

A T T I T U D E S O F T E E N A G E R S T O W A R D
C U R R E N T S O C I A L I S S U E S A T
G A I N E S V I L L E H I G H S C H O O L

A THESIS

4161

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND FAMILY LIVING IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
THE TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF
HOUSEHOLD ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY
NAOMI EMBRY AUSTIN, B. S.

DENTON, TEXAS

AUGUST, 1970

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to those who have given guidance and assistance in the completion of this study.

To Dr. Jessie W. Bateman, Dean of the College of Household Arts and Sciences, Texas Woman's University, for her assistance in conducting and editing this study;

To Dr. Dora R. Tyer, Professor of Child Development and Family Living, for her warm personal interest, encouragement, and sincere assistance in the writing of the thesis;

To Dr. Nicholas L. Lund, Assistant Professor of Education, for editing the manuscript and serving on the graduate committee;

Mr. Jim Campbell, Principal of Gainesville High School, Gainesville, Texas, and his staff for granting the investigator permission to make the study, and for cooperation and help in collecting the data for the study;

To her husband, for his constant encouragement, patience, and cooperation.

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Chapter		Page
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
	LIST OF TABLES.	v
	LIST OF FIGURES	vi
I	INTRODUCTION.	1
	Need for Study	1
	Review of Literature	2
	Statement of Problem	13
II	PROCEDURE	14
	Sample	15
	Instrument	16
	Data Analysis.	16
III	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	26
	Student Information Sheet (Part I)	26
	Social Issue Attitude Survey (Part II)	33
	Individual Attitudes.	33
	Parents' Education.	44
IV	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	47
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.	50

L I S T O F T A B L E S

Table		Page
I	DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO GRADE LEVEL, ETHNIC GROUP, AND SEX.	28
II	DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO GRADE LEVEL, ETHNIC GROUP, AND AGE	30
III	DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO RELIGION, GRADE LEVEL, AND ETHNIC GROUP	31
IV	ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS ON SOCIAL ISSUES.	36
V	ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN SEX FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE	39
VI	ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN GRADE LEVELS FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE. . .	40
VII	ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE . .	42
VIII	DIFFERENCES IN TOTAL ATTITUDES BETWEEN SEX, GRADE LEVELS AND ETHNIC GROUPS AS INDICATED BY 352 PARTICIPANTS	43
IX	COMPARISONS OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS ACCORDING TO MOTHERS' FORMAL EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND. . . .	45
X	COMPARISONS OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS ACCORDING TO FATHERS' FORMAL EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND. . . .	46

L I S T O F F I G U R E S

Figure		Page
1	Schematic Conception of Attitudes.	8
2	Level of Parents' Education of 352 Participants	32
3	Persons Who Influence Teenagers' Attitudes Toward Today's Issues.	34
4	Difference in Attitudes of 352 Participants Between Protestants and Catholics on Social Issues	37

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

NEED FOR STUDY

Today's youth lives in a complex innovating society composed of various demands and purposes. Possibly the greatest demand placed upon the teenager is social acceptance by the peer group. The degree of success enjoyed by the teenager through social acceptance is determined by the teenager to establish rapport with peers.

The teenager's chief concern is acceptance by peers; and a continued striving to understand the adult world. Young people question the adult, oriented society; and doubt the effectiveness of the adult rules and regulations concerning the environment.

A concise definition of attitude must be determined before an attempt is made to survey teenagers' beliefs and opinions. According to Young (31), an attitude is an incomplete, suspended or inhibited act. A person's attitude is a definite phase of behavior. The individual is born with some behavior patterns, whatever they may be called or from whatever source they may be derived, the genes of the

environment. These go into action under the stimulus of the environment and as a result of the necessity of making an adjustment to the conditions of survival. Fishbein (14) stated that

. . . an attitude has one value in the sense that it acts as a stimulus to produce another response, but it also is a drive in the sense that its tension is reduced through subsequent behavior leading to a reward.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is assumed that the manner in which the individual reacts to any particular situation in which a person finds himself depends not simply upon the character of the thousands of stimuli which are bombarding the individual, but also upon the character of the attitudes at that particular time and place. According to Britt (6), these attitudes are learned. Attitudes are dependent in large measure upon social conditioning; Allport (1) suggested there may be a hereditary basis for attitudes; but Rokeach (24) stated that most other writers agree that attitudes are learned.

Campbell (7) noted that as a child grows up those around the child will direct their efforts both intentionally and unintentionally toward the task of shaping the individual to conform to a particular social mold. At the same time, as stated by Katz (17), the child expends part of his energy

in smoothing rough edges that do not fit society's model; but the child also designs certain portions of the mold that when tried on for size, prove particularly chafing to the edges of a person's own individuality. At this stage, according to Sherif (27), socialization and personality development move side by side in a fashion far from perfect, yet reasonably effective.

It is noted that during the child's social growth, the child naturally learns about many different substantive areas of life, including institutions, events, people, and even the states that the child and other individuals experience. As the child develops attitudes and opinions concerning beliefs and environment, the social process emerges.

Thibant (30) maintained that individuals vary in what they prefer, believe, and value. Some of the fundamentals that determine the individuals beliefs, attitudes and values are family socialization, peer group influence, specific events in the child's past, sources of anxiety, basic strivings, mechanisms of defense, aptitudes and skills, education, income, occupation, and the mass media.

Allport (1) suggested that all attitudes are learned through the principles of learning. Dewey (10) stated that the nature of an attitude is an acquired predisposition to ways or modes of response, not to particular acts except as

under special conditions, these express a way of behaving. According to Rokeach (24) an attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner. An attitude is not a basic, irreducible element within the personality, but represents a cluster of syndromes of two or more interrelated elements.

According to Sherif (28), attitudes are formed in relation to objects, persons, and values which may or may not have motivational appeal at first. Almost any food may satisfy hunger but a person may develop a special liking for a special food, even for a special eating place, and even a special table in that eating place. When these particular likes or dislikes are more or less fixated, attitudes have been formed in relation to a particular object.

Sherif (28) further stated that attitudes are not innate but are formed as a result of the individual's contact with his environment. Attitudes are learned or conditioned.

Riley (23) revealed that research findings point out that a child is molded and guided by attitudes, values and aspirations of the family. Sherif (27) believed the individual is forced to respect and uphold the values of the family, school, church, or other institution in which he is a member. The very fact of memberships and participation in

group activity or ceremony makes certain standardized values or practices sacred, justifiable, right, honorable, or dutiful in the individual's eyes. Consequently, the attitudes of an individual in relation to such activities or practices become affectively changed.

Newcomb (20) theorized that attitudes most important in daily life are social attitudes; attitudes formed in relation to other individuals, groups, institutions, tools and technology, standardized values, or norms. These are attitudes that really determine an individual's reaction to other people, other groups, and that map out for the individual the main boundaries of experience and taste. Most of their social attitudes are transmitted by short-cut verbal value judgments. Words are the most common medium for both the formation and the expression of social attitudes. Although it is known that social attitudes of others are learned largely from the words they use, most individuals do have many quite personal attitudes not related to social values, which they seldom if ever express. If the individual is approached concerning likes or dislikes, attitudes will be expressed. All attitudes, whether social or non-social, whether verbalized or nonverbalized, function essentially according to the same psychological principles; there may be differences of content, richness, or endurance. Sherif (28) pointed out that although the psychology of value is involved in the psychology

of attitudes, it should be borne in mind that social values are essentially the data of the social sciences. According to Cantril (8), social psychologists become interested in and concerned with social values simply because social values are part, and an important part of the stimuli that surround man and, through stimulation, influence the individual.

Erikson (13) believed that should a child feel that if the environment tries to deprive the child too radically of all the forms of expression which permits the child to develop and integrate the next step of ego identity, the child will resist with the astonishing strength encountered in animals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives. In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of ego identity. To understand this would be to understand the trouble of adolescents effectively, those desperately seeking for a satisfactory sense of belonging, be it cliques or gangs.

Riley (23) emphasized that the parents responsibility for the growth of a happy, wholesome, purposeful home life has been developed at length because the influence of the family environment molds a child surely and permanently. Parents need to do a better job of family life education in the home by example and education likewise in the school by instruction. Education not only imports facts but shapes

attitudes; builds values and provides incentives. Education for family values must come early to do some good, starting in elementary school and continuing through college.

Rosenberg and Hovland (25) prepared a diagram to indicate that attitudes are predispositions to respond to some class of stimuli with certain classes of responses and designate the three major types of response as cognitive, affective, and behavioral. (See Figure 1.)

The study by Katz and Braly (17) was an early attempt to investigate the cognitive content of attitudes. A well known finding from this study was that prejudiced respondents were markedly similar in the "traits" they attributed to members of disliked ethnic groups. A further study by Katz (17) reported that attitudes are characterized through some index of overt behavior.

As stated by Newcomb (20) individuals are more satisfied by "consistent" arrangements of related responses than by "inconsistent" arrangements. The adolescent will respond better to discipline or rules if the rules are consistent and not changing constantly. Individuality is an important aspect to the adolescent.

Katz (17) indicated that the functional approach is the attempt to understand the reasons people hold certain

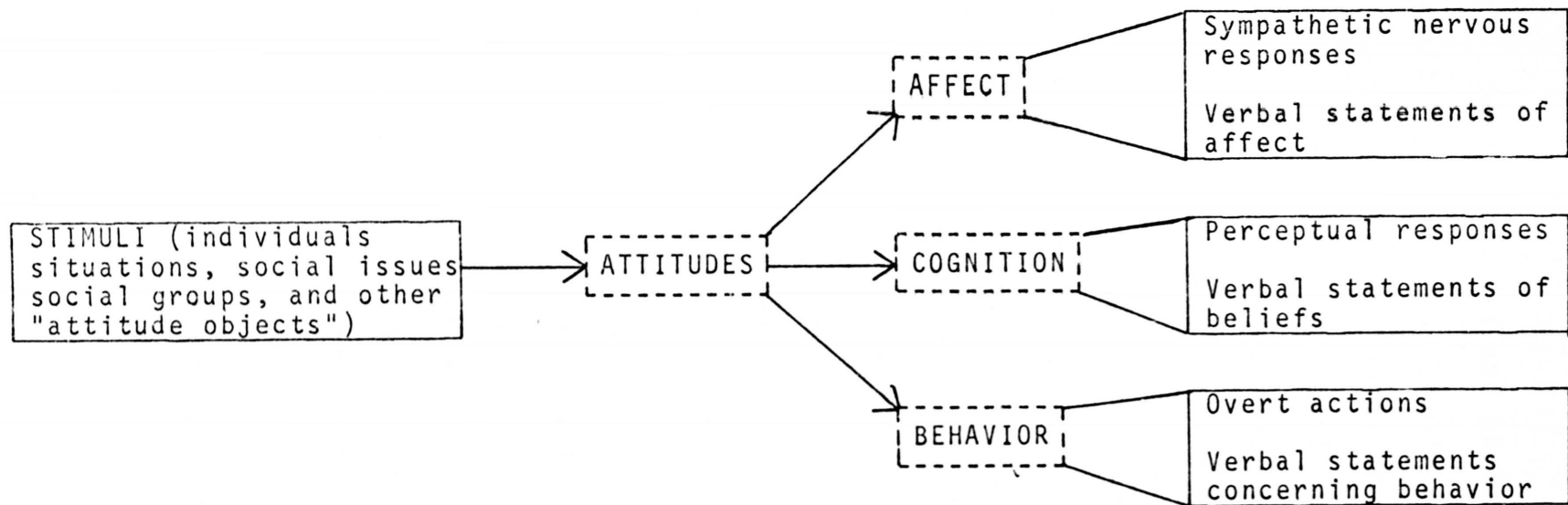


Figure 1
Schematic Conception of Attitudes

attitudes. Both attitudes and habits are formed toward specific objects, people, and symbols as they satisfy specific needs. The closer these objects are to actual need satisfaction, the greater are the probabilities of positive attitude formation. Doob (12) stated that the "strength" of an attitude is almost as ambiguous as the concept of attitude itself.

Rokeach (24) believed that attitudes concerning values are dramatic in their impact on the individual. Once a value is internalized it becomes consciously or unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations, for justifying one's own actions. A value, unlike an attitude, is a standard or yardstick to guide actions, attitudes, comparisons, evaluations, and justifications of self and others.

Rokeach (24) further stated many social factors can be expected to restrict sharply the number of obtained variations. Culture, social system, group and class, sex, occupation, education, religious upbringing, and political orientation are major variables that are likely to shape in more or less similar ways the value systems of large numbers of people.

Fishbein (14) stated that in many cases an individual's attitude toward a class of people or objects has been

measured, and this attitude has been used in an attempt to predict the individual's behavior with respect to a particular member of that class. The subject frequently measured attitude toward "Negroes" and then attempted to predict behavior with respect to a particular Negro individual. If the subject were asked to describe a "Negro" the individual would give a very different set of responses than if asked to describe Martin Luther King, George Washington Carver, or Booker T. Washington. Thus an individual may try to predict which group members a particular member will choose as friends or as co-workers. Bale's (2) research has provided strong evidence that the person an individual may like the best and the person an individual most like to work with are usually two different people.

Deaux (9) revealed in a study of attitude change the expectation of the individual and the individual's exposure to relevant information were varied to determine anticipatory shifts in belief than did students who did not expect such an opportunity for public defense. Free choice of relevant information prior to a statement of belief served both as a measure of anticipatory processes and as a mediating influence on attitude change.

Haaland (15) hypothesized that individuals would change their attitudes more if distracted during the presentation

of a persuasive communication, less attitude change occurred in the distraction conditions. The students involved were 244 male and female undergraduates. Distracted students were also less able to recall arguments presented in the persuasive communications. The results were interpreted as supporting a learning theory approach to distraction and attitude change.

Sears (26) determined the effects of aroused and chronic social anxiety upon 1) opinion change following a persuasive communication, 2) opinion presentation, and 3) opinion structure. The relationship between opinion structure and change was also examined. Social anxiety was aroused by telling students they would interact with a highly critical peer about an issue the individual felt relatively uninformed. Aroused social anxiety increased opinion change, regardless of whether it was aroused by varying the criticalness of the interaction partner or varying anticipation of interaction. Chronic social anxiety was not related to opinion change. There was some tendency for opinions to be less differentiated and less centralized under high aroused social anxiety. Centralization of opinion was positively related to opinion change under high pressure to change, but negatively related to change under low pressure.

Stachowiak and Moss (29) found that hypnosis is a highly effective methodological tool for studying the

organization and modification of beliefs and attitudes. In a study to check sex differences in attitude change, 29 subjects composed of 13 men and 16 women were tested under hypnosis. As might be expected, the women generally changed their attitude more as a result of hypnotic suggestion than did men.

In a provocative book, Bloom (5) maintained that much of the development of individual characteristics takes place at a very young age. He reported for example, that by the age of two at least one-third of the variance in the intellectual interest, dependency, and aggression of adolescents is predictable. One self-report instrument identified that more change appears to take place in the first two years of college than at any time during the next 10 to 20 years of an individual's life.

According to Osgood (21) whenever a person reads a book or newspaper, listens to the beliefs statements of others or even ruminates within his own storehouse of concepts, the person is exposed to assertions which are likely to be incongruent to some degree with existing frame of reference.

McCalib (19) summarized that attitudes are inconsistent. Those that are expressed may differ drastically from those that are genuine, and the distinction probably can never be wholly clarified.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This study was undertaken to investigate the attitudes of sophomore and senior students from a selected high school to determine the differences, if any, in attitudes. The specific purposes for the study include the following:

- 1) Investigate teenagers' attitudes toward selected current social issues;
- 2) Compare teenagers' attitudes at the different grade levels;
- 3) Analyze difference in attitudes between males and females;
- 4) Compare attitudes related to different ethnic groups; and
- 5) Explore the relationship of parents' formal education to current social attitudes of teenagers.

CHAPTER II

P R O C E D U R E

The present study was concerned primarily with current social attitudes of senior high school boys and girls toward 1) boys with long hair, 2) smoking marijuana, 3) social drinking, 4) United States participation in Vietnam, 5) student disorders, and 6) belief in God.

The place and setting of the study was the Gainesville High School of the Gainesville Independent School District of Gainesville, Texas. The Gainesville High School is housed in a modern plant consisting of grades 9 through 12 with an enrollment of 1,041 students, of that figure 47 are black students.

Gainesville has a population of 13,565 which has remained almost constant for the past 10 years (11). The residents of this small city are conservative in action and in their attitudes toward contemporary issues.

Prior to undertaking the study, the investigator conferred with the high school principal and explained the survey forms and the purpose of the study. Plans were made

late in the spring of 1970 for administering the survey forms to the classes to participate in the study.

SAMPLE

Permission was granted by the principal of the high school to administer the instruments in the English classes. Each sophomore and senior English teacher was contacted by the investigator for cooperation. The instruments were distributed to all sophomore and senior English teachers. The teachers were instructed concerning administering the instruments at the time of distribution. The instruments were administered the following day to all sophomore and senior English classes by the English teacher in charge. The instruments were administered only to the students present that day and no effort was made to administer instruments to absentees. The instruments were collected at the end of the day by the investigator.

Data for this study were secured from 162 senior students consisting of 81 boys and 81 girls, and 190 sophomore students of which 111 were boys and 79 were girls. Data were collected during the latter part of the second semester of 1969-1970.

INSTRUMENT

A two part instrument was used to collect data for the study. Part I was the "Student Information Sheet" and Part II was the "Current Social Issues" check sheets.

In order to secure information concerning student background, Part I of the instrument was concerned primarily with information about the student. This part of the questionnaire was developed by the investigator. The purpose of this instrument was to collect information in the following areas: 1) personal information; 2) whom they received the most information concerning today's issues; 3) ethnic group; and 4) parents' education.

Part II of the instrument included an instruction sheet and six topics on current social issues scaled from 1 to 7 with Number 4 being neutral for each question. The students were asked to circle the number that best expressed their attitude concerning each question on the particular issue.

DATA ANALYSIS

A comparison of teenager's attitudes toward selected current social issues at sophomore and senior level; difference in attitudes between male and female students; and compared attitudes related to difference between the white and black students was made. A one-way analysis of variance was

applied to determine the possible significance of differences. For the purpose of this study the .05 level was considered significant in evaluating the attitudes. To explore the relationship of parents' formal education to current social attitudes of teenagers, a correlation was made.

A copy of the two instruments follow.

S T U D E N T I N F O R M A T I O N S H E E T

PART I

Directions: Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible. It is important that you answer every question. All answers will be completely confidential.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sex: | 2. Grade level: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Junior |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior |
-
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 2. Ethnic group: | 4. Age: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negro | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Latin | |
-
5. Religious preference:
-
- ☐
- Catholic
-
- ☐
- Protestant
-
- ☐
- Jewish
-
- ☐
- Other
-
- ☐
- None
-
-
6. My attitudes toward today's issues are most influenced by:
-
- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Brothers and sisters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Father | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
-
7. Father's education:
-
- ☐
- Grade school
-
- ☐
- High school
-
- ☐
- Some college
-
- ☐
- College graduate
-
-
8. Mother's education:
-
- ☐
- Grade school
-
- ☐
- High school
-
- ☐
- Some college
-
- ☐
- College graduate

PART II

Directions: Various current social issues are listed on the following pages. Please circle the number that is nearest to the way you feel.

For example:

Law and Order

Unsuccessful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Successful

- 1 - extremely unsuccessful
- 2 - moderately unsuccessful
- 3 - slightly unsuccessful
- 4 - neutral feeling
- 5 - slightly successful
- 6 - moderately successful
- 7 - extremely successful

The number you circle indicates your feelings. Please RATE EVERY WORD on each section. There is no time limit to do these ratings, but it is better to work rapidly and to put down your first impression.

Thank you for your cooperation.

UnsuccessfulSuccessful

Extremely	1					5	Slightly
Moderately	2		Neutral	4		6	Moderately
Slightly	3					7	Extremely

BOYS WITH LONG HAIR

1. Do you think there is anything wrong with boys having long hair?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. Do you think that long hair will be harmful to a boy securing a job?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. Does long hair on boys show a character type?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. Does long hair express a negative attitude toward to-day's social trends?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Can one determine the intelligence of a boy by the length of his hair?

Unintel- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Intelli-
ligent gent

6. In general, do you think long hair serves a useful purpose?

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

UnsuccessfulSuccessful

Extremely	1					5	Slightly
Moderately	2	Neutral	4			6	Moderately
Slightly	3					7	Extremely

SOCIAL DRINKING

1. Do you think drinking of alcoholic beverages only when you are with the crowd is right?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. Would drinking just on occasions be harmful to the body?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. Does joining the crowd for a drink when you really do not approve show a weak person?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. If you did not join the crowd for a drink, would this show a negative attitude?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Since so many drink, do you feel that it could affect the thinking power of the person?

Unintel- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Intelli-
ligent gent

6. Do you feel that on certain occasions, social drinking would be useful?

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

UnsuccessfulSuccessful

Extremely	1					5	Slightly
Moderately	2	Neutral	4			6	Moderately
Slightly	3					7	Extremely

USING MARIJUANA

1. Do you feel that marijuana should be legalized?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. Do you think that the use of marijuana will be harmful to your body in future years?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. If you refuse to smoke marijuana, would you be looked down upon as a person?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. In your opinion, teenagers that smoke marijuans show a rebellious attitude toward society?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Do you feel that the use of marijuana will affect your thinking power?

Little 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Much

6. Since so many teenagers are experimenting with marijuana, do you feel that they are finding it

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

<u>Unsuccessful</u>			<u>Successful</u>		
Extremely	1	Neutral	4	5	Slightly
Moderately	2			6	Moderately
Slightly	3			7	Extremely

UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION IN VIETNAM

1. Do you feel that the United States should have to participate in the Vietnam War?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. How do you feel about the United States being in Vietnam?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. Do you think that our participation in the Vietnam War will make the United States a better country?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. What is your attitude concerning the United States and its involvement in the Vietnam War?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Do you feel that it is very good thinking on the part of our leaders to have participated in the Vietnam War for our country?

Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Good

6. In your opinion, do you feel that our participation in Vietnam has served a justified purpose?

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

UnsuccessfulSuccessful

Extremely	1					5	Slightly
Moderately	2		Neutral	4		6	Moderately
Slightly	3					7	Extremely

STUDENT DISORDERS

1. Do you feel that student disorders in our colleges and other places have been justified?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. After your observation of student disorders do you feel that the students have benefited?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. Do you feel that participating in student disorders will show character of a student?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. A student that participates in student disorders would show negative or positive attitudes?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Do you feel that organized student disorders show intelligent thinking?

Unintelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Intelligent

6. Do you feel that students have gained anything good from student disorders that could not have been solved through some other method?

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

UnsuccessfulSuccessful

Extremely	1					5	Slightly
Moderately	2		Neutral	4		6	Moderately
Slightly	3					7	Extremely

BELIEF IN GOD

1. Is it your belief that there is a God?

Wrong 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Right

2. Do you feel that your belief in God would be helpful to you in all aspects of life?

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

3. Do you feel that belief in God will make you a better person?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

4. Would your outlook on life and your reactions to other people's wishes be more tolerant if you had belief in God?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

5. Do you consider a belief in God to be a part of your total preparation for success?

Negative 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Positive

6. Do you feel you would have a better chance in finding a job or success in a profession if you had a belief in God?

Useless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Useful

CHAPTER III

P R E S E N T A T I O N A N D A N A L Y S I S O F D A T A

The investigation was designed for the purpose of observing today's attitudes of teenagers toward current social issues: boys with long hair, social drinking, smoking marijuana, United States participation in Vietnam, student disorders, and belief in God. An effort was made to determine the relationship between males and females and maturity in attitudes. A relationship was studied between parent's formal education and attitudes of teenagers.

The sample consisted of 352 students, 160 girls and 192 boys, who were enrolled in the second semester English II and English IV classes at Gainesville High School, Gainesville, Texas.

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET (PART I)

The first instrument, Part I, a "Student Information Sheet," was designed to obtain personal and family background information. Part I revealed all participants were sophomore or senior students. There were 14 incomplete sophomore

questionnaires and 13 incomplete senior questionnaires that were discarded leaving a total of 352 completed survey forms suitable for analysis.

The personal and family background information showed that the distribution of males and females was similar with 54.5 per cent males and 45.5 per cent females. The participants were of the black and white ethnic groups. There was a much larger percentage of white than black. There were 336 or 95.4 per cent white participants while there were 16 or 4.6 per cent of black participants. Table I shows that there was the same number of black students in the sophomore and senior class which was eight or 2.3 per cent of the total number in each class. There were more white males in both the sophomore, 106 or 29.9 per cent, and senior, 78 or 22.0 per cent, than females. The white females numbered 76 or 21.5 per cent for the sophomore class while the senior class numbered 78 or 22.0 per cent of the total number of participants.

The distribution of study participants according to age, ethnic group, and grade level showed 57 sophomores, 15 years old, including 56 white or 15.9 per cent and one black student 0.3 per cent. The largest number 115, 32.6 per cent white students, three, or 0.9 per cent black students, were in the 16 year old age group. The 17 year old group showed a distribution of 11 white sophomores, 3.1 per cent, and four

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO GRADE LEVEL,
ETHNIC GROUP AND SEX

Grade Level Ethnic Group	Sex			
	Male		Female	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Sophomore				
White	106	30.0	76	21.7
Black	5	1.4	3	0.9
Senior				
White	78	22.2	76	21.5
Black	3	0.9	5	1.4

black students, 1.1 per cent. In the senior group, age 17, there were 68 white students, 19.3 per cent; two black students, 0.6 per cent. The largest number of white senior students, 84, 23.8 per cent were 18 years of age and five black students, 1.4 per cent. The age group of 19 years, a total of three, 0.9 per cent, included two whites, and one black student. Summary findings as to the distribution of sophomore and senior students according to age, grade level, and ethnic groups are shown in Table II.

The distribution of study participants according to religion, grade level, and ethnic group indicated that 83.5 per cent were Protestants and 13.6 per cent Catholics. There were no black sophomore or senior Catholic students. Twenty-eight white sophomores, 8.0 per cent, expressed a Catholic preference and 20 senior white students, 5.6 per cent. Protestants were the largest number, 149 sophomores, 42.2 per cent, and 131 white seniors, 37.1 per cent. A total of 2.9 per cent did not express a religious preference, Table III.

Figure 2 reveals the number of teenagers and their mothers' and fathers' level of education. The largest number of parents, 196 or 55.6 per cent mothers and 169 or 45.1 per cent fathers had a high school education. Sixty-five fathers or 18.4 per cent and 50 or 14.2 per cent mothers had

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO GRADE LEVEL,
ETHNIC GROUP, AND AGE

Grade Level Ethnic Group	Age in Years									
	15		16		17		18		19	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Sophomore										
White	56	15.9	115	32.6	11	3.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Black	1	0.3	3	0.9	4	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Senior										
White	0	0.0	0	0.0	68	19.3	84	23.8	2	0.6
Black	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.6	5	1.4	1	0.3

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS AS TO RELIGION,
GRADE LEVEL, AND ETHNIC GROUP

Grade Level Ethnic Group	Religion					
	Catholic		Protestant		None	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Sophomore						
White	28	8.0	149	42.2	5	1.4
Black	0	0.0	7	2.1	1	0.3
Senior						
White	20	5.6	131	37.1	3	0.9
Black	0	0.0	7	2.1	1	0.3

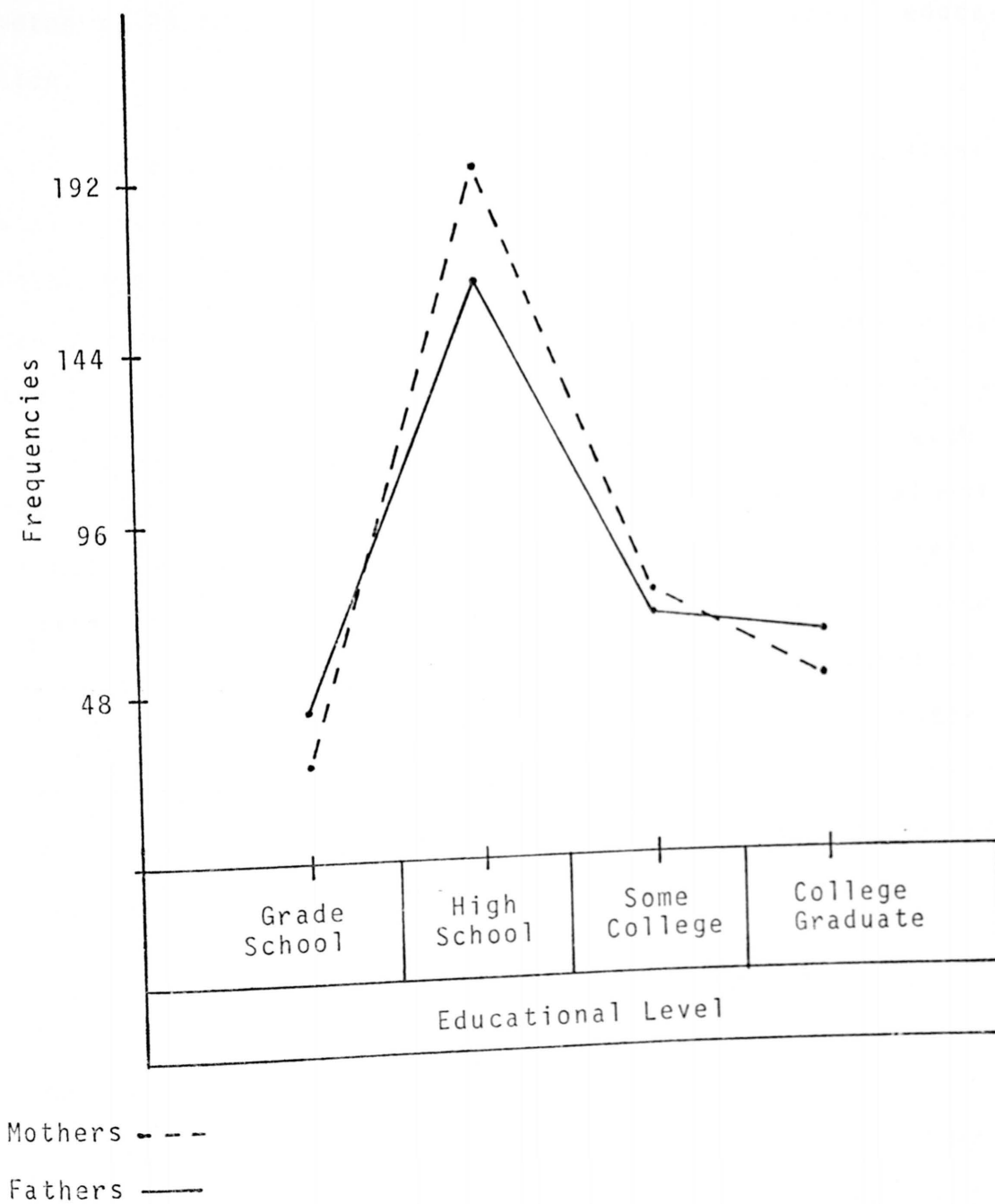


Figure 2
Level of Parents' Education of
352 Participants

a college degree. More fathers, 41 or 14.5 per cent, than mothers, 23 or 6.5 per cent, had only a grade school education.

Data indicated that today's teenagers received their attitudes on social issues from the peer group, Figure 3. Both males, 95 or 26.9 per cent, and females, 69 or 19.6 per cent, were influenced by friends most often; the mother was the next most influential with 49 or 13.9 per cent males and 53 or 14.7 per cent females. A study by Bischof (3) with 440 students in 16 American colleges indicated that almost as much deviation from as conformance to parental beliefs existed. Keniston (18) noted that the mother had a greater influence on the son than did the father. The group that influenced the teenagers least was the brother and sister group; only nine, 2.5 per cent, males and eight, 2.2 per cent, females expressed influence from the brother and sister group.

SOCIAL ISSUE ATTITUDE SURVEY (PART II)

Individual Attitudes

Findings from Part II "Social Issue Attitude Survey" revealed the differences in attitudes between Protestants and Catholics toward selected current social issues. When the one-way analysis of variance was applied using the .05 level

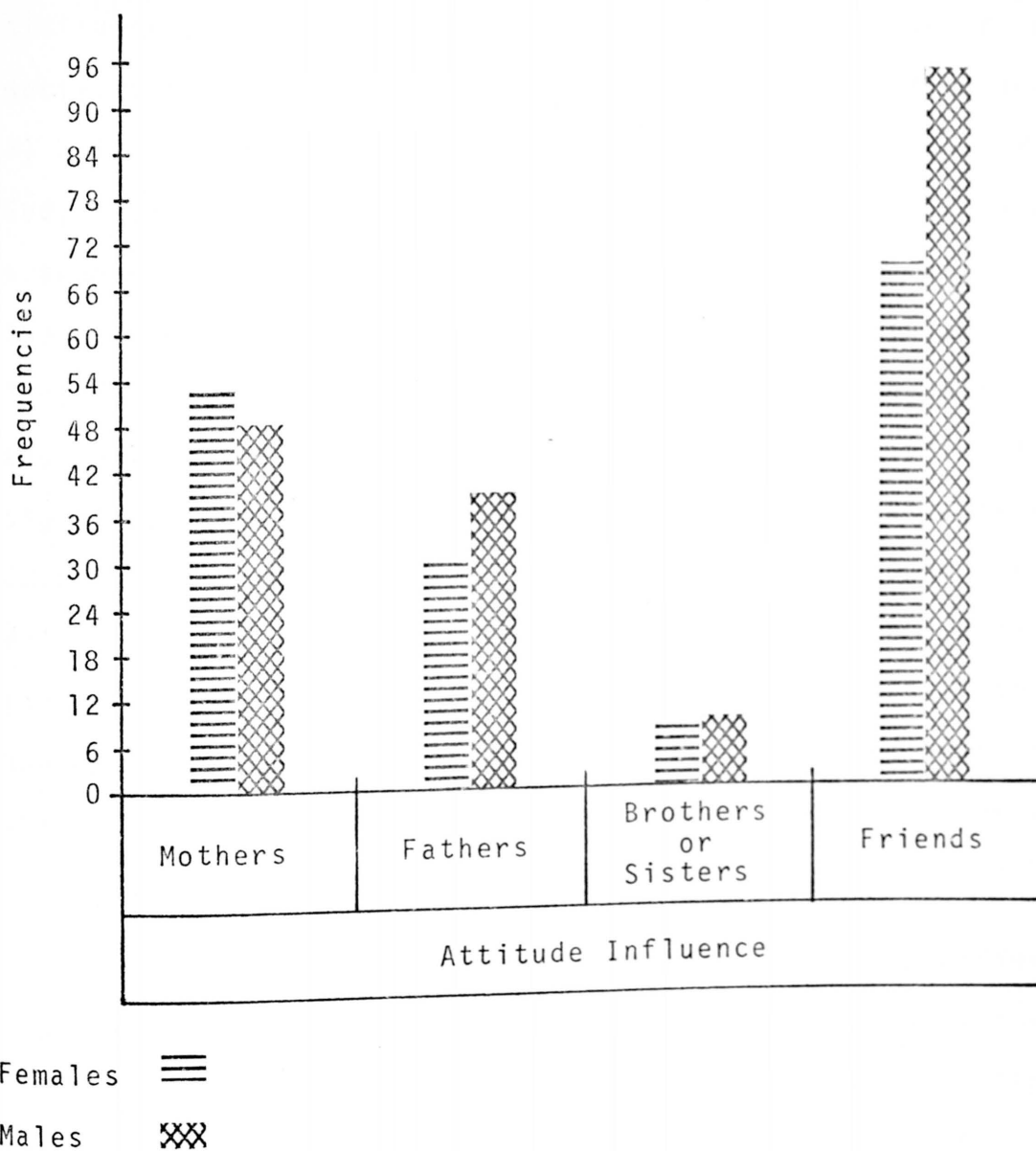


Figure 3
Persons Who Influence Teenagers'
Attitudes Toward
Today's Issues

there was no statistically significant difference in the attitudes between Protestants and Catholics on four of the social issues: 1) smoking marijuana, 2) student disorders, 3) United States participation in Vietnam, and 4) belief in God, Table IV. The social issue, student disorders, showed a tendency toward being significant at the .05 level, with the Catholics tending to be more favorable in opinion toward "belief in God" than the Protestants. The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference between attitudes of Protestants and Catholics on social issues: boys with long hair and social drinking. The Catholics were significantly ($p < .05$) more favorable than Protestants on attitudes toward social drinking and boys with long hair. Hartnett (16) found that the similarity in responses of Catholics and Protestants were too slight to be regarded as significant.

Figure 4 shows how Protestants and Catholics differ in their expression of attitudes toward current social issues. Catholics show a slightly higher mean on all issues except the "United States participation in Vietnam" where the Protestants were 0.2 per cent higher in mean than the Catholics.

No significant difference was found between male and female attitudes on the following social issues: 1) boys

TABLE IV
ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN PROTESTANTS
AND CATHOLICS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Social Issue	Catholics			Protestants			F-value	Probability
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.		
Boys with long hair	48	25.2	6.82	294	21.9	7.31	8.151	<.01
Social drinking	48	24.3	7.18	294	19.3	8.86	13.364	<.001
Smoking marijuana	48	10.8	8.80	294	10.8	8.46	0.002	n.s.
United States participation in Vietnam	48	26.7	10.13	294	27.8	10.03	0.539	n.s.
Student disorders	48	18.7	10.04	294	15.7	9.83	3.825	n.s.
Belief in God	48	40.4	3.39	294	40.4	4.10	0.006	n.s.

Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/340

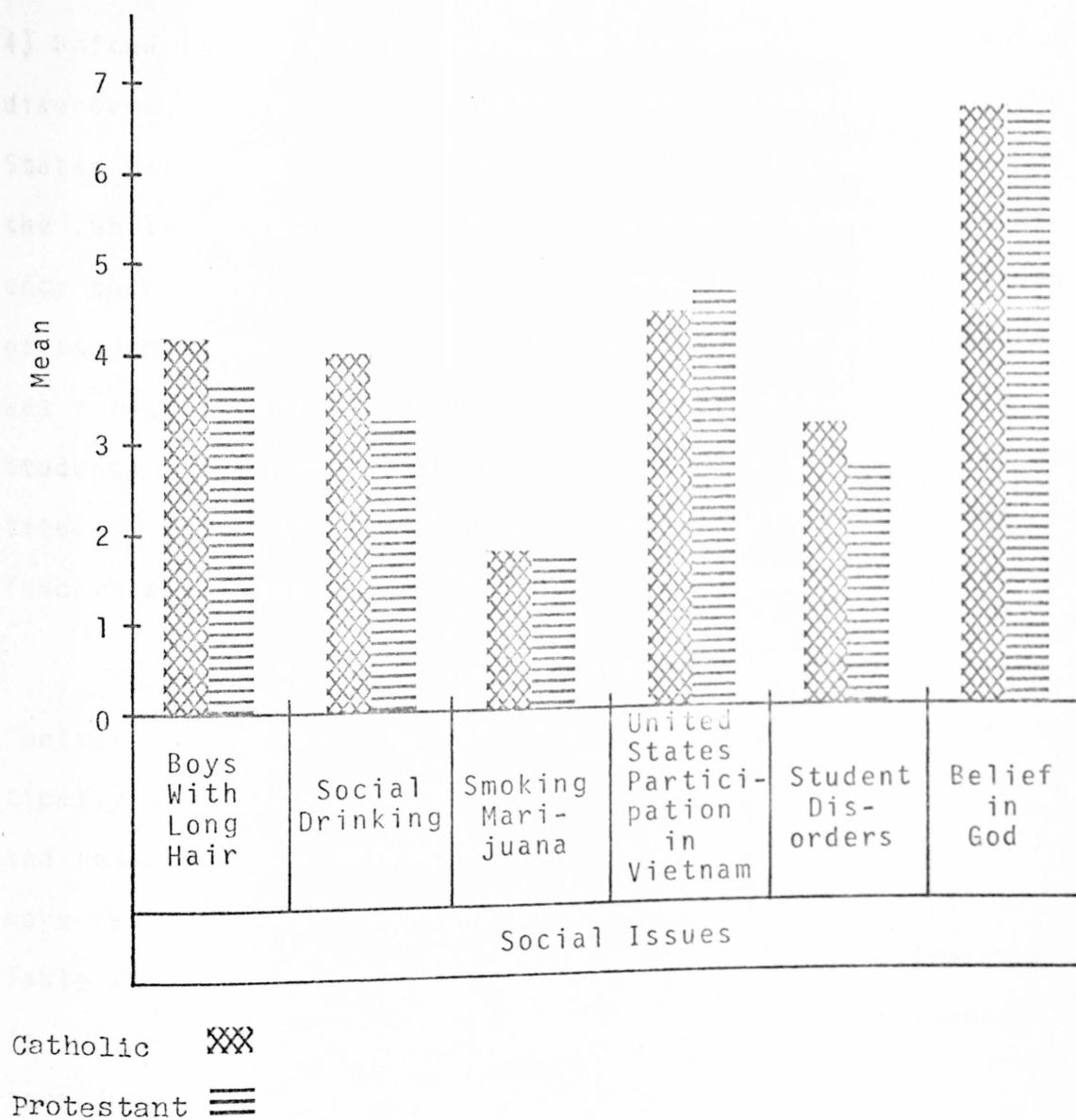


Figure 4

Difference in Attitudes of 352 Participants
Between Protestants and Catholics on
Social Issues

with long hair, 2) social drinking, 3) smoking marijuana, 4) United States participation in Vietnam, and 5) student disorders, Table V. Two social issues, drinking and United States participation in Vietnam, approached significance at the .05 level with the boys showing a more favorable tendency than girls. In a study by Prusok (22) on the attitude of students toward use of alcohol, it was found that there was a significant difference between the male and female students. The female students indicated a less punitive attitude. Blane (4) found boys to hold significantly more favorable attitudes toward the use of alcohol than girls.

The null hypothesis was rejected on the social issue "belief in God" at the .005 level; thus there was a statistically significant difference in attitude between the male and female toward belief in God. Girls were significantly more favorable than boys on attitudes toward belief in God. Table VI revealed that there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) between attitudes of sophomore and senior students toward current social issues.

The one-way analysis was applied on attitude difference between black and white students on current social issues for statistical analysis. The results pointed out that there was no statistical significance ($p > .05$) between white and black students in attitudes toward two of the social issues, boys

TABLE V
ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN SEX
FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE

Social Issue	Male			Female			F-value	Probability
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.		
Boys with long hair	192	22.2	7.32	160	22.9	7.33	0.66	n.s.
Social drinking	192	20.8	9.23	160	19.0	8.38	3.81	n.s.
Smoking marijuana	192	11.5	9.18	160	10.2	7.80	1.96	n.s.
United States participation in Vietnam	192	28.3	10.57	160	26.2	9.64	3.50	n.s.
Student disorders	192	15.9	10.22	160	16.7	9.71	0.44	n.s.
Belief in God	192	39.5	5.18	160	41.0	2.67	10.75	<.005

Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350

TABLE VI
ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN GRADE
LEVELS FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE

Social Issue	Sophomore			Senior			F-value	Probability
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.		
Boys with long hair	190	22.3	6.81	162	22.8	7.89	.44	n.s.
Social drinking	190	20.3	8.47	162	19.6	9.36	.62	n.s.
Smoking marijuana	190	10.7	8.23	162	11.2	9.02	.35	n.s.
United States participation in Vietnam	190	27.7	9.76	162	26.9	10.69	.64	n.s.
Student disorders	190	16.1	9.78	162	16.4	10.25	.07	n.s.
Belief in God	190	40.0	4.27	162	40.4	4.31	.53	n.s.

Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350

with long hair and belief in God, although the difference in opinions about boys with long hair approached significance at the .05 level, with the black students giving a more favorable opinion. The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference in attitude between black and white students on four of the social issues: 1) social drinking, 2) smoking marijuana, 3) United States participation in Vietnam, and 4) student disorders. The black students were significantly more favorable in their opinions than the white students toward social drinking, smoking marijuana, and student disorders. The white students were significantly more favorable in attitudes toward United States participation in Vietnam than the black students, Table VII.

Differences in total attitudes between sex, grade levels, and ethnic groups were grouped for 352 participants. Table VIII indicated no statistical significant difference in attitudes toward current social issues between the total group of males and females, or between sophomores and seniors. In contrast, there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes on current social issues between black and white students. The black students were significantly ($p < .05$) more favorable than white students in overall attitudes, including, boys with long hair, social drinking, smoking marijuana, United States participation in Vietnam, student disorders,

TABLE VII
ATTITUDE DIFFERENCE OF 352 PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN ETHNIC
GROUPS FOR EACH SOCIAL ISSUE

Social Issue	White			Black			F-value	Probability
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.		
Boys with long hair	336	22.3	7.29	16	25.8	7.43	3.44	n.s.
Social drinking	336	19.8	8.82	16	24.4	9.42	4.13	<.05
Smoking marijuana	336	10.6	8.10	16	17.7	14.32	10.63	<.01
United States participation in Vietnam	336	27.7	9.92	16	20.7	13.47	7.18	<.01
Student disorders	336	16.0	9.83	16	21.2	12.01	4.11	<.05
Belief in God	336	40.2	4.19	16	39.3	5.98	.69	n.s.

Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350

TABLE VIII
DIFFERENCES IN TOTAL ATTITUDES BETWEEN SEX, GRADE
LEVELS AND ETHNIC GROUPS AS INDICATED BY
352 PARTICIPANTS

Attitude	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-value	Proba- bility
Sex					
Male	192	138.5	24.80	.7409	n.s.
Female	160	132.2	23.00		
Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350					
Grade level					
Sophomore	190	137.4	22.74	.0006	n.s.
Senior	162	137.5	25.43		
Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350					
Ethnic group					
White	336	136.9	22.83	4.1600	<.05
Black	16	149.4	39.92		
Table F (.05) = 3.89, df = 1/350					

and belief in God. The white students were significantly more favorable than black students on one specific attitude, United States participation in Vietnam.

Parents' Education

When the analysis of variance was applied to the relationship of mothers' or fathers' education to attitudes of teenagers toward current social issues, as can be seen in Tables IX and X, the null hypothesis could not be rejected at the .05 level for any of the comparisons; therefore, there was no statistically significant relationship between students' attitude toward current social issues and either of their parents' formal education.

The analysis from the random sample showed that there was no significant difference in total attitudes of today's teenagers toward current social issues between high school males and females but there was a significant difference in attitude toward belief in God. There was no significant difference in attitudes toward current social issues between the sophomore and senior students. There were differences in attitudes toward various social issues between the black and white students. The data taken from the random sample indicated that parents' formal education seemed to have no significant effect on some of the attitudes of teenagers of today.

TABLE IX
COMPARISONS OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS
ACCORDING TO MOTHERS' FORMAL EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND

Social Issue		Grade School	High School	Some College	College Graduate	F- value	Proba- bility
Boys with long hair	N	23	196	83	50	1.06	n.s.
	x	24.26	22.09	23.38	22.22		
	SD	7.94	7.46	6.52	7.56		
Social drinking	N	23	196	83	50	.87	n.s.
	x	22.04	19.77	20.73	18.92		
	SD	11.08	8.84	8.26	8.79		
Smoking marijuana	N	23	196	83	50	2.38	n.s.
	x	9.08	10.17	12.74	12.04		
	SD	7.52	8.14	9.47	8.75		
United States parti- cipation in Vietnam	N	23	196	83	50	.10	n.s.
	x	27.04	27.32	27.19	28.12		
	SD	9.57	9.79	11.20	10.35		
Student disorders	N	23	196	83	50	2.12	n.s.
	x	20.17	15.67	17.53	14.98		
	SD	11.37	8.91	11.33	10.35		
Belief in God	N	23	196	83	50	.94	n.s.
	x	40.50	40.55	39.95	39.52		
	SD	4.70	3.86	4.35	5.36		

Table F (.05) = 3.85, df = 3/348

TABLE X
COMPARISONS OF ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS WHO WERE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS
ACCORDING TO FATHERS' FORMAL EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND

Social Issue		Grade School	High School	Some College	College Graduate	F- value	Proba- bility
Boys with long hair	N	41	169	74	65	.35	n.s.
	x	21.70	22.87	22.24	22.66		
	SD	8.76	7.02	6.75	7.63		
Social drinking	N	41	169	74	65	.56	n.s.
	x	20.61	19.53	21.02	19.75		
	SD	10.08	8.42	8.51	9.56		
Smoking marijuana	N	41	169	74	65	.17	n.s.
	x	11.13	10.86	10.58	11.60		
	SD	10.37	8.63	8.29	7.47		
United States parti- pation in Vietnam	N	41	169	74	65	.46	n.s.
	x	21.11	27.61	26.87	28.24		
	SD	10.51	9.99	10.41	10.24		
Student disorders	N	41	169	74	65	.21	n.s.
	x	16.13	16.05	17.14	16.12		
	SD	10.11	9.70	10.59	9.94		
Belief in God	N	41	169	74	65	.35	n.s.
	x	40.34	40.13	40.67	40.01		
	SD	4.41	4.71	2.71	4.49		

Table F (.05) = 3.85, df = 3/348

CHAPTER IV

S U M M A R Y , C O N C L U S I O N S A N D R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The overall purposes of the study were to: 1) investigate teenagers' attitudes toward selected current social issues; 2) compare teenagers' attitudes at the different grade levels; 3) analyze difference in attitudes between males and females; 4) compare attitudes related to different ethnic groups; and 5) explore the relationship of parents' formal education to current social attitudes of teenagers. Three hundred and fifty two sophomore and senior students enrolled in the second semester English II and English IV classes at Gainesville High School, Gainesville, Texas, during the academic year 1969-1970 participated in the study.

A two part survey form was used to collect data for the study. Part I was the "Student Information Sheet" and Part II was the "Current Social Issues" questionnaire. These surveys were designed by the investigator. The current social issues investigated in the study were: boys with long hair, social drinking, smoking marijuana, United States participation in Vietnam, student disorders, and belief in God.

The data from both parts of the survey forms were analyzed to compare the attitudes toward current social issues. The comparisons were made between males and females, sophomores and seniors, black and white students, and the relationship of parents' formal education to attitudes of teenagers.

Analysis of the "Student Information Sheet" revealed that there were only two ethnic groups, the black and white. The majority of the students were white, 95.5 per cent, and 4.5 per cent was of the black race.

The data from Part II "Social Issue Survey" revealed that there were no significant differences between males and females in total attitudes toward current social issues; but the girls scored significantly more favorable toward belief in God over the boys. Data also pointed out that there were no significant differences ($p > .05$) between the sophomore and senior students.

Findings indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in attitudes between the black and white students toward current social issues. The black students were significantly more favorable than white students on total social issues. The black students were significantly ($p < .05$) more favorable in their opinions on the following issues: social drinking, smoking marijuana, and student

disorders, than the white students. The white students were significantly more favorable in one social issue, United States participation in Vietnam, than the black students. There was no significant difference in attitudes towards boys with long hair and belief in God.

An analysis of the data indicated that there was no statistically significant ($p > .05$) relationship in attitude toward current social issues to parents' formal education. Parents' formal education had no effect on attitudes of teenagers of today.

The findings in the study emphasized that teenagers of today are independent of their parents in forming attitudes about current issues. As a result of the study, it was found that the peer group influenced the teenagers' attitudes toward current social issues.

The author suggests that the study be repeated with the following recommendations: 1) use more grade levels that would include the college student to gain a greater relationship in maturity of attitudes; 2) include more ethnic groups with a more equal percentage of participants in each group; and 3) the random sample should be from more than one locality.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. Allport, G. W. "Prejudice: A Problem in Psychological and Social Causation." Journal of Social Issues, Supplementary Series No. 4 (1950).
2. Bales, R. F. "Task Roles and Social Roles in Problem-Solving Groups." Readings in Social Psychology. Edited by E. MacColey, T. Newcomb, and E. Hartley. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958.
3. Bischof, Ledford J. Adult Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
4. Blane, H. T. and E. Brown. "Alienation, Self-Esteem and Attitudes Toward Drinking in High School Students." Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, Vol. 29 (March, 1968).
5. Bloom, Benjamin S. Stability and Change in Human Characteristics. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964.
6. Britt, Stuart Henderson. Social Psychology of Modern Life. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.
7. Campbell, John D. "Studies in Attitude Formation: The Development of Health Orientations." Attitude, Ego-Involvement and Change. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967.
8. Cantril, H. "Attitudes in the Making." Understanding the Child, Vol. 4 (June, 1934).
9. Deaux, Kay K. "Variations in Warning Information Preference, and Anticipatory Attitude Change." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 9 (June, 1968).
10. Dewey, John. Human Nature and Conduct. New York: The Modern Library, 1930.
11. "Direction Gainesville." Information compiled by the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce, Gainesville, Texas, 1969.

12. Doob, L. S. "The Behavior of Attitudes." Psychological Review, Vol. 54 (March, 1947).
13. Erikson, Erik H. "Identity Versus Identity Diffusion." Readings in Child Development and Personality. Edited by Paul Mussen, John Conger, and Jerome Kagan. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
14. Fishbein, Martin. Attitude Theory and Measurement. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967.
15. Haaland, Gordon A., and M. Venkatesan. "Resistance to Persuasive Communications: An Examination of the Distraction Hypothesis." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 9 (June, 1968).
16. Hartnett, Rodney T. and Richard E. Peterson. "Religious Preference as a Factor in Attitudinal and Background Differences Among College Freshmen." Sociology of Education, Vol. 41 (Spring, 1968).
17. Katz, D. "A Preliminary Statement to a Theory of Attitude Structure and Change." Psychology: A Study of Science, Vol. III. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.
18. Keniston, Kenneth. "The Source of Student Dissent." Readings in Child Development and Personality. Edited by Paul Mussen, John Conger, and Jerome Kagan. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.
19. McCalib, Paul T. "Try an Attitude Survey." English Journal, Vol. 55 (December, 1966).
20. Newcomb, T. M. Personality and Social Change. New York: Dryden, 1943.
21. Osgood, C. E., and P. H. Tennenbaum. "The Principle of Congruity in the Prediction of Attitude Change." Psychological Review, Vol. 62 (January, 1955).
22. Prusok, Ralph E. "Student, Student Personnel Worker, and Parent Attitudes Toward Student Discipline." Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 40 (November, 1961).
23. Riley, Margie. "Attitudes Toward Marriage and Family Living of Senior Boys and Girls Enrolled at Franklin D. Roosevelt High School." Unpublished Master's thesis, Texas Woman's University, 1969.

24. Rokeach, Milton. Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1968.
25. Rosenberg, Milton J., Carl I. Hovland, William J. McGuire, Robert P. Abelson, and Jack W. Brehm. Attitude Organization and Change. New Haven, Connecticut: York University Press, 1960.
26. Sears, David O. "Social Anxiety, Opinion Structure, and Opinion Change." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 7 (October, 1967).
27. Sherif, Carolyn W., and Muzafer Sherif. Attitude, Ego-Involvement and Change. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1967.
28. Sherif, Muzafer and Hadley Cantril. The Psychology of Ego-Involvement. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1947.
29. Stachowiak, J. G. and C. S. Moss. "The Hypnotic Alteration Social Attitudes." American Psychologist, Vol. 18 (July, 1963).
30. Thibaut, John W. and Harold H. Kelley. The Social Psychology of Groups. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1959.
31. Young, Kimball. Social Attitudes. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931.