

COMPARISON OF THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS
OF BLACK AND WHITE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

The United States largest and most visible minority group is the black population, constituting approximately 12 per cent of the total population. For the past two decades the black population has been increasing at a significantly faster rate than the white population (U. S. Census, 1968).

However, as Billingsley (1968) has reported, there is a lack of research on the black family. Most of the research that is available is concerned with family life in the lower socio-economic and ghetto segments of the black community. Very little research has been conducted among the growing middle and upper-class black families.

Billingsley (1968) has also noted that research concerning black families has tended to ignore the expressive functions of the black family and therefore the literature is lacking in information in such areas as marital adjustment and parent-child relationships of black families. Instead, the research concerning black families has concentrated upon the instrumental functions of family life, such as the ability or inability of black families to provide their members with the basic necessities of life.

Parker and Kleiner (1969) have observed that there is surprisingly little current empirical research on the black family. Parker and

Kleiner have also pointed out the weaknesses of the two major research studies on the black family which are most often referred to for information. One, the study of the black family by Frazier (1948) pertaining to the prewar period and is therefore not recent, while the other, Moynihan's study (1965), is based primarily upon statistical analyses of census data that document the disorganization of the black family.

Glick (1963) has suggested that the problems and creative potential growing out of black experience in America are closely related to the social and psychological stability as well as the economic stability of black family life.

In order to better understand the black family, there is a vital need for much more research concerning the psychological and social aspects of parent-child relationships among black families.

It has been suggested that the communication gap problem between the black and white populations in American society is largely rooted in the family structure (Moynihan, 1965). Therefore, there appears to be merit in gaining more information concerning the differences between black and white families with respect to the psychological and social aspects of parent-child relationships. There is currently little research evidence available concerning such a racial comparison.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to compare the parent-child relationships of black and white high school students.

The specific purposes of this study were to compare the parent-child relationships of black and white high school students concerning

each of the following:

1. Type of discipline received from father during childhood.
2. Type of discipline received from mother during childhood.
3. Degree of closeness of relationship with father during childhood.
4. Degree of closeness of relationship with mother during childhood.
5. Source of most discipline during childhood.
6. Degree of praise received during childhood.
7. Source of most affection during childhood.
8. Degree to which family participated in recreation together during respondent's childhood.
9. Degree to which father found time to do things together with respondent as a child.
10. Degree to which mother found time to do things together with respondent as a child.
11. Degree to which parents expressed affection toward respondent as a child.
12. Source of greatest parental influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.
13. Source of greatest general influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.
14. Degree to which the respondent feels free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns.

In order to make the comparisons mentioned above, a questionnaire, which was composed of fixed alternative type questions, was administered to 499 black and white high school students representing 7

communities in the state of Oklahoma. A detailed description of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

It has been primarily during the 20th Century that the importance and feasibility of conducting scientific investigations of parent-child relationships has been fully accepted (Gildia, Glidwell, and Kantor, 1961).

However the investigation of parent-child relationships in black families has hardly begun, as very little research has been conducted concerning the psychological and social aspects of the parent-child relationships in the black family. Most of the research that has been conducted concerning parent-child relationships has been concerned with the white family. The limited research available concerning parent-child relationships of black families, as well as of black families in general, is primarily not recent and has been concerned with demographic characteristics that document the disorganization of the black family. There is also very limited research available comparing the parent-child relationships of black and white high school students. Following are some observations evolving from the limited research on parent-child relationships in black families, and also from the research dealing with parent-child relationships in general.

Among the goals of parent-child relationships is to promote emotional development of children and positive character traits. Several studies have indicated certain common child-rearing patterns found to

be characteristic of families of children who show positive emotional development and have positive character traits.

Child-rearing patterns characteristic of children who have positive emotional development are: a) respect for child as individual whose behavior is caused by several factors, b) commitment to slow development of child from infancy to maturity and tendency to perceive the ultimate goal as raising "happy," successful son or daughter, c) a relatively high sense of competence in handling child's behavior, d) discipline which is chiefly verbal, mild, reasonable, consistent, and which emphasizes rewarding good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior, e) open, free, verbal communication between parent and child, f) democratic methods of child-rearing, g) parents who view themselves as generally competent adults, and who are generally satisfied with themselves and their situation, h) intimate and warm relationship between parent and child, allowing for gradually increasing independence, i) presence of father in home and lack of severe marital conflict, j) free verbal communication about sex, and sex education by both father and mother, k) acceptance of child's drive for aggression but channeling it into socially approved outlets, l) encouragement of new experiences by the child, and m) happiness of parental marriage (Glidewell, 1961; Roff, 1949; Baldwin, 1948; Antonosky, 1959; Block, Patterson, Block and Jackson, 1958; Law, 1954; Peterson, Becker, Hellmer, Shoemaker and Quay, 1959; Watson, 1957; Radke, 1946; Porter, 1955; Thompson, 1962; Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese, 1945).

Child-rearing patterns characteristic of children who have positive character traits are: a) democratic child-rearing methods: b) mild, reasonable, consistent discipline, c) tendency to view the

child's capacity for moral judgement as a slowly developing ability, d) moral values are discussed and clarified, and e) parents set example by their own behavior (Kohlberg, 1964; Hartshorne and May, 1928-1930; Pech and Havighurst, 1960; Kohlberg, 1964; Hoffman, 1963; White and Lippitt, 1960).

Child-rearing patterns have been changing during recent years and Bronfenbrenner (1968) has suggested that the American parent is changing in the following ways: a) greater permissiveness toward the child's spontaneous desires, b) freer expression of affection, c) increased reliance on indirect "psychological" techniques of discipline versus direct methods, and d) in consequence of the above shifts in the direction of what are predominantly middle class values and techniques, there is a narrowing of the gap between social classes in their patterns of child-rearing.

Various research studies have indicated that child-rearing patterns and parent-child relationships are significantly different according to socio-economic class. Chilman (1966) found evidence that strongly suggests that the very poor, more than other groups, tend to employ child-rearing and family life patterns that are maladaptive to our society in these areas: a) mental health, b) educational achievement, c) social acceptability, d) "moral" behavior, and e) family stability.

There is evidence that lower-lower class parental patterns, compared to middle class ones, tend to be antithetical to a child's positive emotional health. Emotionally unhealthy characteristics of the lower-lower class family patterns are lack of goal commitment and of belief in long-range success, repressive attitudes about sex, distrust

of new experiences and high rates of marital conflict and family breakdown (Kantor, Glidewell, Mensh, Darnlee, and Gildea, 1958; Bronfenbrenner, 1961; Clausen and Williams, 1963; Kohn, 1959; Yarrow, 1964). Also in the lower-lower class can be seen harsh, physical, inconsistent discipline and little verbal communication and discussion (Lewis, 1961; Riessman, 1962; Komarovsky, 1964; Littman, Moore, and Pearce-Jones, 1957; Cohen and Hodges, 1963; Miller and Riessman, 1961; Maccoby and Gibbs, 1954; White, 1957; Wortis, 1963).

These characteristics of the lower-lower class parent-child relationships may be partially explained by Bernard's study (1966) on black mothers. It was found that fewer black than white mothers, class for class, had been exposed to child-rearing experts.

There is evidence that black mothers possess a great desire for their children to obtain a higher education, but possess a limited degree of knowledge about how to go about obtaining it (Gittell, 1967).

In a study of child-rearing practices of black and white families of comparable social and economic status, Davis and Havighurst (1958) found the middle class black families were: a) more permissive in oral training, b) more strict in toilet training, c) girls were given more responsibility earlier, and also middle class girls were not allowed to play across the street or go to the movies alone until later than white girls.

Bernard (1966) found that when the black father was at home the one clearly determinative factor in the relationship of father and child was the father's relationship with the mother. If that was close, it "rubbed off" on the relationship with the child. Biological paternity was less important than the relationship with a child's mother.

Queen and Habenstein (1967) found that the middle class black parents share in the responsibility for socialization of their children. Their research also indicated that children are wanted, and that family size is likely to be restricted. The results of the Queen and Habenstein study indicated that both parents in the middle class black family tend to be present during their offspring's infancy and childhood.

When the black family contains only one parent, Bell (unpublished) found no difference in child-rearing practices between one-parent and paired-parent mothers. Lower class black families often show matriarchal tendencies. Moynihan (1965) found three central factors providing the basis for a mother centered black family: a) ghettoization and consequent isolation of blacks in central city cores, b) economic insecurity, and c) a growing disparity between black female and male occupational life chances, with the male falling behind. The tenuous character of the black husband's role leads to the building of the effective household unit around the wife, her children and often her mother.

Moynihan (1965) found that with the absence of a strong black father figure, male children suffer from problems of sex role identity, lack of motivation, are more vulnerable to mental illness and are more likely to reflect the values and institutions of society. Douglass (1966) concluded that black children often have difficulty in identifying with their parents, because their parents are often not at home or are discredited and vilified by the white world. If black children tend to identify more with whites, this often results in self-hatred, frustration, and unrealistic goals.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

The 499 subjects for this study were obtained from 7 high schools throughout the state of Oklahoma, and were predominantly from families of upper-lower and lower-middle socio-economic status. The students were single and primarily Protestant. All of the students in the sample were in the 11th and 12th grades, and were enrolled in a Home Economics class. From this total group of 499 subjects, 167 white students were randomly selected and matched with 167 black students in terms of socio-economic class in an effort to control for the socio-economic factor. Cover letters explaining the research assuring anonymity to the students, and including directions for administration of the questionnaires, were sent to 9 teachers representing 7 high schools in the state of Oklahoma. The data were obtained during the month of February, 1971.

The questionnaire used in this study was developed for the purpose of comparing the parent-child relationships of black and white high school students. Items were included in the questionnaire to obtain certain background data from the students such as sex, age, race, employment of mother, religious preference, residence, marital status of parents, primary source of family income, and highest educational attainment of the principal family income earner. The McGuire-White

Index of Socio-economic Status (1955) was used to assess the status of each respondent, based on the criteria of the family head's occupation, source of income, and level of educational attainment.

Also included in the questionnaire were several questions dealing with the respondent's perceptions of his relationships with his parents. These questions were fixed alternative type questions and dealt with such aspects of parent-child relationships as: (a) source and type of discipline; (b) closeness of relationship with each parent; (c) source and degree of affection received during childhood; (d) degree to which parent and child did things together; (e) degree of praise received during childhood; (f) parental identification; and (i) parent-child communication.

Analysis of the Data

A percentage and frequency count was used to analyze the background characteristics of subjects such as age and sex.

The chi-square test was utilized to examine the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between black and white high school students' perceptions concerning each of the following:

1. Type of discipline received from father during childhood.
2. Type of discipline received from mother during childhood.
3. Degree of closeness of relationship with father during childhood.
4. Degree of closeness of relationship with mother during childhood.
5. Source of most discipline during childhood.
6. Degree of praise received during childhood.

7. Source of most affection during childhood.
8. Degree to which family participated in recreation together during respondent's childhood.
9. Degree to which father found time to do things together with respondent as a child.
10. Degree to which mother found time to do things together with respondent as a child.
11. Degree to which parents expressed affection toward respondent as a child.
12. Source of greatest parental influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.
13. Source of greatest general influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.
14. Degree to which the respondent feels free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of Subjects

From the total sample of 499 subjects, 167 white students were randomly matched with 167 black students in terms of socio-economic status in an effort to control for social-economic class. Therefore, all the statistical analyses used in this study are based upon these two groups of 167 white and 167 black students. The McGuire-White Index of Socio-economic Status was used to assess the status of each respondent, based on the criteria of the family head's occupation, source of income, and level of educational attainment.

Table I presents a detailed description of the 167 black high school students who served as subjects in this study. The respondents were in the 11th or 12th grade, predominantly Protestant (86.71%), and the greatest proportion (47.40%) lived in a small town under 25,000 population for the major part of their lives.

Table II presents a detailed description of the 167 white high school students who served as subjects in this study. The respondents were in the 11th or 12th grade, predominantly Protestant (76.30%), and the majority of the subjects lived in a small town under 25,000 population for the major part of their lives (46.82%). Females constituted approximately 79 per cent of the black respondents and approximately 68 per cent of the white respondents. It is interesting to note that

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BLACK SUBJECTS

| Variable | Classification | No. | % |
|--|---|-----------------|-------|
| Sex | Male | 35 | 20.23 |
| | Female | 138 | 79.77 |
| Employment of mother for major part of childhood | No | 58 | 33.53 |
| | Yes (part-time) | 63 | 36.42 |
| | Yes (full-time) | 51 | 29.48 |
| Religious Preference | Catholic | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Protestant | 150 | 86.71 |
| | Jewish | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Morman | 0 | 0.0 |
| | None | 1 | .58 |
| | Other | 21 | 12.14 |
| Residence for major part of life | On farm or in country | 43 | 24.86 |
| | Small town under 25,000 population | 82 | 47.40 |
| | City of 25,000 to 50,000 population | 26 | 15.03 |
| | City of 50,000 to 100,000 population | 13 | 7.51 |
| | City over 100,000 population | 6 | 3.41 |
| | Parents' marital status | Living together | 86 |
| Separated or divorced (with no remarriage) | | 48 | 27.75 |
| One of parents de- ceased (with no re- marriage) | | 25 | 14.45 |
| Divorced (with re- marriage) | | 6 | 3.47 |
| One of parents deceased (with remarriage) | | 5 | 2.89 |
| Socio-economic class | | Upper-upper | 0 |
| | Upper-middle | 10 | 5.78 |
| | Lower-middle | 35 | 20.23 |
| | Upper-lower | 86 | 49.71 |
| | Lower-lower | 42 | 24.28 |

TABLE II
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WHITE SUBJECTS

| Variable | Classification | No. | % |
|--|---|-----------------|-------|
| Sex | Male | 54 | 31.31 |
| | Female | 119 | 68.79 |
| Employment of mother for major part of childhood | No | 101 | 58.38 |
| | Yes (part-time) | 36 | 20.81 |
| | Yes (full-time) | 36 | 20.81 |
| Religious Preference | Catholic | 4 | 2.31 |
| | Protestant | 132 | 76.30 |
| | Jewish | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Morman | 0 | 0.0 |
| | None | 12 | 6.94 |
| | Other | 23 | 13.29 |
| Residence for major part of life | On farm or in country | 40 | 23.12 |
| | Small town under 25,000 population | 81 | 46.82 |
| | City of 25,000 to 50,000 population | 36 | 20.81 |
| | City of 50,000 to 100,000 population | 10 | 5.78 |
| | City over 100,000 population | 4 | 2.31 |
| | Parents' marital status | Living together | 124 |
| Separated or divorced (with no remarriage) | | 15 | 8.67 |
| One of parents de- ceased (with no re- marriage) | | 16 | 9.25 |
| Divorced (with re- marriage) | | 10 | 5.78 |
| One of parents deceased (with remarriage) | | 7 | 4.05 |
| Socio-economic class | | Upper-upper | 0 |
| | Upper-middle | 10 | 5.78 |
| | Lower-middle | 35 | 20.23 |
| | Upper-lower | 86 | 49.71 |
| | Lower-lower | 42 | 24.28 |

the greatest proportion of both black and white respondents reported their parents' marital status as living together, although this response was given by a much greater proportion of white respondents (71.63%) than black respondents (49.71%). A greater proportion of black respondents (27.75%) than white respondents (8.67%) reported their parents' marital status as separated or divorced (with no remarriage).

Examination of Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis I(a). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from father during childhood.

The chi-square value obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from father during childhood. As Table III indicates, a chi-square value of 3.98 was obtained.

Hypothesis I(b). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from mother during childhood.

The chi-square value obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from mother during childhood. As Table IV indicates, a chi-square value of 8.49 was obtained. This finding coincides with the previously mentioned finding that there was no significant difference in perceptions of black and white high school students concerning type of discipline received from father during childhood.

TABLE III

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
TYPE OF DISCIPLINE RECEIVED FROM FATHER DURING
CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|---|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Permissive | 16 | 9.6 | 7 | 4.2 | | |
| Permissive | 23 | 13.8 | 25 | 15.0 | | |
| Moderate Degree of Both Permissiveness and Strictness | 94 | 56.3 | 96 | 57.5 | 3.98 | N.S. |
| Strict | 25 | 15.0 | 29 | 17.4 | | |
| Very Strict | 9 | 5.4 | 10 | 6.0 | | |
| | 169 | | 169 | | | |

TABLE IV

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
TYPE OF DISCIPLINE RECEIVED FROM MOTHER DURING
CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|---|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Permissive | 14 | 8.2 | 4 | 2.3 | | |
| Permissive | 30 | 17.5 | 23 | 13.5 | | |
| Moderate Degree of Both Permissiveness and Strictness | 93 | 54.4 | 112 | 65.5 | 8.49 | N.S. |
| Strict | 28 | 16.4 | 25 | 14.6 | | |
| Very Strict | 6 | 3.5 | 7 | 4.1 | | |
| | 149 | | 171 | | | |

Hypothesis I(c). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness of relationship with father during childhood.

A significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness with their father during childhood. As Table V indicates, a chi-square value of 8.99 was obtained which is significant at the .02 level. A greater proportion of black than white students reported the closeness of relationships with their father as average. Perhaps the most interesting difference was found to exist in the category of below average. A larger proportion of white students (22.8%) than black students (14.5%), felt the degree of closeness of the relationship with their father during their childhood was below average even though a higher proportion of black students (27.75%) than white students (8.67%) reported their parents' marital status as separated or divorced (with no remarriage).

TABLE V

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING DEGREE OF CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH FATHER DURING CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|---------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Above Average | 36 | 21.3 | 48 | 28.7 | | |
| Average | 109 | 64.5 | 81 | 48.5 | 8.99 | .02 |
| Below Average | 24 | 14.5 | 38 | 22.8 | | |

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This finding is interesting in view of the common assumption that the black father typically has less influence upon his children and plays a less dominant role in the family than does the white father. Such an assumption is reinforced by census statistics indicating more black than white families are headed by females (U. S. Dept. of Labor, 1965). This common assumption carries with it the implication that black children tend to have less close relationships with their fathers than do white children, which is not supported by the present results.

Hypothesis I(d). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness of relationship with mother during childhood.

A significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness of the relationship with the mother during childhood. As Table VI indicates, a chi-square value of 11.05 was obtained which is significant at the .01 level. A higher proportion of black (58.2%) than white (42.4%) students reported the closeness of relationship with their mother during childhood as above average. The greatest difference was found in the category of below average, with more than three times as many white students (6.4%) as black students (1.8%) reporting that the closeness of relationship with their mother during childhood was below average.

This finding coincides with the results obtained in Hypothesis I(d) indicating a greater proportion of the white than black students reported the closeness of relationship with their father during childhood was below average. Both of these findings suggest closer parent-child relationships among black than white families. These findings

may be related to other research findings indicating closer extended family relationships among black than white families (Queen and Habenstein, 1967).

TABLE VI

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING DEGREE OF CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER DURING CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | χ^2 | Level of Sig. |
|---------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Above Average | 99 | 58.2 | 73 | 42.4 | | |
| Average | 68 | 40.0 | 88 | 51.2 | 11.05 | 0.01 |
| Below Average | 3 | 1.8 | 11 | 6.4 | | |

Hypothesis I(e), There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning source of most discipline during childhood.

There was a significant difference reported in Table VII concerning the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning their source of most discipline during childhood, as a chi-square value of 6.71 was obtained which is significant at the .05 level. The greatest difference was that a greater proportion of the white students (22.1%) than the black students (12.3%) reported their father as their source of most discipline during childhood. A greater proportion of the black

students (58.5%) than white students (47.7%) reported their mother as their source of most discipline during childhood.

TABLE VII

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING SOURCE OF MOST DISCIPLINE DURING CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|--------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Usually My Mother | 100 | 58.5 | 82 | 47.7 | | |
| Usually My Father | 21 | 12.3 | 38 | 22.1 | 6.71 | .05 |
| Both Mother and Father About Equally | 50 | 29.2 | 52 | 30.2 | | |

According to the 1960 Census the percentage of nonwhite families headed by a female was more than double the per cent for whites. The present finding may therefore be related to the greater number of female headed families among blacks. The present finding indicates that at least in the area of discipline of children the black family is more mother centered than the white family.

Hypothesis I(f). There is no significant difference in the perception of black and white high school students concerning degree of praise received during childhood.

A significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of

black and white high school students concerning the degree of praise received during childhood. As Table VIII indicates, a chi-square value of 15.19 was obtained which is significant at the .01 level. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of very often, with more than twice as many black students (18.1%) than white students (7.6%) reporting they received praise very often during their childhood.

TABLE VIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING DEGREE OF PRAISE RECEIVED DURING CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | χ^2 | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 11 | 6.4 | 7 | 4.1 | | |
| Rarely | 31 | 18.1 | 21 | 12.3 | | |
| Moderate | 61 | 35.7 | 87 | 50.9 | 15.19 | .01 |
| Often | 37 | 21.6 | 43 | 25.1 | | |
| Very Often | 31 | 18.1 | 13 | 7.6 | | |

This finding supports the previously mentioned findings of Hypotheses I(c) and I(d) that a higher proportion of white than black students reported the closeness of relationship with both the mother and father as below average. It is logical that a greater degree of genuine praise received by the black students during childhood could

contribute to a feeling of closer parent-child relationships. It is also possible that the finding that more than twice as many blacks very often receive praise during their childhood may be due to closer extended family relationships reported among black families (Queen and Habenstein, 1967). Perhaps with more extended family contacts the child has greater opportunity to receive praise.

Hypothesis I(g). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning source of most affection during childhood.

As Table IX indicates, a significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the source of most affection during childhood. A chi-square value of 10.09 was obtained which is significant at the .02 level. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category father, with a greater proportion of the white students (10.5%) compared to black students (6.5%) reporting their father as the greatest source of affection during childhood. Also a greater proportion of the black students (58.0%) as compared to white students (40.9%) indicated their mother as the source of most affection during childhood.

The present results are related to the findings reported in Hypothesis I(e) that a greater proportion of white than black students reported their father as the source of most discipline during childhood while a greater proportion of black students reported the mother as the source of most discipline. This finding also lends support to the thesis that the black family is more mother centered than the white family.

TABLE IX

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
SOURCE OF MOST AFFECTION DURING CHILDHOOD
ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|---|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Mother | 98 | 58.0 | 70 | 40.9 | 17.7 | |
| Father | 11 | 6.5 | 18 | 10.5 | 4 | |
| Both Mother and Father About Equally | 49 | 29.0 | 69 | 40.4 | 10.09 | .02 |
| Other | 11 | 6.5 | 14 | 8.2 | | |

These results would also seem to be related to 1960 Census statistics indicating that fewer black families have a father present than do white families.

Hypothesis I(h). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning degree to which family participated in recreation together during respondent's childhood.

The chi-square value obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the degree to which their family participated in recreation together during their childhood. As Table X indicates, a chi-square value of 2.17 was obtained.

TABLE X

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
DEGREE TO WHICH FAMILY PARTICIPATED IN RECREATION TOGETHER
DURING RESPONDENT'S CHILDHOOD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | χ^2 | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|------------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 27 | 15.9 | 33 | 19.2 | | |
| Rarely | 53 | 31.2 | 48 | 27.9 | | |
| Moderate | 40 | 23.5 | 45 | 26.2 | 2.17 | N.S. |
| Often | 38 | 22.4 | 31 | 18.0 | | |
| Very Often | 12 | 7.1 | 15 | 8.7 | | |

Hypothesis I(i). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning degree to which father found time to do things together with respondent as a child.

The chi-square value obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the degree to which their father found time to do things together with them as a child. As Table XI indicates, a chi-square value of 4.56 was obtained. This finding is interesting in view of other evidence which suggests that the black father tends to be less involved as a parent than the white father.

TABLE XI

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
DEGREE TO WHICH FATHER FOUND TIME TO DO THINGS TOGETHER
WITH RESPONDENT AS A CHILD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 39 | 23.4 | 29 | 17.3 | | |
| Rarely | 41 | 24.6 | 34 | 20.2 | | |
| Moderate | 36 | 21.6 | 50 | 29.8 | 4.56 | N.S. |
| Often | 33 | 19.8 | 35 | 20.8 | | |
| Very Often | 18 | 10.8 | 20 | 11.9 | | |

Hypothesis I(j). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning degree to which mother found time to do things together with respondent as a child.

As shown in Table XII, a chi-square value of 6.15 indicates there is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which the mother found time to do things together with the respondent as a child.

Hypothesis I(k). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning degree to which parents expressed affection toward respondent as a child.

As Table XIII shows, the chi-square value of 3.36 reflects no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high

TABLE XII

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
DEGREE TO WHICH MOTHER FOUND TIME TO DO THINGS TOGETHER
WITH RESPONDENT AS A CHILD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 10 | 5.9 | 13 | 7.6 | | |
| Rarely | 29 | 17.1 | 25 | 14.6 | | |
| Moderate | 40 | 23.5 | 57 | 33.3 | 6.15 | N.S. |
| Often | 50 | 29.4 | 48 | 28.1 | | |
| Very Often | 41 | 24.1 | 28 | 16.4 | | |

TABLE XIII

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
DEGREE TO WHICH PARENTS EXPRESSED AFFECTION TOWARD
RESPONDENT AS A CHILD ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 8 | 4.8 | 9 | 5.4 | | |
| Rarely | 12 | 7.3 | 16 | 9.6 | | |
| Moderate | 44 | 26.7 | 56 | 33.5 | 3.36 | N.S. |
| Often | 60 | 36.4 | 53 | 31.7 | | |
| Very Often | 41 | 24.8 | 33 | 19.8 | | |

school students concerning the degree to which their parents expressed affection toward the respondent as a child.

Hypothesis I(1). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning source of greatest parental influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.

A significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the greatest source of parental influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is. As Table XIV indicates, a chi-square value of 13.60 was obtained which is significant at the .01 level. The most striking difference was that more than twice as many white students (18.1%) as black students (8.3%) reported their father as their greatest parental influence in determining the kind of person they are. A greater proportion of black students (66.7%) than white students (48.0%) indicated that the mother was the greatest parental influence.

These results support, and are partially explained by, the previously mentioned findings reported in Hypotheses I(e) and I(g) that a greater proportion of white than black students indicated their father was the major source of both discipline and affection, while a greater proportion of black students indicated the mother as the major source of both discipline and affection. The present results coincide with those reported in Hypotheses I(e) and I(g) in supporting the thesis that the black family is more mother centered than the white family.

TABLE XIV

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING SOURCE OF GREATEST PARENTAL INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING THE KIND OF PERSON THE RESPONDENT IS ACCORDING TO RACE

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Mother | 112 | 66.7 | 82 | 48.0 | | |
| Father | 14 | 8.3 | 31 | 18.1 | | |
| Both Mother and Father About Equally | 42 | 25.0 | 58 | 33.9 | 13.60 | .01 |

Hypothesis I(m). There is no significant difference in the perceptions between black and white high school students concerning source of greatest general influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.

The chi-square value obtained showed no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the source of greatest general influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is. As Table XV indicates, a chi-square value of 3.49 was obtained.

TABLE XV

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING SOURCE OF GREATEST GENERAL INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING THE KIND OF PERSON THE RESPONDENT IS ACCORDING TO RACE*

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| One or Both Parents | 111 | 66.5 | 100 | 59.2 | | |
| A Brother or Sister | 21 | 12.6 | 20 | 11.8 | | |
| Friends of My Own Age | 23 | 13.8 | 36 | 21.3 | 3.49 | N.S. |
| A Public Figure (such as President or Movie Star) or Other | 12 | 7.2 | 13 | 7.7 | | |

*The categories of "Public Figure" and "Other" were collapsed due to insufficient number of cases.

Hypothesis I(n). There is no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning degree to which the respondent feels free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns.

A significant difference was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which the respondent feels free to talk with his parents about problems and other concerns. As Table XVI indicates, a chi-square value of 10.68 was obtained which is significant at the .05 level. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of rarely, with almost twice as many white students (20.0%) as black students (10.7%) indicating

they rarely felt free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns. A larger percentage of black students (27.2%) than white students (15.9%) reported they very often felt free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns.

TABLE XVI

CHI-SQUARE VALUE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING DEGREE TO WHICH THE RESPONDENT FEELS FREE TO TALK WITH PARENTS ABOUT PROBLEMS AND OTHER CONCERNS

| Perceptions | Black | | White | | X ² | Level of Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|----------------|---------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | | |
| Very Rarely | 26 | 15.4 | 31 | 18.2 | | |
| Rarely | 18 | 10.7 | 34 | 20.0 | | |
| Average | 49 | 29.0 | 52 | 30.6 | 10.68 | .05 |
| Often | 30 | 17.8 | 26 | 15.3 | | |
| Very Often | 46 | 27.2 | 27 | 15.9 | | |

The present finding again indicates that the black students experienced closer parent-child relationships than did the white students. This finding supports the previously mentioned findings reported in Hypotheses I(c), I(d), and I(f) which indicated that the black students had experienced significantly closer relationships with both mother and father during childhood and had also received significantly more praise during childhood. These findings reported in Hypotheses I(c), I(d), and

I(f) suggest closer parent-child relationships among black families and in part explain why the black students felt significantly more free to talk with their parents about their problems and other concerns.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The general purpose of this study was to compare the parent-child relationships of black and white high school students.

The sample was composed of 167 black and 167 white high school students of comparable socio-economic status, selected randomly from a sample of 499 Oklahoma High School students. The subjects were single, primarily Protestant, and in the 11th or 12th grade. The data were obtained during February of 1971.

The chi-square test was used to examine each of the hypotheses. The results of this study were as follows:

1. There was no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from father during childhood.
2. There was no significant difference in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the type of discipline received from their mothers during childhood.
3. A significant difference at the .02 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness with their fathers during childhood. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of below average, where a larger proportion of white students (22.8%) than black students (14.5%) felt that the

closeness of the relationship with their father during their childhood was below average.

4. A significant difference at the .01 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of closeness (of the relationship) with the mother during childhood. The greatest difference was found in the category of below average, with more than three times as many white students (6.4%) as black students (1.8%) reporting that the closeness of the relationship with their mother during childhood was below average. *Question*
5. A significant difference at the .05 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the source of most discipline during childhood. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category, usually my father, with a greater proportion of the white students (22.1%) than the black students (12.3%) reporting their father as their source of most discipline during childhood.
6. A significant difference at the .01 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree of praise received during childhood. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of very often, with more than twice as many black students (18.1%) as white students (7.6%) reporting they received praise very often during their childhood.
7. A significant difference at the .02 level was found to exist concerning the perceptions of black and white high school

students concerning their source of most affection during childhood. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category, father, with a greater proportion of the white students (10.5%) than black students (6.5%) reporting their father as their greatest source of affection during childhood.

8. No significant difference was found in the perceptions of the black and white high school students concerning the degree to which their family participated in recreation together during their childhood.
9. There was no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which their father found time to do things together with them as a child.
10. There was no significant difference in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which the mother found time to do things together with the respondent as a child.
11. No significant difference was found in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which parents expressed affection toward respondent as a child.
12. A significant difference at the .01 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the greatest source of parental influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of father, with more than twice as many white students (18.1%) as black students (8.3%) reporting their father as their greatest parental

influence in determining the kind of person they are. ?

13. There was no significant difference in the perceptions between black and white high school students concerning the source of greatest general influence in determining the kind of person the respondent is.
14. A significant difference at the .05 level was found to exist in the perceptions of black and white high school students concerning the degree to which the respondent feels free to talk with his parents about problems and other concerns. The greatest difference was found to exist in the category of rarely, with almost twice as many white students (20.0%) as black students (10.7%) reporting that they rarely felt free to talk with parents about problems and other concerns.

One conclusion of this study is that the black family does appear to be more mother centered than the white family. However, the major conclusion which seems to evolve from the results of this study is that the black students experienced closer parent-child relationships than did the white students, suggesting that the parent-child relationships among black families may be closer than among white families. This conclusion parallels the findings of Maxwell, Dales, and Walters (1969) that black high school students indicated significantly more favorable self concepts than did the white students,

The findings of this study that the black students experienced closer parent-child relationships even though they were much less likely to report their parents' marital status as living together, suggests that the tendency of researchers and writers to concentrate upon the weaknesses and disorganization of black families by almost

exclusively using demographic characteristics as the index of family strength is questionable. The results of this study suggest the importance of investigating the psychological and social aspects of black parent-child relationships. This research also suggests the importance of examining the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the black family.

The results of this study raise important questions concerning why black students felt closer to both their mother and father than did the white students, and why black students felt more free to communicate with their parents. Much future research is needed to examine such questions. It is suggested that the minority group status might be one important factor contributing to closer parent-child relationships among black families, encouraging both parents and children to turn to each other for emotional support.

Another factor contributing to closer parent-child relationships among black families might be a tendency for black family members to be less individualistic in their activities because of less opportunity to pursue individual success. Therefore, because of less opportunity to pursue individual success in a materialistic way, according to the dominant white norms, it is logical that they might be more inclined to turn toward human relationships, and particularly relationships within the family, for personal recognition and satisfaction.

It is recommended that this study be replicated with a national sample. If similar findings are obtained, it is suggested that many detailed studies be conducted in the future in an effort to identify the factors which promote closer parent-child relationships among black families.

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APPENDIX

Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Your contribution in a research project of this type helps us to gain greater knowledge and insight into human relationships. Please check or fill in answers as appropriate to each question. Since your name is not required, please be as honest in your answers as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test.

The blanks at the extreme left of the page are for purposes of coding. (Do not fill in.)

- _____ 1. - 3.
- _____ 4. Sex: _____ 1. male
_____ 2. female
- _____ 5. Age: _____
- _____ 6. Race: _____ 1. White
_____ 2. Black
_____ 3. Indian
_____ 4. Other
- _____ 7. Was your mother employed for the major part of your childhood?
_____ 1. No
_____ 2. Yes (part-time employment)
_____ 3. Yes (full-time employment)
- _____ 8. If your mother was employed for the major part of your childhood, did she enjoy her work?
_____ 1. Yes
_____ 2. Undecided
_____ 3. No
- _____ 9. Religious preference:
_____ 1. Catholic _____ 4. Mormon
_____ 2. Protestant _____ 5. None
_____ 3. Jewish _____ 6. Other

Specify

- ___10. For the major part of your life have you lived:
- ___1. On farm or in country
 - ___2. Small town under 25,000 population
 - ___3. City of 25,000 to 50,000 population
 - ___4. City of 50,000 to 100,000 population
 - ___5. City of over 100,000 population
- ___11. What is your parents' marital status?
- ___1. Living together
 - ___2. Separated or divorced (with no remarriage)
 - ___3. One of parents deceased (with no remarriage)
 - ___4. Divorced (with remarriage)
 - ___5. One of parents deceased (with remarriage)
- ___12. What is the occupation of the head of your family (teacher, policeman, etc.)?
-
- ___13. What is the primary source of the income of your family?
- ___1. Inherited savings and investments
 - ___2. Earned wealth, transferable investment
 - ___3. Profits, royalties, fees
 - ___4. Salary, Commissions (regular, monthly, or yearly)
 - ___5. Hourly wages, weekly checks
 - ___6. Odd jobs, seasonal work, private charity
 - ___7. Public relief or charity
- ___14. What is the highest educational attainment of the principal earner of the income of your family?
- ___1. Completed graduate work for a profession
 - ___2. Graduated from a 4-year college
 - ___3. Attended college or university for two or more years

4. Graduated from high school
5. Attended high school, completed grade 9, but did not graduate
6. Completed grade 8, but did not attend beyond grade 9
7. Less than grade 8
15. (Omit)
16. Which one of the following most nearly describes the type of discipline you received as a child from your father?
1. Very permissive
2. Permissive
3. Moderate degree of both permissiveness and strictness
4. Strict
5. Very strict
17. Which one of the following most nearly describes the type of discipline you received as a child from your mother?
1. Very permissive
2. Permissive
3. Moderate degree of both permissiveness and strictness
4. Strict
5. Very strict
18. Which one of the following describes the degree of closeness of your relationship with your father during childhood?
1. Above average
2. Average
3. Below average
19. Which one of the following describes the degree of closeness of your relationship with your mother during childhood?
1. Above average

- _____ 2. Average
- _____ 3. Below average
- _____ 20. As a child who did you receive most of your discipline from?
- _____ 1. Usually my mother
- _____ 2. Usually my father
- _____ 3. Both mother and father about equally
- _____ 21. How much were you praised as a child?
- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
- _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
- _____ 3. Moderate
- _____ 22. From whom did you receive the most affection as a child?
- _____ 1. Mother
- _____ 2. Father
- _____ 3. Both mother and father about equally
- _____ 4. Other _____
(Specify)
- _____ 23. As a child did your family participate in recreation together?
- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
- _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
- _____ 3. Moderate
- _____ 24. As a child did your father find time to do things together with you?
- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
- _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
- _____ 3. Moderate
- _____ 25. As a child did your mother find time to do things together with you?
- _____ 1. Very rarely

- _____ 2. Rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 3. Moderate _____ 5. Very often

_____ 26. As a child did your parents encourage you to respect the feelings of other children?

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

As a child, how much were each of the following disciplinary methods used with you by your parents?

_____ 27. Physical punishment

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 28. Deprivation of privileges

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 29. Being isolated (forced to stay in room, etc.)

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 30. Withdrawal of love

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 31. Use of reasoning

- _____ 1. Very rarely
 _____ 2. Rarely

- _____ 3. Moderate _____ 4. Often
 _____ 5. Very often

_____ 32. Use of tangible rewards

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 33. Do you feel that you can talk with your parents freely about your problems and things that concern you?

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Average

_____ 34. Which parent do you feel has had the greatest influence in determining the kind of person you are?

- _____ 1. Mother
 _____ 2. Father
 _____ 3. Both mother and father about equally

_____ 35. Which one of the following do you feel has had the greatest influence in determining the kind of person you are?

- _____ 1. One or both parents
 _____ 2. A brother or sister
 _____ 3. Friends of my own age
 _____ 4. A public figure such as a president or movie star
 _____ 5. Other

 (Specify)

How much emphasis did your parents place on your learning each of the following values?

_____ 36. Determination and Perserverance

- _____ 1. Very rarely

- _____ 2. Rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 3. Moderate _____ 5. Very often

_____ 37. Seeing each person as having dignity and worth

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 38. Cooperation

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 39. Self discipline

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 40. Spiritual development

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 41. Loyalty

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

_____ 42. Feeling genuine concern and responsibility toward others

- _____ 1. Very rarely _____ 4. Often
 _____ 2. Rarely _____ 5. Very often
 _____ 3. Moderate

- ___ 43. Expressing sincere appreciation for others
- ___ 1. Very rarely ___ 4. Often
 ___ 2. Rarely ___ 5. Very often
 ___ 3. Moderate
- ___ 44. Taking responsibility for the consequences of your own actions
- ___ 1. Very rarely ___ 4. Often
 ___ 2. Rarely ___ 5. Very often
 ___ 3. Moderate
- ___ 45. Did your parents express affection toward you openly as a child?
- ___ 1. Very rarely ___ 4. Often
 ___ 2. Rarely ___ 5. Very often
 ___ 3. Moderate
- ___ 46. Which one of the following do you feel has influenced you most in the formation of your attitudes toward marriage?
- ___ 1. Parents ___ 4. Church
 ___ 2. Friends my own age ___ 5. Mass media (books, magazines, movies, etc.)
 ___ 3. School
- ___ 47. How prepared do you feel for marriage at the present time?
- ___ 1. Very prepared ___ 4. Unprepared
 ___ 2. Prepared ___ 5. Very unprepared
 ___ 3. Uncertain
- ___ 48. Which of the following do you believe to be most important in achieving marital success (select one)?
- ___ 1. Being in love
 ___ 2. Determination to make the marriage succeed
 ___ 3. Having common interests

____ 4. Compatibility of personalities

____ 5. Mutual respect and consideration

____ 49. What is your present dating situation?

____ 1. Seldom date

____ 4. Going steady

____ 2. Moderately date

____ 5. Engaged

____ 3. Date often

VITA

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