

FATHERING ROLES AS PERCEIVED BY EXPECTANT
FATHERS AND MOTHERS

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BY
SUSAN M. CREAMEAN-MANDEL, B.S.

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Texas Woman's University
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We hereby recommend that the Thesis prepared under
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Master of Science

Committee:

Gail Watson

Chairman

Rose M. Nesvick

Jane Dawson

Anne L. Henderson

Accepted:

Robert L. Allen

Provost of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The woman's role in childbearing has been a matter of extensive study. Understanding the dynamics of the father's role has received significantly less attention than that of motherhood. Therefore, the role of the father continues to be a matter for definition and clarification.

The father's role has several implications for the health of family life. Robischon and Scott (199) stated that the father has been identified as a leader, teacher, hero, disciplinarian, authoritarian, mentor, and the family connection with the real world. As family lifestyles change and consumers demand more humanistic and family-centered care, roles change rapidly and a lack of knowledge about roles and relationships between family members becomes somewhat troublesome for the health care professional, particularly the maternity nurse.

Pregnancy and childbirth produce changes in a couple's life which may result in intensive stress, anxieties, and conflicts that may call for emotional adjustment. Fantasies and old conflicts may surface

in couples who are becoming parents and "The degree to which they can adapt and adjust to the parental transition depends on their previous life experiences and subsequent emotional intactness" (Meleis and Swendsen, 1978, p. 12).

Josselyn (195) stated that female and male roles are complementary in the family. Thus, the efficacy of the family as a unit is dependent upon the capacity of each parent to fulfill the role of mother and father, respectively. If the integration of these family members' roles does not occur, then role attainment for the mother and father may suffer.

All members within a system affect the entire system. Therefore, how both expectant parents perceive the paternal role may affect parenting behaviors and the welfare of the family unit. For this reason, it is important to study perceptions of the paternal role held by both expectant fathers and mothers.

Problem of Study

The questions to be answered by this investigation were:

1. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, companion to the child?

2. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of infant care?

3. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, protector of family members?

4. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, disciplinarian/authoritarian?

5. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of love and affection?

6. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, breadwinner/economic provider?

7. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, maintainer of family unit?

8. Is there a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, teacher of values and morals?

Justification of Problem

According to Leonard (1976), "men in today's society often have difficulty in assuming the role of father" (p.362). This difficulty was further explained when Dodson (1974) contrasted the role of the father 25 years ago with the role of today's father. Twenty-five years ago the masculine and feminine behavior and roles of the father and mother were clear-cut. Presently, masculine and feminine social behavior and the roles of the mother and father are undergoing a tremendous shift. According to May (1978), a clear understanding of the process of paternal role development is vital in the face of the expanding role of the woman and the apparent increase in the number of men who are becoming more responsible for child care.

Rubin (1967) discussed the process of emotional changes in the pregnant female and stated that the successful resolution of conflicts during pregnancy was crucial to attaining a maternal role. May (1978) believed that perhaps there was a parallel process in the expectant father. "He must negotiate that future role with his partner during pregnancy and prepare consciously for that style of fatherhood" (May, 1978, p. 7).

In order for a male to attain an involved fathering role, it may be necessary for the expectant father to begin to prepare with the expectant mother for the fathering role before the arrival of the child. The coordination of the feelings of motherliness and fatherliness is essential to the creative, mature, and psychosexual development of both the father and the mother (Robischon & Scott, 1969).

Recent literature suggested that there was not a clear understanding of the process of paternal role development and indicated a need for additional research in this area. Exploring perceptions of the primiparous couple may provide nursing with additional data regarding the importance of fathering and the development of the fathering role.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on role theory, utilizing specifically the concept of role expectations as viewed by Hardy (1978). Role theory represents several concepts and hypothetical formulations that predict how individuals will perform in a given role.

According to Hardy (1978), literature suggests that individuals within a social system may not agree on norms relevant for particular positions. "The norms may be vague, ill defined, or unclear" (Hardy, 1978, p. 80). The disagreements concerning role expectations are often associated with a lack of clarity in role expectations, rather than conflicting role expectations.

Role expectations, or perceptions, are those perceptions held by an individual, or by a collection of individuals, about the performance of any one individual's assigned role in society. Hardy (1978) explained that role expectations, or perceptions, are position-specific norms that identify the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs which one has for oneself or others. Norms are rules that either prescribe or proscribe behavior, and, therefore, suggest what an individual should do, think, or feel. Numerous variables such as significant others and reference groups, may affect role expectations. Thus, role expectations, or perceptions, involve the perceived obligations and duties necessary to fulfill one's socially prescribed role behaviors. When these role

norms are not shared equally by individuals in society, role difficulties arise.

The man who is anticipating the new role of becoming a father may have certain expectations, or perceptions, of himself for that particular role. In addition, his partner, or significant other, may also have certain perceptions of him in the fathering role. Therefore, this investigation will explore the father's role as perceived by both partners in a couple in an attempt to identify similarities and differences in the perceptions of the fathering role.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study were:

1. A role has a standard, prescribed pattern of behavior for each individual within one's culture.
2. Role expectations are the expected behaviors associated with a particular position in society.
3. There is a reciprocal relationship between the mother's and father's role.
4. Role difficulties may arise as a result of incompatibility in role expectations, or perceptions.
5. Becoming a parent for the first time forces a structural change in the family unit which results in a

reorganization of roles and relationships in order to maintain family unity.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study were:

1. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, companion to the child, using the Fathering Role Perception Tool (FRPT).
2. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of infant care, using the FRPT.
3. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, protector of family members, using the FRPT.
4. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, disciplinarian/authoritarian, using the FRPT.
5. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of love and affection, using the FRPT.
6. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, breadwinner/economic provider, using the FRPT.

7. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, maintainer of family unity, using the FRPT.

8. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, teacher of values and morals, using the FRPT.

Definition of Terms

The terms defined for this study were:

1. Primiparous couple--a male and female who are having a relationship and expecting a first child.

2. Perceived fathering behaviors--those activities which have been identified as tasks assumed by fathers, such as companion to the child, provider of infant care, protector of family members, disciplinarian/authoritarian, provider of love and affection, bread winner/economic provider, maintainer of family unity, and teacher of values and morals.

Limitations

The limitations for this study were:

1. The use of a convenience sample may limit the conclusions and generalizations which can be drawn.

2. There was no attempt to control for the subjects' ages.

3. Previous exposure to children and/or child care activities may have contributed and/or influenced the individual participants in the sample.

4. The instrument used was not tested for reliability.

Summary

The man who is becoming a father has certain expectations, or perceptions, of himself as a father. In addition, his partner also has perceptions of him in the paternal role. If differences in perceptions of the paternal role exist in an expectant couple, then conflicts may arise in the family. This study was conducted to determine if a difference existed between fathering roles as perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple.

A conceptual framework of role expectations (Hardy, 1978) was utilized for the study. Eight hypotheses were formulated, terms were clarified, and limitations for the study were identified.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Little research has been focused on the expectant father's experiences of pregnancy and early parenthood. Research on fathers has been done from the mother's viewpoint and viewed in terms of the father's absence or presence. In general, the father's role has been defined in terms of motherhood and the mother's function (Kiernan & Scoloveno, 1977).

Recently there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of the role of fatherhood. This has been partially as a result of changes in social definitions of the male and female roles. As a result of changes in social definitions, urbanization, industrialization, and technological advances, paternal role development has undergone many changes.

Research has indicated that for a man to have an opportunity to participate actively in early parenthood, it is necessary to negotiate with the mate for that role during pregnancy (May, 1978). Thus, the father has become a much more significant factor in promoting family-centered health care. The literature reviewed included

role theory, historical view of the fathering role, and transition into fatherhood.

Role Theory

Role theory enables the researcher to focus on the individual and the integration of role relationships. Roles prescribe the behavior expected of an individual in a standard situation and specify what the individual's obligations are (Robischon & Scott, 1969).

Cottrell (1942) is recognized as being responsible for some of the original propositions and hypothetical formulations fundamental to role theory. Others have subsequently enlarged upon role theory. The role an individual elects to play is derived by the behavior expected and received from others. Sarbin and Allen (1968) proposed that one adapts to a role as a result of interactions or social exchange with others.

"Role, as a concept, is useful in interpreting personal behavior vis-a-vis significant others, and in understanding the context in which behavior takes place" (Meleis, 1975, p. 265). Through interactions with significant others, an individual's roles are defined and validated when others indicate an acceptance.

Specific concepts aid in understanding role theory. One such concept is that of role expectations. One's role, according to Meleis (1975), is often a derivative of actions motivated by the returns expected and received from others. Therefore, one's actions are validated by the acceptance of significant others such as family members. Roles are acquired through the process of socialization, and the cultural milieu of one's upbringing may affect the individual's role expectations.

In any social interaction, the beliefs, feelings, and attitudes an individual has for oneself and/or significant others are defined as role expectations (Sarbin, 1964). In other words, role expectations are those perceptions held by an individual or by a collection of individuals occupying a specific role.

Sarbin and Allen (1968) defined role expectations as "the duties and obligation, of any role occupant of a social position in relation to persons occupying other positions in the social structure" (p. 497). How an individual perceives his position in the social network as well as perceptions of that role, determine the role an individual plays. Although there are several variables

that may affect one's role expectations, or perception, the reinforcements of significant others are vital.

Currently masculine and feminine social behavior is changing. The Feminist Movement is one indication of the upheaval in American society. As a result of such societal change, the family roles of the mother and father are changing, and clarification of the father's role has become necessary.

Historical View of the Fathering Role

Kiernan and Scoloveno (1977) stated that the father's role in the family has undergone marked changes in the last century. Such changes may be the result of shifting functions of the family in a society experiencing drastic technological advances.

From a historical viewpoint, the 19th century role of the father was that of "breadwinner." The father was thought of as taciturn and stern. "He was respected but feared by his children, who never learned to know him well" (Hines, 1971, p. 180). Society considered that the concentration of power in the family rested naturally with the husband and father. Literature concerning the male's parental role was almost limited to impregnation, paying

bills, and acting as a role model for adolescent boys (Phillips & Anzalone, 1978).

Society was structured to allow the father to work as a skilled tradesman, shopkeeper, or farmer at or near home. This allowed the father more time to communicate personal opinions and philosophy of life to the children in the course of daily living. As a result, the children formed a clear and definite image of what a father should be, and role identification was a natural process (Hines, 1971; Phillips & Anzalone, 1978).

Industrialization and urbanization affected the father's absolute power in the home and required the father to spend more time away from home. Therefore, increased responsibilities of early childrearing were delegated to the mother. The mother's domain became the home and the children, whereas, the father's domain became the working world. As a result, the father was defined in economic terms and expected to repress feelings of tenderness and gentleness (Phillips & Anzalone, 1978).

Biller and Meredith (1975) stated that the denial of permission for men to become emotionally committed to childbearing and childrearing has resulted in fathers not actively participating in pregnancy and birth.

Preparation for parenthood begins in the parental family. Children develop a role-specific gender at an early age. Although fathering and paternal roles are learned, the father has not been readily available as a masculine role model. An unfortunate effect is that young boys may have difficulty in identifying with the paternal role and learning fathering behaviors (Kiernan & Scoloveno, 1977). However, the "importance of this process of paternal role development has yet to be documented or fully explored" (May, 1978, p. 8).

Societal role definitions have begun to change. Sexual equality and socioeconomic factors have resulted in more mothers entering the work force. "The integrated nature of American society dictates that changes in the role of women must be accompanied by complementary role changes for men" (Murphy, 1979, p. 3). As a result of the changing role of the woman, the father's role has expanded and men have begun to undertake more childrearing responsibilities. The traditional role model of the American father is no longer representative of many of today's fathers. Today the father's character traits may include qualities of tenderness, warmth, compassion, and feelings of nurturance.

It is important to recognize the father as an integral and interacting member of the family (Hines, 1971). The father has been traditionally recognized as an authoritarian, protector, provider, and disciplinarian (Benedek, 1970; Hines, 1971; Robischon & Scott, 1969). Benedek (1970) and Josselyn (1956) hypothesized that fatherhood and fathering may parallel motherhood, motherliness, and nurturing. Benedek (1970) suggested that these facets may all be complementary to each other and necessary for the child's emotional well-being.

In a study of how fathers perceive the fathering role, Ritzman and Camilleri (1978) gathered data from 30 well-educated, middle-class men who already were fathers. The division of labor among husbands and wives seemed to follow a traditional pattern. Thus, the father was seen primarily as the breadwinner and the mother primarily responsible for running the household and child care. However, "the breadwinning role was a responsibility to be built upon and did not constitute the totality of fathering" (Ritzman & Camilleri, 1978, p. 271). The fathers were inclined to share the many tasks required to maintain a family. The father's role was usually to complement that of the mother who was seen as primarily

responsible for childrearing. Defining parental roles was a joint enterprise for the father and mother, and the parents shared a common frame of reference concerning the basic orientation and values of childrearing (Ritzman & Camilleri, 1978).

There are two factors which influence the way men arrive at ideas concerning child development and the father's role (Ritzman & Camilleri, 1978). The first factor involves the mother's thought of fathering; the second factor involves the influence of significant others upon the father. The father's role is defined by what society considers the father's role to be, what the father learned about fathering as a child, and what family members expect of the father (Fitzman & Camilleri, 1978). Kiernan and Scoloveno (1977) proposed that how each member in the family, including the father, views the significance of the father's role within the family may also determine the significance of the father's role.

Obrzut (1976) interviewed 20 first-time expectant fathers in an attempt to study fathering and fathering roles. Eighty-five percent of the expectant fathers thought fathers played different roles than the mothers. These expectant fathers identified nurturing, teaching,

and providing as important aspects of the fathering role. Sixty-five percent expected to have responsibilities which were different from the mother's responsibilities. In general, the sample believed that "providing" is an inherent aspect of fathering. However, data also suggested that the male provider role is not of overriding importance. Eighty-five percent of the men expressed concern about infant care skills; 68% about adequacy as a father; and 35% about financial security (Obrzut, 1976).

Reiber (1976) stated that the two distinct roles of mothering and fathering are simply sex-role distinctions which have been imposed by social norms. In reviewing the literature as far back as 1954, Reiber (1976) found that both fathers and mothers viewed nurturing as an important aspect of fathering and contended that the development of nurturing behaviors of the male may be influenced by society and culture.

In an attempt to investigate parental attitudes and nurturing activities, Reiber (1976) observed seven couples. Parent-child interactions were observed when the infant was between 5 and 9 weeks old. An interesting finding was that fathers tended to exhibit nurturing

behaviors similar to those of the mothers. The most frequent behaviors for both the father and the mother were proximal behaviors of looking at, holding, talking to the infant, and touching. Generally, the mothers did more caretaking activities as diapering, dressing, and bathing of the infants. These findings also indicated that men are involved in nurturing to the infants only as much as the mothers permit.

Manion (1977) studied 45 first-time fathers' involvement with newborns. The purpose was to determine what caretaking activities fathers provided to infants and some of the factors which influenced this participation. Two questionnaires were distributed to the fathers. The first questionnaire was completed while the mother and infant were still hospitalized. It sought information about the factors which would influence the father's later participation in infant care. The second questionnaire requested information on the amount of the father's actual participation in caretaking activities after leaving the hospital. Results indicated that fathers did provide caretaking activities to infants. Such activities included rocking/walking, feeding, diapering, and bathing the baby.

Several variables were involved in the father's involvement in infant care. These variables included satisfaction from the interaction, a desire to help the mother, and the recent emphasis on the importance of the father's role in child development (Manion, 1977). The father's involvement with the newborn could be affected by increasing opportunities to become actively involved with the birth and the newborn shortly following the delivery (Manion, 1977; Reiber, 1976).

The role of the father has several implications for family health in terms of family relationships and its effect on the child. Insight into the dynamics of the father's role and fatherliness has received less impetus than that of motherhood. There is much need for further exploration, especially as society and the family structure continue to rapidly change.

Literature is replete with studies that indicate the emotional disturbances in children as a result of detachment or lack of involvement of the father. A largely neglected area of research involves a man's experiences with pregnancy and the factors involved in the transition to a parental role. Expectant fatherhood is now being recognized as a critical transition time for men (Marquart, 1976).

Transition to Fatherhood

Jones (1982) concluded that pregnancy stimulates fantasy, brings on emotional experiences, increases sensitivity to emotional needs, increases vulnerability, and is generally a time of transition for the father and mother. LeMasters (1957) interviewed 46 first-time parents in an attempt to determine whether the addition of a first child could be construed as a "crisis." Results indicated that the arrival of a first child constituted a critical event. This addition of a new family member results in a structural change which forces a reorganization of statuses, roles, and relationships. It was reported that 83% of the couples experienced an "extensive" or "severe" crisis in adjusting to a first child (LeMasters, 1957). The parents tended to romanticize parenthood, and had little, if any, effective preparation for parental roles. Parenthood marks the final transition to maturity and adult responsibility in American culture and presents a developmental or maturation crisis for a husband and wife in which each spouse has to integrate a new set of roles as individuals and as spouses (LeMasters, 1957; Marquart, 1976).

Dyer (1963), in replicating LeMaster's (1957) study, reported that 53% of first-time expectant parents experienced a crisis. The degree to which the birth of a first child represented a crisis event appeared to be related to the state of the marriage and family organization at the time of birth, the couple's marital adjustment after the birth, and certain social background and situational variables.

Pregnancy is fraught with anxieties for both expectant parents. Social preparations for the mother may include numerous well-wishes and advice from friends and relatives (Phillips & Anzalone, 1978). There are no such preparations for the father in preparing for the fathering role. Stichler, Bowden, and Reimer (1978) asserted that the expectant father experiences inward changes. Thus, childbirth may be a profound experience for both parents.

Rubin (1967) described the emotional aspect of the changes in the pregnant female and stated that the resolution of conflicts during pregnancy is crucial to the successful acquisition of the maternal role. The five phases necessary for the female to attain the maternal role are mimicry, role play, fantasy, introjection-projection, and grief work (Rubin, 1967). There may be a

parallel process in the expectant father (May, 1978). In addition to the emotional tasks of successfully attaining fatherhood, it has been suggested that it may be equally as important for expectant fathers to resolve emotional conflicts concerning parenting before the infant's arrival (Biller & Meredith, 1975; Colman & Colman, 1971; Soule, Standley, & Copans, 1979).

Roehner (1976) attempted to study fatherhood by distributing questionnaires to 50 expectant fathers. Twenty-six of the expectant fathers responded. Twenty-two of the fathers felt that helping the expectant mother was an important function of the father during pregnancy. Results also indicated that 13 of the expectant fathers felt that pregnancy had brought the couple closer together. Marquart (1976) confirmed this finding after interviewing 15 expectant fathers in an attempt to determine expectant fathers' needs and concerns. All 15 expectant fathers experienced feelings of protectiveness toward the mother and unborn child.

While the expectant father does not have the constant physical reminder of the baby, the expectant father is not unaware of these changes in the mother. Colman and Colman (1971) suggested that the expectant father's responses to

the pregnancy cannot be neutral. A father's involvement in pregnancy and childbirth helps the father feel closer to both the mother and child. "How the mother accepts or rejects the father may be a predominant factor in how the mother accepts or rejects the child" (Hott, 1976, p. 1437). Hott went on to explain that the father's feelings and thoughts may affect the mother's regard for the child. This may perhaps affect the future father-mother-child relationship.

MacLaughlin (1980) declared that there was a need for men to become actively involved in pregnancy and early parenting. Future child care activities, such as caretaking and nurturing, may be hampered if such an involvement was absent during pregnancy. As a result, the father may be shut out of the mother-infant dyad which may delay the father-infant interaction (May, 1976).

May (1976) asserted that pregnancy has both an emotional and physical impact on men, and went on to suggest that the changes pregnancy elicits in men may be related to the father's identity. The capacity to "feel pregnant" may later result in the father establishing a closer tie with the neonate. Should this existence of a correlation be confirmed through research, it would have

an impact on how the father's role transition in pregnancy and childrearing is viewed.

In 1975, Antle reviewed the literature pertaining to fatherhood and fathering roles. It was noted that the father's role in pregnancy is undefined, the dynamics of fatherhood are not clear, and there is not a definite role transition procedure evident. Antle further indicated that fathers acknowledge and accept the emotions pregnancy elicits. In addition, it was suggested that a willingness to "feel pregnant" may correlate with "feeling fatherly" after the child is born (Antle, 1975).

Supporting one's pregnant wife may help improve the physical well-being of the unborn child (Biller & Meredith, 1975; Verny & Kelly, 1981). A man's experience during pregnancy and after birth may be more fulfilling if the expectant father feels valuable and an integral part of the childbearing process. Thus, by supporting the mother through pregnancy and birth, a father prepares for parenthood (Jones, 1982).

Summary

Women experience physical and social preparations for motherhood. Men do not experience such preparations for

fatherhood. As a result, role transition may be more difficult for the father.

The father's role has been traditionally described as provider, protector, and disciplinarian. As a result of industrialization, urbanization, and sexual equality, the father's role has become somewhat ill-defined.

Research has indicated that fathers who are actively involved in pregnancy and birth go through stages of becoming a father. Literature also suggested that pregnancy and early parenthood is a time for role transition and adjustment for both parents. Both the mother and father must begin to deal with these role changes.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA

This investigation was a descriptive survey to determine if there was a difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behaviors of companion of the child, provider of infant care, protector of family members, disciplinarian/authoritarian, provider of love and affection, breadwinner/economic provider, maintainer of family unity, teacher of values and morals. In a descriptive survey, the researcher investigates individuals' characteristics, attitudes or beliefs about a particular subject (Polit & Hungler, 1978).

Setting

The study was conducted in prenatal classes offered through a private 500-bed hospital in a large metropolitan city in the Southwestern United States. The hospital offered a variety of prenatal classes to expectant couples. The classes included The Childbearing Year (for those couples who have not experienced childbirth), The Prenatal Refresher (for couples who have had previous

prenatal classes), The Cesarean Childbirth Preparation (for those couples who will experience childbirth surgically), and The Earlybird Prenatal Exercises (for expectant couples less than 5 months along in the pregnancy). The Childbearing Year series of classes were chosen as the setting for this study. There were 30 couples enrolled in two sections of The Childbearing Year series of classes which ran concurrently. Each section was offered one night a week for 7 weeks in the hospital's educational building.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of all primiparous couples who attended The Childbearing Year series of prenatal classes. There were 30 couples who attended The Childbearing Year series of classes. Of the 30 couples, 23 met the following criteria: primiparous and willing to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires of two couples were discarded due to ineligibility because one of the spouses in each couple had a previous child. A third set of questionnaires was discarded because one of the partners had incorrectly completed the questionnaire. Thus, of the 23 couples

included in the sample, 20 couples were included for data collection.

Nonprobability convenience sampling was utilized. According to Polit and Hungler (1978), the sample of convenience is convenient and economical. The sample of convenience consisted of subjects who were easily accessible for the researcher.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study was in compliance with Category I of the Risk Categories and did not necessitate full committee review. Written permission was obtained from the graduate school (Appendix A) and the agency (Appendix B) to conduct the research study.

Anonymity of participants was maintained as no names appeared on the questionnaires. Results were reported as group data. The statement "I understand that the return of my questionnaire constitutes informed consent to act as a subject in this research" was typed on each questionnaire. The questionnaires were coded using numbers so that each couple's questionnaires could be matched. Participants in the study were informed of the purposes, risks, and benefits involved in the study during the verbal explanation (Appendix C).

Instruments

The Fathering Role Perception Tool (FRPT) (Appendix D) was developed by the investigator and is a questionnaire. The validation committee for the FRPT consisted of a prenatal instructor, who is a registered nurse; a registered nurse with experience in maternity clinical settings; a primiparous couple; and a physician, who has a family practice.

Each committee member was asked to review the questionnaire and make additional suggestions and recommendations. This allowed the investigator to identify any areas for improvement as well as determine the length of time necessary to complete the FRPT.

The FRPT consists of eight items, each representing a fathering task or behavior. The items utilized were identified in the literature as fathering behaviors. The FRPT asked the expectant father and mother to rank, in order of importance, each of the eight items used to describe the role of the father. Attached to the FRPT was a demographic data sheet (Appendix E). Demographic data asked for the subject's sex, age, and previous children. The gender of the subject was asked in order to match the questionnaires of each couple. Age helped describe the

sample. Determining the existence of any previous children served as a screening device. It was not possible to conduct reliability studies for the questionnaire with data from the pilot study.

A pilot study consisting of five expectant couples was utilized to assist in validating the FRPT. The FRPT was administered twice, one week apart. The ages for the expectant fathers participating in the pilot study ranged from 20 to 38, and the ages for the expectant mothers ranged from 19 to 36. The mean age for the expectant fathers was 27; the mean age for the expectant mothers was 25. No other statistical analysis of the results was completed for the pilot study.

During the first administration, four expectant fathers and two expectant mothers chose provider of love and affection as the most important fathering role. To increase validity of the FRPT, the item, provider of love and affection, was moved from the first position to the fifth position during the second administration of the FRPT. During the second administration, three expectant fathers and three expectant mothers chose this item as the most important role of the father of those listed in the

FRPT. It was not necessary to clarify the instructions during the pilot study. A section was supplied on the FRPT which elicited comments; however, none of the participants indicated a need for additional terms to describe the roles of the father.

Data Collection

After permission was obtained from the graduate school and the agency, the researcher attended a class in the series of The Childbearing Year prenatal classes. A brief verbal explanation of the study was given and couples meeting the established criteria and willing to participate remained in the classroom.

Questionnaires and pencils were distributed. Attached to the questionnaires were written instructions (Appendix F). The researcher then left the room and remained in the hallway until the questionnaires were completed.

After completing the questionnaire, each individual placed the questionnaire in an envelope located at the back of the room. The researcher was available for questions following administration of the questionnaires. The researcher attended sessions of classes in different sections of The Childbearing Year series of classes in

order to collect data from the sample of the population who met the identified criteria.

Treatment of Data

In order to test each of the eight null hypotheses, the paired t-test statistic was utilized. According to Polit and Hungler (1978), the paired t-tests are utilized when the researcher obtains two measures from paired sets of subjects. The 0.05 level of significance was utilized to reject the null hypotheses.

The age of the subjects obtained from the demographic data sheet was analyzed using means. Such descriptive statistics are used to describe and summarize data (Polit & Hungler, 1978). By asking the sex of each subject, the researcher was able to match the questionnaires of each couple. It was necessary to determine the existence of any previous children as a screening device.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Eight null hypotheses were tested to determine if there was a significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in eight fathering behaviors. Data for this study were obtained from questionnaires distributed to primiparous couples attending a series of prenatal classes entitled The Childbearing Year. The data obtained are presented and statistically described in this chapter.

Description of Sample

Twenty-three couples attending a series of prenatal classes participated in this study. The convenience sample consisted of 20 primiparous couples. The questionnaires of two couples were discarded due to ineligibility because one of the spouses in each couple had a previous child. The third set of questionnaires was discarded because one of the partners in the primiparous couple had incorrectly completed the questionnaire.

Demographic data revealed that the sample consisted of expectant fathers ranging in age from 19 to 34 with a

mean age of 26. The expectant mothers ranged in age from 18 to 35 with a mean age of 25.

Findings

There were eight null hypotheses for this study. Table 1 reflects the findings of these hypotheses.

1. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, companion to the child, using the Fathering Role Perception Tool (FRPT). Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.24$, $p = 0.82$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, companion to the child.

2. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of infant care, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.15$, $p = 0.879$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, provider of infant care.

Table 1
Paired t-test Results

Fathering Behavior	Mean		<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
	Father	Mother			
Companion to the child	4.50	4.65	2.85	0.24	0.82
Protector of family members	4.10	4.00	2.90	0.15	0.879
Disciplinarian/authoritarian	5.60	5.15	2.82	0.71	0.48
Provider of love and affection	2.85	2.45	2.80	0.64	0.53
Breadwinner/economic provider	5.00	5.55	3.50	0.70	0.49
Maintainer of family unity	4.75	4.65	2.80	0.16	0.875
Teacher of values and morals	3.85	3.85	2.29	0.00	1.00
Provider of infant care	5.35	5.80	2.50	0.80	0.43

3. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, protector of family members, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.71$, $p = 0.48$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, protector of family members.

4. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, disciplinarian/authoritarian, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.64$, $p = 0.53$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, disciplinarian/authoritarian.

5. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, provider of love and affection, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.70$, $p = 0.49$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and

fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, provider of love and affection.

6. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, breadwinner/economic provider, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.16$, $p = 0.875$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, breadwinner/economic provider.

7. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, maintainer of family unity, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.00$, $p = 1.0$. The null hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, maintainer of family unity.

8. There will be no significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behavior, teacher of values and morals, using the FRPT. Utilizing the paired t -test statistic at the 0.05 level of significance, $t(19) = 0.80$, $p = 0.43$. The null

hypothesis was accepted indicating expectant mothers and fathers did not perceive a significant difference in the fathering behavior, teacher of values and morals.

As a group, the expectant fathers perceived the fathering roles (beginning with the most important) to be provider of love and affection, teacher of values and morals, protector of family members, companion to the child, maintainer of family unity, breadwinner/economic provider, provider of infant care, and disciplinarian authoritarian (Table 2). Expectant mothers ranked two of the fathering behaviors, maintainer of family unity and companion to the child, as being equally important. Both expectant fathers and mothers ranked provider of love and affection, teacher of values and morals, protector of family members, companion to the child, and maintainer of family unity as being first, second, third, fourth, and fifth in order of importance, respectively.

The expectant fathers ranked breadwinner/economic provider as sixth in importance, while the expectant mothers ranked this item as seventh in importance. Provider of infant care and disciplinarian/authoritarian were ranked as seventh and eighth in importance by the expectant fathers. Disciplinarian/authoritarian,

Table 2
Fathers' Mean Rank

Fathering Behavior	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Provider of love and affection	2.85	1.60
Teacher of values and morals	3.85	2.39
Protector of family members	4.10	2.27
Companion to the child	4.50	1.96
Maintainer of family unity	4.75	2.15
Breadwinner/economic provider	5.00	2.71
Provider of infant care	5.35	2.54
Disciplinarian/authoritarian	5.60	1.64

breadwinner/economic provider, and provider of infant care were ranked as sixth, seventh, and eighth in importance by the expectant mothers (Table 3). Examination of the individual couples may indicate a need for further consideration in comparing the ranking of the partners in each primiparous couple.

Table 3
Mothers' Mean Rank

Fathering Behavior	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Provider of love and affection	2.45	1.96
Teacher of values and morals	3.85	1.57
Protector of family members	4.00	2.05
Companion to the child	4.65	2.28
Maintainer of family unity	4.65	2.39
Breadwinner/economic provider	5.15	2.18
Provider of infant care	5.55	2.35
Disciplinarian/authoritarian	5.80	1.91

Summary of Findings

This descriptive survey was conducted utilizing eight null hypotheses. The paired t-test statistic was utilized at the 0.05 level of significance to accept or reject each of the hypotheses. All eight null hypotheses were accepted.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

A descriptive survey was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference perceived by either partner in a primiparous couple in the fathering behaviors: companion to the child, provider of infant care, protector of family members, disciplinarian/authoritarian, provider of love and affection, breadwinner/economic provider, maintainer of family unity, and teacher of values and morals using the FRPT. Eight hypotheses were formulated. This chapter includes a summary of how the study was accomplished, a discussion of the findings, conclusions and implications, and recommendations for further study.

Summary

The conceptual framework for this study was based on role theory and role expectations (Hardy, 1978). When an expectant father is preparing for fatherhood, both the expectant father and mother have certain perceptions of him in the fathering role. A descriptive survey was used for this study (Polit & Hungler, 1978). A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to study perceptions of the

fathering roles by expectant couples. In an attempt to control for extraneous variables, only primiparous couples were utilized for the sample.

The participants in the study were obtained from a group of expectant couples attending a series of prenatal classes. A demographic data sheet was attached to each questionnaire to obtain the subject's gender, age, and whether the subject had a previous child.

The data obtained from this study supported the null hypotheses which were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypotheses were accepted.

Discussion of Findings

An evaluation of the results of this study indicated that no significant difference existed between the way partners in primiparous couples perceived the fathering roles. In the past, the father's role has been seen as that of breadwinner and his domain was the working world. As a result of industrialization, urbanization, and sexual equality, the father's role has undergone marked changes. Yet, as Antle (1975) noted, the father's role remains largely undefined.

Benedek (1970), Hines (1971), and Robischon and Scott (1969) stated that the father was traditionally defined as

an authoritarian, disciplinarian, protector, and provider. The present study did not confirm these findings. Both the group of expectant fathers and mothers felt that provider of love and affection was the most important role of the father, while the expectant fathers as a group listed the item, disciplinarian/authoritarian, as the least important of those behaviors listed in the FRPT. The expectant mothers listed this item as sixth in importance. This indicated a possible change in the traditional definition of the fathering role.

The findings of this study are also in contrast with the findings by Ritzman and Camilleri's (1978) study of fathers. These researchers found that others viewed the fathering role primarily as that of breadwinner, although this role did not constitute the totality of the father's role in the family.

Obrzut (1976), after interviewing 20 first-time expectant fathers, found that 85% of the sample identified nurturing, teaching, and providing as important aspects of the fathering role. The sample in Obrzut's (1976) study also indicated concerns about infant care skills. The expectant mothers and fathers of the present study chose provider of love and affection and teacher of values and

morals as the first and second most important roles of the father. The expectant fathers listed provider of infant care as seventh in importance while the expectant mothers listed this item as eighth in importance. One of the expectant fathers in this study's sample commented that the traditional father "missed out" on many of the aspects of parenting. Another expectant father felt that "bringing up" a child should be shared equally by both parents. One expectant mother commented that the father should share in household chores. There were no other comments or suggestions made by the participants.

This study consisted of a small sample, and there was no control for the age, educational level, or previous child care experiences. In addition, the sample was taken from those couples attending prenatal classes; therefore, the expectant fathers and mothers who participated in the study may have been more motivated to actively participate in child care and parenting.

The mean age for the study's sample was 26 for the expectant fathers and 25 for the expectant mothers. The sample may have included participants who learned about parenting when the social definitions and behaviors for the male and female were evolving. However, results

indicated that there was not a significant difference in the way a mother or father of primiparous couples perceived the fathering role.

Conclusions and Implications

There was no significant difference in the categories of the fathering behaviors: companion to the child, provider of infant care, protector of family members, disciplinarian/authoritarian, provider of love and affection, breadwinner/economic provider, maintainer of family unity, and teacher of values and morals. This was demonstrated by a relatively small group of primiparous couples attending prenatal classes. Because pregnancy and childbirth produce changes in an expectant couple's life, conflicts may result. Josselyn (1956) stated that the efficacy of the family as a unit may be dependent on whether the mother and father can fulfill their roles. If the integration of these roles does not occur, then role attainment may suffer and this may, in turn, affect the entire family unit. The results of the present study indicated that the expectant mothers and fathers who participated in this study did agree on how the paternal role was perceived. In each of the fathering behaviors: companion to the child, provider of infant care, protector

of family members, disciplinarian/authoritarian, provider of love and affection, breadwinner/economic provider, maintainer of family unity, and teacher of values and morals, group data revealed that there was no significant difference in the fathering roles as perceived by expectant fathers and mothers of primiparous couples. Perhaps this may be an indication of role complementarity. However, the sample may have included a group of highly motivated individuals who were eager to actively participate in childbearing and childrearing. Although the expectant mothers' and fathers' rankings of the fathering roles appear to agree, the results of individual couples should be further examined.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further research on expectant fatherhood and the father's role is necessary. Content validity and reliability of the FRPT should be tested. Perhaps the use of another statistical method would allow the researcher to further investigate the individual couples.

A replication of this study could include a larger sample size and a more homogeneous sample group. The FRPT could be administered after the child's 1st, 6th, and 12th months in the home. This may indicate a difference in the

father's role. Future studies could include a comparison between groups of fathers who have had past experiences in child care and those who have had no past exposure to child care.

APPENDIX A



Texas Woman's University

P.O. Box 22479, Denton, Texas 76204 (817) 383-2302 Metro 434-1757, Tex-An 834-2133

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

November 18, 1982

Ms. Susan M. Creamean-Mandel
P. O. Box 724
Bedford, TX 76201

Dear Ms. Creamean-Mandel:

Thank you for providing the materials necessary for the final approval of your prospectus in the Graduate Office. I am pleased to approve the prospectus, and I look forward to seeing the results of your study.

If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert S. Pawlowski".
Robert S. Pawlowski
Provost

ap

cc Dr. Anne Gudmundsen
Dr. Gail Watson

APPENDIX B

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING

AGENCY PERMISSION FOR CONDUCTING STUDY*

THE _____

GRANTS TO Susan Marie Creamean-Mandel

a student enrolled in a program of nursing leading to a Master's Degree at Texas Woman's University, the privilege of its facilities in order to study the following problem. Is there a relationship between fathering roles as perceived by expectant, primiparous fathers and expectant, primiparous mothers?

The conditions mutually agreed upon are as follows:

1. The agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
2. The names of consultative or administrative personnel in the agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
3. The agency (wants) (does not want) a conference with the student when the report is completed.
4. The agency is (willing) (unwilling) to allow the completed report to be circulated through interlibrary loan.
5. Other _____

Date: October 21, 1982

Susan M. Creamean-Mandel
Signature of Student

Gail Watson
Signature of Faculty Advisor

*Fill out & sign three copies to be distributed as follows:
Original - Student; First copy - Agency; Second copy - TWU College of Nursing.

APPENDIX C

VERBAL EXPLANATION

My name is Susan Creamean-Mandel, and I am a registered nurse and graduate nursing student at Texas Woman's University. I am conducting research to determine how first-time expectant fathers and mothers view the fathering role. Your participation will better assist nurses in understanding the role of the father, and, in turn, nurses will be able to assist fathers in adjusting to their new roles.

Those of you who are first-time expectant parents and who wish to participate in this study, please remain in the classroom for a few additional minutes. If you decide not to participate in this study, it will have no effect on your participation in the prenatal classes. Results of the study will be available to your group and your prenatal instructor.

APPENDIX D

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RETURN OF MY QUESTIONNAIRE
CONSTITUTES INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT IN THIS
RESEARCH.

FATHERING ROLE PERCEPTION TOOL

Couple Number _____

Instructions: There are many different roles of a father. Listed below are eight of some of those most important roles a father may assume once the baby arrives. Please rank each item in order of importance from 1 to 8 (1 being the most important role of the father and 8 being the least important role of the father). Place the number to the left of each item in the space provided. Do not use the same number more than once.

- _____ Companion to the child
- _____ Provider of infant care
- _____ Protector of family members
- _____ Disciplinarian/authoritarian
- _____ Provider of love and affection
- _____ Breadwinner/economic provider
- _____ Maintainer of family unity
- _____ Teacher of values and morals

Do you have any suggestions or additional items that may help to describe the role of the father? If so, please list them below.

Please return the questionnaire by placing it in the envelope provided at the back of the room. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

APPENDIX E

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RETURN OF MY QUESTIONNAIRE
CONSTITUTES INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A SUBJECT IN THIS
RESEARCH.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Couple Number _____

1. Sex

_____ Male _____ Female

2. How old were you on your last birthday?

_____ years old

3. Do you have any children from a previous relationship?

_____ Yes _____ No

APPENDIX F

INSTRUCTIONS

The questionnaire consists of a list of different roles a father assumes. It is to be answered separately by expectant fathers and mothers. For purposes of this study, please do not discuss your answers with anyone until after completing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is brief and takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. All information received will remain confidential and anonymous. The number placed on each questionnaire is to help in matching the couples' papers.

If you decide not to participate in this study, it will have no effect on your participation in the prenatal classes. If you decide not to participate, please return the blank questionnaire. Return of the completed questionnaire is construed as your consent to participate in the study.

After completing the questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided at the back of the room. I will be available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Susan Creamean-Mandel

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