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# The Attitudes of Young Black Adults Towards Reading

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THE ATTITUDES OF YOUNG BLACK ADULTS TOWARDS READING

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Faculty of Education  
State University College at Brockport  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Science in Education

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of four socio-educational factors (sex of teachers, race of teachers, geographic location of schools, and degree of mobility during schooling) and the current attitudes toward reading of fifty young, urban Black adults. Need for the study was prompted by discrepancies in the reading test scores and percent of functional illiteracy by an over-representative number of Black students.

Fifty young, Black adults who presently reside in a city in northern New York were selected to be interviewed. They ranged in age from 18 to 24 years, and had various socio-educational experiences. An attitude scale and an information form were administered to the subjects at various community locations. The scores of the attitude survey were analyzed to determine the degree of positive and/or negative attitude toward reading. Correlations between socio-educational factors and scores on the attitude survey were investigated. Responses to the descriptive questions provided information about the reading experiences of the subjects.

After testing four null hypotheses no significant correlations were found between the four socio-educational factors and attitudes toward reading. Reported changes in attitude toward reading were positive. The schooling process, parental influences, and parents' attitudes toward reading were cited as factors influencing attitude toward reading.

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## CHAPTER I

### Statement of the Problem

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of various socio-educational factors to the current attitudes toward reading among young, urban Black adults.

#### Questions

The following questions, extending from the purpose, were investigated:

1. What are the current attitudes of young, urban Black adults toward reading?
2. What are the relationships between attitude toward reading and the following socio-educational factors:
  - a. sex of teachers
  - b. race of teachers
  - c. geographic location of schools
  - d. degree of mobility (during schooling)

#### Need for the Study

Attitude toward reading and the entire reading situation is somewhat dependent upon social aspects of education (i.e. socio-educational factors). Social aspects of education include such

factors as sex and race of teachers, geographic location of school(s) continuity of education, and number of years of schooling.

Although limited research exists on the relationship between attitude toward reading and achievement in reading, it is generally believed that how much and how well a person reads depends largely on his attitudes toward reading. Attitudes, consisting of . . . "a system of feelings related to reading which cause the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation" (Alexander and Filler, 1976), greatly influence a learner's motivation. Alexander and Filler also indicate that although relationships between achievement and attitudes are often found, positive correlations between high achievement and favorable attitudes do not always exist. In other words, a person may have a positive attitude toward reading and not be a good reader and vice versa; a good reader may have a negative attitude toward reading.

Functional competence relates to the ability to communicate through such factors as reading, writing, speaking, listening, computation, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations. Functional literacy then involves the ability to communicate by reading and writing. Statistics from the Adult Performance Level Project, (Northcutt, 1974), suggest that approximately one out of every five Americans . . . "is incompetent or functions with difficulty and that about half of the adult population is merely functional and not at all proficient in today's necessary

skills and knowledge."

Specific concerns for young Black adults result from the discrepancies in reading test scores and percent of functional incompetence by an over-representative number of Black students. (In the Black community, an ironic truism constantly surfaces; the longer we stay in the game, the further behind we get.) According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading assessment for 1974-75, Black 9 year-olds were performing 13 percentage points below White children in overall reading performance. See Appendix A.

Overall results for the 13 year-olds showed Blacks 17 percentage points below the performance of their White peers. And again, overall results for the 17 year-old group showed the continuing gap between Black and White students. White students' mean achievement level was 19 percentage points above their Black peers.

#### Definition of Terms

attitude toward reading - "The predisposition or tendency to react specifically towards an object, situation, or value; usually accompanied by feelings and emotions; attitudes cannot be directly observed but must be inferred from overt behavior, both verbal and nonverbal." (Good, 1973)

functional literacy - the ability to communicate by reading and writing at a specific grade level; functional reading needs of the 1970's require at the minimum, a ninth grade

education (U. S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1970)

geographic location of schools - schools located in one of two categories; either urban or non-urban settings.

(degree of) mobility - The degree of movement during schooling, changing of schooling. Low mobility refers to uninterrupted school attendance within each level of schooling (i.e. elementary and secondary). High mobility involves enrollment in various schools during the course of elementary and secondary schooling.

socio-educational - of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and educational factors; social aspects of education

young, urban Black adults - Americans of African descent, 18-24 years of age, who are presently residing in a city in northern New York State.

#### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study:

1. No data for reliability or validity exist for the attitude survey.
2. The study will only be conducted in a single, moderate size, urban location.
3. The subjects will only include 50 urban Black young adults.

### Summary

Attitude toward reading and the entire reading situation is somewhat dependent upon socio-educational factors. Discrepancies in reading test scores and percent of functional incompetence by an over-representative number of Black students forces educators to take a look at sociological as well as educational factors related to reading. This study examines the relationship between four socio-educational factors and the current attitudes toward reading among young, Black adults.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of the Literature

Discrepancies in the reading test scores and percent of functional illiteracy by an over-representative number of Black students prompted the need for this study. Correlations were made of the relationship of four socio-educational factors to the current reading attitudes of young, urban Black adults.

The literature cited in this chapter reflects a review of the available research in the areas of sociology of education and attitudes toward reading.

#### Sociology of Education

Social aspects of educational involving human interactions occur within and as a result of the process of schooling. Brembeck (1966) lists four social aspects of education: teaching and learning, the classroom, the school, and the larger society. Teaching and learning are the social acts which take place within a social setting, i.e. the classroom. The classroom is a mini-society which is responsible for educating those within. The school is a collection of classroom/mini-societies and is also considered a social institution. The larger society creates schools which are responsible for carrying out specific educational functions. Fostering literacy, through the teaching of reading, is one of the specific functions of the schools.

## Urban Education

In addition to carrying out specific educational functions, schools serve as mirrors of society and societal trends.

Williams (1978) states that . . . "the function of public schools and colleges, like all other cultural institutions, is to teach the ideologies of society -- to perpetuate a way of life" (p. 177).

The "way" of American life during the period since the civil rights movement witnessed population shifts in the cities. Urban areas, and thus, urban schools, became largely non-white and poor. Ravitch (1978) contends that "This abrupt demographic change is of particular concern because the schools have had the least success in educating precisely those children who now constitute the majority of their enrollment" (p. 4).

The Coleman Report of 1966 indicated that education in the nation's schools proved to be largely unequal, resulting in legislation to affect the equality of educational opportunity through the enactment of mult-billion-dollar education bills (Smith, 1972).

By and large, the minority groups (non-whites and the poor) attended urban schools which proved to be unequal, segregated, and inadequate. Urban schools polarized students by failing to achieve educational equality (Williams, 1978). In particular, discrepancies in the reading achievement of non-white students emerged. Ornstein (1972) noted that . . . "there is a high correlation between being poor and being a member of a minority

group and between these two classifications and low reading scores" (p. 6).

Polarized students, emerging from urban schools which had failed to provide them with equality in educational opportunity began to consistently join the ranks of America's functionally illiterate adults.

The functionally illiterate are individuals who are unable to make use of basic skills in reading, writing, and computation to effectively meet the demands of society. In the 1960's functional illiteracy had become a national problem of "prominent concern" and the term had various meanings (Cook, 1977). Schenz (1969) defined the functionally illiterate as "all persons eighteen years or older who are unable to function above the third grade level in the areas of oral and written communication" (p. 217). Berg (1960), on the other hand, described a functional illiterate as "an adult twenty-five years of age or older who had less than five years of formal education" (p. 48).

Need was demonstrated for an all-encompassing definition which made use of specifics. Limitations had resulted from previous definitions, whether they were flexible or specific. The basic age for an "adult" had to be established. Eighteen was suggested because of age stipulations in compulsory school laws in many states, legislation which had extended the franchise, and the cut-off point for participation in adult basic education programs. The level of competency also had to be determined. The level had to be raised to reflect survival skills necessary

in our changing society (Cook, 1977). Cook also indicated that completion of a grade does not mean that the individual is performing at that level. The term "grade level achievement" should be used rather than "grade education" or "completion of grade."

In 1969, illiteracy was related to educational attainment. In a population survey by the Census Bureau, it was assumed that everyone who had completed six or more years of school was literate (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1969). Functional reading needs of the 1970's, however, required at the minimum, a ninth grade education. (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970).

Literacy has emerged as one of urban education's major concerns. Cook verifies that attitude is at the very core of the literacy problem and it is also the one factor that educators find "virtually impossible" to control.

### Race of Teachers

Recent decreased enrollments in the urban school and escalating budgets, leading to increased per pupil expenditures have not positively affected the achievement levels of students. Indeed, Johnson (1978) in an open letter to the Rochester Board of Education, regarding continued low reading achievement test results, stressed that "These results are essentially the same as they were a year earlier, and they are unacceptable" (p. 4). Unacceptable reading achievement test scores in urban schools,

forces a look at urban classroom teachers. Research indicates that interaction between teacher and student increases achievement level (Amidon and Flanders, 1963). Banks (1972) revealed that research also indicates that "classroom teachers typically have negative attitudes toward poor and black youth, and low expectations for them" (p. 32). Ornstein (1972) reported that urban teachers were often described as having "negative attitudes and behaviors, limited experiences and substandard or temporary credentials."

White teachers, much more than Black teachers, dislike teaching urban Black children (Gottlieb, 1964). "Blame the victim" beliefs were most often emphasized by white teachers as reasons for low achievement in reading for minority students. Black teachers most often stressed "blame the system" beliefs when discussing urban school problems. (Clark, 1964, Hoover, 1978).

Banks (1972) further reports that in a study conducted by Clark in 1964, fifty percent of the white teachers felt that "black students were innately inferior to whites and unable to learn in school. They believed that urban black schools should become custodial institutions and not remain educational institutions" (page 33).

The Coleman Report of 1966 listed statistics which were collected during the fall of 1965. Percent of teachers with various characteristics was shown. In looking at the nation as a whole, the average White elementary student attended

schools where two percent of the teachers were Black and 97 percent of the teachers were White. In the metropolitan Northeast, Black students attended schools having 30 percent Black teachers and 67 percent White teachers. Nationally, the average secondary Black student attended schools having 59 percent Black teachers and 38 percent White teachers. Secondary White students on the average attended schools where two percent of the teachers were Black and where 97 percent of the teachers were White. In the metropolitan Northeast, secondary Black students typically attended schools where 18 percent of the teachers were Black and 79 percent of the teachers were White. White secondary students attended schools where two percent of the teachers were Black and 96 percent of the teachers were White.

#### Sex of Teachers

Few differences in the sex composition of faculties have been observed. Most elementary children in our nation attend schools where the majority of teachers are female (Coleman, 1966). Skagen (1977) states that women have traditionally held the teaching positions at levels (usually elementary) which received little or no prestige in our society. The prevailing notion has been that "anyone" can teach young children; and since the 1860's, "schoolmarms" were the majority of elementary teachers. "There were--and are--more women in elementary schools than high schools; even fewer, proportionately, taught--and teach--in colleges" (Skagen, 1977, p. 3). Traditionally held attitudes conce

ning sex of teacher have negated the importance of the educational process at all levels and devalue women.

Statistics cited in the Coleman Report of 1966 concerning sex of teachers in elementary and secondary schools attended by the typical White and Negro (Black) student follow. For elementary schools attended by the typical White student, national averages show that 17 percent of the teachers were male and at schools attended by the typical Black student, 16 percent of the teachers were male. In the metropolitan Northeast White elementary students had 18 percent male teachers and Black elementary students had 17 percent male teachers. National statistics for the typical secondary White student show 56 percent male teachers and 49 percent male teachers at schools attended by the typical Black student. In the metropolitan Northeast, secondary White students attended schools where 58 percent of the teachers were male and secondary Black students attended schools where 59 percent of the teachers were male.

#### Attitude Toward Reading

Attitude is an important affective component of reading for which limited research exists. Wilson and Hall (1972) maintain that a positive attitude is "essential for successful mastery of the printed page". Good (1973) defines attitude as the predisposition or tendency to react specifically toward an object, situation, or value; usually accompanied by feelings

and emotions; attitudes cannot be directly observed but must be inferred from overt behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, Alexander and Filler (1976) state that attitudes "consist of a system of feelings related to reading which cause the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation" (p. 1).

### Relationship Between Attitudes and Achievement

Achievement is thought to be one of a number of variables associated with the development of attitudes toward reading. However, a limited amount of research information exists on the relationship between attitude toward reading and achievement in reading.

Alexander and Filler (1976) investigated several selected studies and the following findings regarding the possible relationships between attitude and achievement were reported. Relationships between higher achievement and more positive attitudes do sometime exist. Improvement in attitudes and achievement may be concurrent. Attitudes may affect achievement. Over a period of time, more reading and achievement gains may occur as a result of attitude changes. However, positive attitudes are not necessarily maintained over time. Finally, some research, i.e., Ransbury (1973), shows no significant relationship between achievement and attitude.

In Ransbury's study, ability to read directly related to attitude toward reading. Fifth and sixth grade students were asked to identify factors which had affected their

attitudes toward reading. Parents, rather than teachers, were considered to be a major influence. Results, however, suggested that positive attitudes were primarily determined by reading ability. Similarly, the Coleman Report of 1966, in its examination of three aspects of student attitude and motivation as they related to achievement, found that attitudes were extremely highly related to achievement.

Positive correlations between high achievement and favorable attitudes do not always exist. Greenberg et al. (1965) in their study of 115 fourth grade, Black children "from a severely depressed urban area," found similar attitudes among good and poor readers. The researchers speculated that the lack of positive correlations "may have resulted from the type of criterion instruments used, the nature of the setting, and the composition of the group." Similarly, Bernstein's study (1972) of a Right to Read program in the Mamaroneck, New York public schools showed no relationship between improved achievement and attitudes. It was reported that pupil attitudes could have been negatively affected because the teachers were not enthusiastic about the program.

The relationship between attitude and achievement in reading is quite nebulous and can be likened to the situation of the chicken and the egg. Correlations between achievement in reading and attitude toward reading may be high or low.

### Measurement of Attitude Toward Reading

Attitude toward reading is often misunderstood and usually ignored in assessment programs. Research shows that a combined use of both formal and informal assessments give the best information concerning attitudes toward reading (Chester and Dulin, 1977). Estes and Vaughan (1978) state that the measurement of attitudes is crucial to planning for and evaluating educational experiences of students. These authors mention two kinds of measures, direct and indirect.

Direct measures are obvious in their intent and require little inference in interpretation. An example of a direct measure of reading attitude is the Likert scale which presents a series of statements related to a "psychological domain" to which respondents indicate agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Indirect measures disguise their true meaning. The main problem with them is that "one can never be sure that attitude inferred from any behavior or judgment is justified" (Estes and Vaughan, p. 59). Questions of validity may arise because of the possible multitude of variables in the scores.

Few valid published scales were available until recently. These scales are valuable because they allow teachers to determine students' present positive or negative attitudes. Teachers can also respond to attitudes by making modifications in curriculum and instruction; and finally, teachers can observe

attitude changes over a period of time. Estes and Vaughan conclude that informal observation and assessment lack precision but are of value in diagnosis and counseling. Informal questions can represent kinds of behaviors and statements which are indicative of attitudes.

Chester and Dulin (1977) examined three instruments in an attempt to validate attitude measures. Results of their study indicated that measurement of different aspects of reading through the use of several reading attitude instruments in combination is probably more reliable than the use of any single instrument.

Alexander and Filler (1976) presented seven informal assessment techniques, and general considerations in informal assessment. Informal assessment techniques include observation, i.e., an informal, nonstructured situation, where predetermined behaviors are noticed over a period of time; interviews, which are structured situations which make use of predetermined questions which are arranged in categories; questionnaires, which elicit direct (oral or written) response to specific questions; incomplete sentence instruments which contain sentence starters to which students supply endings; pairing, where reading is compared in preference with another activity; summated ratings, requiring that responses be made to a series of statements on a four or five point scale; and finally, semantic differential assessment instruments, opinion scales to which responses are made to concepts by use of descriptive adjectives.

Alexander and Filler went on to discuss behavior sampling, cautions in interpretation, insurance of maximal accuracy of responses, checking of validity and reliability, and record keeping.

The last phase of a two year study conducted by Kennedy and Halinski (1975), was concerned with determining the validity and reliability of an attitude inventory. A revised instrument of seventy items was developed on the basis of factor analysis data and item-test correlations. The revised instrument was administered to 977 secondary students in their English classes. Responses were made on a four point scale. Internal consistency reliabilities were established using analysis of variance procedures and by crossing sex, grade level and signed-anonymous dimensions. Construct validity was confirmed and additional comparisons further validated the instrument.

Chester and Dulin, (1974) developed an indirect measure of attitude toward reading. They felt that an indirect measure was necessary because of the possibility of slanted responses due to social forces. One hundred thirty eleventh graders responded to fifteen paired statements regarding reading and to three self-rate scales. The subjects' classroom teachers also completed an evaluation on each subject. The study hypothesized that an overall high score was associated with positive attitude toward reading and an overall low score was associated with negative attitude toward reading. Results of the study showed

that the instrument was not a good measure of attitude toward reading, but it proved to be useful as an exploratory tool. The investigators concluded that "reading attitude does appear to operate upon judgmental processes" (p. 218).

Estes (1971) described construction of his scale to measure attitude toward reading. The Likert or summated ratings were chosen because of ease of use and general high accuracy. A pool of statements was secured from a group of twenty seven high school and elementary teachers in the Charlottesville, Virginia area. Criteria for attitude scale item formation and selection were outlined by Edwards (1957). The tryout scale contained twenty-eight items and was administered to a sample of 283 third through twelfth grade pupils in order to assure a sampling of a wide variety of attitudes. In analyzing the data, an estimate of the general performance of the scale was acquired through computation of mean, standard deviation, and reliability data. Individual analysis was made of each item in terms of its ability to separate the group of subjects on the basis of attitude toward reading. Younger pupils had more positive attitudes toward reading than older students. Items which remained on the scale were those on which a student's total score was likely to be high if he had a positive attitude but low if he had a negative attitude toward reading. In his summary, the researcher felt that the scale allowed reading teachers to objectively measure how students felt about reading.

### Summary

This chapter has reviewed the available literature in the areas of sociology of education and attitudes toward reading. Data and definitions were often contradictory and until recently, only limited research information has existed in both areas.

## CHAPTER III

### Design of the Study

This study was concerned with determining the relationship of various socio-educational factors to the current reading attitudes of fifty young Black adults.

#### Questions

The questions this study sought to answer include:

1. What are the current attitudes of young, urban Black adults toward reading?
2. What are the relationships between attitude toward reading and the following socio-educational factors:
  - (a) sex of teachers
  - (b) race of teachers
  - (c) geographic location of schools
  - (d) degree of mobility (during schooling)

#### Subjects

The subjects of the study were 50 young Black adults who presently reside in a city in northern New York state. They were selected at various urban community locations. Sites for subject selection were chosen upon recommendation of several Black community leaders and agencies as well as seminar members. (Refer to Appendix B) Selections were made from a pool of subjects. The subjects ranged in age from 18--24 years and

had various socio-educational experiences. Some subjects never completed high school, others are presently enrolled in various postsecondary experiences. Some instances of high mobility schooling were reported as well as non-urban school settings.

### Instruments

The instruments used in the study included a one page information form and a two page, 25 item reading attitude survey. (See Appendix C and D).

The attitude survey items were a compilation from various attitude surveys including Estes and Vaughan. The items were ranked as either negative, positive, or invalid, upon recommendation of members from a master's seminar in reading. The attitude survey, designed on a four point scale, viewed the subjects' scores as a reflection of attitude toward reading. Response categories included strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The researcher-designed information form endeavored to generate descriptive as well as general information about the reading experiences of the subjects.

The descriptive information was open-ended and the subjects were asked to respond to three questions:

1. What factors have influenced your attitudes toward reading?
2. How does your present reading attitude differ from an earlier view? (Has your attitude toward reading changed?)

3. What are your earliest remembrances of reading experiences? (in school, out of school)

Correlations related to socio-educational factors, social aspects of education, were developed from responses to the general information form. Socio-educational factors included age, sex, occupation, and educational background, (i.e., sex of teachers, race of teachers, geographic location of schools, and degree of mobility).

#### Procedures

Several Black community leaders and agencies, as well as graduate education students, recommended various possibilities for subject and interview site selection. Neighborhood agencies, organizations, businesses, playgrounds, recreation centers, training programs, schools, bus stops, and churches were mentioned as possible locations for interview sites. Telephone interviews were also conducted.

Each subject was interviewed individually. After establishing some rapport with each prospective subject, and assuring anonymity, the interviewer briefly explained the purpose of the study. In person-to-person interviews, the subjects were invited to preview the instruments and make comments or ask questions. The subjects were also allowed to view the instruments while they were responding to each item. After agreement was reached to proceed, both the information form and the attitude survey were read to each subject. Responses to both instruments were recorded

by the interviewer. No limits were imposed on the subjects' response time.

Young Black adults who presently reside in a middle-size northeastern, urban location, were selected as subjects for the study with some regard given to their socio-educational experiences and their age. The subjects selected had, or could have recently experienced some portion of the 12--13 years of the required educational process. They also had current, though somewhat reflective, attitudes toward reading.

#### Limitations

Several limitations existed for the study. First, no data for reliability or validity exist for the attitude survey. The study was only conducted in a single, moderate size, urban location. And finally, the subjects included only fifty young Black adults.

#### Summary

This study sought to determine the current reading attitudes of fifty young, Black, urban adults and the relationships between their attitude toward reading and four socio-educational factors.

An attitude scale and an information form were administered to the subjects at various community locations. The scores of the attitude survey were analyzed to determine the degree of

positive and/or negative attitude toward reading. Correlations related to socio-educational factors were developed from response to the general information form. Response to the descriptive questions provided information about the reading experiences of the subjects.

## CHAPTER IV

## Analysis of Data

The major purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of four socio-educational factors to the current attitudes toward reading of fifty young, urban Black adults. Two questions, extending from the purpose, were investigated.

1. What are the current attitudes of young, urban Black adults toward reading?
2. What are the relationships between attitude toward reading and the following socio-educational factors:
  - (a) sex of teachers
  - (b) race of teachers
  - (c) geographic location of schools
  - (d) degree of mobility during schooling?

Current Attitudes of Young, Black Adults

An attitude survey was administered which viewed subjects' scores as a reflection of attitude toward reading. A copy of the survey and the distribution of scores are shown in Appendixes D & E, respectively.

Examinations of responses to the attitude survey indicated that ninety-eight percent of the subjects most often agreed with statements #5, 10, 15, and 16:

5. Reading should be appreciated by more people.
10. Reading should be taught at home as well as in school.
15. Reading is one of the best ways to keep informed.
16. Reading improves my vocabulary.

The statements most often disagreed with included #2, 9, 18, and 22:

2. Reading is difficult for me. (90%)
9. There's nothing to be gained from reading books. (98%)
18. Reading is something I can do without. (92%)
22. Reading is a waste of time. (94%)

The subjects were also asked to respond to three descriptive information questions:

1. What factors have influenced your attitude toward reading?
2. How does your present reading attitude differ from an earlier view? (Has your attitude toward reading changed?)
3. What are your earliest remembrances of reading experiences? (in school, and out of school)

Fifty percent of the subjects responded that parental influence, parents' attitudes toward school in general and reading in particular, and the entire schooling process (including teachers, books, and trips to the library) were factors which had influenced their attitudes toward reading. Several of the other subjects responded that seeing others read, the visual appeal of books, influence from the media, job requirements, self-initiative, and "the quest for knowledge" were factors which had influenced their attitudes toward reading. A small portion of subjects surveyed responded that there were no factors (or none that they could think of) which had influenced their attitudes toward reading.

In response to question #2, some subjects merely stated

that their attitude toward reading had or had not changed. The majority, who were more specific, responded that their attitude toward reading had changed favorably and they are presently reading more than ever before. They indicated that they enjoy reading for relaxation and also for general information, However, some increases in reading have been due to necessity; for school, and advancement on the job. Several subjects responded that they don't have as much time as they would like to have to read for pleasure.

When asked about earliest remembrances of the reading experience, both in school and out of school, the majority of subjects remembered specific books, materials, procedures, and teachers. Second and third grade teachers and experiences were most often remembered. SRA kits, the Dick and Jane series teachers reading aloud to the class and class trips to the library were some of the particulars recalled. Subjects who didn't enjoy reading during their school years, reflected about embarrassing oral reading experiences and one subject even related an ear-wringing episode! A few subjects reflected an out-of-school reading experience which included parents reading to and with them and taking them on trips to the library.

Socio-educational Factors and Attitude Toward Reading

Four sets of data were analyzed testing the null hypotheses. Analysis was made using the point biserial correlation. The first null hypothesis stated that sex of the subjects' teachers does not significantly correlate with the subjects' attitude toward reading. Analysis of the first set of data failed to reject the null hypothesis (see Table 1 ). There was no statistical indication of a correlation between sex of subjects' teachers and subjects' attitude toward reading.

Table 1  
Correlations Between Socio-Educational Factors  
and Attitude Toward Reading

factor	$r_{pbis}^*$
H <sub>1</sub> : sex of teachers	-.009 (n.s.)
H <sub>2</sub> : race of teachers	-.073 (n.s.)
H <sub>3</sub> : location of schools	.055 (n.s.)
H <sub>4</sub> : degree of mobility	-.068 (n.s.)

\*critical  $r_{pbis}$  ( $p < .05$ ) = .2761

The second null hypothesis stated that race of subjects' teachers and subjects' attitude toward reading do not signifi-

cantly correlate. Analysis of the data failed to reject the null hypotheses suggesting that no correlation existed between race of subjects' teachers and subjects attitude towards reading (see Table 1). The third null hypothesis stated that geographic location of schools does not significantly correlate the subjects' attitude toward reading. The third null hypothesis was also rejected. Analysis of the data indicated that geographic location of schools and attitude toward reading did not significantly correlate (see Table 1). The fourth null hypothesis stated that students degree of mobility during schooling and attitude toward reading do not significantly correlate. Analysis of the data also failed to reject this hypothesis. There was no statistical indication of a correlation between degree of mobility and attitude toward reading.

### Summary

Experiences involving the schooling process as well as parental influence and attitudes were mentioned as factors influencing attitudes toward reading. The majority of subjects acknowledged changes in their attitudes toward reading and noted that the changes were positive and that they are presently reading more than before. The relationship between attitude toward reading and four socio-educational factors, (sex of teachers, race of teachers, geographic location of schools, and degree of mobility during schooling) failed to reject four null hypotheses. Implications of these findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions and Implications

This study endeavored to determine the relationship of four socio-educational factors to the current reading attitudes of fifty young, urban Black adults. Need for the study was prompted by discrepancies in the reading test scores and percent of functional illiteracy by an over-representative number of Black students.

#### Conclusions

No significant correlations were found between four socio-educational factors (sex of teachers, race of teachers, geographic location of schools, and degree of mobility during the schooling) and attitudes toward reading. There are several possible reasons for the lack of positive correlations. First, it is possible that the resulting correlations exist between the four socio-educational factors and attitude toward reading. On the other hand, the insignificant correlations may have resulted because of the low number of subjects surveyed. Also, internal variables may have influenced the resulting correlations.

Patterns were detected in response to the reading attitude survey. The schooling process, parental influences, and parents' attitudes toward school in general and reading in particular were cited as factors influencing attitude toward reading. Also, reported changes in attitude toward reading were positive. Implications drawn from these patterns will be discussed in the

following section.

#### Implications For Education

Subjects responded that the schooling process; teachers, books, and trips to the library influenced their attitudes toward reading. More interesting however, parental influences and parents' attitudes toward reading were also cited as factors influencing attitude toward reading. Indeed, ninety eight percent of the subjects surveyed agreed that reading should be taught at home as well as in school.

Implications are that because social aspects of education involve human interactions within and as a result of the schooling process, educators must not only be aware of reading experiences within the school setting but must also promote development of at-home strategies which encourage parental involvement in reading readiness and maintenance.

#### Implications for Research

Further research could deal with the limitations which existed for this study. Studies could be conducted over a broader period of time and with increased accessibility to a wider range of subjects. Assurance of construct reliability and validity could be established through some revision of the attitude survey and information form. Future research could also take a look at various other factors as they relate to attitude toward reading.

### Summary

This chapter has considered implications for education and for further research. Provision was made for the interpretation of the data cited in Chapter IV. No significant correlations were found between the four socio-educational factors and attitude toward reading. However, some interesting patterns were indicated and discussed.

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## APPENDIX A

Mean Percentages for 9-, 13-, and 17- Year Old Students on All Reading Items for NAEP Reading Assessments (1974-75).

<u>Race</u>	<u>9-Year Olds</u>	<u>13-Year Olds</u>	<u>17-Year Olds</u>
Black	54.514	46.386	55.434
White	67.665	63.534	74.797

## APPENDIX B

## COMMUNITY LEADERS AND AGENCIES

James Beard	Threshold
Mary Brown	Rochester Institute of Technology
Brenda Edwards	Urban League of Rochester
Willie Lightfoot	Montgomery Center
John McCutcheon	Flint Street Recreation Center
Furelise Smith	Rochester City School District
Sam Tramel	Urban League of Rochester
Cecilia Griffin Turner	Rochester City School District
Reverend John Walker	Seventh Step Foundation

Personal Information

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sex: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Do you like your job? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background

name or district of elementary school \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

rural \_\_\_\_\_ urban \_\_\_\_\_ suburban \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_  
 (specify)

name or district of secondary school \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

rural \_\_\_\_\_ urban \_\_\_\_\_ suburban \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_  
 (specify)

highest grade completed \_\_\_\_\_

number of male teachers \_\_\_\_\_ 1 - 3, \_\_\_\_\_ 5 - 7, \_\_\_\_\_ more

number of female teachers \_\_\_\_\_ 1 - 3, \_\_\_\_\_ 5 - 7, \_\_\_\_\_ more

number of Black teachers \_\_\_\_\_ 1 - 3, \_\_\_\_\_ 5 - 7, \_\_\_\_\_ more

number of years of post-secondary education \_\_\_\_\_

name and location \_\_\_\_\_

area of specialization \_\_\_\_\_

Descriptive Information

1. What factors have influenced your attitudes toward reading?
2. How does your present reading attitude differ from an earlier view? (has your attitude toward reading changed?)
3. What are your earliest remembrances of reading experiences? (in school, out of school)

each of the following statements by marking the appropriate space the right of each item.

SA (1) = Strongly agree. You strongly agree with the statement.

A (2) = Agree. You agree more than you disagree with the statement.

D (3) = Disagree. You disagree more than you agree with the statement.

SD (4) = Strongly disagree. You strongly disagree with the statement.

	SA	A	D	SD
Reading stimulates thought.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading is difficult for me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I read only what I have to read.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I would rather read than do anything else.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading should be appreciated by more people.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
There are very few things that I find interesting to read.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
I believe reading is the basic subject for all school work.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading gives me self confidence.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
There's nothing to be gained from reading books.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading should be taught at home as well as in school.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading is important to me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Being able to read seems to be a necessary evil.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading is a good way to spend spare time.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading bores me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Reading is one of the best ways to keep informed.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

- Reading improves my vocabulary. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Reading is something I can do without. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Reading takes too much concentration. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- It is important to be able to read well. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Reading turns me off. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Reading is a waste of time. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- I like to read. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- I read only what I have to. (1)(2)(3)(4)
- Children will want to read if they see their parents reading. (1)(2)(3)(4)

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Number of Subjects	Scores
1	59
1	64
1	65
2	67
1	68
1	69
2	70
3	71
1	72
3	73
1	74
3	75
3	76
1	77
1	78
1	79
1	80
2	81
3	82
1	83
3	84
2	85
3	86
3	88
1	89
1	90
1	93
1	94
1	96
1	99