper lower (47.01%) class homes. The largest group of subjects (41.87%) grew up in a community with a population 2,500 - 50,000. Of the 97 students whose father was not the head of the house, most (68.04%) lived in homes where the mother was head of house. Of those who experienced father absence, the majority (61.43%) experienced it at the age of five or older, and the most frequent (37.58%) reason for father absence was divorce.

#### Family Relationships Information

The questionnaire contained items which elicited students' perceptions of family relationships (Table II). Many students (46.99%) reported they were loved "very much" by their father. A majority of respondents (89.38%) felt their childhood happiness was average or above average. The prevailing source of discipline in most students' homes

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS\*

Description	N	Total %
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	136	54.18
Female	115	45.82
<u>Age</u>		
13	22	8.98
14	18	7.35
15	58	23.67
16	72	29.39
17 or older	75	30.61
<u>Grade</u>		
7	13	5.39
8	10	4.15
9	21	8.71
10	60	24.90
11-12	137	56.85
<u>Number of siblings</u>		
0	11	4.51
1	29	11.89
2	44	18.03
3	44	18.03
4 or more	116	47.54
<u>Socio-economic Class</u>		
Upper middle class	19	7.57
Lower middle class	77	30.68
Upper lower class	118	47.01
Lower lower class	37	14.74
<u>Residence</u>		
Farm	57	23.17
Community with population under 2,500	58	23.58
Community with 2,500 - 50,000 population	103	41.87
Community with over 50,000 population	27	10.98
<u>Race</u>		
Black	114	45.52
White	137	54.58

TABLE I (CONTINUED)

Description	Total	
	N	%
<u>Head of house other than father</u>		
Mother	66	68.04
Step-father	24	24.74
Sibling	1	1.03
Guardian or self	3	3.09
Other	3	3.09
<u>Age of father absence</u>		
0-1	13	18.57
2	6	8.57
3	5	7.14
4	3	4.29
5 or older	43	61.43
<u>Reason for father absence</u>		
Separation	15	21.74
Divorce	26	37.68
Military	4	5.80
Death	13	18.84
Other	11	15.94

\*N = 251



TABLE II  
 SUBJECTS' RATING OF THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS\*

Description	Total	
	N	%
<u>Love felt from father</u>		
Very much	117	46.99
Above average	37	14.86
Average	64	25.70
Below average	15	6.02
Very little	16	6.43
<u>Childhood happiness</u>		
Very happy	90	36.73
Somewhat above average	65	26.53
Average	64	26.12
Somewhat below average	17	6.94
Very unhappy	9	3.67
<u>Prevailing source of discipline</u>		
Father	35	14.34
Father with help from mother	47	19.26
Equally father and mother	69	28.28
Mother with help from father	34	13.93
Mother	59	24.18
<u>Type of discipline</u>		
Rough	19	7.79
Somewhat severe	14	5.74
Average	136	55.74
Somewhat mild	40	16.39
Mild	35	14.34
<u>Degree of closeness to father</u>		
Very close	65	26.53
Above average	35	14.29
Average	85	34.69
Below average	31	12.65
Very distant	29	11.84

\*N = 251

(28.28%) was reported to be father and mother equally. Most students (55.74%) perceived discipline to be "average" in severity. The majority of students (75.51%) felt their closeness to their father was "average," "above average," or "very close."

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

Students' responses to Itkin's scale (1952) are listed in Tables III, IV, and V. The subjects are broken into the following eight categories: white, middle-class males; white, middle-class females; white, lower-class males; black, middle-class males; black, middle-class females; black, lower-class males; black, lower-class females. Responses are listed for each of the eight categories.

In general, students reported very positive attitudes toward their fathers. Item 3 on Scale IV concerning asking father intimate questions elicited the most answers indicating negative attitude; i.e., few students reported they felt free to ask their fathers intimate questions.

Comparison of Scores

Comparisons were made of the responses on Itkin's scale (1952) between black and white adolescents, male and female students, and middle class and lower class students, utilizing a Mann-Whitney U test. Scores and levels of significance are listed in Table VI. The comparison of black and white adolescents' scores indicated no significant difference. Similarly, a comparison of the scores of male and female adolescents indicated no significant difference. However, a comparison of middle-class with lower-class adolescents' scores indicated middle

TABLE III

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

Item		White, Male Middle Class		White, Female Middle Class		White, Male Lower Class		White, Female Lower Class		Black, Male Middle Class		Black, Female Middle Class		Black, Male Lower Class		Black, Female Lower Class	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I consider myself very close to my father.	True	22	59.5	10	55.6	18	50.0	23	53.5	18	81.8	8	44.4	21	56.8	15	42.9
	?	5	13.5	5	27.8	9	25.0	7	16.3	1	4.5	3	16.7	8	21.6	11	31.40
	False	10	27.0	3	16.7	9	25.0	13	30.2	3	13.6	7	38.9	8	21.6	9	25.7
2. My father generally has good reasons for any requests he might make.	True	32	86.5	10	55.6	29	80.6	28	65.1	19	90.5	12	66.7	27	75.0	23	63.9
	?	3	8.1	6	33.3	2	5.6	10	23.3	1	4.8	1	5.6	5	13.9	6	16.7
	False	2	5.4	2	11.1	5	13.9	5	11.6	1	4.8	5	27.8	4	11.1	7	19.4
3. I would like to be the same kind of a parent that my father has been.	True	16	42.1	7	38.9	15	41.7	12	28.6	15	79.0	6	33.3	17	47.2	8	23.5
	?	10	26.3	3	16.7	8	22.2	7	16.7	2	10.5	4	22.2	5	13.9	8	23.5
	False	12	31.6	8	44.4	13	36.1	23	54.8	2	10.5	8	44.4	14	38.9	18	53.0
4. I believe that my father underestimates my ability.	True	14	37.8	9	52.9	17	46.0	18	43.9	26	27.3	7	38.9	17	46.0	17	50.0
	?	4	10.8	0	0.0	6	16.2	7	17.1	4	18.2	2	11.1	6	16.2	6	17.6
	False	19	51.3	8	47.1	14	37.9	16	39.0	12	54.5	9	50.0	14	37.8	11	32.3
5. I believe my father finds fault with me more often than I deserve and seems never to be satisfied with anything I do.	True	15	40.5	3	18.8	12	33.3	12	29.3	4	22.2	6	37.5	13	36.1	11	32.3
	?	3	8.1	2	12.5	5	13.9	6	14.6	1	5.6	0	0.0	5	13.9	4	11.8
	False	19	51.3	11	68.8	19	52.8	23	56.1	13	72.2	9	56.2	18	50.0	18	52.9
6. I believe that my father has insufficient respect for my opinions.	True	16	44.4	3	18.8	15	40.5	15	35.7	5	26.3	4	26.7	13	35.1	8	23.5
	?	4	11.1	5	31.3	2	5.4	10	23.8	8	42.1	4	26.7	6	16.2	15	44.1
	False	16	44.4	8	50.0	20	54.0	17	40.5	6	31.6	6	40.0	18	48.6	10	29.4
7. In my estimation, my father is insufficiently interested in whether or not I have friends.	True	10	29.4	3	17.6	8	22.9	18	43.9	4	18.2	3	17.6	13	35.1	9	25.0
	?	6	17.6	3	17.6	8	22.9	5	12.2	1	4.5	1	5.9	7	18.9	6	16.7
	False	18	52.9	11	64.7	19	54.3	18	43.9	17	77.3	13	76.5	17	46.0	21	58.3
8. In my judgment, my father did not treat me fairly when I was young.	True	3	8.3	2	11.8	6	16.2	3	7.3	2	10.0	3	20.0	5	14.7	3	10.0
	?	5	13.9	0	0.0	6	16.2	11	26.8	2	10.0	1	6.7	9	26.5	5	16.7
	False	28	77.8	15	88.2	25	67.6	27	65.9	16	80.0	10	66.7	20	58.8	21	70.0
9. I believe that my father is one of the most admirable persons I know.	True	25	69.4	11	61.1	18	51.4	24	55.8	18	81.8	9	56.1	20	54.0	21	60.0
	?	6	16.7	2	11.1	7	20.0	8	18.6	1	4.5	3	18.8	10	27.0	7	20.0
	False	5	13.9	5	27.8	10	28.6	11	25.6	3	13.6	4	25.0	7	18.9	7	20.0
10. My father has been one of the best friends I have ever had.	True	20	54.0	4	22.2	14	37.8	12	30.8	14	66.7	7	38.9	20	58.8	16	47.0
	?	6	16.2	6	33.3	9	24.3	10	25.6	3	14.3	1	5.5	6	17.6	10	29.4
	False	11	26.7	8	44.4	14	37.8	17	43.6	4	19.0	10	55.6	8	23.5	8	23.5
11. My father considers the rearing of his children the most important job in life.	True	26	72.2	10	62.5	24	68.6	17	43.6	17	81.0	9	52.9	24	63.2	21	58.3
	?	5	13.9	4	25.0	5	14.3	14	35.9	1	4.8	3	17.6	7	18.4	13	36.1
	False	5	13.9	2	12.5	6	17.1	8	20.5	3	14.3	5	29.4	7	18.4	2	5.6

TABLE IV

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

Item	White, Male Middle Class		White, Female Middle Class		White, Male Lower Class		White, Female Lower Class		Black, Male Middle Class		Black, Female Middle Class		Black, Male Lower Class		Black, Female Lower Class	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. My father:																
a. Takes a very great interest in everything that concerns his children.	20	54.0	10	58.8	18	48.6	17	40.5	15	68.2	9	50.0	21	55.3	17	48.6
b. Takes a moderate amount of interest in things which concern his children.	14	37.8	5	29.4	14	37.8	14	33.3	6	27.3	7	38.9	9	23.7	13	37.1
c. Does not take very much interest in things which concern his children.	1	2.7	0	0.0	2	5.4	7	16.7	1	4.6	0	0.0	4	10.5	2	5.7
d. Takes little interest in things which concern his children.	1	2.7	1	5.9	3	8.1	2	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	10.5	2	5.7
e. Takes no interest in things which concern his children.	1	2.7	1	5.9	0	0.0	2	4.8	0	0.0	2	11.1	0	0.0	1	2.3
2. I get along with my father:																
a. Very well.	9	24.3	8	44.4	13	35.1	10	24.4	11	52.4	9	50.0	11	29.0	14	41.2
b. Well.	14	37.8	3	16.7	4	10.8	10	24.4	6	28.6	2	11.1	13	34.2	10	29.4
c. Fairly well.	11	29.7	5	27.8	13	35.1	14	35.1	4	19.0	4	22.2	11	29.0	6	17.6
d. Not very well.	2	5.4	0	0.0	5	13.5	5	12.2	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	5.3	4	11.7
e. Poorly.	1	2.7	2	11.1	2	5.4	2	4.9	0	0.0	1	5.6	1	2.6	0	0.0
3. In regard to taking my father into my confidence, I:																
a. Feel free to ask him intimate questions.	8	21.6	2	13.3	4	11.4	4	10.3	8	10.0	2	11.8	6	18.2	4	12.9
b. Often ask him intimate questions.	3	8.1	1	6.7	1	2.9	1	2.6	4	20.0	3	17.6	3	9.0	3	9.7
c. Sometimes ask him intimate questions.	7	18.9	0	0.0	6	17.1	7	18.0	3	15.0	3	17.6	7	21.2	5	16.1
d. Rarely, if ever, ask him intimate questions.	12	32.4	10	66.7	14	40.0	12	30.8	3	15.0	3	17.6	10	30.3	6	19.3
e. Wouldn't think of asking him any intimate questions.	7	18.9	2	13.3	16	28.6	15	38.5	2	10.0	6	38.3	7	21.2	13	41.9
4. Check whichever of the following terms best describes your feelings toward your father:																
a. I idealize my father.	5	14.3	2	11.8	1	3.0	2	4.9	2	10.5	3	20.0	3	8.3	3	8.8
b. I admire my father.	6	17.1	2	11.8	4	12.1	7	17.0	7	36.8	2	13.3	7	19.4	2	5.9
c. I respect my father.	19	54.3	11	64.7	21	63.6	25	61.0	9	47.4	8	15.3	20	55.6	24	70.6
d. I do not particularly respect my father.	4	11.4	1	5.9	7	21.2	5	12.1	1	5.3	1	6.7	6	16.7	4	11.8
e. I do not respect my father at all.	1	2.9	1	5.9	0	0.0	2	4.9	0	0.0	1	6.7	0	0.0	1	2.9

5. 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.	2	5.3	1	5.6	2	6.0	5	11.6	0	0.0	2	11.1	3	8.3	1	2.9
b.	Is rather critical of his children, and is not often pleased by what his children do.	3	7.9	4	22.2	6	18.2	5	11.6	2	10.0	1	5.6	5	13.9	2	5.7
c.	Is not very critical of his children, but on the other hand, does not show particular pleasure of what his children do.	6	15.8	3	16.7	6	18.2	10	23.3	4	20.0	1	5.6	4	11.1	6	17.1
d.	Often shows pleasure at what his children do, and often praises them for their accomplishments.	24	63.2	7	38.9	17	51.5	15	34.9	12	60.0	9	50.0	15	41.7	16	45.7
e.	Very seldom complains about his children, and is liberal in his praises of them.	3	7.9	3	16.7	2	6.0	8	18.6	2	10.0	5	27.8	9	25.0	10	28.6
6. I consider my father:																	
a.	Always willing to think only the best of his children.	13	36.1	7	41.2	12	31.6	10	23.8	12	24.5	8	44.4	9	25.7	11	34.4
b.	Generally inclined to think well of his children.	14	38.9	6	35.3	15	39.5	15	35.7	7	31.8	5	27.8	17	48.6	13	40.6
c.	Neither inclined to think only well or only poorly of his children.	3	8.3	3	17.6	4	10.5	12	28.6	1	4.5	3	16.7	3	8.6	4	12.5
d.	Sometimes inclined to be critical of his children.	3	8.3	1	5.9	7	18.4	3	7.1	2	9.0	0	0.0	4	11.4	1	3.1
e.	Always ready to think only the worst of his children.	3	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.8	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	5.7	3	9.4
7. My father:																	
a.	Never does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	1	2.6	1	6.7	2	5.7	4	10.0	0	0.0	3	16.7	2	6.0	1	3.2
b.	Seldom does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	8	21.0	2	13.3	7	20.0	7	17.5	2	9.5	3	16.7	8	24.2	7	22.6
c.	Sometimes does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	13	34.2	4	26.7	12	34.3	15	37.5	8	38.1	2	11.1	9	27.3	10	21.2
d.	Often does little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	10	26.3	5	33.3	9	25.7	9	22.5	10	42.6	6	33.3	6	18.2	3	9.7
e.	Is always doing little things for his children to show affection or consideration.	6	15.8	3	20.0	5	14.3	5	12.5	1	4.8	4	22.7	8	24.2	10	32.3
8. In my opinion, my father:																	
a.	Is so attached to his children that he wants to have them around all of the time.	4	10.5	3	20.0	6	17.6	5	11.6	2	10.5	2	11.1	8	24.2	2	6.9
b.	Enjoys spending some of his time with his children.	22	57.9	9	60.0	14	41.2	16	37.2	15	79.0	8	44.4	16	48.5	16	55.2
c.	Likes to spend a little of his time with his children.	9	23.7	3	20.0	10	29.4	16	37.2	2	10.6	4	22.2	6	18.2	9	31.0
d.	Does not like to spend time with his children.	2	5.3	0	0.0	3	8.8	3	7.0	0	0.0	3	16.7	3	9.0	2	6.9
e.	Dislikes very much spending any of his time with his children.	1	2.6	0	0.0	1	2.9	3	7.0	0	0.0	1	5.6	0	0.0	0	0.0

TABLE V

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

Trait	White, Male Middle Class		White, Female Middle Class		White, Male Lower Class		White, Female Lower Class		Black, Male Middle Class		Black, Female Middle Class		Black, Male Lower Class		Black, Female Lower Class	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>1. Fair</b>																
a. Very great degree	15	42.9	5	27.8	12	31.6	7	18.4	9	42.9	7	38.9	16	43.2	10	32.3
b. Greater than average degree	5	14.3	8	44.4	10	26.3	16	42.1	7	33.3	5	27.8	6	16.2	5	16.1
c. Average degree	11	31.4	3	16.7	10	26.3	9	23.7	5	23.8	3	16.7	10	27.0	10	32.3
d. Less than average degree	4	11.4	1	5.6	3	7.9	6	15.8	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	5.4	1	3.2
e. Very slight degree or not at all	0	0.0	1	5.6	3	7.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.6	3	8.1	5	16.1
<b>2. Selfish</b>																
a. Very great degree	1	2.9	1	5.6	4	13.3	6	16.2	1	5.6	2	12.5	3	10.7	5	19.2
b. Greater than average degree	3	8.8	1	5.6	1	3.3	5	13.5	2	11.1	0	0.0	6	21.4	3	11.5
c. Average degree	2	5.9	3	16.7	3	10.0	3	8.1	2	11.1	2	12.5	2	7.1	1	3.8
d. Less than average degree	6	17.6	4	22.2	6	20.0	7	19.0	4	22.2	1	6.2	10	35.7	2	7.7
e. Very slight degree or not at all	22	64.7	9	50.0	16	53.3	16	43.2	9	50.0	11	68.7	7	25.0	15	57.7
<b>3. Helpful</b>																
a. Very great degree	16	48.5	6	35.3	17	53.1	11	29.7	11	57.9	4	25.0	18	54.5	10	32.3
b. Greater than average degree	8	24.2	6	35.3	7	21.9	11	29.7	3	15.8	4	25.0	6	18.2	9	29.0
c. Average degree	5	15.1	2	11.8	3	9.4	8	21.6	3	15.8	5	31.2	5	15.1	7	22.6
d. Less than average degree	2	6.0	2	11.8	3	9.4	5	13.5	1	5.3	1	6.2	3	9.0	2	6.4
e. Very slight degree or not at all	2	6.0	1	5.9	2	6.2	2	5.4	1	5.3	2	13.5	1	3.0	3	9.7
<b>4. Sarcastic</b>																
a. Very great degree	3	10.0	1	6.7	2	7.7	4	12.5	2	15.4	2	22.2	7	29.2	3	13.0
b. Greater than average degree	2	6.7	3	20.0	4	15.4	5	15.6	1	7.7	0	0.0	2	8.3	2	8.7
c. Average degree	4	13.3	1	6.7	6	23.0	8	25.0	1	7.7	2	22.2	1	4.2	5	21.8
d. Less than average degree	7	23.3	4	26.7	6	23.0	5	15.6	2	15.4	3	33.3	7	29.2	2	8.7
e. Very slight degree or not at all	14	46.7	6	40.0	8	30.8	10	31.2	7	53.9	2	22.2	7	29.2	11	47.8
<b>5. Considerate</b>																
a. Very great degree	11	30.6	6	37.5	14	41.2	9	23.0	9	42.9	9	54.9	9	33.3	6	20.0
b. Greater than average degree	17	47.2	5	31.2	10	29.4	10	25.6	9	42.9	3	17.6	8	29.6	16	33.3
c. Average degree	4	11.1	3	18.8	7	20.6	12	30.8	3	14.3	2	11.8	5	18.5	11	36.7
d. Less than average degree	2	5.6	1	6.2	1	2.9	4	10.3	0	0.0	2	11.8	3	11.1	3	10.0
e. Very slight degree or not at all	2	5.6	1	6.2	2	5.9	4	10.3	0	0.0	1	5.9	2	7.4	0	0.0

<b>6. <u>Bossy</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	8	26.7	2	14.3	5	14.3	8	25.0	2	11.8	4	25.0	8	28.6	9	37.5
b. Greater than average degree	4	13.3	1	7.1	3	8.6	7	21.9	3	17.6	2	12.5	5	17.9	3	12.5
c. Average degree	6	20.0	3	21.4	5	14.3	6	18.8	4	23.5	1	6.2	7	25.0	5	20.8
d. Less than average degree	9	30.0	5	35.7	13	37.1	6	18.8	2	11.7	4	25.0	5	17.9	4	16.7
e. Very slight degree or not at all	3	10.0	3	21.4	9	25.7	5	15.6	6	53.3	5	31.2	3	10.7	3	12.5
<b>7. <u>Agreeable</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	3	8.1	3	16.7	8	22.2	9	21.0	7	31.8	4	22.2	9	25.0	2	5.9
b. Greater than average degree	11	29.7	5	27.8	6	16.7	6	14.0	5	22.7	4	22.2	5	13.9	9	26.5
c. Average degree	16	43.2	5	27.8	10	27.8	17	40.0	9	40.9	6	33.3	16	44.4	15	44.1
d. Less than average degree	4	10.8	3	16.7	10	27.8	7	16.3	1	4.6	2	11.1	4	11.1	1	2.9
e. Very slight degree or not at all	3	8.1	2	11.1	2	5.6	4	9.3	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	5.6	7	20.6
<b>8. <u>Kind</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	8	22.9	7	41.2	11	31.4	13	31.0	9	40.9	4	30.8	9	30.0	11	34.4
b. Greater than average degree	12	34.3	2	11.8	9	25.7	14	33.3	7	31.8	3	23.0	7	23.3	7	21.9
c. Average degree	12	34.3	6	35.3	10	28.6	9	21.4	6	27.3	3	23.0	13	43.3	11	34.4
d. Less than average degree	2	5.7	1	5.9	2	5.7	5	11.9	0	0.0	1	7.7	1	3.3	3	9.4
e. Very slight degree or not at all	1	2.9	1	5.9	3	8.6	1	2.4	0	0.0	2	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>9. <u>Envious</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	1	2.6	0	0.0	4	10.8	3	7.1	0	0.0	1	5.9	5	15.1	4	13.3
b. Greater than average degree	2	5.3	1	5.9	2	5.4	3	7.1	4	19.0	2	11.8	3	9.0	1	3.3
c. Average	6	15.8	2	11.8	8	21.6	7	16.7	4	19.0	2	11.8	8	24.2	8	26.7
d. Less than average degree	6	15.8	4	23.5	7	18.9	7	16.7	2	9.5	3	17.6	6	18.2	5	16.7
e. Very slight degree or not at all	23	60.5	10	58.8	16	43.2	22	52.4	11	52.4	9	53.0	11	33.3	23	40.0
<b>10. <u>Affectionate</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	4	11.1	5	29.4	6	15.8	10	24.4	6	30.0	7	38.9	10	29.4	4	12.1
b. Greater than average degree	14	38.9	6	35.3	7	18.4	5	12.2	6	30.0	3	16.7	8	23.5	11	33.3
c. Average degree	11	30.6	4	23.5	13	34.2	15	36.6	7	35.0	2	11.1	11	32.3	13	39.4
d. Less than average degree	4	11.1	1	5.9	8	21.0	6	14.6	1	5.6	1	5.6	3	8.8	3	9.0
e. Very slight degree or not at all	3	8.3	1	5.9	4	10.5	5	12.2	0	0.0	5	27.8	2	5.9	2	6.0
<b>11. <u>Understanding</u></b>																
a. Very great degree	8	22.2	6	35.3	9	25.7	5	12.2	7	33.3	1	7.7	8	24.2	7	22.6
b. Greater than average degree	11	30.6	5	29.4	7	20.0	11	26.8	4	11.0	4	30.8	7	21.2	4	12.9
c. Average degree	10	27.8	2	11.8	9	25.7	10	24.4	7	33.3	4	30.8	10	30.3	12	28.7
d. Less than average degree	4	11.1	3	17.6	7	20.0	10	24.4	2	9.5	3	23.0	4	12.1	4	12.9
e. Very slight degree or not at all	3	8.3	1	5.9	3	8.6	5	12.2	1	4.8	1	7.7	4	12.1	4	12.9

TABLE V (CONTINUED)

Trait	White, Male Middle Class		White, Female Middle Class		White, Male Lower Class		White, Female Lower Class		Black, Male Middle Class		Black, Female Middle Class		Black, Male Lower Class		Black, Female Lower Class	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>12. Cold</b>																
a. Very great degree	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.9	4	9.5	1	5.0	2	11.1	2	6.7	1	3.0
b. Greater than average degree	2	5.4	1	6.2	6	17.6	5	11.9	0	0.0	3	16.7	2	6.7	1	3.0
c. Average degree	6	16.2	2	12.5	8	23.5	6	14.3	2	10.0	1	5.6	6	20.0	9	27.3
d. Less than average degree	8	13.5	3	18.7	5	14.7	4	9.5	3	15.0	3	16.7	9	30.0	5	15.1
e. Very slight degree or not at all	24	64.9	10	62.5	14	41.2	23	54.8	14	70.0	9	50.0	11	36.7	17	51.5
<b>13. Suspicious</b>																
a. Very great degree	4	11.1	2	11.1	7	19.4	6	14.3	2	9.5	1	7.1	3	8.8	1	3.3
b. Greater than average degree	2	5.6	3	16.7	2	5.6	6	14.3	6	28.6	4	28.6	7	10.6	4	13.3
c. Average degree	11	30.6	2	11.1	11	30.6	8	19.0	5	23.8	4	28.6	13	38.2	10	33.3
d. Less than average degree	5	13.9	2	11.1	7	19.4	11	26.2	3	14.3	0	0.0	6	17.6	6	20.0
e. Very slight degree or not at all	14	38.9	9	50.0	9	25.0	11	26.2	5	23.8	5	35.7	5	14.7	9	30.0
<b>14. Sympathetic</b>																
a. Very great degree	2	5.3	3	18.7	8	21.6	7	17.0	4	19.0	5	29.4	6	18.2	4	12.1
b. Greater than average degree	17	44.8	5	31.2	6	16.2	7	17.0	7	33.3	5	29.4	8	24.2	6	18.2
c. Average degree	8	21.0	5	31.2	14	37.8	14	34.1	5	23.8	3	17.6	12	36.4	17	51.52
d. Less than average degree	6	18.5	1	6.2	7	18.9	5	12.2	2	9.5	1	5.9	3	9.0	3	9.0
e. Very slight degree or not at all	5	13.2	2	12.5	2	5.4	8	19.5	3	14.3	3	17.6	4	12.1	3	9.0
<b>15. Courteous</b>																
a. Very great degree	8	21.6	6	33.3	7	18.9	7	17.0	6	30.0	5	29.4	10	31.2	9	27.3
b. Greater than average degree	10	27.0	3	16.7	10	27.0	14	34.1	9	45.0	3	17.6	9	28.1	8	24.3
c. Average degree	10	27.0	6	33.3	14	37.8	11	26.8	4	20.0	5	29.4	9	28.1	9	27.3
d. Less than average degree	7	18.9	2	11.1	3	8.1	7	17.0	1	5.0	2	11.8	2	6.2	3	9.0
e. Very slight degree or not at all	2	5.4	1	5.6	3	8.1	2	4.9	0	0.0	2	11.8	2	6.2	4	12.1
<b>16. Trustful</b>																
a. Very great degree	21	58.3	6	37.5	12	34.3	14	33.3	10	52.6	10	55.6	15	42.9	10	38.5
b. Greater than average degree	8	22.2	5	31.2	8	22.9	12	28.6	2	10.5	3	16.7	7	20.0	4	15.4
c. Average degree	2	5.6	2	12.5	10	28.6	6	14.3	6	31.6	3	16.7	3	8.6	6	23.0
d. Less than average degree	1	2.8	1	6.2	0	0.0	3	7.1	1	5.3	0	0.0	5	14.3	2	7.7
e. Very slight degree or not at all	4	11.1	2	12.5	5	14.3	7	16.7	0	0.0	2	11.1	5	14.3	4	15.4



TABLE VI  
MANN-WHITNEY U SCORES CLASSIFIED BY  
RACE, SEX, AND SOCIAL CLASS

Variable	Z	Level of Significance
Race	-0.07888	n.s.
Sex	-1.21927	n.s.
Social Class	-2.69728	.01

class adolescents had significantly higher median scores, suggesting middle class adolescents may tend to have more positive attitudes toward their fathers than lower class adolescents.

#### Relationship Between Scores and Selected

##### Background Factors

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance revealed that the attitudes of black and white adolescent boys and girls are not significantly related to: (a) number of siblings, (b) residence, (c) father absence, (d) age when the father became absent, (e) reason for father absence. However, it was revealed that the attitudes of black and white adolescent boys and girls were related significantly to: (a) age, (b) grade in school, (c) father's love, (d) childhood happiness, (e) source of discipline, (f) severity of discipline, and (g) closeness to father. The results of these analyses are presented in Table VII.

Age and grade in school were found to be significant at the .05 level. The data indicate that attitudes toward fathers were more positive among the 14-year olds than among the 13-year olds, that the attitudes were more positive among eighth graders than among seventh graders. At 14 years of age and in grade eight, attitudes became gradually less positive each year of age from 14 to 18 and each grade from eight to twelve. Perceived father's love was found to be significantly related at the .001 level to adolescents' attitudes toward their fathers. Study of this relationship indicates the higher the degree of perceived father's love the more positive the attitudes toward fathers.

Perceived childhood happiness was found to be significantly related at the .001 level to attitudes toward fathers. In general, the happier

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

Background Variable	H	Level of Significance
Age	10.164	.05
Grade	10.851	.05
Number of siblings	7.457	n.s.
Head of house	1.720	n.s.
Residence	1.659	n.s.
Age of father absence	3.021	n.s.
Reason for father absence	3.902	n.s.
Father's love	112.747	.001
Childhood happiness	57.040	.001
Source of discipline	19.392	.001
Severity of discipline	13.136	.01
Closeness to father	116.383	.001

adolescents reported their childhood, the more positive their attitudes toward their fathers. An interesting finding is that students who rated their childhood happiness as "very unhappy" had attitudes more positive than students who rated childhood happiness as "somewhat below average," significant at the .001 level.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance revealed a relationship between attitude and source of discipline, significant at the .001 level. The highest scores, indicating the most positive attitudes, were obtained from students who reported discipline coming equally from father and mother. Second highest scores were from students who reported discipline came from father with help from mother, and third highest scores were from students reporting father was the main source of discipline. Lowest scores, indicating least positive attitudes, were from students whose discipline came mainly from mother.

Severity of discipline was found to be significantly related at the .01 level to attitudes toward fathers. Most positive attitudes were revealed for students who reported average severity as compared to "rough" or "mild." In general, ranging from "rough" to "mild," the closer to average, the more positive the attitude toward fathers. For example, adolescents who reported "somewhat severe" discipline had more positive attitudes than adolescents reporting "rough" discipline. Similarly, "somewhat mild" discipline was related to more positive attitudes than "mild" discipline.

Perceived closeness to father was found to be significantly related at the .001 level to attitudes toward fathers. The closer an adolescent rated his closeness to his father, the more positive his attitude.

The significant differences between lower and middle class adolescents' attitudes toward their fathers is consistent with other studies. Rosen (1964) found middle class boys perceived their father to be more competent and secure than lower class boys. Similarly, they rated their fathers higher on interest in them and acceptance of them. Littman, Moore, and Pierce-Jones (1957) also found over-all reactions to fathers more positive among middle class boys and girls. A plausible explanation for more positive attitudes among middle class adolescents may be the differences in child-rearing practices of middle and lower class parents. Middle class parents tend to be interested in how their children develop, while lower class parents focus on how a child behaves (Duvall, 1946). Since loosening family ties and becoming an independent person are major developmental tasks of teenagers (Duvall, 1971), the less democratic parenting of lower class parents could contribute toward less positive attitudes.

A similar study with Spanish American youth (Brooks, 1964) also found relationships between positive attitudes and perceptions of father's love, closeness to father, and childhood happiness. The study did not report attitudes related to source of discipline or severity of discipline as did this study, although the results of other studies (Leighton, 1970; Mussen and Distler, 1960) tend to support the relationships between an adolescent's attitude toward his father and source and severity of discipline.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate attitudes of adolescents toward their fathers and to investigate the relationships between these attitudes and selected background factors.

The sample was 251 junior and senior high school students who were enrolled at Coyle Public School, Guthrie High School, or Langston Elementary School. The sample included black and white students, male and female students, and middle and lower class students.

The questionnaire consisted of an information sheet for the purpose of gathering background information, and Itkin's Attitude Toward Parents Scale (Form F) which measures attitudes toward fathers.

The chi-square test was used to determine the usefulness of Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents (Form F) with black adolescents. Its usefulness with white adolescents was established by Itkin (1952). Each item was statistically discriminating between the upper and lower quartiles of blacks at the .05 level or beyond, suggesting its usefulness with blacks.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine scores of respondents on Itkin's scale which were classified in terms of: age, grade in school, number of siblings, head of house, residence, age of father absence, and reason for father absence. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine the relationships between categories within

the factors which accounted for the significance revealed by the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance. The Mann-Whitney U was also used to examine scores on Itkin's scale and the following: race, sex, and social class.

Analysis of the data revealed no significant difference between attitudes of adolescents toward their fathers and the following background factors: sex, race, number of siblings, head of house, residence, age at the time of father absence, or reason for father absence. There was a statistically significant relationship between scores on Itkin's Attitudes Toward Parents Scale (Form F) and the following: age, grade in school, father's love, childhood happiness, source of discipline, severity of discipline, and closeness to father.

Concerning age and grade in school, scores increased, indicating increasingly positive attitudes, to the eighth grade and to age 14, and then gradually decreased to grade twelve and age 18. In general, the greater the father's love the happier the childhood, and the closer the relationship to father, the more positive were the attitudes toward fathers. Attitudes were most likely to be positive if discipline was rated as average rather than "rough" or "mild" and if discipline came equally from mother and father rather than from either parent. Attitudes were more likely to be positive if discipline came mainly from father rather than mainly from mother.

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## APPENDIXES

## INFORMATION SHEET

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can. It is important that you answer ALL questions which are appropriate. Your identity and your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Your cooperation in this research project is greatly appreciated.

- \_\_\_ 1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 2. Address \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 3. Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
   month  day  year
- \_\_\_ 4. Age (check one)       13 \_\_\_\_\_  
   14 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 5. Were you born in America?  
        \_\_\_ 1. Yes  
        \_\_\_ 2. No
- \_\_\_ 6. I am presently in grade: (Circle one)  
        a. 7  
        b. 8  
        c. 9
- \_\_\_ 7. I have \_\_\_ brothers and \_\_\_ sisters. I was number  
        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8 (Circle one)
- \_\_\_ 8. If the head of your household is one other than your father,  
        indicate which one:  
           mother \_\_\_\_\_  
           step-father \_\_\_\_\_  
           brother \_\_\_\_\_  
           sister \_\_\_\_\_  
           legal guardian \_\_\_\_\_  
           self \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ 9. In your school, your father completed grades:  
        \_\_\_ none   \_\_\_ graduated from high school  
        \_\_\_ 1-4    \_\_\_ completed 1-3 years college  
        \_\_\_ 5-7    \_\_\_ graduated from college  
        \_\_\_ 8-10   \_\_\_ over 4 years of college  
        \_\_\_ 11-12

- \_\_\_ 10. The majority of my life so far, I grew up: (Circle one)
- on a farm
  - in a community of less than 2,500 population
  - in a community of 2,500 to 50,000 population
  - in a community of over 50,000 population
- \_\_\_ 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:
- very much
  - above average
  - average
  - below average
  - very little
- \_\_\_ 16. With respect to happiness, I consider my childhood to be:
- very happy
  - somewhat above average
  - average
  - somewhat below average
  - very unhappy
- \_\_\_ 17. In my family, the discipline I receive is mainly from:
- my father
  - my father with some help from my mother
  - 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 my, 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						

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