Attitudes Towards Women Among Inner-City Seventh Graders

Laurel A. Avery

The College at Brockport

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN
AMONG INNER-CITY SEVENTH GRADERS

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in Education

by
Laurel A. Avery

State University of New York
College at Brockport
Brockport, New York
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore seventh grade students' attitudes about women. This was completed in two phases: An adapted, *Attitudes About Women* survey, and through student drawings. Participants were asked to, "Draw a woman doing something."

Students who participated in this study were enrolled in an inner-city, upstate New York school district. The subjects were selected at random. Two hundred and fifty-three students constituted the population sampled.

Group responses, using a Likert scale of, strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, were analyzed using a standard deviation formula.

The ancillary purpose of the study was to measure the attitudes of seventh grade students towards women. The most significant piece of data acquired was, when asked to complete using a written format, student responses were very liberal. Data showed women should receive equal pay for the equivalent jobs of males and the
provision of childcare should be shared equally. Pictoral responses of the students still depicted women in traditional roles, e.g., secretarial, teacher, homemaker, and others. It should be noted that women were portrayed in non-traditional roles, also. The closeness in percentage of these numbers suggests that the potential exists for elimination of women in traditional roles -- that perhaps gender differences will be eliminated eventually.
Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my grandmother, Iva B. Wright. She continues to exemplify the role of teacher in everything she does, and for this, I thank her.

To my parents, Nancy and Gary, and to Michael DeToy, whose encouragement never has wavered. This support and understanding made the completion of my thesis possible.
Acknowledgments

The writer of this thesis wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Gerald Begy, Ed.D., and Arthur Smith, Ed.D., for their necessary guidance required for the completion of this paper. Special thanks is extended to Marybeth Brady, Ed Weiner, and Sam Attardo for their assistance in completing the measurement phase of this study.

Theresa M. LoPresti requires recognition, also. She provided encouragement, assistance and gave her time and computer-guidance to me. To all, thank you for making this thesis a reality.
CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to investigate and document attitudes about women in seventh grade.

Question to be Answered:
1. What attitudes do seventh graders have about women?

Need for Study

Complete the following statement, "A woman's place is in the ________." Traditionalists still tend to answer matter-of-factly, "Home." In modern industrial societies, jobs have always been created with the assumption that the workers have no domestic responsibilities. Unfortunately for women, the employer expects that the worker could, and would be, at the appropriate place at the expected time (Taylor, 1985, p.30). According to the Bureau of Statistics, 1984, This is the reason
why women, although constituting half of the world's population, are only one-third of the world's official income-earning labor force. Many assume this proportion has changed significantly but, in fact, it has only increased slightly. In 1950, women were 31% of the income-earning work force, compared with 35% in 1984. *1988 Statistical Abstracts of the United States,* indicates women were 55% of the income-earning force in 1986.

Women, rather than men, tend to be employed in the service sector. This is due to the fact that men are still responsible for jobs in the heavy labor industry, e.g., digging coal, laying bricks and pouring cement. Another reason is that sex-role stereotypes still exist. Secretaries, teachers, nurses, cleaners, canteen workers and filing clerks, still neatly "fit" a woman's traditional supportive role. Nonetheless, whatever occupation a woman chooses, the majority of women who take jobs do so for monetary reasons. Specifically, either because her husband's income is not sufficient, because they live in areas they cannot afford on one income, her husband chooses not to give them a fair share of his wages, or, in
an increasingly larger number of cases, there is no
husband for support.

Women work because of many reasons. Some have
pursued education in order to choose rewarding
careers. Others work for self-satisfaction.

We live in a society which values work and
ultimately, the profit derived from it. The first
question generally asked of a man is, "What do you
do?" People use his answer to develop perceptions
about him. Unfortunately, achievement and money
are equated, rather than self-satisfaction and
fulfillment.

Yet, whether it (work) is satisfying
or not, a man is expected to work,
to be achievement oriented, and to
put other life goals, such as family
interaction and fatherly care of
children, in a secondary position

There are many arguments about why women are not
treated the same as men in society. Research has
often compared women and men college students
regarding their attitudes about girls and women.

In 1972, The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS), by
Spence and Helmreich was developed. "It was the
first scale since the 1930's specifically designed
to measure attitudes about the roles of girls and women." (White, 1984, p.3)

It is interesting to note that while one often accepts certain conditions intellectually, actual practices may vary. For example, attitudes of younger students have been assessed. Bush, Simmons, Hutchinson and Blythe, (1978), compared 1974-75 data collected in Milwaukee with 1968 data collected in Baltimore. Those authors concluded that girls demonstrated fewer changes about themselves and their sex-roles than one might have expected, given the social scene then. Researchers have found that girls hold more liberal attitudes than boys, when the persons sampled with ninth graders (Entwisle & Greenberg, 1972; Jackard & Fitzgibbons, 1979), high school seniors (O'Toole, 1976), sixth graders (Metcalf, 1977), eighth graders (Chandler, Sawicki & Stryffler, 1981), and students in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 (Greenberg, 1978), (White & Lewis, 1984, p.4) It is interesting to note that while one often accepts certain conditions intellectually, actually practices may vary.
Clearly, the indication has been that girls have generally intellectually accepted non-traditional work roles for both men and women, such as male nurse, and female construction worker.

Shepard and Hess (1975) collected information from kindergarten, eighth grade, college and adult groups. In the three older populations sampled, females displayed a much more general, liberal viewpoint than males. Both seem to have the belief that women needed to be admitted to more prestigious occupations, but men were less flexible about sharing the responsibilities of child-care and household tasks. These findings suggest that women have improved on occupational settings, but are still expected to fill the traditional home responsibilities and also, to raise the children. It would seem to many that these expectations have changed. However, with many women doing double duties, as domestic engineers, being fully employed outside the home, and generally responsible for child care, there is a long way to go before equilibrium may be achieved.
Introduction

Definition of Terms
Attitude - a manner, disposition, feeling or position with regards to a person or thing, often a tendency or orientation of the mind.

Sexism - attitudes or behaviors based upon traditional stereotypes of sexual roles.

Limitations

The subjects of this study were taken from a random-stratified population sampling of two hundred and fifty-three children attending a city school in Western New York. Any application of conclusions, drawn from this large sample study, is limited to a similar group. Results from the surveys and drawings are summarized in the data for analysis.

Summary

Women are participating in more occupations outside the home, and yet still have the primary childcare and home management responsibilities.
There is a need to investigate further how young adults feel about these changes. It is also important to find out exactly what attitudes children have about what a woman is, in terms of their attitudes.

While women constitute half the world's population, only one-third participate in earning income. The jobs selected by women are still in the provision of service.

Women need to work today for a variety of reasons. Man's status is determined by his occupation, while a woman's is more often not.

How educators influence a young person to develop and expand the understanding of the necessary abilities will requiring constant attention for improving education and employment opportunities. Attitudes definitely affect the individual's perception of what a person can, and will accomplish. This study addresses seventh grade attitudes toward women.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate seventh grade children's attitudes about women. Using the statement, "What is a woman?", attitudes were measured in survey format.

This chapter has been divided into two relevant categories: education and employment. Additional information on relationships, with implications for the future, has also been included.

Introduction

With respect to sexism, I can hardly remember a time in my own growing up when I did not believe that women were equal to men in all things that matter today -- brains, courage, drive, humor, creativity, responsibility, and perseverance, not to mention the supposedly 'feminine' traits of warmth, empathy, and willingness to share and nurture. (Toffler, 1983, p.124)

From 1975 to 1985 was declared the United Nations Decade for Women, something the majority of people missed. Perhaps this was due to a lack of
knowledge, or an apathetic attitude. Whatever the reason, it is tempting to simply dismiss the Decade of Women as just another "labeled event," or an international talkshop. There have been major changes within the last ten years due to this event. New laws and new government departments are two results caused by pressures on individual governments, from both men and women, within their countries. While the changes already mentioned, in addition to those of economy and the workplace itself, there are definitely many more alterations around the corner.

**Education**

Gender equality has always been an issue in many areas: education, employment, health care, socialization, family roles and politics. Numerous studies have repeatedly found that women's academic achievement not only equals, but surpasses, that of men in our society.

In this society, in which education credentials are linked to jobs, promotions, wages, and status, women's educational accomplishments appear anonymous because women continue to receive far fewer rewards for their educational credentials than do men with comparable credentials. (Mickelson, 1989. p. 47)
The myth that females are underachievers has been explored repeatedly, and it has been found that a woman's motivation is equal to or beyond that of men (Klein, 1985, Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; National Center for Educational Statistics, 1986; Stockard, 1985; Stockard and Wood, 1984, 1984; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987). More young women still graduate from high school and more female graduates than male, participate in master's degree programs, or some other form of graduate work. There still are more men enrolled in professional and Ph.D. programs. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1986, Stockard, et al., 1980). Hafner and Shaha, (1984) both found that fields of specialization continue to have a gender link—mathematics, physical and biological science, computer science and engineering are primarily dominated by males. Social sciences and humanities tend to be dominated by females.

Mickelson (1983), indicated that, "...both working-class and minority youths underachieve, in part, because of the poor returns they are likely to receive from their education." Students lack valuable foresight to see and clearly understand
the long-range implications of education. This reiterates the Protestant work ethic's promise that schooling acts as a vehicle for upward mobility and success. The saying, "Education is the key to future success," has been reiterated. Unfortunately, with the dominance of males in higher education, a woman drastically reduces opportunities to find female faculty administrators and staff as role models. When children attend elementary school, the expectation, stereotyped, is that girls will achieve more than boys, and they generally do, in spite of the fact that boys receive more teacher attention. In settings of higher education, men are expected to excel above women and often do. Sandler (1983), summarized that, for many women, their aspirations and confidence in themselves will drop as a result of their college education, while for men, the opposite will occur. Cited in Klein and Bogart's 1988 work, this pattern of female loss and male gain repeatedly appears in the disabled, elderly and minority student populations.
Employment

Women who have it "all" are those who work and have a family too -- often a bittersweet predicament. Verheyden-Hillard, the director of the Equity Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, states:

We still haven't taught our girls to plan for a career, not the way we teach boys. We're still bringing up girls to please others (and) I have a dreadful feeling that in the back of many girls' minds is the thought that, when the chips are down, she can find someone to take care of her. (Connley, 1982, p.1)

Statistics from 1982 offer some comfort, but still flash caution. Last year in the United States, 11,768 women graduated from law school, compared to 24,563 men. Among those graduating with business degrees, 74,000 were women, while 127,000 were men (Connelly, 1982, p.1). Comparing the traditional degrees earned by women, 31,000 went to women, 2,000 to men. By comparison, 11,672 medical degrees were awarded, but women received only 3,833 (Connelly, 1982, p.1).

The working woman's impact has been phenomenal. Business Week, 1984, has described the crucial role of women. "Women are flooding the job market,
Boosting economic growth, and helping reshape the economy drastically. (Women) have seized two-thirds of the jobs created in the past decade, and changed the shift towards service, and away from manufacturing. "(Business Week, 1984, no page number).

As women earn respect and power in the workforce, they are forcing companies to sit-up and recognize their legitimate needs. Day care, for example, is finally being viewed not as a woman's problem, but an issue related directly to work. Since many women belong to a two-career family, new issues such as maternity and paternity leave have been addressed. Also, the relocation policies that uproot families and leave spouses unemployed is currently a prominent issue. Women are demanding a whole new range of goods and services (Nasbitt & Aburdene, 1985, p.204).

Despite achievements accomplished in the worksite, women are still faced with a single, inexcusable problem -- the continuing wage gap between male and female workers. According to a recent Conference Board report, whether executives or clerk-typists, women consistently earn less than
men having the same education and experience. "Among college graduates, women earn a paltry 55% of what men earn with the same schooling" (Nasbitt & Aburdene, 1985, p.204).

On a more optimistic note, the most recent data show that women's wages are gaining on those of men. The late 1980's will move the seller market wages to rise even further.

Traditionally, women have earned only about sixty cents for every dollar men earn. In fact in 1970, after millions of women entered the labor force, that percentage actually fell from fifty-seven cents in 1980, to sixty-four cents in 1984. (Nasbitt & Aburdene, 1985). The general consensus is that this percentage will continue to rise.

Smith, the co-author of A Rand Smith Corporation study of women's earnings in the workplace, projects that by the year 2000, women's wages will reach 74% of men's. This projection makes sense for several reasons. Corporations have grown used to being able to hire candidates from a large selection of well-educated, female job seekers, women from the "baby boom era." For the most part, this group has already been absorbed and
is being replaced by, "... the less popular generation that followed them (the baby boomers). the "baby bust era." (Nasbitt & Aburene, 1985, p. 78). Although Smith's forecast represents a sizeable economic leap for women, seventy-four cents to the dollar clearly does not represent equal pay.

As early as 1971, Entwisle and Greenberger measured adolescents' views of women's work roles. Their findings were that, generally, higher IQ students of both sexes are more liberal than lower IQ levels. There are marked differences in opinions between boys and girls about women's roles. Boys consistently retain more conservative opinions. Other general trends, "Both sexes are decidedly on the negative side regarding women holding men's jobs, ... whether women should work, most girls are mildly positive, boys are consistently negative. (Entwisle & Greenberger, 1971, p. 654).

Bush, Simmons, Hutchinson and Blythe (1977–1978) found that since the rebirth of the women's movement, one might expect that the positive attitudes towards women have filtered down to the
adolescent. Early adolescent girls have no higher self-esteem than in 1968, when Milwaukee subjects were compared to boys, girls still evaluated their sex-roles less highly than boys, and at the seventh grade age level, girls still value sociability more (Bush, et al., 1977-78, p.464). Girls who desire occupations rank higher in being employed but demonstrated somewhat lower self-esteem and a less-positive attitude about being female. In the 1975 study of Bush, approximately 88% of the girls surveyed expect to work after marriage, and 31% expect to work regardless if they bear children. Finally, there was a positive attitude toward marriage for those young women. However, in general, the sex-role of women shows little change, regardless of the previous women's movement.

Summary

Gender equality continues to be an issue in many areas. Although numerous studies repeatedly find women's academic achievement equal to or above that of men's jobs and wages are not commiserate. Repeatedly, the misconception that females are underachievers has been dispelled. It
is unfortunate, that while women possess more advanced degrees than men, monetary compensation for them is not forthcoming.

The fact that many females do not plan on being self-sufficient is most disturbing, but a fact which must be approached realistically. While women still earn less of each dollar, the general consensus is that eventually, equality may be achieved, especially since many females expect employment even after marriage.

It seems more likely that extensive changes will have to made in the next generations. New attitudes toward women must be learned and accepted more thoroughly, if they are to be shared with future children, students, and family members.
CHAPTER III

Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to conduct an investigation to determine the attitudes seventh grade students hold about women. A survey was used to obtain the attitudes desired and also to measure them. Following this, a researcher-designed questionnaire was given. The final phase of the study was the follow-up use of drawings, strictly individual and original which are included in the appendix. The resources mentioned above (questionnaire and drawings) were of primary interest and importance from the standpoint of relationships existing between students and women. It was from these data that the attitudes of seventh grade students toward women were concluded.

Question

1. What attitudes do seventh graders have about women?

Methodology

A pilot study was conducted in April 1989, for the purpose of examining and redefining the
procedures to be used in this study.

Subjects for the pilot study were sixty seventh graders who were known by the researcher, having observed and worked with these students in health class.

Two separate groups were utilized and changes were made in the drawing directions. The following is a description of these changes.

Participants were asked, "What is a woman? Please draw your interpretation of what a woman is on the paper provided." On the second sheet of paper, directions were, "Draw a man performing a task, label your drawings and place them in the appropriately marked boxes found in the front of the room."

No changes were made in the Attitudes About Women survey.

**Instruments**

1. An adapted, *Attitudes About Women* (Spence and Helmreich, 1972, p.390) survey was used to measure the students' attitudes about women.

2. An open-ended research design direction, "What is a woman? Please draw your interpretation of a
woman doing something on the paper provided."

Procedure

Participants consist of approximately two hundred and fifty students, randomly selected, from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

This project, piloted during the month of April 1989, and was followed by the actual study which took place in May 1989. It was completed by four teachers, two female and two male, who participated on a voluntary basis. The study was administered to all students on the same date.

Materials and supplies were provided to all students by the researcher. Students were given the open-ended statement, "What is a woman? Draw your interpretation of her doing something."

Students were also given the same directions for a male. Forty minutes were provided to draw and to answer the twenty-five questions found on the survey, which investigated women and their roles.

The survey is based upon Spence, Helmreich and Stapp's Attitudes Towards Women - short form, dated 1973. Additional questions from the researcher have supplemented the survey, and questions have been phrased according to the level of ability. Student response was evaluated through machine-
scored, computerized answer sheet. Using a Likert Scale, the response choices available were: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were two hundred and fifty-three seventh graders. Of these, one hundred and one were male participants, one hundred and fifty-two were female. Each of these students attend an inner-city public school located in Western New York. The students were chosen at random, with two male teachers and two female teachers participating on a voluntary basis. At the time of the study, May 1989, four students were less than eleven years of age, seventy-six were twelve years old, one hundred and thirteen were age thirteen, and sixty were fourteen years or older.

Summary

Two hundred and fifty-three students were asked to complete a survey to measure their attitudes about women. They were instructed to do this anonymously. After completion, their results were computer-scored and analyzed.
After all students completed this, they were asked, "What is a woman? Draw her doing something." The same directive was given for drawing a man. Students were given two sheets of paper, pencils, and markers to complete this task. No guidance was given, and, if students chose to, they were allowed to explain their pictures on the back of their papers. This, too, was done anonymously to allow for freedom of expression.
CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Part I - Demographics

This study was an attempt by the researcher to learn what attitudes seventh grade students have about women. Each child's responses were limited by the researcher's questions, level of his or her cognitive development, ability to communicate through drawings, and the motivation to answer questions to the best of the student's ability.

The students who participated in this study attended an inner-city public school system in Western New York.

Of the two hundred and fifty-three students who answered the written Attitudes Towards Women adapted survey, 40% were male, 60% were female. The average age of the respondent was thirteen, 45% fell into that category. Fewer than 1% were less than age 11, 30% were age twelve, and 24% answered age fourteen or older. (See figure 1)
Ethnic background was diverse. 28% were White, 40% Black, 24% Hispanic, and 8% were "other," meaning Oriental, American Indian, Laotian, and others. (See Figure 2)
Forty-two percent of the respondents stated that their mothers were home for them upon their arrival from school. Only 11% stated their fathers were home. These statistics may suggest that most students still arrive home to a traditional setting. It is interesting to note that of those saying their fathers were home, may have believed that traditional roles are not necessarily "having mom home after school." Twenty-eight said another adult, grandparent or older sibling was home, and
only 2% said that there was "no one" there for them when they arrived. Seventeen percent did not answer the question. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3

WHO'S HOME
ON ARRIVAL FROM SCHOOL

- MOTHER 107 69%
- FATHER 27 16%
- OTHER ADULT 40 22%
- NO ONE 7 4%

N=181

The majority of students have mothers that work outside the home, 76%. Twenty-four percent said their mothers do not work outside the home. Eighty-five percent of the students who responded, said that their father works outside the
home, 13% said they do not. Two percent chose not to answer this question.

Most students, 53% live with both parents, 30% live only with their mother, 3% live with their father, 3% live with another relative, and 11% did not participate. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4

LIVES WITH RESIDES
Part 2 - Survey Results

When the survey results were computed, individual response to each possible answer was measured.

Table 1
Respondent Percentages

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<th>Total</th>
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<td>65.2%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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This researcher looked at overall numbers and then computed the standard deviation using the proper formula. Numbers >100 were +1 standard deviation, <24 were -1. It is interesting to note that equal numbers of strongly agreed and strongly disagreed were distributed, indicating that seventh graders
seem to have a strong capability for deciding where it is they stand on certain issues.

The first question students responded to was, "Women should be concerned with raising children and keeping house, rather than a career." Five percent strongly agreed with this statement, while 33% agreed.

Students responded favorably with 55% strongly agreeing to having the man share in household tasks and childcare, especially since many work outside the home.

Of the response, strongly agree, students overwhelmingly believed jobs should be given to the best qualified person, regardless of gender.

Interesting to note, question eleven, "Women should worry less about their rights and be more concerned about being good wives and mothers," received a combined strongly disagree/disagree response 70%. This seems to support that it is acceptable to have a job and family in our society today.

Fifty percent of the students polled felt that if the wife works, it is affirmative for the husband to stay home and raise the children.
Of the second largest response, 65% strongly agreed that, "Women should earn equal pay for the same jobs men have."

Participants in this survey felt it was within proper limits for a woman to propose to a man, 49%.

Question 19, "Women are less capable of contributing to the economy than men," elicited a 42% for strongly disagreeing. "Draft should apply to only men, not women," was received negatively, 44% were not in favor of this statement.

Almost half (49%) of the students felt that men and women should have classes in school that prepare them to become good parents. Also, many favored men showing emotions.

Respondents felt that women are not necessarily happier at home than men who are in traditional worksites. Many students drew students that depicted women in employment situations. Figures were often smiling and in control of the situation. Fifty percent agreed that when both men and women are working, that it is acceptable to share the expenses of dating.

Answers to questions 14, 15, 17, 18, and 23 were substantially below standard deviation. The
student survey indicates that respondents may have been tired, or lacked ability to express themselves on the scale provided by the researcher.

Analysis indicates very liberal responses to most questions that encouraged women to work outside the home, receive equal wages, and provided the opportunities to be placed in non-traditional positions. Also, students supported men participating in childcare, showing emotions, and working at home. The students who participated were definitely influenced by the values and roles their parents and guardians exhibit daily for them.

**Part 3 - Analysis of Drawing Samples**

The drawing samples were descriptively analyzed according to the characteristics that emerged from the samples. A few students described their drawing and labeled the activity on the back.

At the request to draw, the children produced a variety of women completing a number of activities, including the following: executives, teachers, doctors, singers, dancers, construction workers, mechanics, lawyers, judges, and in other positions of leadership. Also depicted were occupations such as: shopping (both food and
clothes), cooking, cleaning, caring for children, reading, and bearing children. (See figure 5).

Figure 5

**DRAWINGS OF WOMEN ROLES DEPICTED**

- **Non-Traditional**: 28% (55)
- **Traditional**: 44% (87)
- **Recreation**: 14% (27)
- **Human Needs**: 4% (7)
- **Sexual**: 8% (15)
- **Unsure**: 5% (9)

*N = 200

Each drawing sample was analyzed to see what category a student depicted. The previous chart shows the percentage of samples within a category. These results indicate that 41% drew women in traditional roles, such as providing childcare, washing dishes, preparing food, shopping, cleaning house, doing laundry and sewing. In the category of non-traditional, students drew women as
executives, doctors, lawyers, singers, computer technologists, architects, construction workers, gas station mechanics, airplane pilots, in judicial roles; including lawyers and judges, mail personnel, painters, and even one holding a rat in her mouth.

**Summary**

The analysis of the data from this research was divided into three sections, with part one containing demographics, part two containing the survey results, and part three consisting of the analysis of drawing samples.

Responses were arranged categorically. The results revealed that students are developing a liberal, accepting attitude regarding women, work, and childcare. This seems to be true also for the role of men, in the acceptance of childcare provision, demonstrating emotions, and working at home, rather than in a traditional worksite.

The students' perceptions of the roles of women with use of drawings were limited due to time and interpretation by the researcher. There were vast differences in the women's roles.

Written communication on some drawings provided
additional information. It helped explain strategies used in the drawings and clarified the artist's perceptions about women in a variety of roles.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of seventh grade students about women.

Conclusions
This study substantiates much of the previous research into attitudes about women's roles. Some new insights and questions requiring the need to be addressed were also answered.

The most important conclusion to be formulated from this study is that the majority of seventh grade students, although liberal in written response, still pictured women in traditional roles. It must not be assumed, however, that the students are confused about the concepts of women's roles. Instead, they clearly answered and dictated their answers consistently, time and time again.

To date, this research indicates evidence documenting a gradual shift toward attitudes and behaviors more equal in gender. Liberalization of
roles has, no doubt, profoundly affected the
decision-making processes that concern seventh
graders. Arrangements that were once taken for
granted, by students at this level previously, such
as work, childcare, and education, are becoming
pertinent individualized concerns now.

As adolescents prepare for adulthood, they must
consider several dimensions. Optimally,
both young men and women will view family and
non-family responsibilities as part of a
generalized orientation towards adult life. From
their experiences, each will gather expectations
and assumptions for their future spouse. The
accompanying drawings completed by the seventh
grade participants, provide insight and examples in
non-verbal form of these expectations. They prove
helpful to those who lack the ability to read
and/or express themselves in verbal form. The
children were allowed to communicate their beliefs
through drawings. Drawings were sometimes
ambivalent in several instances. For example, when
students portrayed women in the role of singer, it
was unclear whether she represented tradition, or
was participating in a recreational role. The same
with depictions of athletes. This made the classification difficult at times.

Although over half (53%) live with both parents, many respondents still live with their mothers in single-parent situations. This follows traditional cultural pattern. Only 4% reside with their father in single-parent homes, no doubt influencing the results.

Students participating in this study seem aware of potential conflicts between marriage, childcare, and careers. There are also variations among the different ethnic groups sampled, not only in their projection of the roles of men and women; but also in the degree of consistency in their gender-role definitions. Many ethnic variations still demonstrate that women combine work and home roles. Research has been done to show that black youth exhibit more traditional values than white youth. This study verified that statistic. Of the population sampled, the majority black, found very liberal beliefs about gender roles. Perhaps this requires investigation for future implications. Attitudes held by women have become progressively more liberal than men. This is probably because of
the relevancy. The issues directly affect their lives more.

The emphasis on sex roles has exclusively focused on the female. Because of this emphasis, it has been often assumed that this is not a male issue. This researcher challenges this assumption and perhaps, creates an awareness -- it is an issue that affects all people, with exclusion of color, race or creed. Sexism is often an excuse used to justify the domination of one sex over another. Perhaps if one looked exclusively at human diversity, the rationalization of minority groups, including women, would be clarified. The results of this study also suggest that seventh grade students have definite opinions about their future concerns, e.g., employment, wage equality, childcare, and education. The drawings imply that many still see women in traditional roles in our society. These original drawings, 44% depicting women in traditional roles, 28% in non-traditional roles, actually represent only a small percentage of difference. This researcher considers this a significant piece of data. Obviously, outside influences caused these differences. Television,
movies, music, family models, literature and associates, no doubt are variances of students' attitudes.

Implications for Research

The past decade has provided a wealth of research on attitudes towards women. This research substantiated many of these findings, but also raises new questions for the future.

More investigation is necessary concerning sex-role concepts. How does this affect human behavior? How strong is the impact upon society? Are these attitudes curbed by education? If so, by what amount?

This study could be duplicated using larger samples of students from a variety of grade-levels. Results of an exclusive population, as opposed to a diverse sampling like this one, would no doubt provide very different results.

A longitudinal study could be conducted over a period of years to investigate if the attitudes held by students change over time. Such a study would reveal whether students are consistent in their beliefs or if they change. This would suggest very important implications for teaching.
There is a need for further research into the roles of teacher and family, especially regarding the way in which people can, and do, affect it. Attitudes and strategies of both teachers and parents suggest strong correlations with those of children and pupils. This researcher overheard a

This researcher overheard a student while she was working. She said, "I don't mind that my mom works, it helps provide things we want, and it makes her happy, but sometimes, I resent the fact that she's not home for me when I get home from school to hear my day." This comment evoked several thoughts. When surveyed, 42% responded that their mothers are home when they return from school. Many students have the luxury of having a parent home, but, is there more of an impact if it is the mother? What are the needs of the student? The combination of role equality, no doubt, requires major effort from the male partner. Thus, this combination would on average, require a larger role transition for the man than is commonly evidenced. (Mott, 1982, p.7)

Implications for Classroom Practice

This study and much of the research in the past
has provided a wealth of information regarding attitudes towards women, but, comparatively little has been reiterated in the assessment of how to change already formed attitudes. It is known that family, school and community groups influence young people, but initial impact has been limited in review.

Recent literature indicates that effective assessment of attitudes towards women, or any other subject, can never be accomplished by a single instrument. The design of this study suggests an alternative to standardized tests for assessment of attitudes. The sampling of performance through artistic measures permitted much information to be revealed in a non-threatening form. This type of assessment could be ongoing, and cumulative data could be kept concerning a child's development. Results would provide valuable information about strengths, weaknesses, interests, attitudes and beliefs. The results should aid the teacher in designing appropriate instruction techniques in decision-making and non-judgemental activities.

Students should be allowed and encouraged to talk about their attitudes towards women. Many
studies validate the effectiveness of oral language.

Summary

This study yields insight into seventh grade students' attitudes about women. Further research is needed to understand what variables are involved in the formation of how attitudes are formed. Parents and educators need to provide support and guidance, since children develop different aspects involved in attitude formation. Only recently have we begun to discover the invisible borders that force us into our attitudes regarding many issues. One can only somehow imagine what the world would be like without these walls. Perhaps it would provide an opportunity to eliminate judgments, and the encourage the discovery of ourselves as people.
References


Appendix

A. Attitudes About Women Survey.

B. Student drawing by categories

1. Traditional
2. Non-Traditional
3. Recreation
4. Human Needs
5. Sexual
Attitudes About Women Survey

Directions: Please bubble the correct answer for the following questions. All answers are confidential. Thank you for your assistance.

Part I.
1. What is your sex?
   a. male
   b. female

2. What is your age?
   a. less than 11  c. 13
   b. 12  d. 14 or older

3. What is your ethnic background?
   a. White  c. Hispanic
   b. Black  d. Other

4. When you arrive home from school, who is there?
   a. your mom  c. another adult
   b. your dad  d. no one

5. Does your mother work outside the home?
   a. yes  b. no

6. Does your father work outside the home?
   a. yes  b. no

7. Do you live with:
   a. both parents  d. another relative
   b. mother only  e. another person not listed above
   c. father only

Part II.
Directions: Please answer the following questions using these choices:
A) STRONGLY AGREE
B) AGREE
C) DISAGREE
D) STRONGLY DISAGREE

8. Women should be concerned with raising children and keeping house than a career.
9. Since many women work outside the home, the man should share in household tasks and childcare.

10. Jobs should be given to the best, qualified person, regardless of a person's sex.

11. Women should worry less about their rights and be more concerned about being good wives and mothers.

12. It is acceptable for the man to stay home and raise children, if the wife wants to work.

13. Women should earn equal pay for the same jobs men have.

14. Males should be encouraged to further their information more than females.

15. When raising children, the father should have greater authority than the mother.

16. A woman should be free to propose marriage to the man.

17. Swearing is more disgusting in the speech of a woman than a man.

18. Women should take increased responsibility for leadership in solving world problems.

19. Women are less capable of contributing to the economy than men.

20. A draft for war should apply only to men, not women.

21. Males and females should have classes in school to help them become good parents.

22. Men should never cry, only women.

23. Men are happier when they work for other men, rather than for women.
24. Women are happier at home than in the workplace.

25. Men and women both working should share the expenses of dating.
TRADITIONAL
The women is home with her baby.
A woman with her new born baby.

By Rosy
She's doing the dishes. Oh, she looking out the window now!
The woman is going sleeping.
Age: 14
Sex: Female
Race: Black, Hispanic

Female (shopping)
1) female
2) 13
3) Hispanic

A woman doing something

I had to buy some clothes.
You kids go in play
out side!

Let's see should I
get some apples?

popcorn
peanut
banana
candy
A woman doing something.
A) Draw a woman doing something
B) Draw a man doing something

Woman
Hep-12
Re: Black
Sex: Female

Bank

Woman and banker
A woman doing something

was in McDonald working
a Waitress

White Female
12
woman "Doing Something"

Teaching

My Name is
Mrs. Rodriguez

I'm going to be
your teacher this
year.

Teaching. She's teaching her
7th grade class.
white
NON-TRADITIONAL
William doing it is to b work
Draw a woman doing something.

Chairman: Susan L. Curry

Today we will speak on the issue of Abortion.
Female
12
Oriental/Caucasian

Woman doing something
1. Female
2. 12
3. Black/Indian

"Women Doing Something"
NYC 12 sex female two white
draw a woman doing something
Draw a woman doing something

age 13
gread 7
Race Black
Sex Boy
Women can campaign for President.
This woman is a lawyer defending a client in a court.
RECREATIONAL
'Reggae' and 'Muss Lives' are written in the image, along with a comic strip of a woman speaking into a microphone. The text in the comic strip seems to be a song lyric:

"Ooh, I like muffin with the ring of d regression. Just simply tell me your name. Oh I like the fancy clothes you wear. The bouncy white teeth in your smile. There's something about you I like. Oh I can't live without..."
Is female caucusion - draw a woman doing something
A man doing something
On a woman doing something

Come on man
Hit me? bom

Leave her up
Or I'll tell
Woman watching ToVo

gate
Sex: Female
Age: 12
Race: Black
Age: 12  Sex: Male  Race: White

Draw a woman doing something.
age 12, caucasian, male
Woman playing gymnastics 1/4
age: 13  sex: female  race: white

Draw a woman doing something

This is "Chris". She is flying a kite at a park.
Draw a woman doing something
Age - 13
Race - White
Sex - Male
Girl
Hispanic

A woman and a dog

A woman walking her dog
HUMAN NEEDS
13 year old
Male

draw a woman doing same thing
checking for breast cancer

shoes
I'm having a baby
A Woman of the Streets

I want a ride, please.

Female

BRO

PEACE