

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION



Background to the Study

Several studies have been made in an attempt to find whether there is any relationship between the process of child rearing practices and achievement motive. As a result, the longterm effect of mothers' encouragement of independence on the achievement behavior in the child has been demonstrated. One of the better pieces of research of this type is the one by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (14). This study used the interviewing method. In presenting their findings on what the parents expect of their children in education, the authors stated:

"It is no surprise that boys were expected to go farther in school than girls. Their mothers usually had planned to send them to college while the girls' mothers were more likely to expect that their girls would finish high school; college was a possibility, of course, if a girl showed unusual promise" (14, p. 404).

The same study has found that different social classes exert different pressures and expect different standards of achievement.

"Current school performance may have been more of a problem for the working-class families. More parental pressure may have been required to keep working class children performing at reasonable standards. In any case, our study does not show any tendency for the working-class, or the less well-educated, parents to take school achievement lightly. On the contrary, they seemed emphatically interested in having their children do well in school, and placed much more pressure on their children than did the middle-class families. At the same time, the reports show very clearly that parental aspirations for college education were much higher in the middle class." (14, p.430).

Another study was done by Winterbottom (15), who interviewed mothers of children of various age levels to find the relationship

between the demands of parents on their children and the achievement needs of the children. The children were tested to determine the strength of their need for achievement. The author discovered that children with higher achievement need are children from homes in which the mothers make greater demands. The demands reflected emphasis on independent achievement at an early age.

Winterbottom also found that the boys who told many achievement stories had mothers who, they said, made relatively strong demands for independence and mastery early in the child's life. Moreover, the mothers of the boys who told many achievement stories were reported as giving more physical affection as a reward for their child's independence and mastery than the mothers of boys who told few achievement stories.

In his study, Rosen (13) tried to find parents' and children's perceptions of child rearing practices by administering two sets of questionnaires, one to the children and the other to parents. He Clalland's T.A.T. was used to measure achievement motive. According to this study the Brazilian mothers were less likely to train their sons in self-reliance, autonomy, and consciousness of achievement than were American mothers. Brazilian parents seem to be very protective and overindulgent with their children; these were regarded as the significant factors responsible for the children's lower achievement motivation. However, the parents expect their children to be independent, to be successful students and get high marks in school. This inconsistency between the actual practices and the expectation for

high school achievement causes difficulty for the Brazilian children. Rosen also states that there is a strong tendency for the parents to be overprotective and indulgent as well; this behavior can be seen reflected in the cultural conception of the child as a protected one. Brazilians justify their indulgence for their children by arguing that an adult's life is harsh and painful, hence childhood should be made as pleasant as possible. Rosen also finds that the Brazilian boys tend to perceive their parents as having high general aspirations despite the fact that they report lower parental aspirations in specific activities and higher parental evaluations of actual performance. Children who are brought up in this fashion may develop exaggerated self-evaluations and expectations, the frustration of which could generate feelings of being excessively forced and rejected.

Another cross-national study including comparisons of the patterns of child rearing practices of parents in the United States of America and those of the Federal Republic of Germany were done by Devereux, Bronfenbrenner and Suci. (1) One source of data was obtained from the responses of groups of American and German Sixth graders to a questionnaire concerning child rearing practices. Among other things, Devereux and his associates called upon the children to report in some detail on child rearing practices currently employed in their homes by their mothers and fathers. These children were asked to report on 45 specific details of parental behavior and these were intended to index 15 more general variables. Taken as a whole, the available comparative data suggested that the greater affection and control characteristic of the German

family have the effect, at least for boys, of reducing independence, self-directed achievement, and association with peers. By comparison, the American parent is less restricting but at the same time more critical and demanding, a combination which according to the work of Winterbottom and Rosen, is optimal for the developmental of strong motives for independence and achievement in males.

In Thailand, not much psychological research has been done. A study related to children's attitudes towards their parents was conducted by Tab Won Koedkietpong (3) as a Master Degree thesis and the result was submitted to the College of Education in collaboration with the International Institute for Child Study. (3) In his study Tab Won repeated Harris and Tseng's study. The data were collected by projective technique. The subjects were asked to complete 4 open-ended questions:- "Most boys" "Most girls" He concluded from this findings that both boys and girls show positive attitudes towards their parents. However, there is a sharp decrease in the boys' favorable attitude to their parents in their late adolescent period, while in their late adolescence, the girls' attitudes toward their parents become more increasingly positive.

Purposes of the study:

1. What are patterns of child rearing practices as perceived by middle class adolescents?

- 1.1 Whether or not there are any differences in the perception of the parents among adolescent boys and girls.

1.2 Whether or not there are any differences in the behaviors of mothers and fathers as perceived by adolescents.

2. How high is the level of expectation of middle class parents regarding (school achievement) their children.

3. What are the anxieties and fantasies of male and female adolescents about school achievement?

4. How do these adolescents perceive themselves and their parents?