



Rural Montanans attitudes toward child rearing education, social life and recreation
by Donna Rogers Herdina

Montana State University
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Abstract:

Attitudes toward child rearing, education, social life and recreation were investigated in a random sample of rural Montanans. Respondents were 134 males and 198 females age 18 or older who lived in 12 randomly selected counties, representing all six geographic regions of the state. The survey instrument included data related to the above elements and to personal background information.

Males, those who were older, Protestants, those with larger numbers of children, and those with less extensive education appeared to be more authoritarian in their child rearing attitudes. Mean scores for the sample revealed generally positive attitudes toward education; no personal variables significantly effected this finding. Income and level of education were found to have a significant influence on social satisfaction. Social interaction was significantly effected by sex, marital status, church attendance, number of children, and children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home.

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Date May 28, 1976

RURAL MONTANANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD CHILD REARING
EDUCATION, SOCIAL LIFE AND RECREATION

by

DONNA ROGERS HERDINA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Approved:

Robert W. Lind
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Mary Dee Kewer
Head, Major Department

Henry L. Persons
Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

Attitudes toward child rearing, education, social life and recreation were investigated in a random sample of rural Montanans. Respondents were 134 males and 198 females age 18 or older who lived in 12 randomly selected counties, representing all six geographic regions of the state. The survey instrument included data related to the above elements and to personal background information.

Males, those who were older, Protestants, those with larger numbers of children, and those with less extensive education appeared to be more authoritarian in their child rearing attitudes. Mean scores for the sample revealed generally positive attitudes toward education; no personal variables significantly effected this finding. Income and level of education were found to have a significant influence on social satisfaction. Social interaction was significantly effected by sex, marital status, church attendance, number of children, and children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The family as the basic social unit of our society is the institution in which the earliest social and psychological development of the child occurs (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957; Photiadis, 1964; Salk & Kramer, 1969; Schlater, 1970; Kelley, 1974). It has been stated that the child learns in his early years, patterns of behavior and emotional response that will be his for the rest of his life (Kelley, 1974). In other words, the kind of home in which the child receives training in these early years will determine in large part the kind of individual he will become.

In the past, beliefs concerning child rearing have usually had a strong parental orientation; parents reared their children according to their own needs and values as parents (Miller & Swanson, 1968). Rapidly occurring social change, however, is resulting in a transition in child care (Photiadis, 1964; Ritchie & Koller, 1964; Miller & Swanson, 1968; LeMasters, 1970). Working mothers, for example, may have to rely on persons outside of the family for help in caring for the child. The child, as a result, becomes subjected to a set of values different from those of his parents. Pre-schools and/or day care centers introduce the child to different parent models with different values. Social organizations in the community (church,

school organizations, etc.) may also influence the child's socialization. Due to technological advances parents may have more time to involve themselves in leisure and social activities; thereby acquainting their children with a variety of circumstances.

Rural and urban people alike are being effected by the social changes going on in the United States (Ritchie & Koller, 1964). According to LeMasters (1970), however, rural parents are in a more difficult position than urban parents. Farm children are being subjected more and more to urban values and the urban way of life, increasing social distance between them and their parents. Many farm parents are having to prepare their children for a more urban world; a world they really do not understand themselves. Kelley (1974) stated:

The basic economic unity and interdependence characteristic of the traditional farm family no longer hold family members together. School, church, and community, together with economic factors, peer groups, television and mass media, and recreational activities, pull the family in many different directions (p. 536).

Economic, technological, and population changes taking place in rural America may offer an explanation. It has been stated that "Only the well-educated, well-financed farm youth can hope to survive in the agricultural world of tomorrow (LeMasters, 1970, p. 201)." Rising costs of land and machinery have made it very difficult for people to engage themselves in agriculture. The mechanization of

the farm has also been a factor in the decline of the American population engaged in agriculture (LeMasters, 1970). Parents rearing their children on a farm may realize the hardships their children could face if they were to follow in their parents' footsteps. Raising children according to parents' own needs and values may not necessarily prepare children for a kind of life different from their own. A population shift is also taking place. In 1974, more people moved to rural areas than moved out (Rodale, 1975). This does not mean that people are moving to the farm, but it does mean they are moving to more sparsely populated areas. The impact of greater numbers of people all with different values and life styles may have an effect on the rural family.

A significant portion of Americans live in rural settings even though there has been a decline in the percentage of the population engaged in agriculture. Nationwide, 20 per cent of the population live in such areas; in Montana 46 per cent (323,733) of the total population has been reported as being rural (Johnson, 1974). Little research, however, has been done involving rural family life styles, particularly in the rural west. If the changes taking place in rural America are effecting the family it seems essential that we learn what these effects are and the attitudes of those involved.

It is important that we try to isolate individuals' attitudes regarding family life. Only when the problem areas are identified can help be given to deal more effectively with our changing social system. In the coming decades, many issues of concern to individuals and families will require new knowledge about the interrelationships between man and his physical and social environment (Schlater, 1970).

It seems that the availability and quality of education and social and recreational resources would help to enrich family life. It is necessary to discover what people believe about education and about their social and recreational life before we can assess their needs with any degree of accuracy.

If outside social forces have an effect on the family, altering basic goals and values, the child will also be effected.

Children in today's America grow up without the comfort and support of a single, unified, and consistent value system. . . Any problem which faces the child may be solved differently by his peers, by his parents, and by his teachers, to name just three. . . This situation puts great importance on our need to know. . . how community life affects family life and family life affects community life (Kerckoff, 1961, p. 9).

Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and

recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

Hypotheses

The following specific hypotheses were chosen for the study:

1. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and attitudes toward:
 - a. education
 - b. social life and recreation
2. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward child rearing and the personal variables of:
 - a. sex
 - b. age
 - c. marital status
 - d. income
 - e. religion
 - f. church attendance
 - g. number of children
 - h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
 - i. children 18 and over living in the home
 - j. level of education
3. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and attitudes toward social life and recreation.
4. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward education and the personal variables of:
 - a. sex
 - b. age
 - c. marital status
 - d. income
 - e. religion
 - f. church attendance
 - g. number of children

- h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
 - i. children 18 and over living in the home
 - j. level of education
5. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward social life and recreation and the personal variables of:
- a. sex
 - b. age
 - c. marital status
 - d. income
 - e. religion
 - f. church attendance
 - g. number of children
 - h. children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home
 - i. children 18 and over living in the home
 - j. level of education

Definitions

For the purposes of this study the following definitions were used:

Rural: Farm and non-farm communities with a population of less than 2,500 people (Gould & Kolb, 1964).

Attitudes toward child rearing: The expression of values and beliefs in relation to the caretaking of children. These expressions were referred to as either authoritarian (traditional) or democratic (equalitarian).

Authoritarian: The expression of an attitude which views parents primarily as authority figures in the child rearing relationship.

Traditional: The term will be used interchangeably with authoritarian.

Democratic: The expression of an attitude which views children as equals in their rights and responsibilities as family members.

Equalitarian: The term will be used interchangeably with democratic.

Attitudes toward education: The expression of feelings in relation to the effects education has upon one's life. These expressions range from the positive effects possessing an education has upon leisure time and economic opportunity to conflict between education and work.

Attitudes toward social life and recreation: The expression of feelings with regard to social interaction and social satisfaction.

Social interaction: The involvement of the respondent with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community.

Social satisfaction: The expression of an attitude involving general friendliness of the community, a sense of belongingness, and overall tone of family life.

Age: Each respondent was placed in one of six age groups: under 21, 21-28, 29-35, 36-50, 51-65, over 65.

Marital status: Levels of response referred to whether the participant had never married, was presently married, divorced, or widowed.

Income: Response levels categorized income as follows: over \$25,000, \$20,000-\$24,999, \$15,000-\$19,999, \$10,000-\$14,999, \$7,000-\$9,999, \$5,000-\$6,999, \$3,000-\$4,999, and under \$3,000.

Religion: The four response levels included Roman Catholic, Protestant, another religion, and no religious preference.

Church attendance: Responses comprised four categories: three or more times per month, once or twice per month, a few times per year, and never.

Number of children: This variable refers to the total number of children each respondent had.

Children between the ages of 0-17: The number of children of this age group presently living in the home.

Children 18 and over: The number of children of this age group presently living in the home.

Level of education: Categories for educational attainment are as follows: less than eighth grade, completed eighth grade, completed high school, attended college, completed bachelors degree, college beyond bachelors degree, masters degree, doctors degree, finished business college, and finished trade school.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study focuses on only a small portion of the total study titled "Rural Family Life Styles in Montana." The total survey deals with housing and homemaking, marital roles, marital communication, family planning and sex knowledge, child rearing, nutrition knowledge, consumer knowledge, education, and social life and recreation. The number of questions, therefore, pertaining to each of the areas are delimited.

The study is limited by two factors: sample size and previous research. Sample size prohibits the use of direct observation which places limitations on the type of data that can be derived. Minimal research pertaining to rural family life styles in the west limits the amount of information from which to build.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

History of Child Rearing Practices

. . . a study of child-rearing ideas of the past . . . can help to make us aware of the precedents which remain dynamically related to our own work in the upbringing and education of children (Sunley, 1955, p. 151).

Early Attitudes Toward Children

It is difficult to imagine that in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist. That is to say, a child was not distinguished from an adult (Thompson, 1952; Aries, 1962; Kessen, 1965; Lefrancois, 1973). The infant was, in effect, regarded as a miniature adult. He differed from adults only quantitatively (Lefrancois, 1973). Since the infant was too small and fragile to take part in adult activities, he simply didn't count (Aries, 1962).

That children were viewed in this manner is one of the reasons there are so few accounts of child rearing practices in earlier times.

According to Lefrancois (1973), there are two other possible explanations. One is that animals of a lower phylum were easier to understand and therefore much easier to study. Another is the place a child held in the affection of adults. Children were not necessarily loved or wanted and if they were wanted, it may have been only for economic reasons. It is easier to understand this lack of love and affection when it is remembered that a child was regarded as an ill-formed adult, incapable of carrying out adult activities.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, a new concept of childhood appeared. A child became the symbol of sweetness and simplicity; for the adult, a source of relaxation and amusement (Aries, 1962). It is interesting to note that this concept was most popular among women, even though the entire responsibility for the care of the child rested with them. In spite of the changing attitude toward children on the part of many, the child was still absorbed into the world of adults between the age of five and seven.

At the same time, men of the church came to regard children as "fragile creatures of God who needed to be both safeguarded and reformed (Aries, 1962, p. 133)." Later in the seventeenth century, as this idea became more prevalent, so also did interest in education and the concept of a long childhood. Although the literature reviewed is inconclusive, it may be attributable, at least in part, to the sex

difference in parents and to changing social attitudes toward education in general.

Early Child Rearing Practices

Kessen (1965) stated that before 1750 the odds were three to one against a child completing five years of life. This may have been due partly to a lack of information regarding children's needs, inadequate nutrition, and less than adequate medical skills. As reported by Kessen (1965), not until late in Western history were there any experts in child care. Many parents relied on the midwife and the teacher for advice.

According to Rogers (1969), during the period between 1550 and 1750, European parents became somewhat permissive in their child rearing practices. This varied somewhat according to geographic, religious, and socio-economic factors, but generally speaking, a wave of permissiveness in child care was reported to have appeared.

In North America, on the other hand, the colonial family was reported to have been very stern and subjective in their attitudes regarding children (Queen & Habenstein, 1967). In some households children were not allowed to sit during mealtime. They ate whatever was handed them and were taught it was sinful to complain.

Many believed the child was born with perverse tendencies (Queen & Habenstein, 1967; Rogers, 1969; Thompson, 1952). In order

to break down these undesirable qualities, severe and inflexible disciplinary methods were used. Discipline was not only the responsibility of the home, but of the school and state as well. Stern laws were enacted to enforce strict obedience. A Connecticut statute, for example, decreed that: if a rebellious son sixteen years or older did not obey his parents or heed their punishment, he could be brought before the magistrates assembled in court, and be put to death (Trumbull, 1876, pp. 69-70).

This stern code of discipline was thought to be associated with current religious beliefs and to reflect the difficult conditions under which these people lived. The usual pattern of family life was patriarchal, making the support and conduct of family members the responsibility of the male head of the house. The woman, on the other hand, was also responsible for a wide range of activities. It was her duty to tend to the children as well as help till the soil. Most of the time was spent doing chores, so there was little time for social life or recreation for any family members, even for the children. Boys, however, were permitted to go to school (Queen & Habenstein, 1967).

The colonial period seems to have been a time of masculine dominance. Families were viewed essentially as economic institutions (Queen & Habenstein, 1967). It appears that these two factors, along with a lack of social life, largely accounted for the strongly

authoritarian view of child rearing in this period of our history. According to Rogers (1969) this attitude prevailed from the colonial period up to the beginning of the twentieth century.

A marked interest in children and in child rearing problems developed during the nineteenth century. According to Sunley (1955), this interest was brought about by several reasons. First of all, a rapid rise of industry was taking place. This shift was disrupting not only established patterns of living, but patterns of child rearing as well. Along with increasing industrialization came the growing belief in the power of man to control his environment. Man was becoming capable of directing the future and became more conscious of his ability to mold his children. Finally, an increased emphasis was being placed on the child as an extension of his parents' ambitions.

As man came to realize the control he had over himself and his environment, the concept of character development became even more important. Since it was the mother who was considered the principal person in forming character, her role became paramount (Sunley, 1955). By mid-nineteenth century, the father played only a small part in the upbringing of his children. According to the literature, the father's responsibility rested almost solely with the administering of corporal punishment, if and when it was considered necessary.

Due to the many changes taking place in the social system between 1850 and 1900, a substantial amount of literature appeared on the subject of child rearing. In this literature three general theories seemed to prevail. One prescribed that parents should enforce absolute obedience. This would break the child's will and help free him "from the hold of his evil nature (Sunley, 1955, p. 163)." Dwight, writing in 1834, stated: "No child has ever been known since the earliest period of the world, destitute of an evil disposition -- however sweet it appears (p. 31)." Another theory advocated the idea of children becoming "strong, vigorous, unspoiled men, like those in the early days of the country (Sunley, 1955, p. 161)." A third theory endorsed gentle treatment of the child, making corporal punishment undesirable as a means of disciplining children. Advocates of this theory recommended that understanding and justice be used by parents in rearing their children.

Even though the literature of the times expressed varied feelings concerning child rearing practices, it was not until the latter half of the 1930-1940 decade that a great deal of attention was given to permissive procedures (Stendler, 1973; Rogers, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1970). It has been reported that two-thirds of the articles written on child rearing promoted the idea of parental permissiveness (Winch, 1952). Baby and Child Care by Spock (1946) became very popular. In it, Spock advised parents to act according

to instinct. Whatever the parents felt was best would probably be best for the child (Stendler, 1973; Rogers, 1969).

The concept of permissiveness did not hold a dominant place very long. The fifties and sixties brought a new mode of thought and action which affected peoples' lives all over the world. With it came many transitions in personal goals and values and consequently, a new and yet unclear trend in child rearing (Rogers, 1969). Child care once again became a blend of conflicting theories.

Today, many adhere to the democratic way of rearing children. ". . . that is, that parents probably know best in many things, but children know something, too (Papalia & Olds, 1975, p. 377)."

Child Rearing Studies

Little research has been done in the rural west, especially with respect to the family. Research which has been done has dealt primarily with agriculture. Since the rural family has been given little attention, it has been difficult to identify as a variable in many of the studies dealing with child rearing.

Rural

Researchers conducting a study on family social interaction in rural Michigan (Michigan State University Experiment Station, 1957) found that family members spent little time together, with very

few activities being shared in the home. In general, mothers spent more time with their children than did fathers. These findings were not correlated, however, with specific child rearing attitudes.

Extensive interviews of urban, suburban, and farm wives living in Michigan comprised the population for a study by Blood and Wolfe (1960). The results tended to indicate very little difference in child rearing problems from city to country.

Wilson and Sperry (1961) conducted a study which dealt with child rearing techniques of rural mothers. Significant relationships to techniques of guidance were found to exist on the basis of the mother's age and level of education. The use of affection by the mothers as a guidance technique tended to decrease as her age increased. The demonstration of affection also decreased as the mother's level of education increased.

Non-Rural

Several studies, though not dealing with a rural population, have been found which indicate a number of personal variables to be directly related to child rearing attitudes. Among these variables is socio-economic status (SES) or social class, which has been given considerable attention in its relationship to child rearing attitudes and techniques. Social class becomes relevant when broken into its major component parts: income and level of education, both of which are variables in the present study.

Havighurst and Davis (1955) compared major studies done at Harvard and in Chicago and found that there were differences in child rearing practices based upon social class. On the basis of social class, middle class parents appeared to have higher educational expectations of their children than did lower class parents.

Jordan (1970), examining the influence of age and social class on authoritarian family ideology, found less authoritarianism for the higher social classes. Permissiveness increased as age increased, indicating a higher degree of permissiveness on the part of the older.

Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) also found differences in child rearing practices between the social classes. Working class mothers seemed to use more rigid disciplinary techniques with their children than did middle class mothers. The researchers attributed this difference not only to social class but to the number of children each family had. They suggested the possibility that "if we compared working-class families who had a certain number of children with middle-class families having the same number, there would be little or no difference between them in their child-training methods (p. 435)." Findings were the same whether mothers were compared on the basis of their educational attainment or on the basis of their SES. An explanation for this finding may lie partly in the fact that level of education often comprises a large part of SES.

The relationship between SES and a mother's behavior toward children was analyzed in the Berkeley Growth Study (Bayley & Schaefer, 1960). Findings indicated only a slight increase of warmth, understanding, and acceptance toward children as SES of mothers rose. Although mothers of a lower status tended to be slightly more punitive and controlling, the differences in behavior were much more evident for those mothers having sons than for those having daughters. According to Bronfenbrenner (1972), parental behaviors differentiated by sex of the child are pronounced only in the lower middle class. As the SES of a family rises, both parents tend to relate to sons and daughters similarly.

It seems important to note at this point that child rearing attitudes in relation to the sex of the child are not important to the present study. It appears, however, to be one of two factors that could in part be responsible for differences in child rearing which are often attributed to social class alone. Historically, families of lower SES have had more children than those of the middle class (Sears, et al., 1957). According to Clausen (1966), "The size of a group markedly influences the patterning of interactions and relationships among members (p. 9)." As a family increases in size, explicit rules concerning duties, responsibilities, and behavior become more characteristic. Leadership becomes increasingly centralized. It seems that an increase in family size would also

increase the likelihood of varied sex composition. According to Elder (1962), the sex composition of a large family might in itself dictate or control the amount of parental dominance exercised.

Bartow (1962) also examined family size in relation to child rearing practices and found no significant relationship between them. The differences in findings between Elder and Bartow might be partly accounted for by sample composition. Elder's study was based on adolescents' perceptions of their parents, while Bartow's dealt directly with parents.

A program of research on adolescence at the University of North Carolina (Elder, 1962) displayed only slight evidence that lower class parents were more dominant than middle class parents. Significant relationships to child rearing practices were found to exist on the basis of family size, level of education, sex, and religion. Parents of a larger family were viewed as being more authoritarian than those of a small family. An equalitarian attitude seemed to be most characteristic of those parents having completed one or more years of college. Parents with a ninth grade education or less, however, were perceived as being authoritarian. Mothers were more likely to be permissive or equalitarian in the child rearing relationship than fathers. Fathers most often were perceived as being the dominant figure. The results suggested a tendency of Catholic fathers to increase their control and restrictiveness

as their children became older. Among Protestant fathers, the tendency reversed.

As pointed out by the studies previously cited, there is some evidence that social class is at least partly responsible for differences in child rearing. According to Bronfenbrenner (1961), however, ". . . the gap between the social classes in their goals and methods of child rearing appears to be narrowing. . .(p. 6)."

By and large, parents of the working class are assuming not only social and economic values similar to the middle class, but also similar child rearing techniques.

Anders (1968) found the less educated more likely to express a punitive attitude toward child rearing. Findings also indicated women to be more permissive in child rearing attitudes than men. Although Anders' study dealt with three religio-ethnic groups (Anglo-Saxon Protestant, Negro-Protestant, and French Catholic), the findings are similar to those of Elder (1962).

An examination of data cited by Bronson, Katten, and Livson (1959) points to a somewhat different finding with regard to parental role differentiation. According to these researchers, the father is becoming increasingly more affectionate and less authoritarian in the child rearing relationship, while the mother's role as disciplinarian is increasing. In an analysis of childcare attitudes of two generations of mothers (Cohler, Grunebaum, Weiss, & Moran,

1971), there did not appear to be a significant difference between the attitudes of the older and younger mothers. Findings seemed to be directly related to the comparative constancy in the society's value system.

The review of the literature has revealed a considerable amount of material dealing with child rearing. At the same time, it has revealed that writings relating this topic to rural Montanans or to rural Americans anywhere are virtually non-existent. The review of literature has served to confirm the need for a study of child rearing in a rural population.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

Sampling Procedure

The present study focuses on a portion of a larger project, titled "Rural Family Life Styles in Montana." Following is a description of procedures employed relating to the entire project, including the portions which are the subject of this study.

Boundaries suggested by the Montana Cooperative Extension Service divide the state of Montana into six districts. These districts are not based upon population, but represent relatively equal amounts of land area. To insure representation of each geographic sector in the state, two counties were randomly selected from each of the six districts.

Communities within the selected counties were randomly chosen and persons from those communities were selected at random to be

invited to participate in the study. By this process 60 from each county, or 720 in all, were asked to take part in the study.

Method of Collecting Data

Communication

To encourage a better rate of participation in the study, a news release about the project appeared in virtually all of Montana's daily and weekly newspapers. A letter, explaining the purpose and sponsorship of the project, was then sent to the potential participants, asking for their cooperation. An acceptance form and return envelope were enclosed with each letter. Those individuals who agreed to participate in the study were sent a survey booklet. Some time later, a follow-up reminder was sent to those who had not responded.

Instruments

Since the plan for the total project called for all the data to be collected at one time, the test instruments for each phase of the study were compiled and bound into a survey instrument booklet. This task was completed prior to the present investigator's involvement in the project.

Whenever possible, scales authenticated by previous research were used. It was necessary in certain cases, however, to devise an instrument which would more adequately suit the purposes of this

investigation. In such cases, appropriate resource persons at Montana State University were consulted. The instruments were then pretested with students for content validity. Copies of the instruments employed in those portions of the study which are the subject of the present report are contained in the appendix.

In order to gather information with regard to the respondent's background, a general information section was devised. From this section, the following variables were used: sex, age, marital status, income, religion, church attendance, number of children, children between the ages of 0-17 living in the home, children 18 and over living in the home, and level of education.

The portion of the survey instrument dealing with child rearing provided an index to parental style. It was adapted from "A Survey of Opinions Regarding the Discipline of Children" developed by Itkin in 1952. Reliability of Itkin's scale was estimated by the split-half method to be .95. According to Shaw and Wright (1967), validity was determined by item analysis data and the correlation between attitude scores and self-ratings of parents; the correlation was .26.

Attitudes toward education were determined by the use of a scale developed by Rundquist and Sletto in 1936. The items are broad in content, ranging from the effects of possessing an education upon one's leisure time and upon economic opportunity to conflict between education and work (Shaw & Wright, 1967). Split-half reliabilities

of .82 and .83 have been reported as well as test-retest reliabilities of .84 and .85. According to Shaw and Wright (1967), the scale has good content validity for measuring attitudes toward a high school education. It is somewhat restricted, however, in measuring attitudes toward a college education.

The instrument dealing with social life and recreation was constructed by the project leader and his graduate assistant. Questions primarily dealt with the respondents' interactions with relatives, friends, and neighbors living in the community.

Analysis of Data

Items on the attitude scale of child rearing were scored in such a way that higher scores reflected authoritarian attitudes toward child rearing, while lower scores represented the more permissive or equalitarian attitudes. With the highest possible value being three points for each question, the highest score that could be obtained was 60.

Higher scores on the attitude scale of education indicated a positive attitude toward the effects of possessing an education, while low scores were indicative of a negative attitude. The scale was composed of 22 items, which when scored could produce a possible score of 66.

The 20-item social life and recreation scale could provide a possible value of 81. Higher scores indicated less social interaction and satisfaction with one's social life, while lower scores reflected greater amounts of interaction and satisfaction.

Data derived from items concerning personal background information and the various scales were coded and transferred to electronic data processing equipment at Montana State University Computing Center. The primary statistic employed in the analysis of data was the Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes rural Montanans have toward child rearing, education, and social life and recreation; to measure the correlations of the attitudes with one another, and also with certain selected personal variables; and to discuss these findings.

Description of Sample

A total of 720 persons, each chosen at random, were invited to participate in the study. Of the 479 who confirmed their desire to participate, 332 (46.1%) actually completed and returned the survey booklets (Johnson, 1974).

Table 1 provides a description of the sample. The 332 individuals who agreed to participate in the study were predominantly female (59.6%). The sample leaned toward middle age, with the median being in the 36 to 50 age group. Only 18.2 per cent of the sample represented the under 21 to 28 age group.

Nearly seven-eighths of the respondents (84.6%) were married. Family size, with regard to number of children, ranged from zero to ten. In general, families were not large; 2.5 was the mean number of children. One might have expected families to be larger in a

