MALE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TIMING OF PARENTHOOD

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to Benedek (1959), parenthood is part of a cycle of developmental events occurring throughout life. Parenthood is also an event which can be controlled by human intervention, that is, husbands and wives, men and women can participate in the decision of whether or not to enlarge the family, and, if so, when. Since greater control over this event is now possible, it may be advantageous for social researchers to investigate the attitudes of people toward the timing of parenthood.

In reviewing the literature pertinent to family life, parenthood and family planning, it appears that the most frequently surveyed section of the population is that of women. Hott (1976) counted the listings of research articles in one five-year period and found 202 titles under mother and 42 under father. Therefore, the male segment of the population must also be considered when undertaking studies of family life and parenthood. In addition, male attitudes should not be investigated by way of the female's report and perception.

Back (1973) noted that social trends are made out of individual actions, but that individual decisions need not be taken into account as explanations of social trends. It is the overall view of trends which must be united and described by psychologists, demographers and sociologists. According to Back, a comprehensive view of population

conditions needs to include three factors: (1) transformation of a basic biological need into social values and symbolic examples, (2) fitting of crucial life events into a comprehensive view of human lives, (3) integrating methodology of micro- and macro-systems.

Benson, (1968, p. 127) stated that "fatherhood, like marriage itself, is less important to men than motherhood is to women in spite of the fact that maternity causes severe limitations on women's activities." Fatherhood has been cited as less important within the sociological perspective of the family. The paucity of paternal studies may serve to support this statement.

Lott (1973) used marital status and age as variables in a survey to determine the population most desirous of having and rearing children. She concluded that to a segment of the population, parenthood was not recognized as a joyful event. Its joys as well as its drawbacks should be pointed out, and fatherhood, in particular, needs recognition for its importance.

Peterson (1975) carried out a study in which childbearing attitudes of 168 male college students and 122 female college students were assessed at an interval of two years. He found that college students, after gaining two years of experience and insight, expressed views of family life with less emphasis on children. He pointed out, however, that although children were not deemed necessary for marital happiness, they were not ruled out entirely in the future.

Young married couples today may experience discord with regard to their family planning. While they desire freedom from children in

the adjustmental stages of their relationship, societal expectations may pressure them toward parenthood. These societal pressures may have changed during the last few years. The pressures which once encouraged early parenthood may have subsided and may be reflected in the attitudes of men and women today. The present study attempted to obtain data regarding male attitudes toward timing of parenthood as a result of active, societal pressures found in families, social and educational groups.

Nydegger (1973) used the questionnaire method to obtain data from 97 fathers on their perceptions of their own timing of fatherhood. Though reluctant to make generalizations because of the sample size, she was able to describe characteristics of those men who defined themselves as either "late" or "early" fathers.

American couples are changing the timing of parenthood. Twenty to twenty-five years ago they typically concentrated their childbearing in the younger reproductive years of life and had relatively large families. A study done in 1969 by Maxwell and Montgomery, upon whose scale the present study is based, reported that women in the earlier years of the reproductive period were having lower fertility rates because of a tendency to delay childbearing (Vital Statistics, 1968). It also posed the question as to whether or not societal pressures placed a guiding hand on attitudes toward the timing of parenthood. Women were sampled on the rationale that the female was the ordinary transmitter of values and attitudes regarding childbirth and childrearing.

It would appear that societal pressures would affect both husband and wife in determining the timing of parenthood. The purpose in determining the possible existence of these attitudes lies in the possible effect of such current thought on population growth and control. New factors such as availability of contraceptives, global population ecology as well as influences encouraging women to become part of the work force may be expressed in attitudes of the male population. Since the attitudes of females have been recorded, it appears desirable to evaluate and consider the perspective of the male population with regard to parenthood.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of undertaking the study of male attitudes toward the timing of parenthood was two-fold. First, it was an attempt to determine if there was a majority opinion among males reflecting the position that the onset of parenthood should be either early or late in marriage. Schluderman and Schluderman (1970) and Hott (1976) pointed out the importance of including males in research of family, parental and marital attitudes. Second, it was also an attempt to consider the sample with respect to current age, educational attainment, socio-economic status, how long the subjects waited after marriage to have their first child, and the number of children in their family. These independent variables were correlated with the dependent variables of attitude toward timing of parenthood.

This study was exploratory in nature and therefore did not

presume to be a definitive work. However, it did attempt to balance out the picture of attitudes toward timing of parenthood along with the work produced by Maxwell and Montgomery in 1969.

Hypothesis

There is a difference of attitude among males toward what is appropriate timing for the onset of parenthood after marriage. This difference may be reflected in various age, economic, educational groups and among those of different marital status.

Rationale for Hypothesis

The rationale for this hypothesis is based on the following assumptions:

1. There is a difference of opinion toward the timing of parenthood among males.

2. Societal pressures may influence the attitudes toward timing of parenthood.

3. The variables of age, education, socio-economic status, time lapse from marriage to the birth of the first child, and the number of children in the family may have some effect on the expression of these attitudes.

Previous research, though scarce, has attempted to analyze timing of fatherhood withing the participant's conception of himself as an early or late father. Nydegger (1973) conducted a study using fathers who were faculty members at a large university as her sample.

Use of this particular sample caused a certain economic and educational congruence among subjects. College students have been surveyed at a two-year interval to determine if their attitudes toward a happy family life included children both times (Peterson, 1975). Age, marital status and the age at birth of the first child have been used as variables in determining the characteristic traits of those least and most reluctant to have children (Lott, 1973).

Consistent with the exploratory nature of this study, and with the variables tested in earlier studies, the variables tested here were an attempt to describe the factors related to influences on males and their attitudes toward timing of parenthood.

Definition of Terms

Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood. That attitude as expressed through responses on the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood questionnaire.

Early Parenthood. A low score received on the questionnaire indicated a preference for having a family early in marriage. This score was obtained by averaging responses on the questionnaire on a scale of 1 to 5. A score below 3 indicated a preference for early parenthood.

Late Parenthood. A high score received on the form indicated a preference for having a family late in marriage. This score was obtained by averaging responses on the questionnaire on a scale from 1 to 5. A score over 3 indicated a preference for late parenthood.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In discussing the attitudes toward timing of parenthood, it is possible to consider the background from the perspectives of parenthood as a result of socialization, possible motives for desiring to become a parent and as a means for family planning. In addition, the aspect of male attitudes can be specifically considered.

Male Socialization

Part of the consequence of the recent women's liberation movement has been some re-evaluation by husbands and wives of their roles in family decision-making. It has also involved considerable discussion as to whether or not a couple may have children at all or when to have them. The decision may be a joint one, between husband and wife, but it may come as a result of some outside societal pressures which may be exerted by peers or be part of traditional family viewpoints. This latter point has been considered within the conceptual framework of symbolic interaction which involves the socialization of the child and development of personality through the learning of various roles as life situations change (Stryker, 1959).

Females have long been designated as the perpetuator of the species and as child rearers. However, the limitations motherhood has put on women have not been entirely overlooked in the past years.

As early as 1916, Leta Hollingworth made a strong statement which showed the intensity of her feelings with regard to the one-sidedness of parenthood:

> The facts shorn of sentiment, then are: (1) the bearing and rearing of children is necessary for tribal or national existence and aggrandizement, (2) the bearing and rearing of children is painful, dangerous to life and involves long years of exacting labor and self-sacrifice, (3) there is no verifiable evidence to show that a maternal instinct exists in women, of such all-consuming strength and fervor as to impel them voluntarily to seek the pain, danger and exacting labor involved in maintaining a high birth rate (Hollingworth, 1916).

Here she sought to point out that the most dangerous and self-sacrificing of all events to befall women is motherhood. Motherhood is the aspect most frequently considered as intrinsic to being a woman. It is possible that the history of most women has included appropriate reinforcement of behavior from parents along with a great deal of modeling from mother (Sarbin, 1968).

It seems necessary to remember that men too must play a part in the perpetuation of the species and that responsibility needs to continue throughout the life of the child. However, socialization of the male has not yet placed the emphasis so heavily on fatherhood as a specific aspect of life for which they are born. The respect for and responsibility of childrearing as a father has been given second place to the importance of those functions with mothers. Leonard Benson, who conducted an extensive review of literature, sees fatherhood as "less important to men than motherhood is to women" as a result of his readings (Benson, 1968, p. 127). He quotes

Hemingway as saying, "To be a successful father, there's one absolute rule: when you have a kid, don't look at it for the first two years."

There seem to be fewer studies considering the father's view of parenthood as opposed to that of the mother's. The socialization of males has been contrasted with the socialization studies done on females.

> Studies of the family and socialization have quite consistently slighted the implications of the cultural content of early role-playing for manhood. Too much ought not to be made of scholarly neglect or unconscious biases. Yet since the function of males in family and work roles is increasingly evaluated by members of this culture in historically new and still evolving terms like 'adjustment' and 'interpersonal competence,' males are due scrutiny parallel that given females (Knox and Kupferer, 1971).

Therefore, it appears that studies of early role-learning of males largely assume that identification with father is a "good thing" even though what father represents is rarely explored and defined. For example, studies of early doll play of young girls may be done to determine the extent of the socialization process through which she may have acquired the habits of the mother figure. Socialization of the young girl as a future mother exists whereas socialization of a young boy to the role of a father, one who may care for the young, may exist although less overtly. Men may be motivated for parenthood by the desire to cuddle a baby next to one's skin and to take care of an infant or older child, but the desire to care for a child has not been described as an innate need for men as it has for women (Pohlman, 1969).

In summary, the socialization factor of parenthood primarily grants to women the duties and responsibilities of bearing and raising children. At least this has been the case historically. Few studies on the process of socialization for fatherhood have shed any light upon the area of acquisition of caretaking responsibilities of children in males. However, the developmental framework of Rodgers (1973, p.15) and the symbolic interactional approach of Stryker (1959) serve as a basis to explore the effects of modeling on the acquisition of parental behaviors among young males and females.

Motivation for Parenthood

The studies which have been done thus far on motivation for parenthood have been, at best, inconclusive. Rabin (1965) attempted to devise a scale to assess why people want to have children. His study was conducted using a population of middle-class males and females who answered a questionnaire containing possible descriptions of their reasons for having children. The direction of his survey forced participants to answer questions by placing them in one of four categories. His categories included four main reasons for having children. Those reasons were: (1) that children were an inevitable part of life, (2) children were gratifying to the parents' ego, (3) parents found children useful in their lives, and (4) children could be formed into useful people. The results did not provide any significant clue to motivation. He also concluded that perhaps more study was needed and that findings could be used to

promote methods of population control by appealing to people's self-preservational instincts. Interpretation factors were given as a limitation of the study.

Parenthood has also been seen as a part of the developmental cycle of life. The most significant step into adulthood has not been marriage, but the onset of parenthood. It is part of the cycle in which man re-creates life (Benedek, 1959). This is similar to the approach of Rodgers (1973, p. 15) in which part of the definition of family includes the statement "the definitions of positional role content change over the history of the group." In other words, as time passes, the position and function of a member of the family group alters. Motivation for parenthood as a result of change in position or development occurs.

Burr (1970) found in his sample of 116 couples in later middle age that subjects were less happy in the pre-child period than they were at the pre-school stage of their children's lives. No speculations were made as to why this phenomenon existed, but it is noteworthy to consider this effect with respect to the studies done which indicate the pre-child stage as being the happiest aspect of marital life.

A study related to the effect of the timing of the first pregnancy on divorce rates of three cultures was conducted by Christensen (1963). He did an extensive study by researching the birth and divorce records of the Mormons in Utah, a middle-class community in Indiana, and a town of comparable size in Denmark.

He hoped to determine the effect of early as opposed to late post-marital conception on marriage in three differing societies. A four factor hypothesis evolved from the research. These factors are: (1) divorce would be higher for premarital than for postmarital pregnancy cases, (2) divorce differentials between premarital and postmarital pregnancy categories would be greatest in the most restrictive culture (the Mormons) and least in the most permissive (Denmark), (3) divorce would be higher for early rather than late postmarital pregnancy cases, and (4) divorce differentials between early and late postmarital pregnancies would be greatest in the culture which normally delays first postmarital pregnancy longest and least in the culture which normally has first postmarital pregnancy the earliest. Of most importance here, however, is his contention that divorce rates would be higher for early rather than late post-marital pregnancy cases.

This study could be understood in the context of its relationship to parenthood as a crisis situation. Among the first researchers to consider this event in the life cycle as crisis was E.E. LeMasters. LeMasters (1957) took the position that a crisis forced a reorganization of the family as a social system. Roles needed to be reassigned, status positions shifted, values reoriented and needs met through new channels. If a couple needs to seek readjustment to their new roles of husband and wife after marriage, the additional roles of mother and father soon thereafter could add to the problems of the initial reorganization. It is not to be assumed that the adjustment

could not be made. However, the deleterious effect upon a marriage, if not a solidified one, could be disastrous.

A study by Dyer (1963) and one by Hobbs (1968) were both replications of the earlier LeMasters work. Parents of one year-old children were studied and both questionnaire and interview techniques were employed to obtain data. New and varying results were found in both sources. Dyer pointed out that the crisis of parenthood manifested itself in husbands by a loss of sleep, adjustment to new responsibilities and routines, upset schedules and daily routines, financial worries and other adjustments. The most severe elements of new parenthood were adjustment to the new demands of parenthood, new routines, and sharing family life with grandparents and relatives. Hobbs concluded that parenthood was a stressful rather than a crisis situation. Those interviewed by Hobbs indicated less massive reorganization to being a parent than parents in either Dyer's or LeMaster's study. He also found that fathers tended to show less difficulty in the adjustment to parenthood than mothers. With respect to motivation for parenthood, the above studies may be indicative of the incomplete knowledge of personal adjustment needed by couples, and males in particular, to prepare themselves for parental responsibilities.

It has been noted in some studies that marital and parental satisfaction are related. The timing of the first pregnancy and birth are critical to the manner in which parental responsibilities will be shared by the couple within the marital relationship. The rate at which couples contract marital agreements over the future years may

stay at the same level or increase, but there may be a desire to postpone childbearing among those couples with the increased availability of contraceptives (Rossi, 1968). She pointed out, however, that there is a cultural pressure to assume the role of a parent, especially that of mother, in spite of various claims to the contrary.

An additional motivation for parenthood other than that of cultural or societal pressures or developmental history is provided by the Freudian concept of parental role identification allowing for adequate adult sexual adjustment. Congruence in perception of self with the parent of the same sex was found to be associated with marital satisfaction (Luckey, 1960). Using the Freudian framework, Luckey surveyed 40 adult males to determine the background for their marital satisfaction. She concluded that the capability of reproduction, which their parent (father) possessed, entered into their perception of themselves as adequate, sexual adults. This influenced their marital satisfaction.

In summary, motivation for parenthood may influence the individual's planning to become a parent through parental modeling, social pressure, developmental occurrences or parental role identification. Depending upon the stance of the observer, any or all of the above factors may contribute to timing of parenthood attitudes. No research has yet provided adequate answers to why (psychologically speaking) men and women become parents. As mentioned previously, women have been assumed to desire children because they are women. However, men's motivations are even more obscure at the present time.

Family Planning Considerations

In addition to the fact that a lower divorce rate was evidenced by couples who postponed the bearing of children for some time after marriage (Christensen, 1963,), there is also another consideration. With the continually expanding population of the world putting a strain on environmental resources, some researchers and sociologists interested in the area of family planning have suggested the possibility of postponement of childbirth as an aid to population control. Postponement would decrease the number of optimum child-bearing years in women and perhaps encourage smaller families. Thus far, however, the textbooks in marriage and family have not considered offering the postponement of birth as another possibility offered to students (Pohlman, Thompson, and Jennings, 1968). The researchers reviewed and rated textbooks used in courses on family life education, specifically on information it provided about birth timing and spacing. They found postponement was not considered or encouraged and offered two reasons why timing of parenthood should be studied: first, to allow for adjustment of the couple to their new roles as husband and wife, and second, as a means to control population growth.

Pohlman (1969, p. 186) used Freudian psychology as a background for other reasons not compatible with sound planning considerations for wanting children. In a theoretical study, he suggested that producing children was conspicuous evidence of man's virility. It was also seen as competition with one's parent of the same sex for

independence and as a symbol of adultness. Husbands more often than wives emphasized a carrying on of the family name as a reason for having children.

In the area of male considerations in planning a family, dominance may be a factor. Men wanting more authority may wish to start or enlarge their family to keep the women at home and submissive. Wives would then have less change of standing up to their husbands. However, the emergence of a more egalitarian conception of family life has lessened the mother-child versus husband-father dichotomy (Rossi, 1968). She also conjectured, on the basis of her studies on family life, that education is more often continuing after marriage for both husband and wife, and as a result, a more democratic family structure has evolved.

Mass media have succeeded in projecting the concerns of various cultures for global welfare and in producing more cognizant societies in the area of family planning. Attitude toward timing of parenthood can be measured to determine the effect of education on family life and birth control on various cultures and segments of society. It can also be a consideration of contemporary society as a means to obtain a stable and realistic population size.

In summary, attitude toward timing of parenthood appears to be closely related to family planning. As a result of increased medical technology and knowledge, couples may benefit from the availability of contraceptive information. Reasons for having a family may be altered. Couples may learn more about each other before deciding to

start or enlarge their family. The world's population may benefit from men and women who plan their family growth intelligently.

Conclusion

Male socialization, motivation for parenthood, and family planning considerations are all related to attitude toward timing of parenthood. Various theories from scholars and researchers may influence the perspective of related research.

Socialization of males for the purpose of taking care of children has not been investigated thoroughly because of female dominance of that area in the past. However, family roles and responsibilities have been changing within the past few years and new aspects related to those changes may need to be researched.

Motivation for parenthood as a research area is lacking in any concrete results or definitions. Attempts have been made to determine why males and females desire children, but results have not been clear. Suggestions have been made by observers that personal interpretation of terms in surveys has been a limiting factor.

Family planning considerations suggest that attitude toward timing of parenthood could greatly influence the birth rate and be used as a means of population control. However, education has not made use of this concept when teaching family planning.

The purpose of this study was to consider in an exploratory way the effect of these factors on a small segment of society. Although most research in the area of motivation for parenthood, particularly

among males, is sketchy, it should not be assumed that research in that area be concluded. On the contrary, role definition and its acceptance must be more clearly defined in order to better understand human development.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The procedure for this study involved the use of mailed questionnaires distributed to a random sample of males in a university town located in the southwest Virginia area. Analysis of the data was accomplished through the use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and the one-way analysis of variance.

Sample. The subjects consisted of males in Blacksburg, Virginia. The youngest was 18 years of age and the oldest was 71. All respondents resided in Blacksburg at the time the study was undertaken. The sample was obtained by contacting persons listed in the Blacksburg telephone book. The pages were randomly picked and one random name per page was called. Those names listed as living in dormitories or in places other than Blacksburg were eliminated. A call was made to the potential subject to determine his willingness to participate in the survey. A description of the survey was not given at the time the call was made. However, the respondent was informed that the survey was concerned with attitudes toward parenthood. A more detailed description of the sample can be found in the chapter on results.

Data Collection. After having obtained permission from the subject to include him in the survey, a questionnaire was mailed to him. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included to expedite returns. No information requiring name or address from the respondent

was asked on the questionnaire in order to stress confidentiality. Samples of the cover letter and the instrument can be found in the Appendix.

Survey Instrument. The questionnaire measuring attitudes was a scale devised by Maxwell and Montgomery in 1969 called the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood Scale (ATTOP). Permission was obtained from the originators for its use. This scale consists of 10 Likert-type statements with answers ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. Coupled with the attitude scale was a series of items from which demographic data was collected. The most significant items were age, marital status, parental status, economic status, education, time lapse from marriage to the birth of the first child and the number of children in one's family. All items were not relevant to the entire sample, therefore, responses were analyzed where the qualifying criteria for responding were met. A sample questionnaire may be found in the Appendix.

Analysis of the Data

The analysis of each questionnaire included the relating of the items in the demographic section to the average score obtained from the attitude scale. The scores on the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood scale ranged from 1 to 5. A low score indicated that early parenthood was preferred, a high score showed a tendency to prefer late parenthood. A reversal procedure was done on those items in which agreement meant late parenthood in order to provide balance and

keep the answers in the same direction during computation and averaging. The score obtained through the averaging of the 10 items on the ATTOP was at the interval level of measurement.

Each item in Part I (demographic data) was related to the score obtained in Part II (ATTOP). Those demographic items measured at the interval level were compared with the ATTOP score through the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Items of nominal level in Part I were related to Part II through the use of the one-way analysis of variance. Ordinal data were analyzed by the use of one way-analysis of variance with a further test for polynomial trends.

The following table represents each item in Part I, its level of measurement and the method of analysis used in relating it to the score obtained on the attitude section of Part II.

Table 1

Analysis Methods for Individual Items

Item No.	Content	Method	Level of Measurement
Part I			
1.	present age	Pearson's r	interval
2.	age at birth of first child	Pearson's r	interval
3.	marital status	1-way anova	nominal
4.	parental status	1-way anova	nominal
5a.	no. of children in family	Pearson's r	interval
5b.	age of oldest	Pearson's r	interval
5c.	age of youngest	Pearson's r	interval
6.	marriage to birth time lapse	Pearson's r	interval
7.	job status	1-way anova	nominal
8.	family income	1-way anova (polynomial trends)	ordinal
9.	education	1-way anova	nominal
10.	grade completed	Pearson's r	interval
11a.	importance of: financial security	Pearson's r	interval
11b.	husband's education	Pearson's r	interval
11c.	wife's education	Pearson's r	interval
11d.	age of husband	Pearson's r	interval
11e.	age of wife	Pearson's r	interval

Table 1 (continued)

Analysis Methods for Individual Items

Item No.	Content	Method	Level of Measurement
Part I			
11f.	desire of parents to become grand-parents	Pearson's r	interval
12.	religious pre-ference	1-way anova	nominal
Part II			
ATTOP	low/high score		interval

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of the Sample

This study was exploratory in its attempt to determine the attitudes of males toward the timing of parenthood. The sample of men was not limited to those of any particular class or group. At the time the research was undertaken, men residing in the town of Blacksburg, Virginia who were 18 years of age or over were eligible to participate. Among those responding to the questionnaire were men both married and unmarried as well as those with or without children. A more detailed description of the sample can be found in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, N does not always equal 103, the total number of subjects obtained in the survey. Items were omitted from the questionnaire by respondents either because the subject did not feel the question was pertinent to him or because he desired to be excluded from that particular category.

In particular, item 11 in the demographic section was found to be omitted frequently by respondents. A few subjects wrote notes in the margin referring to their reluctance to answer the question. It was determined that this question was inappropriate for the questionnaire.

Because Blacksburg, Virginia is a small university town with a fluctuating population, it must be noted that the attitudes expressed by this sample are not representative of the overall opinion of the

Table 2

Description of the Sample

(Total N = 103)

Item	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Age	103	30.58	8.05
Marital Status			
never married	26		
currently married	74		
separated	1		
divorced	2		
widowed	0		
Parental Status			
no children	48		
children living at home	51		
some children living with you	3		
all children have left home	1		
Age at Birth of First Child	57	26.56	4.67
Number of Children in Family	103	1.09	1.23
Age of Oldest	57	8.33	7.61
Age of Youngest	38	5.32	4.83
Wait from Marriage to Birth of First Child (in years)	53	3.04	2.03
Job Status			
employed full-time	75		
employed part-time	13		
now out of work	12		
not yet started work	2		
retired	1		
Income of Family (annual)			
less than $5,500	14		

Table 2 (continued)

Description of the Sample

(Total N = 103)

Item	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
$5,501 to $10,000	23		
$10,001 to $15,000	23		
$15,001 to $20,000	13		
$20,001 to $25,000	14		
$25,001 to $30,000	5		
greater than $30,001	8		
Educational Status			
attending school full-time	24		
attending school part-time	13		
not attending school	65		
Highest Grade Completed			
grade through high school	10		
some college	22		
Associate Degree	4		
Bachelor's Degree	18		
some graduate school	12		
Master's Degree	9		
doctoral degree	28		
Religious Preference			
Protestant	18		
Catholic	9		
Jewish	6		
Methodist	9		
Baptist	3		
Lutheran	2		
Presbyterian	3		
Episcopalian	2		
Other	2		

general population. However, it does represent an attempt to suggest the current attitude trend occurring among the 103 men surveyed.

Description of the Questionnaire

The 10-item questionnaire itself was adapted from a study originally done by Maxwell and Montgomery (1969). It was formerly used to indicate social pressures exerted in influencing women's attitudes toward early parenthood. However, the questionnaire was also found to be useful in studying the male perspective on parenthood and its timing. With some modification, the ten basic questions relating to societal pressures and early parenthood were used to measure inclinations toward early or late parenthood among males. The modifications were done in order to provide a balance in the instrument itself. Agreement with some items indicated a preference for early parenthood, while agreement with other items indicated a preference for late parenthood.

Each item of the Timing of Parenthood questionnaire suggested an attitude which could be answered on a continuum from agree strongly to disagree strongly. A "no opinion" response was also included. Each subject responded only once to each item.

The responses were valued from 1 to 5. "Agree strongly" was valued at 1, and "disagree strongly" was valued at 5. Each of the ten items in Part II was averaged for 103 subjects. An average score of 0 to 3 indicated a desire for children early in marriage. An average score above 3 indicated a preference for children later in marriage,

according to responses to questionnaire items.

Table 3 provides a description of the overall responses to each of the 10 items listed on the questionnaire. Table 4 indicates the mean and standard deviation for the dependent variable of Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood as found for the categories listed as age, parental status, marital status, job status, family income, educational status and religious preference.

The average on the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood questionnaire was obtained by adding each item on the survey and dividing by 10, the total number of items. However, a reversal was done first on those items which indicated that agreement meant later parenthood was preferred. This was done in order to provide consistency in direction of scoring. Those items which required the scale to be reversed are the following: Items 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Relationships Found Between Demographic Variables and Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood

Present Age. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship of present age to the average on the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood variable. Using a two-tailed test, it was found that the two variables were signficantly related but in a negative direction. This result occurred at the .001 level of significance.

From those responding on the questionnaire, the older men indicated a preference for earlier parenthood. Younger men indicated a

Table 3

Description of Individual Items of Questionnaire

	Item	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
1.	The best time to begin having children is usually within the first two years of marriage.	103	3.67	1.01
2.	It is important for a young couple to enjoy their social life first and to have children later.	103	2.62	1.23
3.	A marital relationship is strengthened if children are born in the early years of marriage.	103	3.51	1.05
4.	Women are generally happier if they have children late in marriage.	102	3.38	0.80
5.	A strong marital commitment will not be damaged by one spouse's wish to put off having children.	103	2.77	1.03
6.	Most married women can lead fulfilled lives without children in the early years of marriage.	102	1.99	0.84
7.	The establishment of a wife's career or finishing her education should come before starting a family.	103	2.35	1.03
8.	Married couples who have mature love for each other will be eager to have a child as soon as possible.	102	3.72	0.93
9.	Children will bring a couple closer together and it is in the best interest of the couple to have them early in the marriage.	101	3.79	1.13
LO.	Children enjoy their parents more when the parents are nearer their own age; therefore, parents should have children while they are young.	103	3.18	1.22

Table 4

Group Means and Standard Deviations

on Timing of Parenthood Questionnaire

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Age			
lowest to 20	7	3.73	.54
21 to 30	49	3.58	.53
31 to 40	38	3.43	.62
41 to 50	7	2.77	.67
51 and above	2	2.85	1.20
Marital Status			
never married	26	3.68	.62
currently married	74	3.40	.61
separated	1	3.10	-
divorced	2	3.50	.14
widowed	0	-	-
Parental Status			
no children	48	3.64	.53
children living at home	51	3.37	.61
some children living with you	3	2.80	.78
all children have left home	1	2.00	-
Job Status			
employed full-time	75	3.39	.64
employed part-time	13	3.78	.26
now out of work	12	3.78	.45
not yet started work	2	3.45	.07
retired	1	2.00	-
Income of Family (annual)			
less than $5,500	14	3.64	.65
$5.501 to $10,000	23	3.59	.56
$10,001 to $15,000	23	3.56	.53
$15,001 to $20,000	13	3.46	.68
$20,001 to $25,000	14	3.13	.75
$25,001 to $30,000	5	3.64	.19

Table 4 (continued)

Group Means and Standard Deviations

on Timing of Parenthood Questionnaire

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
greater than $30,001	8	3.20	.50
Educational Status			
attending school full-time	24	3.63	.50
attending school part-time	13	3135	.66
not attending school	65	3.45	.64
Highest Grade Completed			
grade through high school	10	3.07	.74
some college	22	3.07	.74
Associate Degree	4	3.28	.67
Bachelor's Degree	18	3.65	.51
some graduate school	12	3.54	.66
Master's Degree	9	3.49	.47
doctoral degree	28	3.43	.67
Religious Preference			
Protestant	18	3.26	.65
Catholic	9	3.11	.74
Jewish	6	3.85	.41
Methodist	9	3.24	.42
Baptist	3	3.60	.96
Lutheran	2	3.60	.14
Presbyterian	3	3.40	.96
Episcopalian	2	3.55	.35
Other	2	3.20	.85

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account for the age factor and parental perceptions relationship. It is recognized that age may not be a prime factor in determining the onset of parenthood, but in future marriages it may be a stronger consideration.

The statistical information for this and other Pearson correlations may be found in Table 5.

Marital Status. Testing for the significance of this item in relation to a preference toward early or late parenthood was accomplished through the use of a one-way analysis of variance. The independent variable of marital status was found to be related so that a slight inclination toward later parenthood appeared among subjects who were never married.

In computing this anova, the last three categories, those who were either separated, divorced or widowed, were deleted from the analysis because of the small number of cases being represented. For this and other anovas, categories with an insufficient number of cases were deleted from tables and computations.

Referring back to Table 4, it appears that there is a slightly stronger preference for later parenthood among those who have never married. With the standard deviation at approximately .6, most individuals in this group seem to exhibit the same attitude toward timing of parenthood.

In discussing this variable, the possibility arises that those who are married may be more inclined to see themselves with children than those who are not. Lott (1973) used this variable in her research

Table 5

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients Between Demographic Variables and Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood Scores

Independent Variable	Correlation with TPQ	
	No. of Cases	Correlation
Age	103	-.38 **
Age at Birth of First Child	57	.16
Number of Children in Family	103	-.35 **
Age of Oldest	55	-.44 **
Age of Youngest	38	-.28
Wait from Marriage to Birth of First Child	53	.27 *
Highest Grade Completed	103	.06
Financial Security	96	-.02
Husband's Education	94	-.03
Wife's Education	93	-.09
Age of Husband	96	.14
Age of Wife	95	-.02
Desire of Parents for Grandchildren	95	.02

* $p < .05$

** $P < .001$

and also concluded that the inclusion of children in families was more often associated with adults who were married than those who were not.

Pertinent information for the use of the anova in this study for this variable and others may be found in Table 6.

Parental Status. Another one-way analysis of variance was performed on this item with respect to the attitude questionnaire. As in the previous item, the categories were collapsed from four to two groups because of insufficient cases in two response categories. Those eliminated were "some children living with you, some not" and "all children no longer living with you."

The findings from this study showed that a relationship between parental status and attitude toward timing of parenthood was present. Those who had no children presented an opinion slightly favoring later parenthood compared to the group in which all children were living at home. This category included males who were either single or married, yet still childless.

It is possible to consider the attitudes of those who are married and without children within the concepts of previous research based on marital satisfaction and having children (Ryder, 1973). It may be that married men without children consider marital happiness a significant factor in their present state. Also, Luckey (1970), in her research with both men and women, pointed to the somewhat dubious acceptance of children as adding happiness to the marital situation.

As a result of this study, the suggestion is made that males

Table 6

One-Way Analysis of Variance Between

Demographic Variables and Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood Scores

Independent Variable	D.F.	F Value
Marital Status	1;98	4.23 *
Parental Status	1;97	5.53 *
Job Status	2;97	4.11 *
Income of Family	5;94	1.50
Educational Status	2;99	1.07
Religious Preference	3;38	2.10

* $p < .05$

furthest from the parental state tend to reflect the opinion that parenthood is best delayed for some time after marriage. Whether or not this is a reflection on their happines in their present marital state cannot be determined, but it is possible to suggest that distance from the parental state may be an influence (Table 6).

Age at Birth of the First Child. The relationship of this category with the expressed opinion on the attitude toward timing of parenthood questionnaire was found to be not significant through the use of the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Of the 57 subjects who responded to this item and had children, the average age at the birth of the first child was about 26 years. Whether or not this age is early or late for respondents is impossible to tell.

Nydegger (1973) used the age at the birth of the first child as the basis for determining the subjects' entry into the role of father as late or early. Age at start of fatherhood and present age were used as measures in screening subjects' perceptions of themselves as early or late fathers. Part of her conclusions emphasized "growing into" the role of father by those who perceived themselves as being "early." "Late" fathers drew portraits of themselves as more secure and composed at the onset of parenthood.

It appears that the age at birth of the first child, though not significantly related to attitude toward timing of parenthood, may influence other parental attitudes. Nydegger reported some useful information in her study using this element. The report of age in this study, however, appears to be an unrelated factor (Table 5).

Total Number of Children in Family. The relationship between number of children in the family and attitude toward timing of parenthood was tested for significance by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Table 5). The correlation between number of children and average on the Timing of Parenthood survey was strong and in a negative direction. Those who had more than the average number of children in their family (more than one, in this survey) showed a preference for early parenthood. Those with fewer children expressed an attitude indicating later parenthood was desirable. Included in this statistic were all respondents with no children so that those who were still unmarried and with no children contributed to the relationship of this variable.

This result supports the finding of Maxwell and Montgomery (1969) in which their study also tested the relationship of number of children with societal pressures for early parenthood. They speculated as to whether or not attitude or practice was the causative factor contributing to the relationship between the two. The same speculation may be made for this study.

Age of Oldest Child, Age of Youngest Child. These variables were considered closely related to the preceding one. The relationship between the age of the oldest child and the age of the youngest child with attitude toward timing of parenthood was done through Pearson product-moment correlation methods.

It can be seen in Table 5 that the age of the oldest is significantly related to the average attitude score, but the age of the

youngest is not. It is possible that the subjects having only one child may have entered that child's age in only one category.

From the data received, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about the relationship between the age of children and the attitude of their parents toward timing of parenthood. Although the statistical results points to the preference of males with older children toward early parenthood, it has been an unresearched area. However, one may postulate that men with older children have acquired a more "fatherly" self-image than the subjects with younger children.

Wait from Marriage to Birth of First Child. From the 53 cases responding to this question, there was evidence of a strong correlation between attitude toward timing of parenthood and the length of time between marriage and the birth of the first child. Although no allowance was made for the start of parenthood either by chance or by plan, the relationship was positive. As subjects waited longer between their marriage and the birth of their first child, later parenthood was preferred. The mean from Table 2 shows that the average wait was approximately 3 years. Respondents waiting less than 3 years indicated a preference for early parenthood.

It is this variable which requires the most attention. From this may be seen that subjects who had children are consistent with what had occurred in their lives. An interpretation of early parenthood by subjects who had had their child or children in the first 3 years of marriage was reflected in their answers on the questionnaire. The

respondents having children after 3 years of marriage were consistent in their opinions. This is consistent with the findings of Maxwell and Montgomery in 1969 in their study on women's attitudes. Both men and women expressed attitudes consistent with their life patterns (Table 5).

Job Status. The relationship between this variable and attitude toward timing of parenthood was found to be significant at the .05 level. The final two categories, those who had not yet entered the work force or had retired, were dropped because of a scarcity of cases. The remaining three groups determined the degrees of freedom for testing this relationship (Table 6). Subjects who were employed full-time expressed an attitude favoring earlier parenthood as opposed to part-time subjects who preferred later parenthood.

The consideration of job status in family planning has not been heavily researched. It appears from data obtained in this study that early parenthood may be favored by individuals who have been able to attain some degree of financial security. Thus, having a full-time job may have considerable effect upon determining one's financial ability to increase the size of the family.

Income of Family. Closely related to the job status variable is that of family income. Using a one-way analysis of variance test to determine the relationship with the dependent variable, income of family was found to be not significantly related to attitude toward timing of parenthood (Table 6). Polynomial trends did not appear.

In discussing this variable and job status, it is interesting to note that a full-time job can make a difference in attitude toward timing of parenthood, but family income does not relate. This may be a function of seeing financial stability in terms of employment rather than in amount of yearly earnings. In the Maxwell and Montgomery study, their findings relating to socio-economic status showed early childbearing as the most natural behavior among lower or working class women. Middle-class values were more oriented toward individual happiness rather than familial duty.

Educational Status. This category also proved to be not significantly related to attitude toward timing of parenthood. A one-way analysis of variance was used to test this variable (Table 5).

Again, the university town in which this study was conducted may have been a factor contributing to the negligible relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Although an attempt was made to have a random sample, the large proportion of college educated residents may have effected the sampling. Peterson (1975) found college students to be less inclined to include children in the happy family picture. Maxwell and Montgomery recognized that subjects with a higher education tended to be more liberalized in their view of childbearing obligations. It is impossible to make similar conclusions from this study.

Highest Grade Completed, Factors Important to the Decision of Having Children and Religious Preference. These variables were all found to be not significantly related to the dependent variable of attitude

toward timing of parenthood. The use of these factors in the research was based on assumptions of possible cultural influences. In particular, religious preference was thought to project some influence because of the location of the town. However, the somewhat liberalized, university community may have nullified the effect of this variable.

In summary, some relationships between demographic variables and attitude toward timing of parenthood were not significant. Some independent variables correlated strongly with the dependent variable. However, the statistics show that attitude toward timing of parenthood is not governed by any strict educational, economic or marital status. Variance in attitude toward timing of parenthood is slight in most cases and may differ in various locations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

In recent years, more attention has been focused on the male role of parenthood in America. The increased awareness of the male's role in this aspect of life and its responsibilities has been accompanied by changes in attitude toward family life. As women have become more active in interests outside the home, adjustments have had to be made to accommodate for the accomplishment of familial tasks. Although no concrete evidence has been presented to establish that such a movement in society has caused an alteration in attitudes toward timing of parenthood, it may be desirable to explore the possibilities of that premise within certain limits. Since attitudes are formed through social interaction, attitudes toward timing of parenthood may differ in various levels of social strata. It was the purpose of this research to determine whether or not such differences did exist and to describe the relationship, if any, of social group with the expressed attitudes toward timing of parenthood.

Few studies have been done in the area of desire for parenthood and its timing. Those studies which attempted to explore motivation for parenthood produced inconclusive results (Rabin, 1965; Pohlman, 1969). Both researchers cited lack of precise terminology and personal interpretation of questionnaire items as factors limiting their studies. However, a review of literature indicated the possiblity of describing societal pressures which encouraged married couples to

become parents early in marriage (Maxwell and Montgomery, 1969).

The present study attempted to compare the correlations of age, marital status, parental status, the reported age of subjects at birth of first child, the length of time waited from marriage to onset of parenthood, family income, educational status and religious preference with the respondents' overall attitude toward timing of parenthood. The sample consisted totally of males living in Blacksburg, Virginia at the time the research was conducted. Questionnaires including items of demographic data and the Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood Scale were mailed to each subject and the final count totaled 103 respondents.

These results were obtained by the data analysis:

1. There was a significant correlation between age and attitude toward timing of parenthood. Older subjects leaned toward earlier parenthood whereas younger subjects showed a preference for later parenthood.
2. Marital status related significantly with attitude toward timing of parenthood as did parental status and attitude toward timing of parenthood. Those not married expressed a desire for later parenthood than those already married. Those without children preferred later parenthood than those with children.
3. Age at birth of first child did not significantly correlate with the responses on the attitude scale.
4. The age of the oldest child related negatively and significantly

to responses on the scale. Respondents with older children preferred earlier parenthood than those with young or no children.

5. The age of the youngest child did not appear significantly related to timing of parenthood attitudes.

6. Wait from marriage to the birth of the first child related significantly with attitude toward timing of parenthood. The subjects' job status also related significantly with the dependent variable of timing of parenthood. Those waiting longer for the first child preferred later parenthood than those who had their children early in marriage.

7. Income of family, educational status, financial security, husband's and wife's age and education, desire of respondent's parents to become grandparents and religious preference were all found to be not significant factors when correlated with attitude toward timing of parenthood scores.

Those items which appeared to be significant can in no way be construed as being a purposeful cause of the findings on the scale. Consistency among some items may be a result of psychological distance factors in which people respond to topics as they happened or as they are consistent with their life.

Limitations

This study was initiated with the intent of determining possible relationships between attitude toward timing of parenthood and social

factors influencing that attitude. Of the biographical data collected, this study did not find significant correlations among all items, but the possibility of social influence may still exist.

There are several limitations to be found in the methodology and the instrument used. It needs to be pointed out that this study was exploratory in nature and hence, did not attempt to prove the expediency of the questionnaire as a survey instrument or presuppose conclusions.

First, items under Part I, General Information, were not all successful in obtaining responses. The most obvious item in this category was item 11 in which subjects were asked to rank factors according to their degree of importance in making the decision to start a family. Many responses indicated that these selections were not at all considered in their personal decisions. Some respondents either omitted the item or wrote notes to that effect. It is possible that other motivations are involved when a married couple plan to begin their family. Such a list of only six factors may be too limiting in scope and not reflect the true reasons of the subject.

The Attitude Toward Timing of Parenthood Scale, Part II, also had limitations in its structure and wording. Ten items alone cannot present a balanced, overall picture of most attitudes held by individuals. It is possible that respondents did not relate to any or all items or may have been able to substitute one of their own attitudes for one on the questionnaire. Some items may have presented interpretation problems. Items 9 and 10 may have been answered in two parts

each, but subjects were forced to answer them as a whole.

Interpretation of an item by a respondent in this study is the most limiting factor of the research. The sample consisted of subjects with diverse educational backgrounds. It is possible that this factor may be responsible for various interpretations of questionnaire items.

Recommendations and Implications

Further research in the area of motivation and timing of parenthood should be encouraged in the interest of knowledge about human development and behavior. It is with this in mind that the following recommendations for associated research on this topic are made.

First, it may be desirable to compare pre-determined groups of subjects, for instance, high socio-economic versus low socio-economic groups. Also, a very select group of grandparents, parents and children would indicate if the attitude toward timing of parenthood is a result of socialization within a family and is a value pre-determined by familial environment, or one fostered by outside, societal and peer suggestions.

Second, the possibility exists for using the interview method for obtaining data. This method would not leave items open to interpretation by the subject. It would enable the researcher to focus more closely on items for which a more in-depth understanding would be desirable.

Further research could also evaluate the influence of one marriage partner upon the other in the decision of starting a family as well as

any change in their attitudes toward parenthood. A longitudinal study before and after the event of parenthood could explore the effect of expectations versus the realities of parenthood.

The research done in this study indicates that age, marital status, parental status, job status, and how long a wait there was from marriage to the birth of the first child are significant factors in predicting the attitude toward timing of parenthood. Of subjects responding in this study, it appears that later parenthood is desired by those who are unmarried, or who are married and have no children, and work part-time. Respondents indicating a wait of about three years or more before having their first child may suggest the possible agreement with researchers that a longer wait after marriage is more desirable than early parenting (Christensen, 1963).

Further implications of this study suggest the possiblity that men who express a desire for later parenthood are generally employed full-time and have therefore established some financial background. Also included among males desiring later parenthood are individuals holding bachelor's degrees, and those who are currently married. These factions showing a desire for parenthood later in marriage may have occurred as a result of the area from which the sample was taken. However, it may possibly indicate that the attitudes of those with higher education and greater earning power lean toward a longer delay in parenting. Education and financial situation may indeed be taken into account as a precursor to family life with children.

Since the sample taken was from a southwestern Virginia university town, it should not be considered representative of the overall population. It is, however, a documentation of the attitudes in this place at a certain point in time. It is therefore suggested that such research has implications for counselors and educators, especially those in marriage and family planning. Another's attitude or opinion should not be used in determining one's own plans for life. However, if the research is used in order to suggest trends to clients or students, the individual should be able to view the possiblities and weigh his choice intelligently. In the matter of family planning, research such as this may be used to suggest the attitudes of the population by age, employment status and educational attainment as a hint or suggestion as to what is meaningful and livable for each particular group.

Each individual, with his own perspective on life, should be able to determine his way of life. But with education and learning from past events, planning for parenthood should be purposeful and guided to be a well-timed, developmental event. It is the hope of the author that research will continue to provide useful information for that purpose.

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APPENDIX

Sample Cover Letter

Marcia Savoy
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Dear Sir:

Thank you in advance for participating in my research. Please be assured that your response will be strictly confidential and will be used only for my thesis.

Please fill out all items pertaining to you in Part I. "Family" in this instance refers to you, your spouse and your children, not to your parents and their childrn. Respond to the items in Part II as strongly as they affect you.

Thank you again for helping me in my graduate research.

Sincerely,

Marcia Savoy, Graduate Student

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE COMPLETE PARTS I AND II

PART I

General Information

1. Your present age (to nearest year) _____

2. Your present marital status (circle one)

   a. never married
   b. currently married
   c. separated
   d. divorced
   e. widowed

3. Your parental status (circle one)

   a. have no children (skip #'s 4, 5, and 6 below)
   b. all children are living with you
   c. some children are living with you, some are not
   d. children are no longer living with you

4. Your age at birth of your first child (to nearest year) _____

5. Total number of children in your family _____

   age of oldest _____ age of youngest _____

6. How long did you wait from the time you were married to the birth of your first child? (to nearest year) _____

7. Your current job status (circle one)

   a. employed full-time
   b. hold part-time job
   c. have worked but now out of work (laid-off, returned to school full-time, etc.)
   d. have not yet entered work force (except for summer work, temporary jobs, etc.)
   e. retired

8. Approximate yearly income of your family (included your income, and if married, your wife's) (circle one)

a. less than $5,500
b. $5,501 to $10,000
c. $10,001 to $15,000
d. $15,001 to $20,000
e. $20,001 to $25,000
f. $25,001 to $30,000
g. $30,001 and over

9. Your present education status (circle one)

a. attending school full-time
b. attending school part-time
c. not attending school

10. Indicate highest grade you have completed in school (check lettered category and give number if appropriate)

__a. grade school through high school
(give highest grade completed _____)
__b. some college but no college degree
(give number of years completed _____)
__c. received Associate's degree
__d. received Bachelor's degree
__e. some graduate school but no graduate degree (give approximate number of quarter hours completed _____)
__f. received Master's degree
__g. received doctoral degree

11. Please rank the following items according to their importance to you on a scale of 1 to 6. Decide which is most important to you in making the decision to have children. Number 1 should be most important and number 6 the least. Use only one number for each item and use each number from 1 to 6 only once.

( ) financial security has been established
( ) husband's education has been completed
( ) wife's education has been completed
( ) age of husband
( ) age of wife
( ) desire of parents to become grandparents

12. Your religious preference _____
(You may omit this item if you wish)

PART II

Parental Attitude Questionnaire

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. (Check one response for each item)

	agree strongly	agree	no opinion	disagree	disagree strongly
1. The best time to begin having children is usually within the first two years of marriage.					
2. It is important for a young couple to enjoy their social life first and to have children later.					
3. A marital relationship is strengthened if children are born in the early years of marriage.					
4. Women are generally happier if they have children late in their marriage.					
5. A strong marital commitment will not be damaged by one spouse's wish to put off having children.					
6. Most married women can lead fulfilled lives without children in the early years of marriage.					
7. The establishment of a wife's career or finishing her education should come before starting a family.					
8. Married couples who mature love for each other will be eager to have a child as soon as possible.					

	agree strongly	agree	no opinion	disagree	disagree strongly
9. Children will bring a couple closer together and it is in the best interest of the couple to have them early in marriage.					
10. Children enjoy their parents more when the parents are nearer their own age; therefore, parents should have children while they are young.					

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MALE ATTITUDES TOWARD TIMING OF PARENTHOOD

by

Marcia Ann Savoy

(Abstract)

The purpose of this research was to explore any significant correlations between age, marital status, parental status, age at birth of first child, number of children in family, wait from marriage to first birth, job status, educational status, religious preference and attitude toward timing of parenthood. The sample consisted of 103 males in Blacksburg, Virginia. It was a heterogeneous sampling which included males at all social levels ranging in age from 18 to 71 years. Previous research had shown little conclusive data in this area. Using a scale of 10 Likert-type items coupled with a demographic sections, the research attempted to designate items showing an inclination for subjects to prefer early or late parenthood.

The data were analyzed by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and the one-way analysis of variance. The most significant relationships occurred between attitude scores and age, marital, parental and job states, and wait from marriage to the birth of the first child.