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SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
AND
REFERENCE GROUP ORIENTATION
TO ACHIEVEMENT

- A Pilot Study -

A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Education at
Massey University

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to test the thesis that a relationship exists between a pupil's performance at school and the orientation towards achievement obtaining from his 'reference group'. This concept was understood principally in terms of social psychology, although conceptual strands from sociology were woven into the theoretical considerations.

The study examined the interrelationships of the main variables with socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, class stream, pupil teacher affect and ses of proposed occupation. An (untestable) causal logic was implicit in the design, namely that a reference group orientation to achievement served as a mediator between the independent variables of (1) SES, Ethnic Origin, IQ, Class Stream and previous grades and (2) the dependent variables of Teacher-pupil affect, Pupil-teacher affect, SES of proposed occupation and present grades.

The report contains a justification of the thesis, an account of the pilot study conducted with eighty four fourth form pupils from three streamed classes of a co-educational secondary school, the findings and a discussion of the implications of the study.

The empirical phase called for the gathering of data by interview, questionnaire and a search of school records. As well it entailed the development of an index to measure reference group orientation to achievement. The subsequent statistical analysis relied principally on cross tabulation and step-wise multiple regression analysis.

The results revealed that reference group orientation to achievement did not appear to mediate between independent and dependent variables but rather that it acted independently

intervening to yield a higher correlation with present grades and SES of proposed occupation than any of the variables tested. Further, Reference Group Orientation to achievement emerged as a partial function of SES and ethnic origin, also correlating positively with a simple measure of pupil definition of the school situation and with pupil sociometric rejection.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Abstract | i |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| List of Tables | vi |
| List of Figures | viii |
| Introduction | ix |
| CHAPTER I | |
| RELATED RESEARCH TRENDS | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Conceptual Issues and Trends | 1 |
| Patterns in Home Environment | 4 |
| Patterns in Motivation and Achievement Orientation | 9 |
| Patterns in Cognitive Ability and Language Development | 14 |
| Patterns in the School | 18 |
| Conclusion | 26 |
| CHAPTER II | |
| THE THEORETICAL BASE | 29 |
| Introduction | 29 |
| A Conceptualisation from Symbolic Interactionist Theory | 30 |
| A Conceptualisation from Reference Group Theory | 36 |
| A Case Study | 43 |
| A Synthesis in Education | 49 |
| Application in an Educational Setting | 55 |
| The Theoretical Model | 56 |
| CHAPTER III | |
| HYPOTHESIS STRUCTURE, DATA COLLECTION AND TREATMENT | |
| Introduction | 59 |
| Hypothesis Structure | 59 |
| Research and Operationalisation Design | 68 |
| i Data Collection Methods | 68 |
| ii The Population | 69 |
| iii The Research Instruments | 69 |
| iv Treatment and Analysis of Data | 70 |

| | <u>Page</u> | |
|--------------|---|-----|
| CHAPTER IV | RESULTS | 76 |
| | Introduction | 76 |
| | Variable Frequency Distribution | 77 |
| | Hypothesis Results | 82 |
| | Section A: Reference Group Orientation and the Independent Variables | 82 |
| | Section B: Reference Group Orientation and the Dependent Variables | 89 |
| | Section C: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement and its cumulative Interrelationship with the Independent Variables as they impinge upon the Dependent Variables | 93 |
| | Summary | 106 |
| | | |
| CHAPTER V | CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION | |
| | Introduction | 108 |
| | The Model | 108 |
| | Theoretical Conclusions and Discussion | 110 |
| | Implications for Future Research | 119 |
| | Educational Implications | 121 |
| | | |
| APPENDIX A | Related Research: Aspects of the Definition of the Situation as in Manis and Meltzer (1968) | 122 |
| APPENDIX B | The Research Instruments | 124 |
| APPENDIX C | Direct Independent Variable- Dependent Variable Cross- Tabulations | 127 |
| APPENDIX D | The Sociometry of Reference Group Orientation to Achievement | 133 |
| APPENDIX E | The Raw Data | |
| | | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 141 |

LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| 3.1 A Reference Group Hierarchy | 73 |
| 3.2 Teacher Affect and Pupil Affect Indices | 74 |
| 4.1 Frequencies for SES of Pupil Home | 77 |
| 4.2 Frequencies for Ethnic Origin | 77 |
| 4.3 Frequencies for IQ Scores | 78 |
| 4.4 Frequencies for Third Form Grades by Subject | 78 |
| 4.5 Frequencies for Teacher-Pupil Affect by Subject | 79 |
| 4.6 Frequencies for Pupil-Teacher Affect by Subject | 80 |
| 4.7 Frequencies for Fourth Form Grades by Subject | 80 |
| 4.8 SES of Proposed Occupation | 81 |
| 4.9 Frequencies for Reference Group Orientation to Achievement Index | 81 |
| 4.10 Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Ethnic Origin | 82 |
| 4.11 Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with SES of Pupil Home | 83 |
| 4.12 Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with IQ Scores | 84 |
| 4.13 Stream A: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement and SES of Pupil Home | 85 |
| 4.14 Stream A: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Ethnic Origin | 86 |
| 4.15 Stream B: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with SES of Pupil Home | 86 |
| 4.16 Stream B: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Ethnic Origin | 87 |
| 4.17 Stream C: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with SES of Pupil Home | 88 |
| 4.18 Stream C: Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Ethnic Origin | 88 |
| 4.19 Third Form Grades with Reference Group Orientation to Achievement | 89 |

| | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 4.20 | Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Teacher-pupil Affect | 90 |
| 4.21 | Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Pupil-teacher Affect | 91 |
| 4.22 | Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with SES of Proposed Occupation | 91 |
| 4.23 | Reference Group Orientation to Achievement with Fourth Form Grades | 92 |
| 4.24 | Multiple Regression Statistics and Derived Venn Dimensions | 93 |
| 4.25 | Stream A: Teacher-pupil Affect as a Function of the Independent Variables Combined | 95 |
| 4.26 | Stream B: Pupil-teacher Affect as a Function of the Independent Variables Combined | 100 |
| 4.27 | Stream A: SES of Proposed Occupation as a Function of the Independent Variables | 101 |
| 4.28 | Stream B: SES of Proposed Occupation as a Function of the Independent Variables | 102 |
| A.1 | Socio-economic Status with Teacher-pupil Affect | 127 |
| A.2 | Socio-economic Status with Pupil-teacher Affect | 127 |
| A.3 | IQ with Teacher-pupil Affect | 128 |
| A.4 | Third Form Grades with Teacher-Pupil Affect | 129 |
| A.5 | Third Form Grades with SES of Proposed Occupation | 129 |
| A.6 | Third Form Grades with Fourth Form Grades | 130 |
| A.7 | IQ with Third Form Grades | 130 |
| A.8 | SES of Proposed Occupation with Fourth Form Grades | 131 |
| A.9 | Teacher-pupil affect with SES of Proposed Occupation | 131 |
| A.10 | Teacher-pupil Affect with Fourth Form Grades | 132 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure</u> | <u>Page</u> | |
|---------------|---|-----|
| 1.1 | Cohen, 1970, p.125 | 10 |
| 2.1 | Characteristics, Functions and Sanctions of Reference Groups | 46 |
| 2.2 | The Theoretical Model: School Achievement: Societal, Institutional and Interpersonal Influences | 57 |
| 3.1 | Sociological Influences on Reference Group Orientation to Achievement | 60 |
| 3.2 | Educational Influences on Reference Group Orientation to Achievement | 61 |
| 3.3 | Reference Group Orientation to Achievement and School Behaviour | 63 |
| 3.4 | Sociological, Educational and Reference Group Influences on Teacher-Pupil Affect | 65 |
| 3.5 | Sociological, Education and Reference Group Influences on Pupil-Teacher Affect | 66 |
| 3.6 | Sociological, Educational and Reference Group Influences on SES of Proposed Occupation | 66 |
| 3.7 | Sociological, Educational and Reference Group Influences on Fourth Form Grades | 67 |
| 3.8 | Data Origin | |
| 4.1 | Teacher-pupil Affect as a Function of the Significant Independent Variables Combined | 94 |
| 4.2 | Stream B: Teacher-pupil Affect as a Function of the Independent Variables Combined | 96 |
| 4.3 | Pupil-teacher Affect as a Function of the Significant Independent Variables Combined | 98 |
| 4.4 | Stream A: Pupil-teacher Affect as a Function of the Independent Variables Combined | 99 |
| 4.5 | SES of Proposed Occupation as a Function of Significant Independent Variables Combined | 101 |
| 4.6 | Fourth Form Grades as a Function of the Independent Variables Combined | 103 |
| 4.7 | Stream A: Fourth Form Grades as a Function of the Significant Independent Variables | 104 |
| 4.8 | Stream B: Fourth Form Grades as a Function of the Significant Independent Variables | 104 |
| 5.1 | The Revised Model | 109 |

INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns itself with two educational problems, one deriving from theory and the other from practice. At the theoretical level the thesis seeks to: (i) synthesize selected Symbolic Interactionist conceptualisations with conceptualisations from Reference Group Theory; (ii) to operationalise these concepts; and (iii) test them for applicability and predictability in an educational setting. At the practical level, the thesis seeks to study the relative power and interrelationship of selected predictors of achievement at the fourth form secondary school level. Both problems relate to each other in that operationalised concepts from the theories are used as indices for predicting achievement. The research can be justified on two counts - its potential for the development of educational theory and its relevance for educational practice.

The study is set within the Sociology of Education and the Social Psychology of Education. It is Sociological in that it traces and tests for patterns of relationship among a selection of societal variables as they impinge upon achievement in the secondary school. It is Social Psychological in that certain patterns of interpersonal referents and definitions are described and analysed as they mediate or intervene to affect school behaviours and achievement.

2.

In terms of practical relevance, if the operationalisation of the theory can yield evidence that achievement is influenced by circumstances not usually encompassed by conceptual explanations (eg: SES, IQ, etc), then the possibility of more effective educational intervention may emerge.

For the operationalisation, eighty-four fourth formers in a large co-educational city secondary school, were used. The sample represented one full class from each of the three streams in the school together with core subject teachers. With data obtained from this sample, the study intends to isolate social psychological referents and 'definitions of reality' pertinent to the actors involved and to study their relationship with (i) socio-economic status, (ii) ethnic origin, (iii) IQ scores, (iv) class stream, (v) previous grades, and (vi) behavioural categories of Teacher-pupil affect, Pupil-teacher affect, SES of intended occupation and present grades.

The testing of variable interrelationship and predictive power is complemented by a descriptive analysis of the definition of the situation obtained from pupils in the research sample.

To this end the first chapter of the thesis deals with research that has relevance for the argument (thesis) that is mounted. Chapter II discusses the theoretical bases of the thesis, indicating the foundation on which it rests. Chapter II also develops a model describing the relationships between the variables involved. In Chapter III the hypothesis deriving from the model appear together with their operationalisation in research design and methodology. The results are presented in Chapter IV and their implications in theory and practice presented in Chapter V.

Given the small sample size and the social psychological detail derived from pupil interviews, the thesis is necessarily a pilot study. Further, it seeks to test a method as well as a set of hypotheses, and therefore can be seen as a methodological Case Study also. The conclusions then relate only to the sample and are not generalisable. However, it is hoped that by providing data from a particular case, the study may contribute to a more refined understanding of school achievement and its relationship to interpersonal and societal variables.

CHAPTER I

Related Research Trends

Introduction

This chapter sets out to present some research findings related to the relative power of selected correlates and possible predictors of educational achievement that are germane to the thrust of the thesis. The chapter begins with a discussion of conceptual issues and trends that undergird much of the research presented. The review is divided into particular domains of interest that fall under the broad categories of socioeconomic status, ethnic origin and school achievement as they relate to home environment, motivation, cognitive ability, New Zealand education and school environment. For reasons that are obvious the review borrows heavily on overseas research, mainly in the United States and the United Kingdom. However, no deliberate attempt has been made to use country of origin as a basis for differentiation, principally because the variables under consideration* are gross and are in general taken to be cross culturally consistent (at least in Western cultures).

Conceptual Issues and Trends

It is now commonplace to associate the pre-school experiences of children as strong determinants of success at school, a consequence of the continuing debate over the relative importance of environment and heredity in determining school performance. The difficulty of providing direct rather than

* Sex, as a sociological and social psychological variable was not considered axiomatic to the argument of the thesis and is not presented. This was due to the assumedly secondary nature of its impingement as a variable in Reference Group Orientation to achievement; being related more immediately to pupil self-concept rather than directly to the particular referents isolated in this study. Its inclusion as a reference influence might usefully be employed in subsequent work.

inferential evidence has meant that the genetic argument has subsided to some extent. Consequently, there has been an increased tendency to emphasize the environmental determinants. For example, it is commonly accepted that subsequent educational performance is to a considerable degree a function of preschool experience (Bloom 1964). In a similar vein Brophy and Good (1974) argue that educational achievement is also socially determined in that clothing and appearance and other factors related to socioeconomic status and family background, significantly influence teacher-pupil behaviour and subsequent pupil performance. In the present climate of opinion, mental abilities are now recognized as variable endowments. The interaction of the environment with these is seen as a significant influence impinging upon and shaping the process of cognitive maturation.

The twin variables, socioeconomic status and social 'class', have often been put forward as useful and telling indices of many environmental conditions which have differential effects on school achievement. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that socioeconomic status is in effect a summary of many variables whose components may, in fact, vary from place to place and time to time (Swift, 1968). Neither SES or class has much authority as a causal explanation, their usefulness is rather in providing gross labels which encompass a number of potential explanations.

A further issue for research of the above nature is that described by Sanborn and Wasson (1966) relating to factor identification and causality. They argue that:

"when two variables or conditions are known to be related there is a tendency to regard their interdependence as transitive in nature and to identify one agent as the cause and the other as the effect ... we have no ready way to talk

about conditions of interdependence in which each agent is to some extent a cause and to some extent an effect".

The writers suggest that some kind of notion of interdependence as a theoretical and operational mode may more closely approximate the nature of social and psychological phenomena.

Socioeconomic status, ethnic origin and school achievement as broad categories for analysis especially reflect the problem posed by the need for interdependence. Many lists of SES predictors of school behaviours have been combined: Charters (1963) has listed the following as reliable predictors: grades, achievement and intelligence test scores, retention at grade level, course failures, truency, suspensions from school, high-school dropouts, plans for college attendance and amount of formal schooling. Charters, however, warned of viewing one variable alone as a sufficient and necessary condition for a given social result. Recognising this, Boocock (1966) listed a number of variables that might be regarded as intervening between SES and educational performance. They were: values, child rearing practices, family size and relations with teachers. Variations on such variable selection and role abound. The present review seeks both so-called 'independent', 'dependent' and intervening variables, recognising their possible interdependence and partial variation with each other. The review then seeks patterns and relations that suggest some kind of rapproachment in interdependence.

Patterns in Home Environment

It has been said (Banks, 1968) that one of the main features of modern industrial society is the extent to which the educational system is a means by which individuals are not merely trained for, but often allocated to, their occupational roles. This is seen as a direct consequence of the demands made by an advanced industrial economy for highly trained manpower. Demands emerge for new and continually evolving expertise based in large part on a formal educational training. Status, then, is increasingly achieved, rather than ascribed, and achieved moreover by means of the educational process. The school, to be more specific, has become the major socialising agency, at least during the legal requirement of attendance (Musgrave, 1965). The home, as a socialising agency, has thus lost or is losing its power during this period. Such a conceptualisation from Macrosociology might be qualified however with the more social psychological insight that this period of the Education system's dominance, is only a structured possibility in practice - powerful and pervasive though it may be. It is conceivable that for some 'deviants', the school impact is not a major socialisation factor in their lives and may in fact have a negative effect, with opposing norms being reinforced (Backman and Secord (1968). The prior and continuing power of the home as a socialising agency may then intervene and influence whatever effect the school may have (in Musgrave, 1965).

Even before subjective or directly behavioural variables are taken into account, geographical and material circumstances

may be seen to impinge upon educational performance.

"In south-west Hertfordshire where everyone enjoys a basic adequate income and good housing, the material environment of the home was of less importance in differentiating between the successful and unsuccessful child than differences in the size of the family and in the education, attitudes and ambitions of the parents. In Middlesborough, on the other hand, where incomes were lower and housing conditions less favourable, the successful children at each level were distinguished by the relative prosperity of their homes".

(Underlining mine)

(Floud, Halsey and Martin 1956
in Banks 1968)

The issue may be qualified, however, by noting specific indices that derive, not directly from poverty and housing but from school absence through illness, neglected homework and the inability to pay fees or take up a scholarship (Banks, 1968). Though financial and physical disadvantage may act against the fulfillment of intellectual potential in school, it seems reasonable to suggest that school achievement should be seen in the light of the family as a whole, including the particular values and attitudes that pertain. The Plowden report further emphasised this by calling for a wider definition of home circumstances:

"More of the variation in the childrens school achievement is specifically accounted for by the variation in parental attitudes than by either the variation in the material circumstances of parents or by the variation in the schools. Secondly, the relative importance of parental attitudes increases as children grow older".

(Underlining mine)

(Plowden Report 1967)

The argument for the social psychological mode of the home as a powerful determinant of school performance is

found in work by Deutsch (1963) and Maas (1951). Distinctive features include the notion of a 'hidden curriculum' in middle class homes, comprising intellectual readiness, language cues, concept formation and a milieu of interpersonal relations that mesh with the classroom setting. Lower class homes contain social psychological modes that may often represent a discontinuity with the school environment, in that no such hidden curriculum is present. Such homes have been described as noisier, more crowded, more disorganized and more assertive than middle class homes, lacking many of the accoutrements often associated with school readiness such as books, art work, a variety of toys and self instructional equipment. Adult models are seen as incongruous with the demands of the school or the broader community and the parents are seen as unsupportive of their children's educational pursuits. Physical and concrete experiences were seen as the overriding norm in communications and discipline; lower class homes being much less verbally oriented than higher class homes. 'Closed' and 'rigid' relations between lower class parents and their children was reported and this was concurrent with a high dependence of children on siblings and peers, a condition not so prevalent in middle class families. Given the middle class operants in many schools, the modes of communication, discipline and relationship pertinent to the reported 'lower class child' might tend to be inappropriate. These findings mesh with others from Hess (1966)* which concerned the role of the parents and significant others in the home environment:

* The work of Hess and Shipman develops much of Bernstein's (1961) research.

"The early years are important in part because they occur before formal schooling begins and necessarily impede or facilitate the transition to academic success. In our view many of the differences in mental ability and cognitive styles that appear among different cultural and socioeconomic groups can best be understood in terms of the transmission of information processing strategies from parents to children ... The child's early orientation to authority and cognitive activity facilitates or retards his ability to adopt the role of the pupil when he encounters formal learning situations in the schools".

The impact, then, of preschool experiences and interaction with significant others in the environment appears to shape to a certain extent the modes of adaptation, definitions of the situation and general perspective of the child that may neutralise, to some extent, the impact on the school.

Such findings may be seen to relate to more specific behavioural findings reported by Leshan (1952), Kohn (1959), and Kohn and Carroll (1960). Working class families were described as training their children with immediate punishment and reward, whereas high class families stressed the future consequences and the delay of gratification. Middle class parents appeared to treat a child's misbehaviour in terms of their appreciation of the child's intent. Again, such child rearing modes may be seen as more functional in adaptation in the school setting.

The dysfunctional nature of such patterns for lower socioeconomic status childrens' school performance may be contrasted with Reissman's (1963) findings, which indicate some positive factors in disadvantaged* environments. He lists co-operativeness, mutual aid of extended families, lack of strain from competition, individualism, egalitarianism,

* The term 'disadvantaged' here is associated with SES in that disadvantage characteristics tend to be predominantly lower class operants.

lessened sibling rivalry and the security of a large family. It may be noted, however, that apart from their inherent merit, such patterns may still be dysfunctional for adaptation to the school. Lack of competition, less sibling rivalry and less of the so called 'achievement syndrome' (Winterbottom, 1958) may detract from successful adaptation and performance. Despite such a qualification, however, parents with low levels of occupational and educational skills can still provide a very stimulating home environment for their children (Dave, 1963). It appears, therefore, that parental behaviour rather than parental status per se may be the central social psychological issue with regard to their relative impact on subsequent academic performance.

The tension between variables which describe parental behaviours and parental status has been briefly described. However, the problem remains as to how the two interact with each other. Many lower SES homes may well reflect 'dysfunctional' parental behaviours with regard to their childrens' adaptation to school. Yet prediction on the basis of SES categories may be too crude an approach since individual differences and differing subcultural mores within the lower SES bracket may not exhibit the same parental behaviours. Research into the somewhat more complicated task of relating parental behaviour to measures of achievement value is less prolific. Two examples of such research, however, were conducted by Stodtbeck (1967) and Katovsky, Grandall and Good (1967). The former study found a relationship between the balance of family power in terms of participation and interaction and the need

for achievement and achievement values. Where the mother's power was high, so were her achievement value scores and those of her son.

"The study inferred that this had implications for school achievement, even though the findings were tentative. The latter study found a relationship between childrens' belief in their own control and responsibility for events, and parental behaviour. Using both interviews and questionnaires they found that where parents were rated as protective, nurturant, approving and non-rejecting, children were more likely to believe that they, rather than something or someone else, were responsible for their intellectual achievement".

Complementing this, Elder (1963) found that:

"The strongest commitment to high-school graduation and to obtaining a college education occurred under reported conditions of frequent explanations and moderate or low parental power".

Such patterns come closer to the mechanisms of social psychological transmission of human behaviour and modes of perception and intellectual functioning. The more gross sociological categories of SES have been modified and analysed for more refined discriminators.

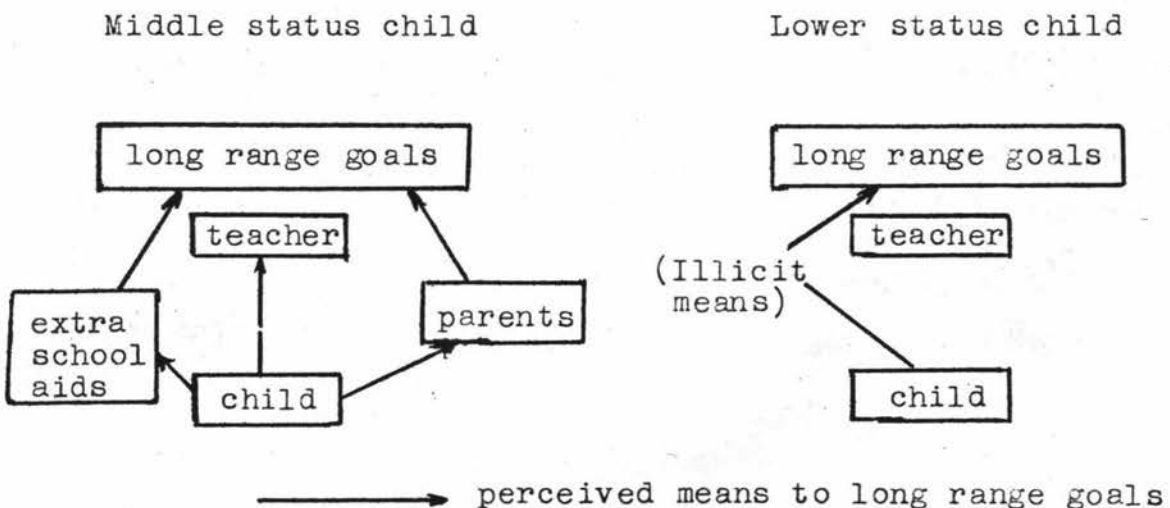
Patterns in Motivation and Achievement Orientation

Low achievement has often been associated with low aspiration and been thought to derive from socially dysfunctional situations, disproportionately found in low SES groups (Gottlieb, 1963). More recently, however, it has been reported that lower SES groups, especially within negro samples have equal aspirations with regard to

school and occupational achievement, but differ in their expectations of realising these aspirations (Rosen (1961)). The minority group pattern in America especially is thought to be tending towards differences in performance not based on aspiration, but rather perhaps on a feeling of powerlessness and lower self-esteem (Ausubel and Ausubel, 1963; Battle and Roger, 1963).

The field is not definitive on these issues, but the suggestion here is that achievement orientation and subsequent motivation to achieve does seem to turn partly on an individual's definition of the situation as hopeless or hopeful. Such definitions are partly thought to be mediated by him by influences and surrounding definitions from neighbourhood, home and peers. Cohen (1970) has crystallised this in diagrammatic form (Fig 1.1). The diagram indicates the ramifications of this attitude in terms of pupil definition of the situation and subsequent behaviour in the classroom. The middle class child sees the teacher as a means to a real and possible end. The low status child cannot believe that working with the teacher will accomplish long range goals.

FIGURE 1.1



As with the patterns revealed in home environment the SES correlation with achievement variables is a feature of much of the research, and social psychological patterns which may effect achievement indices more closely are not so predominant. However some work has been done in the area of self concept and self esteem as it relates to achievement motivation and orientation (Davidson and Lang 1960, Staines 1958, Borislow 1962,

and Fink 1962). All note the conceptual problem that arises here in that, to what extent may self concept be seen as part of the cause and to what extent as part of the effect with regard to achievement orientation. Backman and Secord (1968) have reported that self esteem does not derive from measures of intelligence and is not intimately bound up with such measures despite the cause and effect tension. However the research still consistently reports a correlation between good academic performance and self esteem.

An interesting development from self esteem conceptualisations has emerged in the concept of 'Reflected Self' - an individuals estimation of how persons important to him, would describe him. This 'Reflected Self' emerges from interaction with others as the actor becomes more sensitive to the way others see him. He eventually comes to see himself as he perceives others see him (Davidson and Lang 1960). Brophy and Good (1974) give a more detailed educational context to this finding in their work on expectation effect in teacher pupil interaction and behaviour. The inference here is that self esteem and reflected self derive from the positive or negative expectation of significant others (in this case teachers)

and is to some extent a cause of differential academic achievement. That such expectations may mesh with or clash with parental expectations and beliefs has been investigated by Ashcroft (1972) where a relationship was found between consonant teacher parent beliefs and functional teacher pupil interaction. Whatever the role of self concept, reflected self and their contingencies in the casual pattern leading to differential achievement; once consistent success occurs in school, it tends to breed success. The implication by Backman and Secord (1968) here is that achievement creates the climate for the pupil to view himself as an achiever, and achievement orientation and motivation become operant.

"All the research.....reviewed.....leads to the conclusion that the most important fact in Educational achievement is that the child must repeatedly experience success in his endeavours. This builds appropriate abilities, study habits, attitudes and values and minimises those factors that interfere with performance."

Whether such an orientation is usually prior to school success deriving from preschool experience, whether it is a function of school experience, or a combination of both has not yet been reported accurately.

The traditional trend in research seems to have been to associate lower SES groups with a comparative lack of aspiration, and this tendency allies itself with the fact that such groups often contain a large percentage of ethnic minority groups. However it is contended here that the operants behind low aspiration and achievement orientation do not constitute the universe of lower SES populations. It seems rather that particular social influences, referents and definitions pertain to particular

situations and particular people. Although the sociological trend of class and its concomitant ethnic differences undeniably exists (Hieronymous 1951), subsequent research has concentrated on the social psychology of behaviour transmission with smaller, more intensive studies. Differences between SES and racial groups of children in terms of their expectancies for internal and external control of reinforcement were found to be significant (Battle and Rotter 1963). Lower class negroes were found to be more external than middle class negroes or whites; middle class children were more internal than lower class children. Such a finding has real implications for school performance and behaviour where individual study and competition form a large part of the ethos. Measures of delinquent behaviour, truency and other school offenses were found to be related to downward mobility rather than SES category per se in a study by Pine (1965).

Contradicting some of the past research, Gist and Bennet (1963) found a relatively high level of occupational and educational aspiration among negro high school students in a Mid Western State, even though the negro parents were occupationally disadvantaged with respect to parents of a comparison group of caucasian students. In general the negro students appeared to have higher mobility goals than the whites. The authors suggested that the negro mothers involved may exert more intense influence than do the fathers on the vocational goals of their children. They further suggested that this might effect distinctive

areas of vocational interest for young negroes. Chansky (1965) reportedly confirmed this where he found that ninth grade negroes' vocational interest differed systematically from those of a group of white students who were matched with them on the basis of aptitude scores. The white students showed more interest in careers concerned with nature and machines, but negroes seemed to be interested in interpersonal, verbal, computational and long term training programmes. Chansky posited the existence of 'differential realities' perceived by negroes, deriving from their early socialisation in the form of cognitive and affective 'loadings' by parents and peers.

The inference from more recent research is that sociology eventually becomes manifested through the social psychology of particular situations; the socialisation referents and individual definitions that may well mediate SES and ethnic differences, resulting in differential school achievement but which may also intervene such summary categories and provide their own casual impetus.

Patterns in Cognitive Ability

It has often been demonstrated that measures of cultural deprivation and lower SES are associated with low intelligence test scores and school performance. The high correlation of IQ scores and achievement alone has often been demonstrated and it has been argued that they map similar if not sometimes identical domains. Presently however, concern seems to be directed more to the dynamics of the related process of underachievement, rather than the continuance of research to establish the point.

A complication of the issue is that no ability test

yet exists that could be validly and reliably used to differentiate ability in a latent sense from ability manifest in a culturally specific test. There seems to be no way yet of accurately distinguishing latent ability from early social and psychological dysfunctions. The problem finally centres in the question, 'what is the nature of mental ability itself, what is intelligence?' The operational answer in much research has been 'Intelligence is what the intelligence tests measure', which becomes circular in its logic. If the IQ tests are not culture free, a difficulty arises as to how much mental ability is seen as a function of the environment in prenatal conditions and early socialisation and how much it is seen as innate or 'inherited'. Studies by Fowler (1962), Jensen (1963), and Hunt (1964) imply that the environmental determinants are significant enough to be analysed and modified. They report the existence of successful remedial work at the primary school level in terms of cognitive development, perceptual and language skills. The inference here then is that whatever the nature of the genetic potential in mental ability, it is not so exclusive a determinant as to be the totally binding or the prerogative of the lower class or any ethnic minority group.

Given the above proviso however the difference in performance remains for lower SES pupils.

"Lower class children were (found to be) relatively poorer in auditory discrimination, in manipulation of syntactical aspects of language and in recognition of perceptual similarities."

(Deutsch 1965)

Again a number of investigators have noted perceptual

styles and habits among lower SES children which are inadequate or irrelevant to academic efficiency. Leshan (1952), Deutsch and Brown (1964), Reissman (1963) concluded that:

"Probably of greatest significance is the absence of any high degree of dependence on verbal and written language for cognitive cues. Many of these children have not adopted perceptive and expressive modes traditional to and necessary for success in school."

Given a disadvantage in perceptual and cognitive skills the lower SES pupil has less wherewithall and consequently less motivation to succeed. Deutsch (1963) found that lower SES children tended to ignore difficult problems with a 'so what' attitude and that this ultimately affected their learning. Resultant inadequacy from such experiences was detected by Goff (1954) among lower SES children. This has been related to low self esteem (as indicated before), impaired patterns of personal-social organisation, high incidence of behavioural disturbance and distorted interpersonal relationships - (Ausubel & Ausubel 1963, Battle and Rotter 1963, Goff 1954 and Keller 1963).

Given the plethora of data accumulated over the last twenty years (and only briefly sampled here) the qualification made at the outset of this section remains and it is important to get behind what the test and ability test scores of different social groups mean. Klineberg (1963) has stressed the need to control for cultural and social psychological effects. The theme discerned for home environment and for achievement orientation returns; that mediators and interventions from the situation and its history impinge. Hewer (1965) has even argued that predictions for mental ability and achievement might be more accurately made for particular social groups than for total populations. Goffman (1964) warned against

measuring of the mental ability of children from different cultural backgrounds within society. He argued that when tests were employed for assessment rather than for prediction, intergroup comparisons should take into account variables other than test scores alone.

In terms of New Zealand education, the issue of Maori-Pakeha educational differences has been a much debated issue, although with a dearth of empirical research data. Conceptually at least the main axis of the controversy stems from Maori-Pakeha differences in education being seen as either socioeconomic or cultural effects. It has been suggested that Maori educational problems as evidenced over the last century are due principally to socioeconomic factors (Gregory 1974) ie: that Maori underachievement is a function of their exhibiting predominantly lower socioeconomic status than Pakehas, and not due to some peculiarly Maori cultural dissonance with European educational modes and aims.

By way of contrast it has been suggested by Walker (1973) and the congruent views of Dewes (1968), Bray (1973) Schwimmer (1973) and Walsh (1973) that Maori-Pakeha educational differences stem from cultural differences that operate independently of socio-economic differentials. Given cultural differences impinging upon school clientele, resultant performance measures reflect the inflexibility of the school in adapting to such cultural differences and not inherent environmental deprivation deriving from lower SES. Harker (1976) citing the work of Lovegrove (1964; 66) indicates that the argument for socioeconomic impingement over and above ethnic-cultural impingement as a predictor of differential school performance may in part be due to misleading statistical inferences. The debate continues; however, it seems reasonable to suggest that given the fact of differential performance, some measure of the social psychological referents pertinent to pupils of different ethnic origin and their orientation to achievement may reveal a further factor in the explanatory pattern.

The interdependence of linguistic function with intellectual function is axiomatic to psychology and educational practice, but it seems reasonable to suggest that the social psychology of early cultural socialisation, infant vocalization, development of comprehension, cognitive style and family communicative modes may become socially constituted as to make some pupil performance a result of dysfunctional or functional background. (Deutsch and Brown (1964), Bernstein, (1960), Labov (1964), Anastasi and Diangelo (1962), Rada (1965). PAT scores and Otis IQ results may to some extent be tracing social and cultural differentials rather than purely latent mental ability patterns. A measure of the social and cultural milieu then and of pupil perception of the situation might better complement whatever use or inference may accompany test scores.

Patterns in the School

The review so far has sought to isolate a sample of the findings related to preschool and extraschool socialization, as they are seen to affect school performance. Trends and behavioural patterns in the school may also be seen as part of and integral to the operation of influences from the wider social group, in that schools perceive, define and respond to their clientele in certain ways. Similarly, their clientele undergo the same process of perceiving, defining and responding to the school situation. Stinchcombe (1964) has reported that competition, SES and goal orientation appear to be differentially distributed among high-school students.

"Sources of boredom and rebellion in the high school classroom were revealed. Such behaviour has been termed as expressive alienation, which is characterised by (a) short run hedonism, (b) negativism with respect to conformity and those who conform, (c) the perception of the status system as unfair, particularly as administered by the school authorities, and (d) demands for autonomy and freedom from

adult interference. This psychological state may arise from an inability to meet school demands ... (from middle class pupils who become rebellious consequent to low achievement) or, in the case of other students, it may arise from a lack of articulation between school activity and future status. For those students whose class, racial, or ethnic background, or intelligence, leads to the expectation that they will not achieve the desired level of occupational status under any circumstances, achievement in school makes little sense. Grades and other indicators of successful progress towards desirable adult status have little meaning. In search for other symbols which provide assurance of growing up, these children prematurely demand adult status and reject the cultural doctrine that authority should reside in adults, to the degree that the disadvantaged child has internalised success goals, he will evidence rebellion".

The irony then exists that the school may by being partially successful and being seen as a theoretically valued experience, induce rebellion in pupils who while appreciating the pull of its normative demands to some extent, are unable or unwilling to participate fully in educational tasks. Stinchcombe (1964) adds here:

"The major practical conclusion ... is that rebellious behaviour is largely a reaction to the school itself and its promises, not a failure of the family or community. High school students can be motivated to conform by paying them in the realistic coin of future adult advantages. Except perhaps for pathological cases, any student can be made to conform if the school can realistically promise something valuable to him as a reward for working hard. But for a large part of the population, especially the adolescents who will enter the male working class or the female candidates for early marriage, the school has nothing to promise".

An interesting qualification to this conclusion is provided by Coleman, Campbell and Hobson (1966) in their large American study.

"Whereas the child from the disadvantaged background benefits by attending a school where

the students come from homes providing a favourable background, the child with the favourable background appears relatively unaffected when placed in school where the children are largely drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds".

It might be inferred here that the influence of the home environment is the more dominant factor in the causal pattern, in that an advantaged home stressing and enabling achievement continues its effect naturally, whatever the school is like. This might be contrasted with a 'disadvantaged' home, which while not opposing achievement, may not stress it, making the children more vulnerable to dysfunctional forces in the school.

Three variables thought to contribute to the social climate of the school, which may have consequences for achievement have been reported by Backman and Secord (1968) as (1) attributes that entering students bring with them, (2) characteristics that the school itself exhibits as an institution, and (3) informal social structures passed on from one generation of students to another. It is the first category that is thought to determine the school climate most. Ironically, it is the least amenable to change.

Perhaps one of the most interesting school perceptions of client characteristics, is the streaming process practised in many schools. In the United Kingdom findings seem to indicate that placement in streams is not always in proportion to the abilities of pupils from families in each occupational category (Jackson, 1964; Douglas, 1964).

This is probably not entirely analogous with the New Zealand situation, where streaming usually occurs on the basis of Otis IQ scores, PAF scores and reports from previous schools. However, the whole endeavour of ability grouping has been quite strongly attacked by a number of studies, indicating its limiting and rigid nature in terms of potential ability. It also seems that superior performance pupils in ungrouped schools make the same amount of progress as a similar sample of pupils in streamed schools (Tillman and Hull, 1964). The inference here again is towards a tightening of a number of given indices (to a certain extent arbitrary and questionable themselves) by setting up structures which create performance as much as reflect it. At the macro sociological level it could be argued that such streaming serves to mediate perceived class correlates, solidifying and maintaining them. The consequences at the psychological level may also be questionable, especially with regard to self-esteem and acceptance. Tillman and Hull (1964) found that fewer pupils in randomly selected classes were labelled as social isolates on sociometric tests.

Teachers are another factor that appear to be integral to the influences on pupils at school.

"The more positive the childrens' perception of the teachers feelings, the higher the child's own self image, the better the child's own academic achievement, and the more desirable his or her classroom behaviour as rated by the teacher".

Backman & Secord . (1968)

However, these mutually reinforcing variables may not in fact correlate highly with pupil affect toward teachers within a

certain range. Teachers labelled as friendly have not always been found to be most successful at teaching Brookover (1945). Certainly from an explanatory point of view, Wallers' (1932) analysis of the sociology of learning would seem to reinforce this, that the tension of the teaching situation is to a certain extent coercive.

Becker (1952) and Kaplan (1952) have found that class enters into this interactive setting in that lower class children have been considered to be less rewarding to teach given their attitude ability and response in the classroom. An interesting study by Silberman (1971) focused on teacher affect with regard to pupils. He analysed teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom, in terms of whether the teacher had labelled certain pupils as being, for them, cases of attachment, concern, rejection or indifference. A series of follow up and replication studies showed attachment students to be bright, conforming and generally rewarding to the teachers. Indifference students were found to have low rates of interaction with teachers; concern students were found to have higher rates of interaction with teachers while rejection students were found to be behaviour problems and to be generally active in the classroom in a non-task way. However, this warning is sounded by Brophy and Good (1974).

"The effects of teacher attitudes on teacher-student interaction are not simple and universal. The degree to which teacher attitudes affect teacher-student interaction will differ from teacher to teacher. As with teacher expectations, it seems to us that the more competent the teacher is, the more secure and confident he is, the better his personal adjustment is, and the more aware he is of his attitudes and their possible effect on his behaviour, the less likely his teaching is to be influenced by his attitudes towards individual students ... it seems unlikely that particular

student attributes have simple and universal effects in triggering specific teacher attitudes. Although it is likely that the great majority of teachers will react to a given student attribute positively or negatively, there is room for much interaction between particular students' personality traits and particular teachers' personality traits., so that a given student might be liked by one teacher but disliked by another".

However, there remain the results of longitudinal studies which suggest that attachment, concern and rejection students have somewhat stable and general traits which make them likely to strike teachers similarly, but that indifference students do not exhibit such stable patterns of behaviour. An interesting development here is the possibility of correlations of such phenomena with SES categories; a theme to be investigated in this thesis.

Some work developing the above theme, was conducted where Davidson and Lang (1961) found that even early on in primary school, working class children tended to perceive teachers as less approving than middle class students. Brookover (1945), studying this theme at the secondary school level, has indicated that pupil-teacher identification may well be influenced by the discrepancy between parent-teacher discrepancies. The trend in research at present is towards indices and analysis of teacher behaviour rather than teacher characteristics however, notably in the work of Flanders (1960). Banks (1968) suggested in fact that the teacher-pupil relationship is the most important unit of interaction in the school, although peer groups and other aspects of the community reflected in the school, or structures inherent in the school, do impinge.

At present research appears to contradict more than agree on the relative power and operation of student groups: Turner (1964), Riley and Riley (1961), Kendel and Lesser (1969), Snyder (1969). The relative impact of the adult and peer group and the amount of conflict between these 'significant others' has not yet been resolved; quite often it seems to depend on the situation researched. Work in reference group theory is just beginning to come into its own within educational research, in terms of the above impasse, particularly in the light of the very influential Parsonian theoretical formulations on this matter. Parsons (1959) has asserted that:

"the individual headed for higher occupational status will choose peer groups that tend on the whole to facilitate his progress in this direction ... this can also be a major factor in reinforcing the child's predispositions in terms of his own ability and its encouragement in the school, to transcend the expectation of his class origin".

This appears to be generally supported by subsequent work by Simpson (1962), Ellis and Lane (1963), Turner (1964), where findings indicate that ambitious working class boys tend to have more middle class friends than unambitious working class boys.

An interesting finding by Turner (op cit) indicates that the stratification of peer association tends to form on the basis of ambition, rather than class background. Middle class values seemed to be correlated more with stratification of destination than with stratification of origin. These studies, however, did not include dropouts in their sample and parental background may in fact be more powerful than they suppose. There remain many methodological problems since, even in the example above, there is no guarantee that the more socially mobile working class boys were not in fact

orientated this way by their parents, prior to school peer contact.

Social Psychology has labelled the possible influences deriving from peer power and teacher-pupil affect as the subinstitutional structure underneath the institutional structure of role expectations and role behaviour in the school. These two structures have been seen as the chief sources of stability in the behaviour of persons in all social settings. For example, Gronlund (1959) in using sociometric analysis to probe into subinstitutional patterns has reported that a person is most likely to choose; (i) people with whom he has a greater opportunity to interact; (ii) people who have characteristics most desirable in terms of the norms and values of the group; (iii) people who are most similar to him in attitudes, values and social background characteristics; (iv) people he perceives as choosing him or assigning favourable characteristics to him, and (v) those in whose company he has experienced need satisfaction. Bonney, Hoblet and Dreyer (1953) have analysed such findings in terms of exchange theory. It is possible that patterns of interaction may be found which facilitate the achievement of educational goals and buttress the role pattern; however, some sub-institutional patterns may operate independently of or in opposition to institutional modes and aims. In terms of exchange it may be that interpersonal rewards are gained by certain groups of pupils (perhaps from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds) by participating in subinstitutional modes contrary to the official normative pattern. Most of their needs may not relate to educational task goals, or the formal system may

not achieve the task goals for them. The interrelationship of such modes with SES and achievement will be another pre-occupation of this thesis.

Conclusion

Sources of differential socialization and subsequent differential school achievement have been reviewed and precised here in terms of any pattern of social, ethnic, familial, economic, or geographical factors which combine so as to interfere seriously with educational and vocational fulfillment of individuals. In America particularly the analysis of disadvantage has arisen from a concern for equal opportunity to learn and improve and is a concern which has in part prompted much research in the sociology and social psychology of education. Cultural and social disadvantage are often seen as impediments to equal opportunity. Mothers, peer groups, home conditions, motivation, linguistic differences, cognitive processes and teacher behaviour and expectations among others have all been included as variables. They are seen to bear their collective fruition in the classroom and most significantly at the time of achievement assessment. In terms of collective interrelationship, for example, language may be related to social group, motivation to peer group, socialisation to home conditions and teacher expectations to student manner and appearance as partial predictors of school achievement.

There have not been any cumulative studies unifying the often fragmented nature of research in the past, therefore, the need for interrelationship in research remains. Many of the variables listed above intervene upon each other to such an extent that any cumulative work at present would only reveal a 'soup' of

findings without any obvious body to it. Nevertheless, the trend towards integration continues both conceptually and operationally.

Several methodological points need to be made here, in that research of the above kind is limited to a certain extent operationally. The first limitation is that, on the basis of present statistical method prediction does not constitute explanation. Correlates are always 'an inference away' from the actual case and are therefore vulnerable to misinterpretation. Secondly, it has **not** always been clear on what theoretical and statistical grounds the choice of dependent and independent variables are made. A pervasive interest here has been with the family as a socialising agency, acting as an independent variable. Often within the sociology of education the family is seen as performing a status assigning function: an individual's social class position is usually measured by the SES status of his family. From this it has been argued that the higher the SES the higher the student's aspiration and consequent achievement. The school as an independent variable on the other hand usually involves the researcher in classifying schools as lower or middle class by the status of their students and then making some comparison with the lower class or ethnic group integration or achievement. Difficulties with oversimplified and misrepresented variables may lead to irrelevant research.

This review, as a sample of research studying the influences behind school achievement has presented part of the range of patterns so far discerned. Its point was to unravel

mediators of and interventions to the gross summary categories, breaking them down into more refined variables. By way of summary then, some social groups bring to school a lesser personal valuation of education in general and less desire to achieve in the school setting, along with a store of social and cultural experiences and adult contacts that may actually shape IQ scores and other measures of ability. The emphasis of the thesis will be to continue the investigation of this theme by positing and analysing a series of social psychological mediators and intervenors, that interpret variables already revealed in the sociology of education. This attempt in particular develops the work of Siblerman, in Brophy and Good (1974) in terms of teacher affect; the work of Gronlund (1959) and others in sociometry, and finally, peer group studies. To these it adds the social psychological conceptualisations developed in recent reference group theory and a Symbolic Interactionist notion of the definition of the situation.