

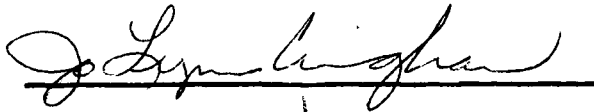
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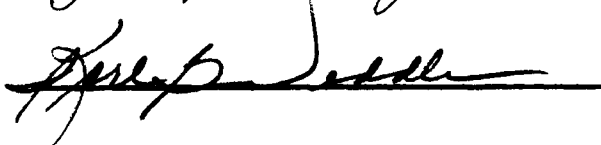
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Martha Ann Bell entitled "Predictors of Adolescents' Romantic Attitudes toward Parenthood." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child and Family Studies.



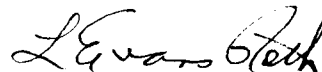
Gary W. Peterson, Major Professor

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Thesis

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PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENTS' ROMANTIC ATTITUDES
TOWARD PARENTHOOD

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Martha Ann Bell

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of gender-role attitudes, experiences with children, expected age at marriage, socioeconomic status, and gender as predictors of adolescents' romanticized attitudes toward parenthood. The unique contribution of this study was the consideration of romanticized parenting attitudes in adolescents. Of special interest was how prospective parents view children and the parenting role.

Data were collected from 185 adolescents who were juniors at Farragut High School in Knox County. Romantic views of parenthood were measured by the Attitudes toward Parenthood Scale, a scale based on LeMasters' "folklore" about parenthood. The Osmond and Martin Sex-Role Attitude Scale was used to assess the gender-role attitudes of the students. Scales developed specifically for this study were used to assess the amount of experiences the young people had with children and the age at which the adolescents expected to marry.

Multiple regression analysis was used in this study to analyze the contribution of the five independent variables to one dependent variable in the model. It was found that traditional gender-role attitudes are predictors of romantic attitudes toward parenthood for

adolescents. None of the other variables examined in this study were found to predict romantic attitudes.

A secondary analysis using statistical models for each gender was performed on the relationships between each independent variable and romantic attitudes toward parenthood. It was found that female adolescents with traditional gender-role attitudes have romantic notions of parenthood. The gender-role attitude variable was found not to predict romantic attitudes in males.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, children have been valued as sources of joy, happiness, companionship, and pride. When asked about the single most important advantage of having children, parents most often mention the love and affection that children provide. These qualities of the parent-child relationship are thought to be an important reason for having children (Espenshade, 1977).

The idea that children are "valued" recognizes that children fulfill needs and serve as sources of psychological satisfaction and dissatisfaction for parents. Despite this acknowledgement, however, differences exist among individual parents with respect to which needs that children satisfy, how intensely the needs are felt, and whether or not there are other sources available for satisfying these particular needs (Hoffman & Manis, 1979). Furthermore, only one child may be sufficient to satisfy the needs of some prospective parents, whereas many children may be required to satisfy the needs of others. The motivation to have children also is thought to depend on the value of children and the capacity of children to meet their parents' needs (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973).

Because of the high value that is placed on children, the motivation to have children begins to develop in adults

during their own childhoods (Fox, Fox, & Frohardt-Lane, 1982). As part of the process of learning about gender roles when they are very young, children come to differentiate between men and women in terms of their ability to bear children and thus to link the concept of "woman" to childbearing. Fox et al. (1982), for example, suggested that "childbearing" and "woman" become defined interchangeably in the minds of children. It would appear, therefore, that many children at very young ages form pronatalist values, and little girls, in particular, develop expectations for themselves as future childbearers (Fox et al., 1982).

Thus, it appears that almost from birth people are exposed to the concept that having children is a valuable and perhaps necessary dimension of life. Continual exposure to these ideas throughout the early years of life tends to make children assume that they must become parents when they grow up. Subtle pressure of this kind to become parents leaves children and adolescents with the notion that most people (including themselves) are expected to have children someday. Extensive social pressure to have children, however, could lead to less desirable results; namely, the idealization of children and the parenting role.

In many cases, however, conceptions of parenthood by young people are not always realistic. For example,

in a classic study on the transition to parenthood, LeMasters (1957) provided evidence that young couples tended to romanticize child-rearing and child-care responsibilities. In a later publication, LeMasters (1977) also argued that the attitudes of prospective parents were encouraged by such myths about parenthood as that children improve marriage, that good parents can manage any child, and that there are no bad children--only bad parents. Because such unrealistic notions exist, it has been argued that making the transition and adjustment to parenthood may be a crisis for new parents (Dyer, 1963; LeMasters, 1957).

Recently, however, other investigators have reported contradictory results indicating that new parents did not characterize the transition to parenthood as a crisis (Hobbs, 1965, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974). In other words, some young people seemed to enter parenthood without having adopted the romantic views of parenthood described by LeMasters (1957). These young people appeared to be successful in separating our culture's romanticized views of parenthood from more realistic ones.

How these young people have been able to separate their own parental attitudes from our culture's romanticized conceptions is unclear. Rapoport, Rapoport, and Strelitz (1977), for example, have suggested that young

people with realistic attitudes may have had prior experience with certain aspects of child care. Furthermore, they may have learned parenting skills in courses at school (Rapoport et al., 1977). Perhaps for a variety of reasons, therefore, the idealization of parenthood has been avoided by at least some of the youth in our society.

Statement of Problem

Romantic views of adolescents about parenthood may predict the degree of difficulty that young people experience when they actually make the transition to parenthood. Knowing which attitudes and experiences of adolescents are related to romanticized attitudes toward parenthood might aid in finding ways to reduce some of the difficulty that adjustment to parenthood requires. Specifically, this study was concerned with the degree that gender-role attitudes, previous experiences with children, expected age at marriage, socioeconomic status, and gender are predictors of romanticized attitudes toward parenting by adolescents (see Figure 1).

Rationale

Traditionally, researchers concerned with attitudes toward children have concentrated on the perceptions of

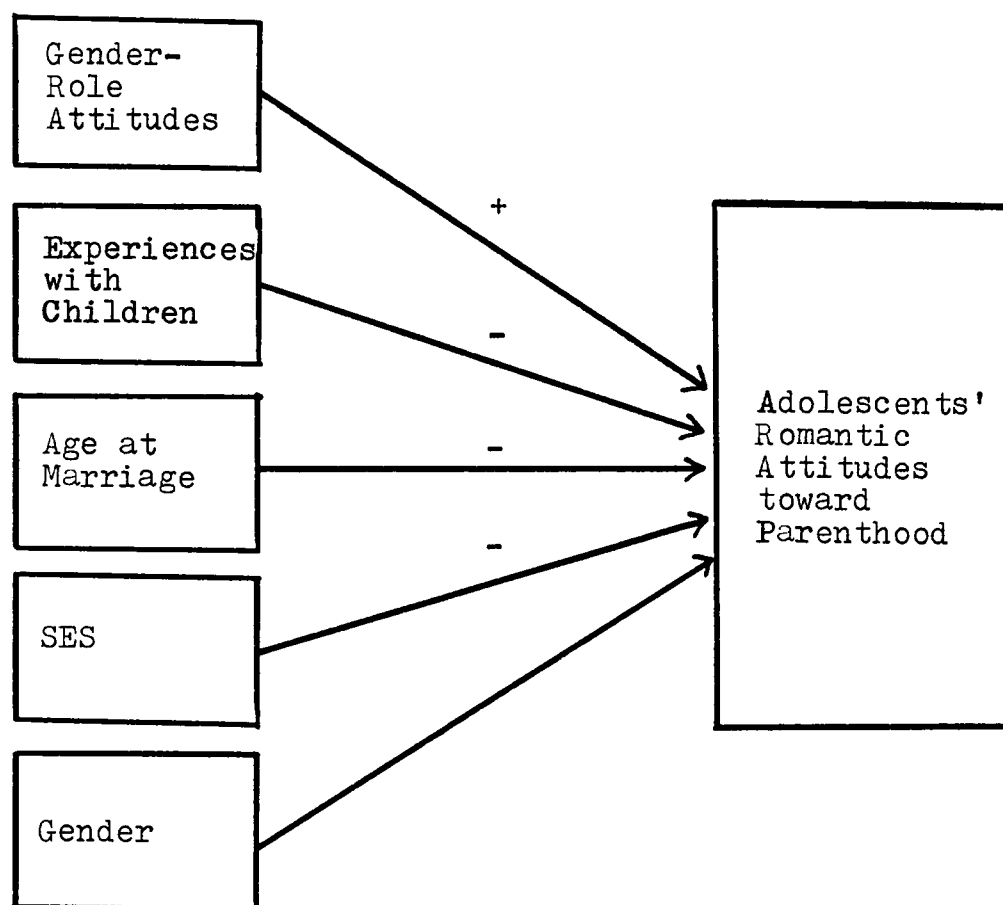


Figure 1. Hypothetical model of variables related to adolescents' romanticized attitudes toward parenthood.

individuals who are currently occupying parenting roles. One focus of this research has been on the transition to parenthood (Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; LeMasters, 1957; Russell, 1974; Steffensmeier, 1982). LeMasters (1957), for example, suggested that difficulty in making the transition to parenthood may be attributed, in part, to the romantic ideas of young couples about parenthood.

Although a large body of empirical literature on the transition to parenthood exists, few researchers have focused on the attitudes of young people toward parenthood before they actually assume this role. Studies of this kind are needed if researchers and educators are to understand the attitudes of prospective parents.

Research concerned with prospective parents might yield information and intervention possibilities that are designed to alleviate problems in the transition to parenthood. LeMasters (1957), for example, reported that first-time parents had difficulties with the unexpected problems of exhaustion, guilt at not being a "better" parent, and adjustment to being tied down. These problems might be alleviated if extensive romanticism about parenthood could be tempered with realistic expectations. Perhaps even the problems of child abuse and neglect result from the realities of a demanding, crying

baby when a dimpled smile and sunny disposition had been expected. Knowing which attitudes and experiences of adolescents are predictive of a romanticized view of parenting could help educators of adolescents guide them toward more realistic attitudes toward parenthood.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the realistic and romantic attitudes of adolescents toward parenthood and the specific attitudes and experiences that are related to these attitudes are conceptualized with ideas from the symbolic interaction conceptual framework. A major assumption of this framework is that humans live in a symbolic environment as well as a physical environment. That is, humans can acquire complex sets of symbols in their minds, can respond to these symbols, and are able to convey meaning through them (Burr, Leigh, Day, & Constantine, 1979). This symbolic capacity becomes actualized through the use of "significant symbols" that convey common values, expectations, and experiences to others. Thus, relationships with others are maintained by the use of significant symbols that convey expectations for interaction (Burr et al., 1979; Nye & Gecas, 1976).

Social norms and expectations for both adults and youth are the components of roles. Burr et al. (1979),

for example, defined roles as "integrated sets of social norms distinguishable from other sets of norms that constitute other roles" (p. 54). Thus, a role is the set of norms and expectations that define appropriate behavior for people in particular situations and settings. Roles are of several types: generic or specific, abstract or concrete, rigid or vague (Mangus, 1957). The adjustments of individuals who occupy roles are because of feedback by others, past experiences, and cues in the setting.

An important area of emphasis in the study of role relationships is the concept gender role. Researchers have shown that gender-role attitudes can change over time (Cherlin & Walters, 1981) and can influence the adjustments of individuals to other sets of role expectations and attitudes. For example, gender-role attitudes have been shown to have consequences for specific parenting behaviors, such as the division of child-rearing responsibilities (Kellerman & Katz, 1978). Thus, adolescents who hold particular gender-role conceptions also may have ideas about parenting roles based on these expectations.

In addition, adolescents develop their own individual sets of expectations for present and future roles through the process of anticipatory socialization. Role theorists suggest that the more anticipatory socialization for a particular role, the greater the ease of transition into

that role (Burr et al., 1979). In role theory, anticipatory socialization is "the process of learning such phenomena as norms, values, attitudes, and subtle dimensions of a role before being in a social situation where it is appropriate actually to behave in that role" (Burr et al., 1979, p. 84). Therefore, the knowledge that people have about future roles should have an effect on their present attitudes toward these roles.

Adolescents who experience anticipatory socialization for parenthood are expected to have attitudes toward the parenting role before they actually become parents. Therefore, adolescents having opportunities to interact with younger children are expected to possess more realistic expectations of parenthood that reflect their previous knowledge and experiences.

Because of their varied experiences, adolescents also have different levels of understanding with respect to role expectations. Along these lines, the concept role clarity is concerned with how ambiguous versus how identifiable are the expectations for a particular role (Burr et al., 1979). In the case of low clarity about roles, there exist situations where individuals are not sure what they should do or not do. One possibility, therefore, is that romantic attitudes of youth are a product of role expectations that are not clear. That is, adolescents having romantic attitudes about the parenting role

may not have clear ideas about what is expected of parents. Analysts of contemporary society have been impressed with the low clarity of expectations for roles during the adolescent stage of life in general (Cavan, 1962; Coleman, 1980).

Nominal Definitions

Nominal definitions of romantic and realistic views of parenthood are important in viewing attitudes toward parenthood. LeMasters linked romantic attitudes of parenthood with folklore. He defined "folklore" as "widely held beliefs that are not supported by the facts. . . . These tend to romanticize the truth" (LeMasters, 1977, p. 20). Adolescents who have romanticized views of parenthood have glamorized or idealized images of children and of parenthood. Adolescents with realistic views of parenthood are those who accurately comprehend the multiple dimensions of the parenting role and are capable of assessing its positive and negative aspects.

Gender-role attitudes are defined as variations in adolescents' opinions concerning the role behaviors viewed as being appropriate for each gender. A "traditional" gender-role attitude is defined as the dichotomous differentiation and typing of social roles on the basis of gender. A "modern" gender-role attitude is defined as

nondifferentiation and/or nontyping of roles on the basis of gender. For example, an adolescent who has a modern gender-role attitude would believe that gender is not essential for the occupancy of social positions or for the performance of certain roles (Osmond & Martin, 1975).

Experiences with children are defined as any anticipatory socialization experiences that adolescents may have had in caring for or in guiding children. This includes any caretaking or babysitting responsibilities for younger siblings. Experiences with children also include any observations by adolescents of the care and guidance of middle school children, elementary school children, preschool children, and infants.

For those adolescents who plan to marry in the future, the expected age at marriage refers to the age at which young people predict that they will marry. The definition of "early marriage" used in this study is the same as that used by Bartz and Nye (1970), that is, age 18 or younger for females and age 20 or younger for males.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a concept concerned with social stratification in which people are seen as differing considerably in terms of power, prestige, and resources. From this viewpoint, people are stratified according to their consumption of goods to a degree that becomes represented by special styles of life (Gecas,

1979). For this study, the SES of adolescents was determined by the mothers' and fathers' educational levels. Gender is defined as the sex of the adolescents: male or female.

Assumptions

Basic to this study of adolescents' attitudes toward parenthood were several assumptions. First, it was assumed that young people already have thought about and formed some of their ideas about future roles. Second, the idea that adolescents can report their perceptions accurately and that these perceptions are accurate representations of their behavior and expectations was another assumption.

From a role theory perspective, it was assumed that perceptions constitute reality for the adolescents. This idea emerges from the symbolic interaction concept the "definition of the situation," which concerns the interpretations that individuals make when situations are encountered. Role theorists have proposed that the definition of a situation influences the effects of that situation in such a way that particular effects tend to be congruent with the definition (Burr et al., 1979). Therefore, each individual's "reality" is what he/she perceives.

Still another assumption for this study included the idea that romanticized views of parenthood can be

associated with negative consequences for new parents. It also was assumed that idealized attitudes of this kind can be measured in prospective parents.

Objectives

The major objective of this study was to investigate the predictive capacity of several independent variables (specific attitudes, experiences, future plans, gender, and socioeconomic background) for romantic versus realistic ideas about parenthood. The specific objectives were to investigate: (1) the relationship between adolescents' gender-role attitudes and their attitudes toward parenthood; (2) the relationship between adolescents' experiences with children and their attitudes toward parenthood; (3) the relationship between adolescents' expected age at marriage, for those who plan to marry, and their attitudes toward parenthood; (4) the relationship between adolescents' socioeconomic statuses and their attitudes toward parenthood; and (5) the gender differences in adolescents' attitudes toward parenthood.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A main concern in the research dealing with parenthood has been the impact of the first child's birth on each of the parents and their marital relationship (e.g., Dyer, 1963; Hobbs, 1965; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; LeMasters, 1957; Russell, 1974). Burr, for example, characterized the transition into parenthood as "the most complex and dramatic change that most people ever make in their lives" (1976, p. 425). Although Burr suggested that other major transitions (e.g., beginning to date, starting the first job, graduating, marrying, and retiring) involve changes, he also suggested that other life transitions are seldom as involved and time consuming as the process of becoming a parent.

In a classic study on the transition to parenthood, LeMasters (1957) labeled the impact of the firstborn on parents as a "crisis." LeMasters theorized that if the family is conceptualized as a small social system, then adding a new member forces a drastic reorganization. He hypothesized that the birth of the first child must be seen as a "crisis," or a critical event.

Family sociologists have proposed for some time that any family crisis results in shock to family members

because the "crisis event" forces extensive reorganization of the family social system (Hansen & Hill, 1964; Hill, 1949; Landis & Landis, 1977). Therefore, many changes must occur; roles must be reassigned, status positions must be shifted, and needs must be met through new channels.

The use of the term "crisis" in this transition to parenthood research has been questioned by later researchers who found little empirical evidence to support the levels of stress and disorganization that seemed to be implied by this term (Hobbs, 1965, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974). Investigators having this viewpoint argued that it seemed more appropriate to conceptualize the process of becoming a parent as a "transition" rather than a "crisis." Thus, the focus of these studies has become the degree of difficulty involved in the transition to parenthood and the degree to which the component situations and relational changes are perceived negatively by the husband and wife.

In a recent study on the transition to parenthood, for example, Steffensmeier (1982) interviewed 54 married couples whose first child was 3 to 5 months old. She found that difficulty in the transition to parenthood has a multidimensional quality consisting of the three components--parental responsibilities and restrictions, parental gratifications, and marital intimacy and stability. Steffensmeier found that gender and anticipatory

socialization are the most important variables that explain variation in parental responsibilities and restrictions. In addition, she found that education is the best predictor of personal gratification, whereas role clarity had a significant influence on the marital intimacy and stability dimension.

General Parenting Attitudes

Whereas many researchers have focused their studies on the transition to parenthood, several others have concentrated on general parenting attitudes of adolescents or married couples before they become parents. Using comparative studies, these researchers of general parenting attitudes have surveyed college students and young married couples. For example, Hobart (1973) looked at the attitudes toward parenthood of English- and French-speaking Canadian university and trade school students. He tested hypotheses concerning determinants of preference for large family size, rejection of contraception, preference for authoritarian attitudes toward child-rearing, and preferences for a traditional allocation of parental responsibilities.

Hobart (1973) also tested a "rurality" background factor as a determinant of parenthood attitudes. However, he found that preference for large family size was the only variable associated with indicators of rural

residence. None of the other attitudes tested were associated with rurality.

In another comparative study of parenting attitudes, McIntire, Nass, and Battistone (1974) contrasted male and female college students on their responses to "fatherhood" and found a consistent pattern of low consensus on role expectations. That is, discrepancies existed between women's perceptions of men and men's actual responses. In every case, women attributed less interest and involvement to their male peers in the raising of young children than was expressed by the men themselves. Women expected men's responses to gender-role responsibilities would be quite segregated, whereas in reality they were not.

In another study, Thompson (1978) examined beliefs of young married couples related to having children. Although Thompson did not survey adolescents in his research study, he did make use of popular romantic notions of parenthood in the study. The investigation was designed specifically to study the similarities and differences in husbands' and wives' beliefs and values related to the advantages and disadvantages of having and rearing children.

Items in Thompson's (1978) study included stereotypically romantic assertions about motherhood, the

desirability of having a son, the contribution of parenthood to happy stable marriages, and social pressures to have at least one child. Thompson also included items about the continuously increasing world population and persuasive measures designed to restrict the number of children permitted. He found that both husbands and wives felt strong social pressures to have children and that husbands were more likely than wives to perceive having children as socially and economically advantageous.

Gender-Role Attitudes

Although research on adolescents' general attitudes toward parenting has not been plentiful, there is a large body of research in related areas. For example, there is a large amount of empirically based literature on adult gender-role attitudes (e.g., Kellerman & Katz, 1978; Osmond & Martin, 1975). Likewise, adolescents may be expected to reflect the gender-role attitudes of adults because they have been exposed to expectations for gender differentiated behavior from the time they were born. After extensive exposure to these ideas, it might be expected that adolescents will form conventional opinions about the roles of men and women in society. In addition, adolescents might develop attitudes about parenting that are a specific reflection of their gender-role attitudes.

Investigators of gender-role attitudes have shown that the traditional division of labor for families persists in our society. The best example of this is the fact that women in our society are attributed primary responsibility for child rearing (Chodorow, 1978; Edgell, 1980; Gecas, 1976; Kellerman & Katz, 1978; LeShan, 1965; Osmond & Martin, 1975). Traditionally, wives have been more closely associated with child rearing and child care than husbands. The traditional division of labor has been for wives to occupy the domestic role and for husbands to become responsible for provider roles.

The trend toward egalitarianism regarding marital relations has been a much discussed issue in our society. In spite of this trend, however, Gecas (1976) reported that social norms continue to specify that child socialization is a greater responsibility of wives than of husbands. Other investigators have reported that subjects in their studies responded to familial roles with the greatest amount of gender differentiation and gender typing and that this finding was predictable (Osmond & Martin, 1975). Because of the conservative nature of the family as a social institution, Osmond and Martin (1975) concluded that little genuine gender-role change has occurred within the realm of family relations. Because their study was based on data from a highly educated sample,

they also speculated that lower- to middle-class samples might demonstrate attitudes that are even more traditional.

Researchers in the mid-1970's found that males held more traditional gender-role attitudes than females (Angrist, Mickelsen, & Penna, 1977; Osmond & Martin, 1975). However, Cherlin and Walters (1981) reported that between 1972 and 1978 the gender-role attitudes of white males had changed to resemble those of white females and that both genders had moved toward egalitarianism.

With reference to the issues of gender-role attitudes and parenting, Rossi (1977) discussed the traditional cultural pressures for American women to assume the parenthood role. That is, adolescent girls who are approaching maturity and young women face considerable pressure to accept maternity as necessary for personal fulfillment and adult status. Thompson (1978) found similar feelings among American men, with husbands perceiving themselves as being subject to strong social pressures to become parents.

Gender-role researchers have reported that traditional norms for familial roles are still prevalent in our society, despite the apparent trend toward egalitarianism in other attitudes in general. These traditional views, plus the addition of societal pressures to assume the

parenting role, could create illusions and unrealistic expectations among adolescents concerning the parenting role. Although the above information provides only suggestive evidence with reference to adolescents, it does provide a rationale to hypothesize that (1) there is a positive relationship between the traditionality of adolescents' gender-role attitudes and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Experiences with Children

Parents seem to have had variations in expectations concerning the parenting role. This diversity in expectancies, in turn, may have contributed to disparate results in the transition to parenthood literature. Researchers in the 1950's and 1960's found that new parents reported "severe" crisis during this period of transition (Dyer, 1963; LeMasters, 1957). LeMasters (1957), for example, reported that 83% of the middle-class couples in his sample experienced "extensive" or "severe" crisis in adjusting to the changes that accompanied the birth of their first child. Things the parents reported as being especially difficult or unexpected were exhaustion and the loss of sleep, guilt at not being "better" parents, long hours, and a 7-day week in caring for a baby.

Parents found that adjusting to being tied down was especially difficult (LeMasters, 1957).

LeMasters (1957) attributed this "crisis," in part, to the idea that young couples may romanticize parenthood. Although a systematic assessment procedure to determine the degree of romanticism was not used, LeMasters reported that this was a common problem for couples who experienced crisis. Another finding reported by LeMasters was the fact that couples felt they had little, if any, effective preparation for parenting. LeMasters quoted one mother as saying, "We knew where babies came from, but we didn't know what they were like" (1957, p. 353).

In another study, Dyer (1963) found that 53% of the middle-class couples in his survey reported "extensive" or "severe" crisis after the birth of their first child. However, Dyer reported that couples taking preparation for marriage courses in high school or college experienced less crisis than those with no preparation course.

More recently, researchers have found that new parents reported only "slight" or "moderate" crisis (Hobbs, 1965, 1968; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974). In addition, Russell (1974) found no relationship between formal preparation for parenthood (i.e., books and courses on parenting) and crisis scores for first-time

parents. A possible explanation is that parents in these studies might have had more contact with infants and knowledge that was not derived from courses and textbooks on parenting.

The transition to parenthood literature has many inconsistencies regarding the degree of "crisis" experienced during the initial phase of being a parent and the value of preparation for parenthood that new parents have received through courses and books. There seems to be no agreement on what might be done to alleviate difficulties in the transition to parental responsibilities. On the other hand, a mother whom LeMasters (1957, p. 353) interviewed was quoted as saying that she did not know what her baby would be like before she became a parent. Perhaps her comment suggested that anticipatory socialization for parenthood, in the form of experiences with infants and young children, might provide more realistic attitudes about children.

Despite this possibility, however, there has been little support for the idea of anticipatory socialization in studies of parenthood. With respect to parenting, anticipatory socialization can include both formal education and informal types of preparation for the role. This anticipatory socialization is usually a long-term, mostly unintentional, and informal process. It begins in

childhood with the observation of one's own parents, continues through the teens with babysitting experiences, and on into adult years with more observations and perhaps formal preparation (Steffensmeier, 1982).

The importance of anticipatory socialization for parenting is uncertain. In some studies, no relationship has been found between the difficulty in making the transition to parenthood and the encounters that parents experienced in caring for infants prior to the birth of their own child (Jacoby, 1973; Uhlenberg, 1970). Jacoby (1973), for example, reported no relationship between transition difficulties and the number of younger brothers and sisters in the parents' families of origin. In contrast, Steffensmeier (1982) reported a negative relationship between anticipatory socialization and the parental responsibilities/restrictions dimension of transition difficulty. Focusing on the impact of the baby's birth on the lifestyle of parents, she found that higher levels of anticipatory socialization yielded less difficulty in this aspect of the transition to parenthood.

It is possible, therefore, that adolescents who have a wide range of experiences with children may have different attitudes toward parenting than those adolescents who lack these experiences. Although such information provides only suggestive evidence with reference to adolescents, such ideas do provide a rationale to

hypothesize that (2) there is an inverse relationship between adolescents' amount of experiences with children and the degree of their romanticized views of parenthood.

Expected Age at Marriage

An area of research indirectly related to adolescents' attitudes toward parenting is the age at which adolescents think they will marry. In a review of empirical research on early marriage, Bartz and Nye (1970) proposed that as a young girl's expectations and attitudes toward marriage become more optimistic, the more likely that early marriage will eventuate. No similar proposition concerning a boy's expectations were made in this study. In another study, on the other hand, Burchinal (1965) went further to say that factors contributing to early marriage include romantic and glamorous images of marriage. He also argued that high rates of disillusionment, unhappiness, and divorce among "early marrieds" probably are a reflection of the greater prevalence of glamorized and naive views of marriage among young people. Thus, adolescents who plan to marry early have a greater likelihood of becoming young parents as well. Perhaps these idealistic views of marriage may be carried over into romanticized views of parenthood. It is hypothesized, therefore, that (3) there is an inverse relationship

between adolescents' level of expected age at marriage and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Socioeconomic Status

Studies on attitudes toward parenthood have indicated that a relationship exists between specific parenting attitudes and the socioeconomic status of respondents. In a study of Canadian university and trade school students, for example, Hobart (1973) found that a rejection of contraceptives and preference for traditional allocation of parental responsibilities was characteristic of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Closely related are findings previously reported concerning traditional gender-role attitudes (e.g., Cherlin & Walters, 1981; Kellerman & Katz, 1978; Osmond & Martin, 1975). Although this information is only suggestive evidence with reference to adolescents, it does provide a rationale for hypothesizing that (4) there is an inverse relationship between adolescents' SES and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Gender

Researchers reporting on gender differences in gender-role conceptions have found that male adolescents have more traditional gender-role attitudes than female

adolescents (Angrist, Mickelsen, & Penna, 1977). Using attitudinal surveys concerning the division of child-rearing responsibilities, researchers have found that mothers have primary responsibility for the largest proportion of child-rearing behaviors, fathers the least responsibility, and an intermediate number of items are labeled as parentally shared (Kellerman & Katz, 1978).

Citing empirical evidence in support of her argument (e.g., Hobbs, 1965; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974), Steffensmeier (1982) hypothesized that mothers would have a greater degree of difficulty in the transition to parenthood than fathers. She argued that women are more likely than men to experience a greater discrepancy of expectations between reality and the romantic notions of motherhood as a natural, happy, and fulfilling time. In contrast to her hypothesis, Steffensmeier (1982) found that fathers, rather than mothers, experienced the greater degree of difficulty in the transition. Steffensmeier suggested that females probably seek and get more feedback concerning parenthood than males. Females also may use selective perception to reduce the complexity and inconsistency of the feedback they receive. Steffensmeier proposed, therefore, that females are able to recognize and sort out the romantic versus realistic notions concerning the mothering role. Likewise, comparisons of husbands' and wives' responses related to

having children have revealed that husbands perceive having children from a more idealistic or romantic perspective than do wives (Thompson, 1978). This yields the hypothesis that (5) there are gender differences in the romantic attitudes of male and female adolescents, with males having more romanticized views of parenthood than females.

Integration of the Literature

It is apparent that there is great variation in the degree of difficulty most couples experience in making the transition to parenthood. Although ranging from "slight" to "severe," some degree of difficulty probably is encountered by most new parents. Researchers have been particularly interested in the reasons for such variations.

Some researchers have indicated that a degree of romanticism about parenthood held by the couples could influence their transition into this new role. However, few possible explanations for these romantic notions have been suggested. Frequently, researchers have inferred that couples romanticize the parenting role.

In sharp contrast to the many research studies on married couples' attitudes toward parenthood are the few

studies concerning adolescents' attitudes. The romanticized notions held by married couples very likely could have been formed when they were younger. Research dealing with adolescents' romantic ideas of parenthood could provide insight into future problems with parenting that might result.

Generally, research on adolescents' attitudes toward parenthood ideas is limited. In contrast, there are many research studies in the areas of gender-role attitudes, experiences with children, early marriage, SES, and gender. Attitudes toward parenthood have been alluded to in many of these studies, but few possible explanations for adolescents' parenting perceptions and attitudes have been suggested.

There is a need, therefore, for researchers to examine these attitudes and expectations of adolescents toward parenting. However, if researchers are to understand adolescents' attitudes toward parenthood, they must recognize that romantic notions concerning parenting cannot be overlooked. Adolescents' romantic ideas about parenthood need to be examined and special consideration must be given to the predictors of these romantic attitudes among adolescents.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The relationships between five independent variables and the one dependent variable were examined in this study. Specifically, adolescents' gender-role attitudes, experiences with children, expected age at marriage, socioeconomic status, and gender were investigated as predictors of the adolescents' realistic or romanticized views of parenthood.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between the traditionality of adolescents' gender-role attitudes and their degree of romanticized views about parenthood.

Hypothesis 2. There is an inverse relationship between adolescents' amount of experience with children and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Hypothesis 3. There is an inverse relationship between adolescents' level of expected age at marriage and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Hypothesis 4. There is an inverse relationship between adolescents' socioeconomic status and their degree of romanticized views of parenthood.

Hypothesis 5. There are gender differences in the romantic attitudes of male and female adolescents, with males having more romanticized views of parenthood than females.

Design and Sampling Procedure

A survey method of data collection was used in this study. The sample was composed of 11th-grade students at Farragut High School, a large high school in the Knox County School System. Adolescents in their junior year of high school were expected to have more clearly defined attitudes and the ability to express their perceptions more accurately than younger children and adolescents. Furthermore, they were expected to have some of their goals set for the future. The criteria for inclusion in this study were:

1. The student should have been in the 11th grade at the time of the survey.
2. The student was not married either previously or at the time of the survey.
3. The student must not have been a parent at the time of the survey.

Approximately half of the 564 11th-grade students in the selected school were given the opportunity to volunteer for this study. Students were contacted

through randomly selected American history classes, a required subject for all 11th-grade students. The specific American history classes were assigned numbers and were chosen randomly using a table of random numbers. Ten American history classes having a total of 296 students were selected.

Questionnaires were administered to 196 (66% of 296) students who had indicated a willingness to participate in this study by returning informed consent forms with their parents' signatures. Of the questionnaires completed by these students, 185 were judged as suitable for use in this study. Eight students indicated that they were in the 12th grade and were eliminated from the study. These 12th-grade students were in 11th-grade American history classes because they had failed to meet the course requirements during their junior year of high school. Three students were eliminated from the study because they indicated that they were presently married.

Description of Sample

There were 185 students included in this study ranging in age from 15 to 17 years, with a mean age of 16.5 ($SD = .52$) years. Of the respondents, all but 5 were white; 55.7% were female and 44.3% were male. Most

of the students came from intact homes, with 136 (73.5%) reporting that their parents were married. All but one student lived at home with their parent(s) and all lived in the West Knox County area.

The mean number of children in the families of the students was 2.65 ($SD = 1.3$). Seventy students (37.8%) reported 2 children in their families and 53 students (28.6%) reported 3 children. Only 2 respondents reported having 8 or more children in their families. Of the students in this study, 27 (14.6%) had no siblings. Detailed descriptive characteristics of the sample are provided in Table I.

Most of the respondents were middle class to upper-middle class. All but three of the students' fathers were participants in the labor force. Most of these fathers (72.4%) worked in professional-technical or in managerial positions. Of the mothers, 21.6% were employed in professional-technical or in managerial positions and 22.2% were employed as clerical workers. Seventy-four of the mothers (40.0%) were nonparticipants in the labor force. Other information concerning the occupations of the parents is provided in Table II.

The parents of the students involved in this study tended to be highly educated. In the case of the fathers, 35.7% graduated from college and 20.0% received a graduate

TABLE I
DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

Characteristics	<u>n</u>	%
Age (years)		
15	2	1.1
16	80	43.2
17	101	54.6
Not reported	2	1.1
Gender		
Female	103	55.7
Male	82	44.3
Parents' Marital Status		
Married	136	73.5
Divorced	34	18.4
Separated	2	1.1
Widowed	8	4.3
Single	2	1.1
Other	3	1.6
Number of Children in Family		
1	27	14.6
2	70	37.8
3	53	28.6
4	23	12.4
5	2	1.1
6	5	2.7
7	2	1.1
8 or more	2	1.1
Not reported	1	.5
Number of Children in Family Younger than Respondent		
0	78	42.2
1	73	39.5
2	26	14.1
3	1	.5
4	2	1.1
5	1	.5
6	0	.0
7 or more	0	.0
Not reported	4	2.0

Note. n = 185.

TABLE II
OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS

Occupation Categories	Fathers/Male Guardians		Mothers/Female Guardians	
	<u>n</u>	%	<u>n</u>	%
Professional-Technical Workers	61	32.9	27	14.6
Managerial Workers	73	39.5	13	7.0
Clerical Workers	4	2.2	41	22.2
Sales Workers	20	10.8	14	7.6
Craftsmen-Foremen	9	4.9	3	1.6
Operatives	0	.0	3	1.6
Private Household Workers	0	.0	0	.0
Service Workers	2	1.1	2	1.1
Laborers	1	.5	0	.0
Not Reported	8	4.3	7	3.8
Unknown	4	2.2	1	.5
Nonparticipants in Labor Force	3	1.6	74	40.0

Note. n = 185.

degree. The mothers of the students included 31.4% college graduates and 8.1% who held graduate degrees. There were, however, some of the parents without college degrees. That is, 39.4% of the fathers either did not attend or did not graduate from college. In the case of the mothers, 42.7% did not attend college. Other information about the parents' educational attainments are provided in Table III.

Measurement and Operational Definitions

A self-report questionnaire was used to assess the adolescents' attitudes toward parenthood and the independent variables that were examined in the study.

Attitudes toward Parenthood

A list of 16 statements by LeMasters (1977) was used to design items to assess a dimension that varied from realistic to romantic attitudes toward parenthood (see Appendix A, Items 23-38). LeMasters labeled his original 16 assertions as "folklore" about parenthood.

The original 16 statements by LeMasters were modified for use in this study. Items 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, and 37 were stated in the questionnaire in a manner that reflected a romantic viewpoint of parenthood. These items were characterized by such ideas as children are "loveable" and "darling" and that parents are "solely

TABLE III
EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF PARENTS

Levels of Education	Fathers/Male Guardians		Mothers/Female Guardians	
	<u>n</u>	%	<u>n</u>	%
Did Not Attend High School	3	1.6	1	.5
Attended High School but Did Not Graduate	6	3.2	9	4.9
Graduated from High School	33	17.8	69	37.3
Attended College but Did Not Graduate	31	16.8	29	15.7
Graduated from College	66	35.7	58	31.4
Attended Graduate School but Did Not Complete Degree	4	2.2	2	1.1
Received Graduate Degree	37	20.0	15	8.1
Unknown/Not Reported	5	2.7	2	1.1

Note. n = 185.

responsible for their children's development." Some examples of these items are:

- (item 24) Children are cute and sweet.
- (item 31) There are no bad children--only bad parents.
- (item 37) Love is enough to guarantee good performance as a parent.

Items 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, and 38 were written to demonstrate more realistic viewpoints. These items include such ideas as parenthood and child rearing are tasks that can be "difficult" as well as "rewarding."

Examples include:

- (item 28) The nature of the child being reared is very important--even good parents can have problems with a "difficult" child.
- (item 33) Children today fail to appreciate all the advantages their parents are able to give them.
- (item 38) One-parent families can raise normal and healthy children.

A 4-point Likert-type rating scale was used to determine the adolescents' degree of agreement with each item. A lower score reflected a relatively realistic attitude toward parenthood and a higher score reflected a relatively romantic attitude.

A principal-components factor analysis that was applied to the item responses for this scale resulted in the 16 items clustering into five factors (see Table IV). The final modified scale used in this study was based on the first two factors, which were the two most interpretable factors.

The first factor for the Attitudes toward Parenthood Scale included four items depicting the joys of parenthood. The items for this factor included the ideas that rearing children is fun, that children are cute and sweet, that children will make the world a better place, and that love is a guarantee for effective parenthood. The alpha reliability coefficient for this factor was .63.

The second factor contained three items that were used to assess the importance of good parenting. These items included the ideas that children turn out well if they have good parents, that children improve marriage, and that children stay good all their lives if they are brought up right. The alpha reliability coefficient for this factor was .61.

The third factor contained six items that were used to assess the long-range effects of parenting. These items included the ideas that children improve marriage, that today's parents are better than those of yesterday, and that becoming a parent makes a person more mature.

TABLE IV
VARIMAX ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX OF 16 ITEMS
ON ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTHOOD SCALE

Item Number	Item Description	I	II	Factors III	IV	V
Factor I: Joys of Parenthood ^a						
23	Rearing children is fun.	<u>.82</u>	.06	-.11	-.07	-.11
24	Children are cute and sweet.	<u>.78</u>	.15	-.07	-.08	-.04
34	Children will make the world a better place.	<u>.41</u>	.25	-.47	-.11	-.03
37	Love is a guarantee for effective parenting.	<u>.47</u>	.11	-.08	.21	.16
Factor II: Importance of Good Parenting ^b						
25	Children turn out well if they have good parents.	.17	<u>.75</u>	-.14	.06	-.05
26	Children improve marriage..	.32	<u>.43</u>	-.41	-.20	.14
27	Children stay good all their lives if brought up right.	.07	<u>.73</u>	-.16	.03	.05
Factor III: Long Range Effects of Parenting ^c						
26	.Children improve marriage.	.32	<u>.43</u>	-.41	-.20	.14
29	Today's parents are better than yesterday's.	.07	.03	<u>.77</u>	-.23	.05
32	Parents are more mature.	-.13	-.21	<u>.64</u>	.02	-.21
33	Children don't appreciate what parents give them.	-.11	-.21	<u>.50</u>	.13	-.02
34	Children will make the world a better place.	<u>.41</u>	.25	-.47	-.11	-.03
38	One-parent families are healthy.	-.03	.24	<u>.44</u>	.26	<u>.55</u>

TABLE IV (Continued)

Item Number	Item Description	I	II	Factors III	IV	V
Factor IV: Responsibility in Parenting						
28	Nature of child is important.	-.21	-.11	-.03	<u>.67</u>	.22
31	No bad children--only bad parents.	.36	-.09	-.07	<u>.49</u>	.18
35	Premarital pregnancy occurs even if know about sex.	-.10	.26	.13	<u>.64</u>	.01
36	Parenthood is unimportant in our society.	-.29	.04	-.02	<u>-.55</u>	.33
Factor V: Nontraditional Family Types						
30	Childless couples are happy.	.03	-.06	-.22	.04	<u>.83</u>
38	One-parent families are healthy.	-.03	.24	<u>.44</u>	.26	<u>.55</u>

Note. Reliability for modified scale (Factors I and II) = .71.
^aFactor reliability = .63.
^bFactor reliability = .61.
^cFactor reliability = -.11.

The third factor also contained the ideas that children today do not appreciate what their parents give them, that children will make the world a better place, and that one-parent families raise normal and healthy children. Because of a low reliability coefficient, the items in the third factor were not included in the scale.

The fourth factor included four items depicting responsibility in parenting. The items for this factor included the ideas that the nature of the child is very important, that there are no bad children--only bad parents, that a premarital pregnancy can occur even if a person knows about sex, and that our society considers parenthood to be unimportant. Because of the contradictory nature of the first two items in this factor ("the nature of the child is important" and "there are no bad children--only bad parents"), the items in the fourth factor were not included in the scale.

Factor V included two items concerning nontraditional family types. These items encompassed the ideas that childless couples are just as happy as couples with children and that one-parent families raise normal and healthy children. These two items were not included in the scale because of their focus on particular types of family structure.

Besides the seven items which loaded on the first two factors, nine items failed to reach a factor loading of .40 or greater on Factors I and II and thus were dropped from the scale. The overall reliability coefficient for this modified scale was .71. Split-half reliability for the scale was .66.

Content validity for the Attitudes toward Parenthood Scale was assessed by a panel of judges. Three members of the faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, reviewed and provided evidence for the scale's content validity.

Gender-Role Attitudes

The Osmond-Martin 32-item Sex-Role Attitude Scale (Osmond & Martin, 1975) was used to assess gender-role attitudes in four general areas: familial roles, extra-familial roles, stereotypes of male/female characteristics and behaviors, and social change as related to gender roles. A Likert-type scale with four response categories was used to assess the degree of agreement with each of the 32 statements (see Appendix A, Items 39-70). A lower score indicated a relatively modern response pattern, and a higher score indicated a relatively traditional pattern.

The authors of this inventory analyzed the reliability of the Sex-Role Attitude Scale and reported a

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .88 for the scale (1975). An alpha reliability coefficient of .85 was calculated for the Osmond-Martin scale using the responses acquired for this study.

The validity of the Sex-Role Attitude Scale was evaluated by three members of the faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They reviewed the scale and provided evidence in support of its content validity.

Experiences with Children

Adolescents were requested to provide information about their previous experiences with children (see Appendix A, Items 1A-15A). This was accomplished by having adolescents respond to 15 statements concerning their previous observation of infants, preschool children, elementary school children, and middle school children. They also responded to statements about any responsibility they might have had in the care and guidance of children. A 4-point Likert-type rating scale was used to determine the adolescents' degree of involvement with children. A higher score reflected a relatively high amount of experience with children and a lower score reflected a relatively low amount of experience with children.

The split-half reliability for this scale was .81 and the Cronbach's alpha was .91. Three members of the faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies at

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, reviewed and provided evidence in support of the content validity of the Experiences with Children Scale.

Expected Age at Marriage

Adolescents were asked whether or not they believed that they would marry. Those who responded positively were asked to report what age they would most likely marry (see Appendix A, Items 21A-23A). The definition of "early marriage" used in this study was 18 years or younger for females and 20 years or younger for males (Bartz & Nye, 1970). Because males generally mature physically, emotionally, and socially about 2 years later than females, an "18 and under" criterion would not be equally appropriate for males.

The validity of the instrument was assessed by three members of the faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They reviewed the scale and supported its content validity.

SES and Gender

Questionnaire items included in a study by Peterson (1978) were used to assess the adolescents' family structure and socioeconomic background (see Appendix A, Items 1-22 and Items 27A-28A). To operationalize the SES variable for this study, mothers' and father' education levels

were added together. Adolescents were asked to indicate the number of years of education each parent had completed (see Appendix A, Item 12-13 and Item 18-19). Responses then were coded into seven educational level categories: did not attend high school, attended high school but did not graduate, graduated from high school, attended college but did not graduate, graduated from college, attended graduate school but did not complete degree, and received graduate degree (see Table III, p. 37). The educational level categories were coded from 1 to 7, with 7 representing the completion of a graduate degree. The mothers' and fathers' educational level codes were added together and a lower score indicated relatively low SES and a higher score indicated relatively high SES. For questionnaire item 20, adolescents were asked to record their gender.

The validity of the instruments was assessed by three members of the faculty in the Department of Child and Family Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They reviewed the scales and supported their content validity.

Procedures

The Supervisor of Secondary Education for the Knox County Schools approved the administration of the student questionnaire used for this project at Farragut

High School. Administrators of this school were consulted and determined that the questionnaire was appropriate for use by the students. A committee from the school's Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTS-A) also reviewed and approved the questionnaire.

After the questionnaire and administration procedures were approved, the information sheets and informed consent forms were distributed to the students in 10 randomly selected American history classes (see Appendix B). The anonymity of the questionnaire was emphasized by the investigator, and all students were asked to sign the informed consent forms if they were willing to participate in the study. Students also took the information sheets and the informed consent forms home for their parents to read and sign. Subsequently, consent forms were collected by the American history teachers, who also were requested to remind students to return their forms.

One week later, questionnaires were distributed to those students who agreed to participate in the study and had received parental consent. The questionnaires were administered during American history classes as part of daily classroom activities. Students who chose not to participate either were given a copy of the questionnaire to examine while it was being administered or worked on assignments given to them by American history

teachers. Administration of the questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes.

In 2 of the 10 American history classes, the researcher supervised distribution of the information sheets and the administration of the questionnaires. In the remaining 8 classes, teachers supervised and administered these procedures for their own classes.

Data Reduction and Analysis

The student questionnaire was designed for direct data entry to eliminate the process of coding the information onto data sheets. Only two questions had to be coded by the researcher (see Appendix A, Item 10-11 and Item 16-17). The answers to these questions concerning fathers' and mothers' occupations were coded directly on individual questionnaires using the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (Miller, 1977; Reiss, Duncan, Hatt, & North, 1961). Data were keypunched onto computer cards and quality control checks were made to insure that data were recorded correctly. This was accomplished by checking each questionnaire after it was keypunched.

Multiple regression analysis was used to interpret the data and test the hypotheses. This method was used to analyze the contribution of the five independent variables to the one dependent variable. Standardized beta coefficients and the corresponding F values for

each independent variable were examined to determine the effect of each independent variable. A probability level of .05 was used to determine the statistical significance of each relationship.

In the initial regression analysis, a dummy variable was used for the categorical "gender" variable to evaluate any gender differences that might exist for each of the predicted relationships. An initial attempt was made to examine each of the predicted relationships for gender differences by computing interaction terms in the regression equation. However, this effort was unsuccessful because of multicollinearity between the independent variables and the interaction terms. An alternative procedure was subsequently used involving the performance of separate regression analyses for males and females.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The independent variables (gender-role attitudes, experiences with children, age at marriage, SES, and gender) were analyzed to determine their strength in predicting the degree of adolescents' romanticism about parenthood. Descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables are shown in Appendix C.

Principal Data Analysis

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis proposed that traditional gender-role attitudes were related positively to romanticized views of parenthood. This hypothesis was supported because the relationship was significant beyond the .01 level (see Table V). Traditional gender-role attitudes manifested a significant beta of .23 and a corresponding F value of 9.37 in relation to romanticized views of parenthood.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis specified that the amount of experiences with children would relate negatively to romanticism about parenthood. However, the beta

TABLE V
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	b^a	r^b	F^c
Romanticized Attitudes toward Parenthood	Gender-Role Attitudes	.23	.23	9.37*
	Experiences with Children	-.04	-.03	.29
	Age at Marriage	-.05	-.02	.42
	SES	-.01	-.03	.01
	Gender	.05	.06	.36

b^a = Standardized regression coefficient.

r^b = Simple bivariate correlation.

F^c = F value for standardized regression coefficients and the multiple correlation coefficients.

* $p < .01$, $df=1,172$; Critical value = 6.79.

representing the relationship between these variables was not significant. The beta was $-.04$, with a corresponding F value of $.29$ (see Table V).

Hypothesis Three

In hypothesis three, it was proposed that age at marriage was related inversely to romanticized views of parenthood. In this case, the beta representing the correlation between these variables did not support the predicted relationship. The beta was $-.05$ and failed to reach significance with an F value of $.42$ (see Table V).

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four posited that an inverse relationship existed between SES and romanticized views of parenthood. A nonsignificant beta of $-.01$ (F value = $.01$) yielding no support for the hypothesis was found (see Table V).

Hypothesis Five

No support was found for the fifth hypothesis, which predicted that males had more romanticized views of parenthood than females. The nonsignificant beta was $.05$ and the F value was $.36$ (see Table V).

Secondary Data Analysis

In order to examine more carefully the results for hypotheses one through four, a regression analysis was

performed separately for female and male respondents (see Tables VI and VII). This secondary analysis was executed to determine whether there were gender differences for the relationships between each independent variable and romantic attitudes toward parenthood.

Results for this analysis indicated that a significant relationship existed for females (see Table VI). That is, the relationship between traditional gender-role attitudes and romantic attitudes toward parenting for females manifested a significant beta coefficient of .45 and a corresponding F value of 23.95, $p < .001$.

Results for this analysis also indicated that the corresponding beta for male traditional gender-role attitudes in relation to attitudes toward parenthood failed to reach significance. The beta for the male model was only .07, with a companion F value of .30 (see Table VIII).

TABLE VI
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION
FOR FEMALES

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	b^a	r^b	F^c
Romanticized Attitudes toward Parenthood	Gender-Role Attitudes	.45	.46	23.95*
	Experiences with Children	-.05	-.03	.25
	Age at Marriage	.05	.09	.33
	SES	-.00	-.03	.00

a_b = Standardized regression coefficient.
 b_r = Simple bivariate correlation.
 c_F = F value for standardized regression coefficients and the multiple correlation coefficients.
 $*p < .001$, $df=1,98$; Critical value = 11.53.

TABLE VII
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSION
FOR MALES

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	b^a	r^b	F^c
Romanticized Attitudes toward Parenthood	Gender-Role Attitudes	.07	.05	.30
	Experiences with Children	-.04	-.03	.04
	Age at Marriage	-.17	-.15	1.90
	SES	-.01	-.03	.00

b^a = Standardized regression coefficient.
 r^b = Simple bivariate correlation.
 F^c = F value for standardized regression coefficients and the multiple correlation coefficients.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether five selected independent variables (gender-role attitudes, experiences with children, age at marriage, SES, and gender) would demonstrate significant relationships with adolescents' romantic attitudes toward parenthood.

Discussion

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis proposed that traditional gender-role attitudes would relate positively to romanticized views of parenthood. This relationship was supported with respect to the female respondents but not for the male respondents (see Table V, p. 51; Table VI, p. 54; Table VII, p. 55).

This finding is consistent with other research on gender-role attitudes and familial roles. For example, researchers have provided evidence that traditional division of labor in families is embedded deeply in our society (Chodorow, 1978; Edgell, 1980; Gecas, 1976; Kellerman & Katz, 1978; LeShan, 1965; Osmond & Martin, 1975). Expectations of this kind prescribe that women are to have most of the responsibility for child rearing

and child care whether or not their own attitudes are traditionally oriented. In other words, women face extensive cultural pressures to assume the parenting role (Rossi, 1977) and scholars have proposed that this pressure starts forming in childhood (Fox et al., 1982).

Female adolescents who have traditional gender-role attitudes seem especially receptive to cultural pressures that encourage the adoption of "wife" and "mother" for their principal life roles. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that these adolescents would view "motherhood" in idealistic terms. Because familial roles are the proposed "life's work" of females with traditional gender-role attitudes, they might view these roles as being more glamorous than they are in reality.

For male adolescents with traditional gender-role attitudes, the opposite is probably true. Traditionally, males have had few responsibilities for child rearing or for child care (Gecas, 1976). Instead, the traditional division of labor has been for males to take primary responsibility for provider roles and for females to occupy domestic and child-oriented roles. Unlike traditionally oriented females, males with traditional gender-role attitudes have not been under as much social pressure to assume the parenting role and are, therefore not as focused on becoming fathers. Males may have not

considered all that is involved in being a parent because, historically, they did not have primary responsibility for the parenting role. Compared to mothers, most fathers still are involved less directly in the nurturance and care of children and do not view this disproportionate division of labor as being unusual.

Considering the implications of traditional gender-role attitudes on the parenting role, the findings for the first hypothesis are not surprising. It would seem that all females are pressured to assume responsibilities for children and that males are more than willing to allow females to have total responsibility. Therefore, one can reason that male adolescents with traditional gender-role attitudes would not regard children or parenthood from a romantic viewpoint.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis specified that the amount of experiences with children would relate negatively to romanticism about parenthood. In this case, no support was found for the hypothesis (see Table V, p. 51). It would appear that the amount of time adolescents spent with children had no effect on whether or not they romanticized the parenting role.

Consistent with this finding, there has been little support for the efficacy of anticipatory socialization

in studies on parenthood (Jacoby, 1973; Russell, 1974; Uhlenberg, 1970). Although none of the research has been concerned with the likelihood that this type of preparation has reduced the romanticism of parenthood, these findings have been focused primarily on the degree of difficulty that may develop during the transition to parenthood. LeMasters (1957), however, did argue for conceptual links between having previous experience with child care and less romanticism about the parenting role.

As pertains to the preparation for parenthood, Steffensmeier (1982) found that higher levels of anticipatory socialization yielded fewer difficulties in the parental responsibilities/restrictions dimension of the transition to parenthood. Results of this nature, however, have not been common. For the most part, other investigators have reported nonsignificant relationships between previous experience with child care and the difficulty in making the transition to parenthood (Jacoby, 1973; Uhlenberg, 1970). Similarly, no relationship has been reported between the number of younger siblings with whom parents grew up and the difficulty of making the transition to parenthood (Jacoby, 1973). The nonsignificant findings for the second hypothesis, therefore, are consistent with the majority of research

findings on the attitudes of adolescents toward parenting. Anticipatory socialization appears to have no effects on whether or not adolescents romanticize children or the parenting role.

Hypothesis Three

In hypothesis three, it was proposed that age at marriage would be related inversely to romanticized views of parenthood. In contrast, however, no support was found for this hypothesis (see Table V, p. 51).

Researchers in the area of early marriage have reported that factors contributing to young marriage include the romantic and glamorous images of marriage (e.g., Burchinal, 1965). Although adolescents who plan to marry early also may have a greater likelihood of becoming parents at a young age, the present findings for the third hypothesis indicate that early marriage plans are not predictive of either romanticized or realistic views of parenthood.

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four posited that an inverse relationship would exist between SES and romanticized views of parenthood. Again, no support was found for the hypothesis (see Table V, p. 49).

Earlier researchers have not linked SES and romantic or realistic attitudes toward parenthood but have

been focused, to some extent, on the relationship of SES with gender-role attitudes and parenthood variables (Gecas, 1979; Kohn, 1969; Osmond & Martin, 1975). The proposition that adolescents of lower SES would have traditional gender-role attitudes and then would have more romanticized attitudes toward parenthood was not supported in this study.

Hypothesis Five

No support was found for the fifth hypothesis which predicted that males would have more romanticized views of parenthood than would females. In contrast to this expectation, no significance was found for the relationship between gender and romantic attitudes toward parenthoods (see Table V, p. 51).

This result was in contrast to the findings from a recent study by Thompson (1978). After analyzing husbands' and wives' responses related to having children, Thompson concluded that husbands perceive having children from a more idealistic or romantic perspective than do wives. Other researchers have reported that females experience a greater degree of difficulty at the transition to parenthood than males (Hobbs, 1965; Hobbs & Cole, 1976; Russell, 1974). It could be, for example, that females with traditional gender-role attitudes experience a greater discrepancy of expectations between

reality and the romantic notions of motherhood. From the results of this study, there was an indication that traditionally oriented female adolescents, more than male adolescents, are unable to recognize and sort out the romantic notions concerning the parenting role.

Results and Symbolic Interaction

From the results of this study, it appeared that gender-role attitudes were the only predictors of adolescents' romantic attitudes toward parenthood. This particular relationship, however, was significant only for females. None of the other variables in this study were found to be predictive of adolescents' romantic parenting attitudes.

Within the symbolic interaction conceptual framework, a particular set of role attitudes are expected to influence the adjustments of individuals to other sets of role expectations and attitudes. Consistent with this idea, the female adolescents' gender-role attitudes were found to be predictive of their attitudes toward the parenting role. Specifically, female adolescents with traditional gender-role attitudes were found to have romantic attitudes toward parenting. Likewise, female adolescents with nontraditional (modern) gender-role attitudes are likely to have realistic parenting ideas. From a symbolic interaction perspective, therefore,

less traditional gender-role expectations by female adolescents also will predict that female adolescents will have a clearer understanding of the requirements of the parenting role.

Limitations

Two conditions may have influenced the findings of this research study. These factors were the characteristics of the sample and the reliability of one of the scales.

The background characteristics of the sample may have reduced the generalizability of this study. All the participants attended Farragut High School, which is located in an affluent section of West Knox County. Many of the subjects' parents were well educated and were employed in professional-technical or managerial positions. Therefore, the socioeconomic balance of this particular school may have favored the upper end of the SES scale and these results could be generalized only to other people with similar demographics.

The reliability of the Attitudes toward Parenthood Scale also may have exerted an influence on the findings of this research study. This was, however, the first time this scale had been used. This particular part of the instrument was based on LeMasters' (1977) "folklore" about parenthood and was designed specifically for

this study. The reliability coefficient for the Attitudes toward Parenthood Scale was only of moderate strength (.71). The reliability coefficients for the Sex-Role Attitudes Scale and the Experiences with Children Scale, however, were fairly high (.85 and .91, respectively).

Implications

Adolescents' romantic attitudes toward parenting were the major focus of this study. Romantic illusions have been discussed as a probable cause for part of the difficulty some parents experience at the birth of their first child (LeMasters, 1957). However, no attempts prior to this study were identified that sought to determine the source(s) of idealistic conceptions of parenthood.

After a review of related literature, five possible origins of adolescents' romantic attitudes toward parenthood were proposed. One variable in the female model accounted for all the romanticism that was encountered. That is, teenage girls with traditional gender-role attitudes appeared to be the strongest supporters of romantic illusions of parenting. The inverse way of viewing this finding is that modern, or nontraditional, gender-role attitudes of female adolescents are predictive of realistic attitudes toward parenthood.

Previous investigators, however, have not focused on romanticized attitudes toward parenthood by adolescents. Instead, major areas of interest have been the transition to parenthood and the division of labor concerning child-rearing and child-care responsibilities during early adulthood (e.g., Hobbs, 1965; Kellerman & Katz, 1978; Russell, 1974). Perhaps problems in these frequently researched areas could be alleviated if romantic attitudes were acknowledged as possible predictors of the difficulties of being a parent. Problems in the area of child abuse and neglect even might be diminished if early romanticism about parenthood were viewed as an important explanatory factor.

Researchers have excluded adolescents from most studies on general attitudes toward parenthood. Of the research reviewed for this project, none involved high school-age young people as subjects of the research. Very few studies on attitudes toward parenthood focused on unmarried subjects (e.g., Hobart, 1973; McIntire et al., 1974). Because parenting attitudes may be formed before marriage, it seems reasonable that the responses of adolescents could provide valuable insight into the attitudes of prospective parents. Researchers must begin to focus their attention on adolescents and their perceptions of parental roles. It is likely that early

intervention programs with adolescents will have the greatest likelihood of alleviating the stresses associated with the transition to parenthood.

The use of intervention does raise some ethical questions, however. For example, educators must determine if it is appropriate to deemphasize the traditional gender-role attitudes of females in order to aid young women in the development of realistic parenting ideas. Perhaps programs that pose alternative life styles for women and thus focus on both traditional and nontraditional gender-role attitudes are the best solution for this difficult dilemma.

Likewise, programs that focus on both traditional and nontraditional gender-role attitudes could be beneficial to adolescent males. From the results of this study and particularly the nonsignificant results for males, there is an indication that parenthood is an area of ambiguity for males. Because females are socialized for parenthood, adolescent males often fail to see parenthood as an important role for themselves. Programs that raise the issue of parenthood would help male adolescents to identify with this future role.

For these reasons, the results of this study may be beneficial to family life educators and practitioners. These professionals might focus on the negative results

of romantic attitudes about the parenting role and develop programs that provide adolescents with more realistic expectations for the parenting role.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Do NOT write your name on any pages of this questionnaire.

Directions: Please answer the following questions. You will need to circle the number of the response choice which is the best description of you or your situation.

- (1) What is your grade level?
 - 1 = 9th grade
 - 2 = 10th grade
 - 3 = 11th grade
 - 4 = 12th grade
- (2) With whom do you live?
 - 1 = with parents
 - 2 = with someone other than parents; please specify _____
- (3) What is your parents' marital status?
 - 1 = married
 - 2 = divorced
 - 3 = separated
 - 4 = widowed
 - 5 = single
 - 6 = other; please explain _____
- (4) How many children and teenagers are there in your family?
(Count yourself.)
 - 1 = 1 teenager only
 - 2 = 2 children/teenagers
 - 3 = 3 children/teenagers
 - 4 = 4 children/teenagers
 - 5 = 5 children/teenagers
 - 6 = 6 children/teenagers
 - 7 = 7 children/teenagers
 - 8 = 8 or more children/teenagers
- (5) How many of these children and teenagers are younger than you?
 - 0 = none are younger
 - 1 = 1 is younger
 - 2 = 2 are younger
 - 3 = 3 are younger
 - 4 = 4 are younger
 - 5 = 5 are younger
 - 6 = 6 are younger
 - 7 = 7 or more are younger
- (6) What is your race/ethnic group?
 - 1 = American Indian
 - 2 = Asian
 - 3 = black
 - 4 = Mexican-American
 - 5 = white
 - 6 = other; please specify _____

- (7) What is your religious preference?
 1 = Catholic
 2 = Jewish
 3 = Protestant
 4 = other; please specify _____
- (8) Is your father (male guardian) presently employed outside the home?
 1 = yes
 2 = no
 3 = retired
- (9) What is your father's (male guardian's) job status?
 1 = works full time (35 hours or more each week)
 2 = works part time (less than 35 hours each week)
 3 = is not employed or is retired
 4 = is a full-time homemaker and does not work outside the home
- (10-11) If your father (male guardian) is employed outside the home, what is his job title? Please be specific.
-
- If your father (male guardian) is employed outside the home, what does he do? Please give a full description such as "is an accountant for T.V.A." or "is a salesclerk at Miller's" or "is a pediatrician."
-
- (12-13) What is the highest grade in school that your father (male guardian) completed? Please circle.
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| grade school | high school | college | graduate school |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 11 12 | 13 14 15 16 | 17 18 19 20 |
- (14) Is your mother (female guardian) presently employed outside the home?
 1 = yes
 2 = no
 3 = retired
- (15) What is your mother's (female guardian's) job status?
 1 = works full time (35 or more hours each week)
 2 = works part time (less than 35 hours each week)
 3 = is not employed or is retired
 4 = is a full-time homemaker and does not work outside the home
- (16-17) If your mother (female guardian) is employed outside the home, what is her job title? Please be specific.
-
- If your mother (female guardian) is employed outside the home, what does she do? Please give a full description such as "is a lawyer with a private firm" or "is a carpenter for a residential contractor" or "teaches history at U.T."
-

- (18-19) What is the highest grade in school that your mother (female guardian) completed? Please circle.

grade school	high school	college	graduate school
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20

- (20) What is your gender (sex)?
 1 = female
 2 = male
- (21) Are you now or have you ever been married?
 1 = yes
 2 = no
- (22) Do you have any children?
 1 = yes
 2 = no

Directions: For each item below, circle the number to the left of the item that best describes your opinion of that statement.

1 = Strongly agree
 2 = Mildly agree
 3 = Mildly disagree
 4 = Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (23) | Rearing children is fun. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (24) | Children are sweet and cute. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (25) | Children will turn out well if they have "good" parents. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (26) | Children improve marriage. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (27) | If children are brought up right, they will stay good all their lives. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (28) | The nature of the child being reared is very important--even good parents can have problems with a "difficult" child. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (29) | Today's parents are better than those of yesterday. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (30) | Childless couples are just as happy as couples with children. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (31) | There are no bad children--only bad parents. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (32) | Becoming a parent makes a person more mature. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (33) | Children today fail to appreciate all the advantages their parents are able to give them. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (34) | The hard work of rearing children is justified by the fact that the children will make a better world. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (35) | A premarital pregnancy can occur even if a person has been told about sex and the facts of life. |

- 1 = Strongly agree
 2 = Mildly agree
 3 = Mildly disagree
 4 = Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (36) | Our society considers parenthood to be unimportant. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (37) | Love is enough to guarantee good performance as a parent. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (38) | One-parent families can raise normal and healthy children. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (39) | Woman with children in grammar school should, if at all possible, stay at home rather than work. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (40) | Women with preschool children should not work, if at all possible. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (41) | Whoever is the better wage-earner, wife or husband, should be the breadwinner. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (42) | It is possible for women to satisfy their needs for achievement through their husbands. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (43) | Men should have more freedom to do such things as cook and care for children, if they so desire. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (44) | A man's self-esteem is severely injured if his wife makes more money than he does. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (45) | Men should take the same amount of responsibility as women in caring for home and children. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (46) | A husband who is the breadwinner in the family should make all the important decisions. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (47) | I would feel uncomfortable if my immediate supervisor at work was a woman. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (48) | To a great extent, women are less able to make a career commitment than men are. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (49) | Females should be encouraged to plan for a career, not just a job. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (50) | I would vote for a woman for President of the United States. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (51) | Women are less capable of making important decisions than men are. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (52) | Men are more capable of assuming leadership than women are. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (53) | Women generally prefer light conversations over rational discussions. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (54) | There is considerable evidence that men, in general, are a "superior species" to women. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (55) | Women really like being dependent on men. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (56) | Career women generally are emotionally unstable. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (57) | Females should go ahead and pamper males--tell him how great he is--because that's a useful way to get what they want. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (58) | Men should stop appraising women solely on the basis of appearance and sex appeal. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (59) | Either consciously or unconsciously, most women would like to be men. |

- 1 = Strongly agree
 2 = Mildly agree
 3 = Mildly disagree
 4 = Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (60) | The way men and women behave is more a result of their genetic make-up than of the way they were brought up. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (61) | Women are as capable as men of enjoying a full sex life. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (62) | Because men have a natural urge to dominate and lead, women who challenge this actually threaten the welfare of society. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (63) | Unlike the race riots, the "battle between the sexes" will never involve violence on any large scale. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (64) | There should be low-cost, high-quality child-care centers for working women. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (65) | Men need liberation equally as much as women do. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (66) | Men's clubs and lodges should be required to admit women. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (67) | Women should get equal pay with men for doing the same jobs. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (68) | Women should have equal job opportunities with men. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (69) | Women can attain true equality in this country only through a really drastic change in the social structure. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (70) | The Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) should be ratified as soon as possible. |

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE.

(Do not write below this line.)

(cc 71-76 = blank)

(cc 77 = 1)

(cc 78 - 80) _____ I.D.

Directions: For each item below, circle the answer to the left of the item that best describes the amount of your experiences with children.

1 = none
2 = little
3 = some
4 = much

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|-------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (1A) | Observation of infants |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (2A) | Care of infants |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (3A) | Observation of someone else caring for infants |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (4A) | Observation of preschool children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5A) | Care and guidance of preschool children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (6A) | Observation of someone else caring for and guiding preschool children. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (7A) | Observation of elementary school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (8A) | Care and guidance of elementary school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (9A) | Observation of someone else caring for and guiding elementary school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (10A) | Observation of middle school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (11A) | Care and guidance of middle school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (12A) | Observation of someone else caring for and guiding middle school children |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (13A) | Care and guidance of younger members of my own family |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (14A) | Care and guidance of children who are not members of my family |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (15A) | Overall amount of experiences with children of all ages |

Directions: Please circle the number of the response choice which is the best description of you.

In these classes, children and/or child-rearing responsibilities are studied. Have you taken any of these courses?

- (16A) Home Ec I
1 = yes
2 = no

- (17A) Home Ec II
1 = yes
2 = no

- (18A) Young Adult Living
1 = yes
2 = no

- (19A) Child Care I
1 = yes
2 = no
- (20A) Child Care II
1 = yes
2 = no
- (21A) Do you think you will ever get married?
1 = yes
2 = no
- (22A) How many children do you think you would like to have?
0 = no children
1 = 1 child
2 = 2 children
3 = 3 children
4 = 4 children
5 = 5 or more children

Directions: Please write out your answers to these questions.

- (23A-24A) At what age do you think you will most likely get married?
(Put 00 if you think you will never marry.)
_____ years old
- (25A-26A) At what age do you think you will most likely have your
first child? (Put 00 if you think you will never have
children.)
_____ years old
- (27A-28A) How old were you on your last birthday?
_____ years old

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!!!

(Do not write below this line.)

(cc 29A-76A = blank)

(cc 77A = 2)

(cc 78A-80A) _____ (Dup. from Card 1) I.D.

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION SHEET
for "Student Questionnaire"

Please take this sheet home and keep it for your reference.

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you need to know the following information.

- 1) You are requested to participate in a research project focused on teenagers' attitudes toward parenthood.
- 2) You are being requested to complete a questionnaire and answer questions about yourself. Also, you will be expected to give your opinions to specific statements concerning parenthood and the roles of men and women in society. The questionnaire will be given to you in your American history class and will take about 20 minutes to complete.
- 3) If you decide to participate, you may refuse to answer any specific question and/or you may stop answering the questions at any time without any penalty.
- 4) All responses will be totally anonymous. Only summaries of the total results will be used.
- 5) You may not benefit directly from participating in this research project. Also, your participation is not expected to be harmful to you in any way. However, this research project may provide information that may be helpful for understanding the views about parenting that young people have before they actually become parents.
- 6) The researcher will answer any questions you may have concerning this project or your participation in it. Questions may be directed to:

Martha Ann Bell
Home Economics Department
FARRAGUT HIGH SCHOOL
11237 Kingston Pike
Knoxville, TN 37922

phone: 966-9775, ext. 146

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
for "Student Questionnaire"

Please return this sheet to your American history teacher with
the proper signatures.

Student's Agreement:

I wish to participate in this research project concerning
teenagers' attitudes toward parenthood that is being conducted
by Mrs. Bell. I understand the conditions stated on the
information sheet.

signed: _____

date: _____

Parent's Permission:

I give my permission for my son/daughter to participate in the
research project concerning teenagers' attitudes toward parent-
hood. I understand the description of the study outlined by
Mrs. Bell on the information sheet.

signed: _____

date: _____

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

TABLE VIII
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF VARIABLES

Variables	mean	S.D.	range
<u>Dependent Variable</u>			
Romanticized Attitudes toward Parenthood	2.63	.89	3.00 (1-4)
<u>Independent Variables</u>			
Gender-Role Attitudes	2.10	.91	3.00 (1-4)
Experiences with Children	2.82	.46	3.00 (1-4)
Age at Marriage	23.79	3.13	18.00 (17-35)
SES	8.70	2.52	12.00 (2-14)
Gender (0 = male) (1 = female)	.56	.50	1.00 (0-1)

VITA

Martha Ann (Lee) Bell was born in Morristown, Tennessee, on May 4, 1956. She attended elementary school in Hamblen County and graduated as salutatorian from Morristown-Hamblen High School East in May 1974. The following August she entered Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee. In May 1978, she received a Bachelor of Science degree, magna cum laude, in Vocational Home Economics.

From August 1978 to June 1979, the author taught Home Economics at Cosby High School, Cocke County, Tennessee. From August 1979 to the present, she has taught Vocational Home Economics at Farragut High School, Knox County, Tennessee. In June 1980, the author entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and began study toward the Master of Science degree, with a major in Child and Family Studies. She received this degree in March 1983.

The author is a member of Alpha Chi, Alpha Lambda Delta, Mortar Board, Omicron Nu, and Kappa Omicron Phi. Professional memberships include the American Home Economics Association, Tennessee Home Economics Association, Tennessee Association of Vocational Home Economics Teachers, National Education Association, and Tennessee Education Association.

She is married to Ray Clifton (Cliff) Bell, Jr.
of Rome, Georgia.