INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
ABSTRACT

One hundred eight adolescents and parents from four rural counties in Ohio were surveyed to examine the influence of family process variables on rural adolescents' educational aspirations. The adolescent's desired level of educational attainment after high school was used to assess educational aspirations. The independent variables were: (a) parents' SES as measured by mothers' and fathers' level of education, (b) parental values regarding gender roles and work ethics, (c) family cohesion, (d) family communication (mother-adolescent and the father-adolescent), (e) the adolescent's perceived parental emotional support for continuing education beyond high school, and (f) the adolescent's perceived financial support from parents for continuing education beyond high school. Both a mother model and a father model were tested to identify the path from parents' educational level to adolescent educational aspirations.

Results of the hypotheses testing were mixed. In the mother's model, only mother's level of education was significantly related to adolescent aspirations. In contrast, the father's model indicated that father's level of education and communication between father and adolescent were significantly correlated with adolescent educational aspirations. In both models family cohesion was also
found to impact both an adolescent's perceived support for education and communication between the parent-adolescent dyads.

The findings of this study lend support to status attainment theory and suggest that rural parents' educational level will have a direct effect on adolescent aspirations. The model also provides exploratory support for family process variables having some impact on the educational aspirations of rural adolescents.
Dedicated to my Mom
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my husband for his unwavering faith, support, and encouragement. My children have also lent moral support without fully understanding how important their hugs and kisses would be to my completing this project. To my parents I express love for their care of my children during this process and their belief in me all my life.

All of my colleagues at River Valley Counseling have given untold moral and emotional support. Also, my graduate school colleagues, most many years into their established careers, never missed an opportunity to encourage me to complete this project, especially my dear friend Renda. If it weren't for a meeting she planned in Autumn of 1997, I would not have had the courage to continue.

Finally, I would like to thank my advisor Patrick Mckenry for his expertise and guidance in this scholarly endeavor. Barbara Newman not only gave me invaluable technical support, but also helped me trust my own research skills. For that I will forever be grateful. Joseph Donnermeyer truly stepped in and provided valuable insight into the special considerations involved in researching rural populations. My thanks to all who helped make my dream a reality.
VITA

August 15, 1961 ....................................... Born - Columbus, Ohio

1983 .......................................................... B.S. Family and Human Development
School of Home Economics
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

1983-1987 ................................................ Crisis Program Coordinator
Huckleberry House
Columbus, Ohio

1987-1989 ................................................ Academic Advisor,
University College, The Ohio State
University; Columbus, Ohio.

1989 ........................................................... M.S., Family Relations and Human
Development, The Ohio State
University; Columbus, Ohio.

1989-1991 ................................................. Graduate Research Associate,
Departments of Family Relations
And Human Development and Family
Resource Management, The Ohio
State University; Columbus, Ohio.

1991-1994 .............................................. Graduate Teaching Associate,
Department of Family Relations
And Human Development, The Ohio
State University; Columbus, Ohio.

1993 .......................................................... Clinical Social Work Intern, Fairfield
Family Counseling Center; Lancaster,
Ohio.
1993-1994...............................................Licensed Social Worker, private 
Practitioner, Pickerington Area 
Counseling Center; Pickerington, 
Ohio.

1994-1998...............................................Licensed Social Worker, private 
Practitioner, River Valley Counseling 
Associates; Lancaster, Ohio.

PUBLICATIONS

Research Publication

enactments with the use of a videocamera. Journal of Family Psychotherapy, 
7(1), 63-67.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field:  Human Ecology
Marriage and Family Therapy
Minor Field:  Counseling psychology
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>General Demographics of the Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Specific Characteristics of Adolescents and Their Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for the Variables in the Fathers' and Mothers' Models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Zero-Order Correlations for the Variables in the Fathers' and Mothers' Models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Measurement of Fit for the Fathers' and Mothers' Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Conceptual Model: Adolescent Educational Aspiration Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Fathers’ Model 1 with Path Coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Fathers’ Model 2 with Path Coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Mothers’ Model 1 with Path Coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Mothers’ Model 2 with Path Coefficients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract...........................................................................................................................ii
Dedication.......................................................................................................................iv
Acknowledgments..........................................................................................................v
Vita..................................................................................................................................vi
List of Tables...............................................................................................................viii
List of Figures................................................................................................................ix

CHAPTERS

1. INTRODUCTION.................................................................................................1
   1.1 Adolescent Education and Occupation Decisions.........................1
   1.2 Family Influences on Educational Aspirations..............................2
   1.3 Rural Youth and Rural Families.......................................................5
   1.4 Family System's Theory and Educational Aspirations..................9
   1.5 Statement of the Problem.................................................................13
   1.6 Hypotheses.......................................................................................16
   1.7 Assumptions....................................................................................17
   1.8 Definition of Terms.........................................................................17

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE........................................................................20
   2.1 Introduction...........................................................................................20
   2.2 Rural Families and Economic Change.............................................20
   2.3 Study of Adolescent Status Attainment and Aspirations.............25
   2.4 Aspirations of Youth.........................................................................27
   2.5 Major contributions.........................................................................28
   2.6 Rural Youth.......................................................................................32
   2.7 Rural/Urban Comparisons...............................................................38
   2.8 Summary............................................................................................40
3. METHODOLOGY ...........................................................................................44

3.1 Introduction..............................................................................................44
3.2 Subjects......................................................................................................44
3.3 Procedures..................................................................................................51
3.4 Instrumentation..........................................................................................52
3.4.1 Family Adaptation and Cohesions Scale III .....................................52
3.4.2 Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale ........................................54
3.4.3 Bengston's Measure of Intergenerational Relations .......................55
3.4.4 Family Values – Work Scale ..............................................................56
3.5 Data Analysis.............................................................................................58
3.6 Limitations..................................................................................................59

4. RESULTS ..........................................................................................................61

4.1 Introduction..............................................................................................61
4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations ..............................61
4.3 Covariance Structure Modeling...............................................................62
4.4 Fathers' Model...........................................................................................66
4.4.1 Model 1................................................................................................66
4.4.2 Model 2................................................................................................67
4.4.3 Model Comparison..............................................................................70
4.5 Mothers' Model.........................................................................................70
4.5.1 Model 1................................................................................................70
4.5.2 Model 2................................................................................................70
4.5.3 Model Comparison..............................................................................71
4.6 Testing of the Hypotheses......................................................................74
4.6.1 Hypothesis 1......................................................................................74
4.6.2 Hypothesis 2......................................................................................74
4.6.3 Hypothesis 3......................................................................................74
4.6.4 Hypothesis 4......................................................................................74
4.6.5 Hypothesis 5......................................................................................75
4.6.6 Hypothesis 6......................................................................................75
4.6.7 Hypothesis 7......................................................................................75
4.6.8 Hypothesis 8......................................................................................75
4.6.9 Hypothesis 9......................................................................................75
4.6.10 Hypothesis 10..................................................................................76
4.6.11 Hypothesis 11..................................................................................76

5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS............77

5.1 Introduction..............................................................................................77
5.2 Discussion of Findings............................................................................78
5.2.1 Hypothesis 1......................................................................................78
5.2.2 Hypothesis 2......................................................................................79
5.2.3 Hypothesis 3......................................................................................81
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The period of adolescence is marked by numerous changes for both the individual and his/her family system. One of the major tasks of adolescence is the process of individuation and the development of an adult identity (Erikson, 1968). An important component of the process of individuation and identity development is the educational and occupational choices the adolescent makes (Crites, 1989; Olson, McCubbin, Muxen, Larsen, & Wilson, 1989). The purpose of the current study is to clarify how family factors including SES, family process, and family values influence the educational aspirations of rural youth. Two aspects of this research are of special importance: (1) The focus on rural youth, a group that is under studied in the literature on adolescent development in general and in the educational and occupational aspirations literature in particular; and (2) The focus on family process and family values as predictors of educational aspirations.

Adolescent Education and Occupation Decisions

An adolescent's aspirations have a direct effect on his/her actual attainment (Thomas, Crosby, & Picou, 1976; Wilson, 1989). Yet, aspirations of youth are usually higher than their expectations, and expectations decline with age (MacBrayne, 1987). Educational aspirations have a well-documented direct effect on the subsequent
completion of schooling (Haller & Portes, 1973; Otto & Haller, 1979; Sewell et al., 1969), and occupational attainment is constrained by educational attainment.

Considerable research attention has been given to explaining the educational and occupational aspirations of adolescents. There are many national studies of educational and occupational aspirations, often employing longitudinal designs (Coleman, 1976; Farris, Mohan, & Sollie, 1985; Kenkel, 1980; Poole, Langan-Fox, and Omodei, 1991; Schiamberg & Chin, 1987; Shoffner & Peterson, 1986) and some that have included nonmetropolitan samples (Gabbard & Coleman, 1976; Jackson, Meara, & Arora, 1974; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969). However, few researchers have looked beyond the adolescent self-reported structural variables associated with family background to address ways that families may influence educational decisions.

Family Influences on Educational Aspirations

In general, the strongest predictor of an adolescent's educational aspirations is the family's socioeconomic status as measured by the father's occupation and level of education (Wilson, 1989; Sewell et al., 1969). However, in Ramsoy (1961) and Coleman's (1976) seminal work in this area found that such structural factors as family background and socioeconomic status have more of an impact on the actual educational and occupational attainment of adolescents than on their aspirations. Also, it has been found that the relationship between family SES and educational attainment is moderated by parental encouragement (Cobb et al., 1989; Marjoriebanks, 1984).

Parents also impact educational aspirations through the role they play in influencing adolescent's educational and occupational decision-making (Barber & Eccles, 1992; Blau & Duncan, 1967; Kotlik & Harrison, 1989; Lee, 1984;
In Blau and Duncan's (1967) landmark study of the status attainment process, adolescent education attainment was shown to mediate the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and occupational attainment rather than educational and occupational attainment being direct effects of parental influence. However, previous research has not addressed the relationship between parental influences and educational aspirations.

The family plays a role in adolescent occupational and educational aspirations in terms of its socialization function. Because the family is viewed as the primary socialization agent, the parental role is to socialize children into a system of values and beliefs about self and society (Gecas, 1976). Attitudes and values that parents learn in their own occupational and educational experiences are often linked to the strategies they use to socialize their children for expected levels of educational attainment (Kohn, 1963; Wilson, Peterson, & Wilson, 1993). Research indicates that core beliefs are shared by parents and children, and any discrepancies center on peripheral or token issues (Mangen, Bengston & Landry, 1988). Moreover, it is not value correspondence between generations that is important in the transmission process, rather it is how values impact on actual behavior (McBroom, Reed, Burns, Hargraves, & Trenkel, 1985). Gustafson (1994) found that the values parents espoused concerning educational attainment played a role in inhibiting or promoting adolescent adaptation within and beyond the academic environment.

Mothers and fathers have a differential influence on adolescents. Research suggests that mothers and fathers differ in their involvement with their children in terms
of interaction, availability, and responsibility (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1987). Mothers take more responsibility than fathers for the management of family tasks such as initiating and arranging access to peers and other socializing influences outside the family (Parke, 1995). However, researchers (Bhavnagri & Parke, 1991; Ladd, Profleet, and Hart, 1992) have found that fathers can function as managers and supervisors of their children's activities but that they do so less frequently than mothers. Mothers and fathers also differ in the quantity and quality of interactions with their children. Mother's interactions with their children tend to be verbal and didactic whereas father's interactions tend to be tactile and physical (Parke, 1995). Montemayor and Brownlee (1987) found that adolescents spent twice as much time alone each day with their mothers than they did with their fathers. In regard to educational aspirations, these gender differences in parenting practices may translate into mothers providing more communication and verbal support for their children's aspirations. Fathers, on the other hand, may provide more of a role model for their children and may encourage them to pursue actual experiences that promote educational and occupational aspirations.

Maternal employment status also plays a role in parenting practices. Overall, evidence suggests that fathers' involvement with children will increase when mothers are employed outside the home (Parke, 1995), but factors such as the family's developmental stage and the reason for employment moderate father involvement. Overall, mothers who are employed outside the home decrease the total amount of interaction time they have with their children, and fathers increase the amount of time they spend with their children (Parke, 1995). These gender differences in parenting practices, when the mother is employed outside the home, may have a differential affect
on the transmission of educational aspirations to adolescents by placing the father in the role of actively communicating more with children regarding day-to-day responsibilities as well as long term goals and aspirations. Because of employment outside the home, mother's role in actively communicating aspirations and goals may be diminished.

Rural Youth and Rural Families

Compared to urban youth, research has indicated that youth from rural areas have higher educational and occupational aspirations (Apostal & Bilden, 1991; Frese, Mohan, & Sollie, 1979; Lee, 1976; McCracken & Barcinas, 1991; O'Neil, 1975). According to information from the National Education Longitudinal Study (United States Department of Education, 1997), the vast majority of all rural youth intend to go to college soon after high school (84%). Only 5.9% of rural youth have no plans to attend any kind of college after graduating high school. However, rural youth fall below their urban counterparts in actual educational and occupational attainment (Cobb, McIntire, & Pratt, 1989; United States Department of Education, 1997). It should be noted that there is a correlation between aspirations and attainment (Haller & Portes, 1973; Otto & Haller, 1979; Sewell et al., 1969; Thomas, Crosby, & Picou, 1976; Wilson, 1989), and that attainment levels for youth in all geographic regions fall below aspirations (MacBrayne, 1987, Walberg, 1989).

Rural youth may face unique challenges in the identification and individuation process because social and psychological forces impact individuals living in rural areas differently than those living in urban areas. Rural youths' educational aspirations may be impacted by the more traditional expectations of rural families compared to urban and suburban families (Cobb, McIntire, & Pratt, 1989). Moreover, the issue of
aspirations may be more problematic for rural youth because they face changing economic conditions (i.e., including the decline in family farms as a result of the farm crisis of the 1980s) that have resulted in the availability of fewer occupational opportunities (Bartlett, 1993; Conger, 1994; Lobao & Meyer, 1991; O’Hare, 1987).

Historically, rural areas in the United States have higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes, and a larger percentage of people living below the poverty level than urban areas (Lobao, 1990). In the decade of the 1980s, the nonmetropolitan growth rate substantially declined (Beale & Fuguitt, 1986) primarily because of what has been termed the “farm crisis” (Bartlett, 1993; Conger & Elder, 1994; Lobao & Meyer, 1990). Today, rural families in general must cope with an environment that is characterized by economic uncertainty, stagnation, and disadvantage (Conger & Elder, 1994). Lobao (1990) attempted to assess economic inequality that exists in rural counties across the United States and found that rural counties that had a highly educated population, lower unemployment rates, greater unionization, and higher AFDC payments had higher incomes than other rural counties. Lobao (1990) also found that counties with larger family farm operations tended to experience better economic conditions. Although counties with a large number of smaller family farms (i.e., under 50 acres) have poorer economic conditions, they also have slightly lower teenage pregnancy rates, lower infant mortality rates, and greater educational gains over time than other rural counties (Lobao, 1990).

Another factor making the educational aspiration process more difficult for rural adolescents is greater ambivalence regarding traditional verses modern gender roles. With the farm crisis of the 1980s, there has been an increase in women working outside
the home (Barlett, 1993). Research conducted in the early phase of the farm crisis by Bokemeir and Maurer (1987) found that the prevalence of dual-career couples in rural families (44.3%) was approaching the levels in urban families (46.1%), and Barlett (1993) found that 61% of the women in her sample of farm families from Dodge County, Georgia, had turned to off-farm employment to get their families through the farm crisis of the 1980's. Even so, Ahearn, Perry, and El-Osta (1993) note that most rural farm women report their primary occupation to be that of homemaker. The change in women's roles in rural families seems to be impacting rural adolescents. McCracken and Fails (1989, 1991) found that 100% of the adolescents from a rural Ohio sample (n=191), who had a college educated mother, also aspired to a college education.

Another obstacle in the educational aspiration process for adolescents in rural America is the impact that the farm crisis of the 1980s had on parent's emotional adjustment and child-rearing behaviors. Conger, Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Simons, and Whitbeck (1992, 1993) found that economic hardship in rural families had negative consequences for early adolescent development. Parent's depressed mood placed adolescent girls at greater risk for adjustment problems than adolescent boys (Conger et al., 1992, 1993). In the Conger et al., (1993) model, the greatest risk of family economic stress for girls came in the form of reduced academic and social competence. Moreover, both mothers and fathers were found to be moderators of the economic hardship process for their adolescent (Conger et al., 1992), but the salience of mother's unhappiness may be a more powerful influence in adolescent adjustment than that of the father. Economic pressure is positively related to maternal depression which in turn is
positively associated with marital discord (Conger et al., 1992, 1993). Considering this pattern, rural adolescent educational aspirations may be differentially impacted by mother and father's influence.

Another difficulty for rural adolescents in achieving their aspirations is the high value placed on familism verses individualism. Peters, Wilson, and Peterson (1986) discuss the fact that rural families have a characteristic kinship pattern that places the needs of the family above the needs of the individual. Haas (1992) found that when rural youth were compared with urban youth, they placed lower value on making a lot of money and a higher value on simply making good incomes, having secure jobs, and maintaining friendships. Barlett (1993) cites the following unique dimensions as characteristic of rural families:

(Member have) personal pride in meaningful work, work that clearly serves a wider societal need; the linkage of work and family, of long-term ties not only to kin but to a like-minded community; the combination of work and family with place and a sense of attachment to land and region; the sense that work and play, effort and leisure, flow into each other and grow out of each other; and a sense of daily connectedness to nature and to deeper spiritual realities embodied in the work process (pg.7).

Rural youth may not be adequately socialized to understand the training and skills they will need to compete in a highly technical world. Moreover, the values rural adolescents hold regarding the agrarian way of life may pose constraints on their eventual educational attainment by limiting their geographic mobility. Lichler, Cornwell, and Eggebeen (1993) contend that family variables will have a larger influence on the educational attainment of rural verses urban youth because rural adolescents seem to be more heavily influenced by the desires of their parents.
Family System’s Theory and Educational Aspirations

From the view of systems theory, the family is the primary emotional system that shapes the pattern and course of one’s life (Carter & Orfandis, 1976). In Hall and Fagan’s (1956) classic definition of a system, both the relationships between objects and between their attributes are essential in understanding processes. Attention is given to the whole rather than the individual unit. Moreover, family relationships are seen as repetitive, circular, reciprocal, and patterned (Broderick and Smith, 1979; Carter & Orfandis, 1976, von Bertalanffy, 1968). The manner in which these patterns display themselves is in a hierarchical fashion dictating that systems be viewed as embedded in larger systems (von Bertalanffy, 1968).

Family systems theory identifies ways that the family mediates both internal and external influences on its members. Separation, individuation, and personal autonomy have the greatest influence on an adolescent’s ability to leave home and establish educational and occupational choices (Bratcher, 1982). Internally, the rules a family uses to govern behavior establish family beliefs and values. Rules regulate beliefs and values and determine how one will develop. Family rules, inherent in the idiosyncratic nature of family values and traditions, impact adolescent educational and occupational development. When someone comments that a particular family always produces teachers or lawyers, they are commenting on the way in which the family’s rules have operated to establish and maintain a type of family character, that is, a predictable structure.

Rules also function in a family through patterns of communication. The chief function of communication within a family is to control its members (Broderick &
Smith, 1979). System theory suggests that it is important to know how the family takes in information about education and careers and turns it into educational and occupational aspirations. Communicating family values related to money, prestige, and service to others will also influence educational aspirations (Bratcher, 1982).

Rules also operate in a family according to the principle of homeostasis wherein the status quo is maintained and there is a range of acceptable behavior (Guttmann, 1991). The tendency of a family system to resist change and move to eliminate attempts to change the roles, rules, and boundaries in a system impacts on an adolescent's career and education decisions (Bratcher, 1982). Specifically, the strength of the rules that help maintain family traditions will effect the kinds of choices an adolescent will be allowed to consider for his/her future education and career plans. Adolescents in families that are more flexible in their rules may have an easier transition to the world of education and/or work.

Similarly, boundaries regulate both the internal structure of the family and the flow of external input into the family (Broderick & Smith, 1979). The concept of boundaries refers to the way a family defines who is in and who is out of the system. Boundaries can be assessed on two continua: (1) open to closed; and (2) flexible to rigid. These boundaries can be viewed as the means by which adolescents are permitted to move flexibly from the secure and safe base of the family to explore the unknown adult world of work and education. A developmental task for parents is to allow their adolescent to develop independence, but forces within the individual system, within the family system, and within the larger system interact in a reciprocal manner to place both constraints and encouragement on an adolescent's drive for independence.
Finally, it is important to understand how both family rules and family boundaries function to allow separation and individuation. Flexible boundaries theoretically make it easier for adolescents to develop their own identity and make decisions regarding educational aspirations. To assess this system function, it is necessary to identify what individuals desire and what each parent wants for that child regarding educational aspirations. Furthermore, forces outside the adolescent's control such as economic conditions and sociological trends are mediated and shaped from within the family (Bratcher, 1982; Young, 1984).

While exploring the impact of the family processes of cohesion and communication on educational aspirations, the circumplex model (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979) holds much explanatory power. This model suggests that middle-range levels of cohesion (i.e., closeness of family members) and adaptability (i.e., ability of the family to be flexible and change through the life cycle) coupled with positive family communication patterns produce the healthiest overall functioning. If these elements all exist within a family one would expect that their parents would support an adolescent's educational aspirations both financially and emotionally.

From a sociological perspective, interaction patterns that foster positive relationships are regarded as social capital and are conceptualized as investments that can yield human capital returns in terms of higher educational attainment (Smith, Beaulieu, & Seraphine, 1995). In much the same manner, family system theory postulates that when family members have a balance between independence and connectedness, various types of healthy family functioning are produced, including high educational aspirations. Families that are balanced or middle-range on the dimensions
of cohesion, adaptability, and communication should provide the support necessary for adolescents to develop a sense of autonomy and control over their future activities and plans. Blustein, Prezioso, and Schultheiss (1995), in reviewing the literature on attachment and career development, suggest that an adaptive level of connectedness between older adolescents and their parents is beneficial for educational and occupational aspirations. In the general population there may be a curvilinear relationship between cohesion and family dysfunction. However, there may be a linear relationship between cohesion and family dysfunction with a rural sample where the hypothesized problem in family functioning is a relative overemphasis on autonomy, not enmeshment (Anderson & Gavazzi, 1990; Pratt & Hansen, 1987; Rudd, Stewart, & McKenry, 1993).

An assumption of systems theory is that positive communication will facilitate movement on the cohesion and adaptability dimension and, as a result, increase educational aspirations. Conversely, negative communication will inhibit movement on the cohesion and adaptability dimension and will dampen educational aspirations. A family that is separate and connected, flexible, and has positive communication patterns will be able to change to satisfy an adolescents’ need for autonomy and should be able to negotiate the career development process, including the educational attainment process, more easily (Penick & Jepsen, 1992).

Finally, the role of parental support, both financially and emotionally, in the development of educational aspirations is important in the consideration of family processes. The influence of significant others is specific to either educational or occupational aspirations, and these two aspirational realms are distinctly different
(Saltiel, 1986). Parental expectations and parental supports, both emotional and financial, increase adolescent educational aspirations (Barber & Eccles, 1992). Scanzoni (1985) suggests that with certain populations the more tangible (i.e., financial) and intangible (i.e., emotional) reinforcements parents give for education, the more the adolescents draw upon their parents as role models. Gecas and Seff (1990), in a review of the literature, identify parental support as one of the most robust variables in the socialization literature. Parental support is positively related to a number of child outcomes including, but not limited to, moral behavior, self-esteem, and academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Although researchers have explored the structural and static variables that affect an adolescent's educational aspirations and expectations, little has been done to identify and understand internal, dynamic family variables (i.e., family processes or systemic attributes) that impact these choices. When these family issues have been addressed in the adolescent aspiration literature, typically one member of the family, usually the adolescent, is surveyed to obtain the perception of the family system.

There are several reasons why there is a need for research into the process by which aspirations are transmitted from parents to adolescents for several reasons. First, there is a clear link between socioeconomic status and subsequent educational and occupational attainment (Blau & Duncan, 1967). Historically, researchers have used father’s education as the main factor in assessing socioeconomic status; however, with a rural population, given changes in women’s roles and changes in general economic conditions, assessment of
the impact of both parents’ educational level is warranted. McCracken and Fails (1989, 1991) found that the actual educational level of both parents affected the educational aspirations of rural adolescents.

Second, adolescent education appears to mediate the relationship between parental SES status and occupational attainment rather than education and occupation being outcomes of parental influence (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell et al., 1969; Thomas et al., 1976; Wilson, 1989). Even knowing this, researchers do not understand how adolescent education intervenes and by what processes. If aspirations impact educational attainment, and parental factors have a strong association with educational aspirations (Haller & Portes, 1973; Hauser, Tsai, & Sewell, 1983; Jencks, Crouse, & Mueser, 1983; Marjoribanks, 1985; Sewell et al., 1969; Wilson, 1989), then research into the salient aspects of parental influence would help clarify the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and adolescent occupational attainment.

Third, family systems theory suggests that family processes, including family communication patterns, cohesion, adaptation, gender and work related values, and perceived parental support from the adolescent’s perspective provide a holistic, dynamic means for understanding the role of family in developing educational aspirations.

The purpose of this study was to examine the unique ways that the family system in rural households influences the choices an adolescent makes regarding educational aspirations. Moreover, this study seeks to expand the widely accepted model of status attainment postulated by Blau and Duncan (1967) and developed more fully by Sewell et al. (1969) in two important ways. First, by including mothers’
education level in the model, one is able to take into consideration, in an exploratory
manner, what effects the increase in maternal employment by mothers in rural areas
may be having on the educational aspiration process. Second, by including the dynamic
process-oriented family constructs of family cohesion, parent–adolescent
communication, and family values, new, more in-depth information can be obtained
about how parents' education level shapes adolescent educational aspirations.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual model: Rural adolescent educational aspiration process.
Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested as depicted in Figure 1.1:

1). There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parents’ education level, and adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for attaining additional education beyond high school.

2). There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parents’ education level, and adolescent educational aspirations.

3). There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for additional education beyond high school and family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender.

4). There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender and family cohesion.

5). There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender and adolescent educational aspirations.

6). There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school.

7). There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and father/adolescent communication.

8). There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and mother/adolescent communication.

9). There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school and adolescent educational aspirations.
10). There will be a positive relationship between father/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

11). There will be a positive relationship between mother/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

Assumptions

1. Parents influence the educational aspirations of their children.

2. The rural community offers adolescents both constraints and incentives for pursuing educational opportunities.

3. Culturally, families living in rural areas function using roles, norms and values that are different than their urban counterparts.

Definition of Terms

Financial Support: The extent of financial support adolescents perceive they will receive from their parents to attend college. Adolescents were asked to answer the question, “If you were to attend college, how much financial support would your parents provide if no other sources of financing were available”.

Educational Aspirations of Youth: The extent of education adolescents would desire if nothing prevented him/her from attaining as much as s/he wanted. Adolescents were asked to answer the question, “How much education would you like to complete if nothing prevented you from getting as much as you wanted?”

Family Cohesion: The extent to which adolescents and their parents view their family as being adaptive, cohesive, and stable. Olson (1985) defines cohesion as “the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another” (p. 3).
Family Communication: The ability of adolescents and their parents to communicate with one another on issues "such as the extent of openness or freedom to exchange ideas, information and concerns between generations; the trust or honesty experienced; and the tone or emotional tenor of the interactions, whether positive or negative" (Olson, 1985, p. 54).

Gender Values: Family values regarding gender are a reflection of the role responsibilities both parents in a family maintain. Parents answered the 14-item Likert-type scale entitled Bengtson's Measure of Intergenerational Relations (Mangen, Bengtson, & Landry, 1988). This scale was developed to assess attitudes an individual might hold regarding men and women, religious values, marriage norms, and political conservatism. Value questions such as "Wives should obey their husbands" and "Every child should have religious instruction" are similar to the constructs assessed in this scale. A parental score was obtained by summing the responses of both parents and then obtaining a mean score that reflected their views on gender.

Work Values: Family values regarding work are a reflection of the importance placed on concrete and abstract aspects of one's work life such as pay and working conditions as well as social responsibility factors. Taken from a question used in the Occupational Aspiration Scale (Haller & Miller, 1963), this scale attempts to evaluate the factors one might view as important in choosing an occupation. Parents answered an 18-item likert scale that assessed various characteristics that might be important in choosing an occupation. The scale assessed values ranging from high pay and pleasant
working conditions to working alone and having the opportunity to live in a rural area. A parental score was obtained by summing the responses of both parents and then obtaining a mean score that reflected their values regarding work.

**Parental Support for Education:** The perceived emotional support that adolescents feel they receive from their parents to pursue a college education. Each adolescent answered the following question: “As to continuing your education beyond high school, how encouraging would you say that your father has been?” Each adolescent answered the identical question regarding perception of mother’s support.

**Rural Adolescent:** An individual who is in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade in a high school that is located in a county that is outside a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area in Ohio and had a high school curricula that included vocational agricultural courses.

**Socioeconomic Status:** Socioeconomic status refers to the social and economic position a person holds in society relative to others in that society (Stevens and Cho, 1985). SES will be evaluated by using only the parents’ level of education as McAdoo and McAdoo (1985) and Pinkney (1987) have suggested education is a more appropriate measure in groups where educational attainment is not highly related to occupational status.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of the current chapter is to (1) examine the significant literature pertaining to rural families' adjustment to economic change; (2) explore the similarities and the differences between rural and urban adolescent educational aspirations; and (3) identify current knowledge about family related influences on rural adolescent educational aspirations.

Rural Families and Economic Change

Historically, when researchers have studied rural families, they have focused on the impact of large-scale economic changes on communities and families (i.e., the Great Depression and the Industrial Revolution). Studies of the Great Depression (Angell, 1965; Cavan & Ranck, 1938; Komarovsky, 1940) demonstrated how important aspects of rural community and family life buffered stressful economic conditions. Family members coped with change during these periods by changing their interaction patterns. Studies (Angell, 1965; Cavan & Ranck, 1938; Komarovsky, 1940) indicated that less cohesive rural families struggled with harsh economic conditions by avoiding each other, and increasing conflicts; however, adaptive and flexible families were mutually supportive and came together in times of diversity. Much of the information regarding rural families in the past two decades also has centered around how large-scale
economic changes have forced rural Americans to change and cope (Barlett, 1993; Conger & Elder, 1994; Lobao & Meyer, 1991; Lobao, 1990).

The farm crisis of the 1980s affected the vitality of many rural communities, especially in the Midwest (Conger & Elder, 1994) and the rural South (Bartlett, 1993). Many farmers in the 1980s faced serious financial difficulty "...because they had borrowed heavily, paid high interest rates, suffered severe droughts, received decreased farm crop prices, faced a shrinking world market for their exports, and had been caught in a political battle to reduce federal deficits" (Little, Proulx, & Knaub, 1987, pp.405) The farm crisis of the 1980s came to be characterized by plummeting land values, high farm operator debts load, and the loss of many small and medium-sized family farms.

The agricultural sector (farms and agribusiness) makes up a quarter of the United States labor force and is the nation's largest industry (Lobao, 1990). When the number of farms in an area are reduced to a few, there are serious consequences for rural communities and the rural way of life (Barlett, 1993). As a result of the economic changes associated with the farm crisis, community services such as schools and hospitals were cut back, and the number and variety of stores, churches, and civic organizations declined as well (Barlett, 1993).

Lobao and Meyer (1990) surveyed 314 matched pairs of spouses and farm operators in Ohio to identify the kind of adjustments farm families made to the economic crisis of the 1980s. The greatest pressure the respondents faced came from the lack of control over weather and commodity prices, and problems in balancing work and family. Reflecting a growing societal trend, 44% of the farm men and 49% of their spouses worked in off-farm employment. Overall, the respondents felt that the majority
of local services had stayed the same. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents felt that job opportunities had either stayed the same or gotten worse. Two-thirds of the sample stated that the largest improvement in local services had come in the form of improved shopping choices. Thirty-five percent said they had decreased money saved for their children's education. However, the largest percentage of families said that they had adapted to changes in economic conditions by postponing major household purchases, cutting back on social activities, and using their savings to meet needs. Lobao & Meyer (1990) suggest that these changes in family economics may have had an effect on adolescent educational aspirations by influencing the perceived amount of financial support available for a college education.

Lobao and Meyer (1991), also examined more extensively the adaptations of families to the farm crisis. Lobao and Meyer (1991) found that there was a significant negative relationship between education and adaptation. This suggests that education may provide greater coping skills along with an increase in economic resources to minimize adjustments. The data also suggest that age, farm background, and marital status had no affect on the number of adaptations made by family members. Female respondents, less-educated respondents, younger respondents, and those respondents who worked off the farm reported greater hardships during this crisis period.

Aherns, Perry, and El-Osta (1993) looked at the national patterns of farm operator households and found that although 90% of farm operators received income from off-farm sources, more than half of the farm operators claimed farming as their major occupation (i.e., an even smaller share has farm income as the household's principal source of income). This may indicate that in rural communities, it is not farm
profitability that matters so much as the view one has of farming as a desired way of life. Formal educational attainment is associated with farm profitability and although high school was the highest level of formal education attained by 40% of the farm operators in 1990, farmers have significantly closed the educational gap that once existed between themselves and the general United States population (Aherns et al., 1993). Similar to Lobao (1990) and Lobao and Meyer (1991), the highest incomes and lowest poverty levels were found in farm households where wives worked in off-farm employment (Aherns et al., 1993).

Barlett (1993) studied farm families in Dodge County, Georgia in 1982. Over the following seven years, Barlett (1993) interviewed a total of 156 husbands and their wives. Barlett (1993) concluded that the changing economy in this rural area brought changes to the fabric of the "moral" economy of the rural family. For men, "moral" changes reflected new values regarding individual choice and work autonomy, commitment to the farm, and personal aspirations. For women, "moral" changes reflected a wider societal trend towards women's increased participation in the work force. Sixty-one percent of the women in the sample turned to off-farm employment as a means of meeting their families' financial responsibilities.

Conger and Elder (1994) undertook a study in 1989 with 451 rural Iowa families (e.g., parents, a seventh-grade adolescent, and one sibling within four years of the adolescent). All of the families in the sample lived on farms or in small communities dependent on the agricultural economy. Conger and Elder (1994) hypothesized that the rural character of the families in the study would have a significant influence on their interpretation of and response to a lengthy period of economic crisis.
Conger and Elder (1994) found that non-farm families and families that were displaced from farming suffered the greatest economic and interpersonal stress of all the participants. The economically distressed families were at greatest risk for emotional problems and disruptions in family roles. Economic conditions in rural areas such as unstable work or low incomes, increased daily stress, and the pressure impacted on the psychological and interpersonal well-being of family members. Even the families who were doing well financially after the farm crisis, often experienced lengthy episodes of depression.

Belyea and Lobao (1990) also found that parents in their rural sample had an increase in clinical depression as a result of economic changes. Those respondents with a negative appraisal of their situation and ineffective coping mechanisms had more severe depression (Belyea & Lobao, 1990).

Conger and Elder (1994) also found that when families in their study experienced financial crisis, children played a role in helping mediate the stress by contributing to household chores and paid employment outside the home. Moreover, social support from family and friends lessened the impact of economic pressure on emotional status. However, this support may be at a cost to adolescents who coped with the economic crisis by helping their families. Rudd, Stewart, and McKenry (1993), using a sample of 103 rural adolescents and their parents from the 1980s, found that 56% of their sample was clinically depressed. This is an indication that just as economic change affects parents, it also affects adolescents.
Study of Adolescent Status Attainment and Aspirations

Sociologists (Little, 1958; Kuvlesky & Bealer, 1967; and Sewell et al., 1969), many of whom were associated with agricultural colleges, have been systematically studying the process of educational and occupational attainment since the early 1950’s. Because of the changes in the economic climate of the United States during that time, researchers became interested in rural youth’s disadvantage in the marketplace (Wilson, 1989). Researchers (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Little, 1958; and Sewell et al., 1969) considered educational and occupational opportunities to be two primary means by which rural youth could become equal to other youth in the labor market.

Education, occupation, and income are all considered statuses or indices of status. Thus, sociologists refer to this type of inquiry as status attainment research. "The basic premise in the status attainment research is that career statuses, such as education, occupation, and income, are passed from generation to generation by a sequence of interpersonal processes" (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984, p.139). Sociologists, differ from others interested in status attainment (Holland, 1973; Roe, 1956; Super, 1957), in that they are most concerned with factors that are beyond the control of the individual such as labor markets, technological advances, familial influences, and other broad societal trends. In stressing institutional influences on status attainment, sociologists examine the individual in four different domains – socialization as a member of the work force, interpersonal relationships, pursuit of material and social life styles, and mobility and advancement (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984).

Sociological perspectives in status attainment focus on class subcultures, social structural influences, transmission of inequality, and change and stability in society. In
the status attainment model, parental influence is seen as particularly salient as status is seen as being passed on to children directly by attitudes of the parents and indirectly through contact parents have with other people (i.e., other adults and peers with similar backgrounds).

Even though the purpose of status attainment research is to explain how the status of parents and significant others is transmitted to children (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984), sociological perspectives have largely explored father's influence on son's status attainment, rather than looking at both mothers' and fathers' influence. Nor have sociologists given much research attention to the status attainment process of female adolescents. Biblarz, Bengtson, and Bucur (1996) compared the social mobility of three generations and found that successive generations had higher occupational attainment, but that upward mobility had slowed since the 1960s. Furthermore, the association between parents' socioeconomic status and children's socioeconomic status has weakened across the generations (Biblarz, Bengtson, & Bucur, 1996).

Regarding social class distinctions, individuals in rural communities are often seen as "working-class" families with social values and cultural influences being similar to blue-collar workers (Langman, 1987). Sociologically, this group of "working-class" families engage in socialization techniques that ensure maintenance of their social class structure for future generations. The values "working-class" families espouse to their children are seen as a function of the resources they bring to bear on their families. Education is one type of resource, and it is seen as the manifestation of upward mobility (Langman, 1987). Although the status attainment model has focused on occupational mobility, it has also been used to explore educational aspirations.
Aspirations of Youth

The following two sections will address the importance of aspirations in the status attainment process and the contribution of seminal work in this field of study. The study of aspirations grew out of Lewin’s (1951) concept of field theory. Based on this theory, an aspiration is seen as choosing a goal from a field. The field (i.e., psychological environment) encompasses an individual’s personal values and his or her judgments concerning the likelihood of achieving the desired goal. The strength of the aspiration is directly proportional to the value the individual places upon the goal and his or her perceived probability of achieving the goal (Sherwood, 1989). The greater the value assigned to the goal, the stronger the aspiration will be (Sherwood, 1989). An underlying assumption in the research literature is that there is a link between aspirations and attainment, and the process begins in childhood (Schickedanz, 1995), and it is heavily influenced by parental factors (Hauser et al., 1983; Haller & Portes, 1973; Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984; MacBrayne, 1987; Otto, 1986; Sewell et al., 1969; and Sewell, Haller, & Olendorf, 1970; Wilson, 1989).

An aspiration is viewed as any future goal that an individual is willing to invest time, effort, or money in order to obtain (MacBrayne, 1987; Sherwood, 1989; Walberg, 1989). Resources that can potentially be invested in achieving the goal can come from an internal, individual source, or an external, ecosystem source. The family is seen as one type of external resource. One clear conclusion from the literature is that aspirations of all youth are higher than their actual attainment (MacBrayne, 1987) because aspirations serve as a guide and source of motivation to what one can possibly attain, rather than a realistic goal (Sherwood, 1989).
Major Contributions

There was a great deal of research into the status attainment process in the 1950's and 1960's and a scarcity of research in the 1970's and 1980's. Most of the early studies looked at both aspirations and expectations. Kuvlesky and Bealer (1967) were among the first researchers to define and study aspirations as they attempted to define occupational choice. Kuvlesky and Bealer (1967) sampled a population of 1,327 rural Pennsylvania males who were in the tenth grade in 1947 and then re-interviewed them ten years later. They were specifically concerned with the study of occupational aspirations. They found that a weak positive relationship existed between occupational aspirations and eventual occupational attainment.

Utilizing a national sample of men, Blau and Duncan (1967) published *The American Occupational Structure* and proposed a clear, understandable model that began to explain the process of status attainment. Simply conceptualized, the model postulates that parent's social status affects educational attainment which, in turn, affects occupational attainment. Education is viewed as an intervening variable that is one status indicator. Although education is not viewed as being parallel to other statuses, it plays a functional role in the attainment process over time (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1984). Blau and Duncan (1967) found that education had a strong direct effect on the choice of first occupation. Furthermore, their model predicted a direct path from father's education and occupation to the respondents' education. The model was unable to demonstrate a direct path from father's occupation to the youth's occupation. Thus, the model supports the hypothesis that education intervenes between parental status and
occupational attainment rather than education and occupation being outcomes of parental status.

Ten years prior to the study by Blau and Duncan (1967), William Sewell began a longitudinal study that would follow high school seniors in Wisconsin from 1957 until 1975. The Wisconsin group differed from other status attainment researchers by focusing their efforts on the social-psychological processes that were affected by both family SES and cognitive variables and, in turn, how these social-psychological processes affected educational attainment (Sewell et al., 1969; Sewell et al., 1970). Included in the social-psychological process (e.g., the independent variable) were the youth's educational and occupational aspirations before leaving high school, parental encouragement to attend college, teacher encouragement to attend college, and peers' plans to attend college.

The Wisconsin study (Sewell et al., 1969) examined a random sample of one-third of all Wisconsin male high school seniors in 1957. Eighty-nine percent of the original sample was re-interviewed in 1964-65 to find their educational and occupational attainment. The researchers first analyzed the data using a subsample of farm residents (Sewell et al., 1969), then they analyzed the data delineating five places of residence – farm, village, small city, medium city, and large city (Sewell et al., 1970). They also ran analyses on the total sample. The same causal model applied across all residential categories. Sewell et al. (1969), concluded that the major effects of significant others' influence on attainment are mediated by level of aspirations. The influence of significant others, namely the parents, was an important variable in the aspiration and attainment process (Sewell et al., 1969).
Haller and Portes (1973) wrote more specifically regarding the role aspirations played in the Wisconsin model. They suggest that aspirations mediate most of the influence of antecedent factors on status attainment. "Aspirations, or initial plans, set limits to the range where eventual attainment levels are likely to be found" (Haller & Portes, 1973, p.68). Haller and Portes (1973) contend that aspirations are formed through two basic mechanisms: interpersonal influences (including reflexive adjustment to other’s expectations) and self-reflection. Interpersonal influence is conveyed to individuals directly via others’ personal communication of expectation levels they hold for that person. Haller and Portes (1973) findings indicate that the largest proportion of the influence of significant others came from roles within the family circle (e.g., parents, siblings, and close relatives). This is consistent with early socialization theory (Woelfel, 1972), i.e., the family is the primary source of socialization for adolescents.

In the Wisconsin model, "...the effects of any significant other variable is transmitted through the corresponding aspiration variable to the corresponding attainment variable. Educational status attainment is particularly strategic because it influences all other status attainment variables" (Haller & Portes, 1973, p. 85).

Writing more about the role of aspirations in the status attainment process, Haller and Portes (1973) speculated that two separate processes effect attainment: (a) the process by which aspirations are formed; and (b) the process by which aspirations are enacted. Furthermore, aspirations are formed as consequences of two related influences: (a) those brought to bear on individuals by significant others; and (b) those brought to bear on individuals as they re-assess their abilities. Sewell (1971) states that
"The allocation of social position is dependent on higher education" (p. 793). Youth with high SES have almost 2.5 times as much chance as low SES youth of continuing in some type of post secondary education (Sewell, 1971).

Wilson (1989) found, in a re-evaluation of the Wisconsin model, that high aspirations were more easily maintained in a less competitive environment and that a low-achieving context fosters aspirations but eventually dampens educational achievement. Wilson (1989) goes on to suggest that "while aspirations are moderately related to economic background, and more strongly related to school performance, they remain largely unexplained by this (Wisconsin) model" (p. 71). Wilson contends that aspirations are related to performance and to the expectations of others, and that the expectations of other and our performance also effects aspirations.

In 1983, two different groups of researchers re-evaluated the Wisconsin model. Hauser, Tsai, and Sewell (1983) attempted to account for response error in the social and psychological variables and found that the variables used in the original study accounted for 93% of the variance in educational aspirations. Jencks, Crouse, and Mueser (1983) undertook a national replication of the Wisconsin study using improved measures for assessing aspirations among other variables. Subjects were 1,975 male tenth graders who were re-interviewed 13 years after they graduated from high school. Unlike the Wisconsin study that assessed educational aspirations by merely asking respondents if they planned to attend college after high school, Jencks et al. (1983), asked if respondents were likely or unlikely to attend a four-year college. The authors concluded that more detailed measures of educational plans beyond high school would
more accurately predict later behavior, and that education beyond high school was by far the most important determinant of occupational attainment.

Both the Blau and Duncan (1967) study and the Wisconsin studies (Hauser et al., 1983; Haller & Portes, 1973; Jencks et al., 1983; Sewell et al., 1969; Sewell, et al, 1970) came to identical conclusions regarding the causal order of comparable status variables. Early occupational attainment is defined, in both models, as a function of prior education. Influences of significant others affect the development of status aspirations which, in turn, act directly on educational attainment.

**Rural Youth**

This section explores the existent literature on rural adolescents' educational aspirations with particular emphasis on the role of the family in this process. Jackson, Meara, and Arora (1974) utilized a sample of rural, male, economically disadvantaged twelfth graders (N=657). They were concerned with the relationship of aspirations to significant other identification, specifically fathers. Results indicated that those males who had high identification with fathers also had significantly higher levels of aspirations, more self-confidence, and greater satisfaction with school experiences. Follow-up studies on the same group of subjects done one year, five years, and 10 years later continued to show the same pattern regarding aspirations, and eventually the same pattern with actual educational attainment. There were no differences in the high identification and low identification groups regarding satisfaction with status.

Thomas et al. (1976) sampled 221 white, rural males in 1966, 1968, and 1972. Educational aspirations and work values were both assessed along with attainment and SES variables. Their findings matched those of Blau and Duncan (1967) and the
Wisconsin group (Sewell et al., 1969) with student levels of educational and occupational aspirations being important intervening variables in the status attainment process.

Gecas (1980) used a sample of rural Mexican-American youth and their families (N=83) to investigate educational and occupational aspirations and expectations among this group. Gecas (1980) found that when considering aspirations, especially with populations other than the middle-class, structural obstacles such as a lack of job opportunities have an important independent influence on the aspirations of youth.

Chu and Culbertson (1982) sampled 73 rural Alaskan sophomores and seniors and found strong positive correlations between aspirations and expectations, and between these two variables and mother and father's education. No significant differences were found in the educational aspirations of boys and girls. Although these researchers were primarily interested in the discrepancy between aspirations and expectations, they did not find a significant difference.

Olhendorf and Rafferty (1982) compared two cohorts of Louisiana rural high school seniors (i.e., class of 1968 and 1972) to a national sample of high school seniors. They found that rural Black students had higher educational aspirations than rural White students but little differences existed in the educational aspirations of males and females in general.

Lee (1984) focused on assessing occupational aspirations with 375 tenth grade, rural Black and White students from the southeastern part of the United States. Researchers focused on the variable of parental encouragement. This variable assessed the students’ perception of the degree of educational encouragement they received from
mothers and fathers. Their findings suggest that parental influence has a significant impact on the occupational aspirations and expectations of youth, but there were no male/female differences in parental influence.

Marjoribanks (1984, 1985, 1986) gathered longitudinal data from 512 rural Australian adolescents at age 11 and 16. He examined the relationship between family learning environment and educational and occupational aspirations. When publishing the finding in 1984, Marjoribanks found that adolescent's aspirations had moderate associations with parents' aspirations but only a negligible relationship to parents' instrumental and affective orientations. However, findings of the study supported previous research that showed aspirations to have a strong association with eventual attainment. "The encouragement of one's parents appears to shape ambitions more directly and with greater impact than any other source" (Marjoribanks, 1984, p.170). "This effect is stronger than one's scholastic aptitude or previous academic achievement and much stronger than any direct influence from one's social origins per se" (Marjoribanks, 1984, p.171). Parental factors were found to have very strong associations with educational aspirations and moderate to high associations with occupational aspirations (Marjoribanks, 1985). When Marjoribanks (1986) analyzed the data and considered ethnic differences between the Anglos, Greeks, and Italians in the sample, the finding that parental factors had the strongest association with educational aspirations still held true; however, he did find that variables used in this study (i.e., parents aspirations for their adolescent) were better predictors of educational aspirations than occupational aspirations.
Wilson and Peterson (1988), using data collected as part of an on-going 10 year longitudinal study of female rural Appalachian adolescents, found that there was a positive correlation between life satisfaction for rural females and proximity to their childhood home. This variable was found to be a stronger predictor of life satisfaction than occupational or educational attainment, financial resources, or community size. There was also a negative correlation between life satisfaction and frustration with diminished job opportunities.

Using a sample of 182 subjects who participated in the elementary school phase, the high school phase and the adult phase, Wilson, Peterson, and Wilson (1993) published data from the final phase of the 10 year longitudinal study of young low-income rural Appalachian females. They examined the influence of family and psychological variables on female occupational attainment. Wilson et al. (1993) did include parents' educational aspirations and adolescents' educational aspirations as variables in the study. Findings indicated that parent's educational aspirations and mother's occupational aspirations for the daughters were predicted only by the father's education. Only father's education and daughters' I.Q. scores from elementary school predicted daughter's aspirations during high school. Also significant was the finding that daughter's educational and occupational aspirations during high school were predicted by parent's educational aspirations for their daughter. Missing from this study is an explanation of how these aspirations are transmitted to the daughter. Wilson et al. (1993) postulate that female attainment is influenced largely by family experiences and personal abilities. In turn these forces shape attitudes, values,
aspirations and expectations. Parental and personal aspirations are important mediating variables between socioeconomic status and attainment for rural female adolescents.

Odell (1989), utilizing a descriptive survey method, sampled 491 rural Ohio males and female adolescents. Odell (1989) found that there were significant differences between the educational expectations of rural males and females. Seventy-one percent of the females planned to attend college compared to 52% of the males in the sample. He also found a similar pattern with occupational expectations. Even with these differences, Odell (1989) concluded that male-female differences do not, by themselves, explain the attainment process.

McCracken and Fails (1989, 1991) completed a panel study using a random sample from Ohio’s rural schools. They interviewed (n=191) tenth and twelfth graders in 1985 and again in 1989. Their finding suggest that educational attainment of mothers was related to the educational aspirations of the youth in their sample. One hundred percent of the adolescents who had a mother with a college education aspired to complete a college education, whereas only 44% of the adolescents having a mother with a high school education aspired to complete a college education. Also, 97% of the adolescents who were in a high school college preparatory curriculum aspired to a college degree.

McCracken, Barcinas, and Wims (1991) used a cluster sampling approach with 71 rural schools in Ohio and southwest Georgia. They found that twelfth grade students who were in an academic curriculum had higher educational aspirations than twelfth grade students in general and vocational programs. Georgia youth had higher educational aspirations than youth from Ohio, even in vocational and general programs.
Lapan and Jingeleski (1992) assessed the occupational aspirations of 112 eighth graders. They were specifically interested in the differences between what they called emotional (e.g., empathetic) expressiveness and instrumental (e.g., assertive) expressiveness. They found that those young people who had high emotional expressiveness scores had greater interest in lower prestige jobs and more traditionally female occupations. Predictably, boys displayed more instrumental expressiveness and girls displayed more emotional expressiveness; therefore, boys aspired to higher prestige jobs more than girls in this sample.

Lichler, Cornwell, and Eggebeen (1993) used the responses of 19,748 youth and families from the 1990 Current Population Survey to assess the dropout rate in rural areas, suburbs, and central cities. The authors were also interested in the family structural variables (i.e., living arrangements, family size, and early childbearing) and economic resources that played a part in this process. Findings suggest that family structure accounted for only a small portion of the higher dropout rate in rural areas. The youth’s experience dealing with declining economic conditions and few job opportunities seemed to affect aspirations the most.

Quaglia and Perry (1995) studied the underlying variables that affect the aspirations of rural adolescents. They postulated that how adolescents use their time will impact on their ability to make decisions in their lives. Using (N= 2,677) eighth to twelfth-graders from seven rural schools in Maine, they looked specifically at how adolescents allocate their time. Findings indicate that a full 94% said they spent time with their family, but 66% said that it occurred less than 10 hours per week. Rural youth also spent a great deal of time hanging out with friends (97%) and watching T.V.
The major reason rural adolescents gave for engaging in these activities was because "there is nothing else to do". Quaglia and Perry recommend that parents of rural youth push their adolescents to pursue meaningful activities.

Conroy (1998) in a sample of 374 young people from grades 7 – 12 form rural Pennsylvania found that rural girls had higher educational aspirations than boys but that all the youth had unrealistically high aspirations. Moreover, job opportunities did not match their goals. Forty-one percent of their sample wanted a bachelors degree and 21% believed they would earn a graduate degree. A total of 66% of the sample aspired to a professional job. Post, Williams, and Brubaker (1996) and Post-Kammer (1985) using a sample of 202 eighth graders form a rural middle school in North Carolina, found that girls had higher educational aspirations than did their male counterparts.

Rural/Urban Comparisons

The last portion of this chapter will explore the similarities and differences between the educational aspirations of rural and urban youth. Gabbard and Coleman (1976) undertook a longitudinal study (N=355) with fifth and sixth-grade students in Appalachian towns in Kentucky and three urban schools in 1969. The first wave of the study involved interviewing subjects in 1969, and then in 1975, 199 students were re-interviewed. Student's expectations fell below aspirations both years with girls maintaining high aspirations than boys over both time periods. Aspirations were higher in 1975 than in 1969; however, in during both time periods, parental advice regarding occupations was valued the most. Father's advice was valued more by boys in the
sample and mother's advice was valued more by girls in the sample (Gabbard & Coleman, 1976). There were no significant differences between the rural and urban youth's aspirations.

Coleman (1976), using a rural and urban sample, initially surveyed 1,500 fifth and sixth-grade children and their mothers. In 1971 and 1975, Coleman took a subsample of the mothers, gave them a series of lessons on helping their children with career planning, and compared the findings. Youth in this sample, even from deprived backgrounds, had high aspirations, as high or higher than those who were affluent. The authors also found that the Black respondents in their sample had higher aspirations than the White respondents, girls had higher aspirations than boys, and rural youth aspirations were about as high as those of urban youth.

Frese, Mohan, and Sollie (1979) compared non-farm, rural farm, and city youth. Using a sample of 134 rural Mississippi youth, they found that all groups had high educational aspirations. Sixty-seven percent of the sample aspired to a college or graduate degree. Females had lower educational aspirations than males, and whites had lower aspirations than Blacks. When they re-interviewed the same sample two years after the original 1966 survey, actual attainment fell below aspirations for all groups, with 84% of the sample attaining less education than they had aspired to in 1966.

Cobb, McIntire, and Pratt (1989), using longitudinal data collected in the High School and Beyond study by the National Center for Educational Statistics, sampled 10,416 seniors from rural, suburban, and urban areas. Their findings suggest that rural youth did not aspire to post-secondary education as frequently as either urban or suburban youth. The authors also found that rural youth were less confident that they
could complete a college education. Rural students also placed lower value on making a lot of money but valued friendships more than their urban and suburban counterparts. Rural parents, in this sample, were perceived as less supportive of full-time college and more supportive of full-time jobs, trade schools, and the military for their adolescents. Rural adolescents also valued their job more and education less than urban and suburban youth.

Pollard and O'Hare (1990) compared metro and non-metro youth from 1980 to metro and non-metro youth in 1986 using a national data file of 11,000 high school seniors. They found that metro students had better educated parents, had taken a college prep curriculum more often, tended to continue formal education, had higher incomes and earnings, and were more likely to work in white collar jobs than non-metro students. They concluded that rural youth had diminished opportunities economically and educationally.

Apostal and Bilden (1991) sampled 174 males and females from rural North Dakota. Using a two-question format, one that addressed educational aspirations and one that addressed occupational aspirations, they found that the educational aspirations of both males and females were relatively high with no significant differences between the two groups. Females did have higher occupational aspirations than the males, and the researchers concluded that rural females may not be as bound to the farm and farm-related occupations as rural males. When they compared their rural sample to a national sample, they found that rural males had higher occupational aspirations than those in the national sample. Making the same comparison between the two groups of females, they
found that rural females aspired to more mid-range level occupations and that the national sample of females aspired to higher level occupations.

Haas (1992) reviewed data published through ERIC and compared rural youth with urban and suburban youth. He found that rural youth believed that parents were more supportive of their taking full-time jobs, attending trade schools, or entering the military immediately after finishing high school than were urban and suburban youth. Rural youth in this analysis had lower values for making a great deal of money, higher values for simply making good incomes, having secure jobs, and maintaining friendships than their urban and suburban counterparts.

Rossman (1996) sampled 293 high school seniors from Los Angeles public school. He found that the number of books in the home had the strongest influence on "choice" factors (i.e., educational and occupational aspirations) and that the educational level of student's parents was the most influential on indexes of actual performance (i.e., grades and abilities).

Summary

Research into the aspirations of rural youth since the late 1970s has tried to address the status attainment process for both males and females. Of the studies reviewed that focused solely on the dynamics of rural educational aspirations, findings were mixed as to the presence of gender differences. Two studies found that rural males and females did not differ significantly in their educational aspirations (Chu & Culbertson, 1982; and Olhendorf & Rafferty, 1982). Three studies found that rural females have higher educational aspirations than rural males (Conroy, 1998; Odell, 1989; and Post et al., 1996). Perhaps these differences are a result of regional sampling
frames that may reflect differences in the economic and cultural climate of the areas. A few studies (Gecas, 1980; Lichler et al., 1993; and Wilson & Peterson, 1988) did suggest that economic conditions in rural areas may be related to structural obstacles in the status attainment process for rural youth.

It may also be possible that there are familial differences that mediate the impact of these factors on young people's educational aspirations. Similar to the findings of Blau and Duncan (1967) and Sewell et al. (1969), researchers found parental influence in the life of rural adolescents' educational aspirations to be strong (Jackson et al., 1974; Lee, 1984; Marjoribanks, 1984,1985, 1986; Wilson et al., 1993). There have been several national and large scale studies involving rural youth (Cobb et al., 1989; Lichler et al., 1993; Quaglia & Perry, 1995; Marjoribanks, 1984,1985, 1986; Sewell et al., 1969). However, the majority of the studies focused on smaller regional samples (Chu & Culbertson, 1982; Gabbard & Coleman, 1976; Gecas, 1980; Lee, 1984; Thomas et al., 1976; McCracken & Fails, 1989, 1991; McCracken et al., 1991; Odell, 1989; Post & Brubaker, 1996). All of the above mentioned studies have stopped short of being able to explain the process of parental influence; instead, they primarily have related the influence of static variables on final outcome (i.e., aspirations).

Research findings that compared rural youth with urban and suburban adolescents speculated that economic and familial differences, attributed to the different social class positions of these populations, would place rural youth at a disadvantage in regard to aspirations. However, findings from the studies reviewed are mixed. Several studies found no significant differences between the aspirations of rural and urban youth (Frese et al., 1979; Gabbard & Coleman, 1976; Lee, 1976). As can be seen, these
studies all took place prior to the widespread changes in the economic conditions of rural areas. Rural youth have also been found to have lower aspirations than their urban counterparts (Cobb et al., 1989; Haas, 1992; and Pollard & O'Hare, 1990). In the studies where rural youth had lower aspirations than urban youth, rural parents were also seen as being less supportive, specifically in regard to attaining a college education (Cobb et al., 1989; Haas, 1992; Pollard & O'Hare, 1990). In contrast, Apostal and Bilden (1991) found that rural male youth had higher aspirations than urban males but that rural females, although higher than rural males, had lower aspirations than urban females. Gabbard and Coleman (1976) also identified a potential differential effect of parental influence, with boys valuing fathers' advice more and girls valuing mothers' advice more.

The following general conclusions can be drawn from this review of the literature. First, rural youth generally have high aspirations. Second, parents play a significant, but unexplained role in the aspiration process. Third, economic changes brought about by the farm crisis of the 1980s impacted the role of both mothers and fathers living in rural families. These changes may have an impact on the educational aspirations of rural youth, and the role of the mothers' educational attainment may be significant. Fourth, the role that a mother's education plays in influencing the status attainment process is substantially lacking from the literature.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study utilizes secondary data collected for a project entitled "Rural Youth in a Changing Economy: Stress, Coping, and Educational and Occupational Decisionmaking" funded by the Ohio Agricultural Research Development Center (Rudd, McKenry, Leigh, & Sanik, 1988). The study sampled 108 rural adolescents and their residential parents.

Subjects

One hundred eight rural tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade adolescents and their residential parents participated in this study. Four rural counties in one Midwestern state were used as sampling sites. Counties were chosen because they were located outside a major metropolitan statistical area and because they differed substantially in terms of median income and unemployment rate from one another. A demographic description of the sample is presented in Table 3.1. A description of selected variables relevant to adolescents and parents in this sample is presented in Table 3.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Age</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>6.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Age</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent’s Age</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Size</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm or open country</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very small town or city (less than 1,000)</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town or city (1,000 – 9,999)</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized city (10,000 – 49,000)</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Family Income**     |      |     |
| UNDER $10,000          | 9.1% | 9   |
| $10,000 - $24,999      | 23.0%| 23  |
| $25,000 - $49,999      | 46.0%| 46  |
| $50,000 - $74,999      | 19.0%| 19  |
| OVER $100,000          | 2.0% | 2   |
| **Total**              | 99   |     |

| **Family Structure**  |      |     |
| Intact never divorced | 73.1%| 79  |
| Step-families         | 14.8%| 16  |
| Single-parent mothers | 10.2%| 11  |
| Single-parent fathers | .01% | 1   |
| **Total**             | 107  |     |

Table 3.1: General Demographic Characteristics of the Sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Grade Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Grades</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly A's</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A's and B's</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly B's</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B's and C's</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly C's</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C's and D's</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D's and F's</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent High School Educational Track</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Prep</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Influenced by Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite a bit</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Educational Aspirations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community vocational or Trade program</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year college</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/professional school</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent Perceived Financial Support from Parents for Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Specific Characteristics of Adolescents and Their Parents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st source - scholarships/grants</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd source - loans</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd source - money from own earnings</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who was most influential?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother &amp; Father</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another relative</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female friend</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male friend</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another person</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Encouragement to Pursue Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly encouraged</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some encouragement</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never said much</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better off going to work</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) Actual Educational Attainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t complete high school</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated high school or equivalent</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated vocational or trade school</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated two-year college</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed some college</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated 4-year college</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s) Satisfaction with Primary Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Occupational Aspirations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names a specific occupation</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names a field of study</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Confidence of Occupational Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sure my mind is made up</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not sure but I think it is made up</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm not sure my mind is made up</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Adolescent Occupational Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Expectations</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, technical, kindred worker</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service worker</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm labor/foreman</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ability for Occupational Choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability for Occupational Choice</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much above average</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat above average</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just average</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat below average</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescent</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Satisfaction with Place of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with Place of Residence</th>
<th>Adolescent</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like it very much</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like it some</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither like or dislike</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike it some</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| I like it some                      | 82.4%      | 89    |     |
| I like it some                      | 9.3%       | 10    |     |
| Neither like or dislike             | 2.8%       | 3     |     |
| Dislike it some                     | 2.8%       | 3     |     |

| Dislike it some                     | 1.9%       | 2     |     |

### Desired Place of Residence After

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adolescent is no longer in School</th>
<th>Adolescent</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of home/same Community</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same county, not same Community</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another county, same state</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of state</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign country</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't care</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| With parents                        | 8.3%       | 9     |     |
| Out of home/same Community          | 42.6%      | 46    |     |
| Same county, not same Community     | 6.3%       | 7     |     |
| Another county, same state          | 11.1%      | 12    |     |
| Out of state                        | 9%         | 1     |     |
| Foreign country                      | 6.5%       | 7     |     |
| Don't know                          | 16.7%      | 18    |     |

| Don't care                          | 26.9%      | 29    |     |
The sample consisted of approximately two-thirds adolescent females and one-third adolescent males. The average age of the adolescent was 17 years with 32 percent sophomores, 43 percent juniors, and 25 percent seniors. Adolescent self-reported grades in school revealed that the majority of the adolescents earned mostly B's or better with less than 15 percent earning mostly C's and below. The majority of adolescents (82%) were pursuing a college preparatory curriculum, with the remainder pursuing vocational (10%) and general (7%) curricula.

Most adolescents (95%) reported a religious affiliation, with the Protestant faith most frequently reported (68.9%; n = 71). The majority (81%) of the adolescents reported that religion had at least some influence in their lives, with less than 20% reporting that religion had only a slight or no influence.

Almost two-thirds of the families in this sample resided on farms or in very small towns (<1,000 persons). Another fourth lived in small towns with populations between 1,000 and 5,000 persons. Approximately one-third of the families reported incomes under $24,999, almost one-half reported incomes between $25,000 - 49,999, and about one-fifth reported incomes over $50,000. Almost two-thirds of the sample lived in a never divorced, two-parent family. The remaining one-third of the sample lived in either a step-family or with a single-parent mother.

Both mothers and fathers in this sample were well educated. About one-third of the fathers and one-half of the mothers had a bachelors degree or higher. About 60% of
the mothers and 40% of the fathers had some post-high school education other than a four-year bachelors degree. Overall, the vast majority of the parents were satisfied with their primary occupation.

Mothers were cited as the most influential regarding education and occupation. Almost one-third of adolescents stated that their mother was the most influential regarding their education choices, and 27 percent of the adolescents said that their mother was the most influential regarding their choice of an occupation. The combined influence of the mother and the father account for almost 30 percent of the adolescents’ decisions regarding educational choices, and 20 percent of the adolescents’ decisions regarding occupational choices. Less than one-fifth of the adolescents said that their father was the most influential regarding their education choice, and slightly more than 10% of the adolescents said their father was the most influential regarding their occupational choice. Almost all of the adolescents felt that their mothers had either “strongly encouraged” or “encouraged them some” to pursue an education beyond high school. Similarly, the adolescents reported that most (75%) of their fathers had either “strongly encouraged” or “encouraged them some” to pursue an education past high school.

Over half of the adolescents stated that their primary source of financial aid for attending college would come from scholarships and grants. Less than 30 percent indicated that loans would be their second source of financial aid, and slightly more than one-third reported money from their own earnings would be their third source of
financial aid. Almost three-fourths of the adolescents felt they would get "much" or "some" financial support from their parents with the remainder expecting very little or no financial support at all from their parents.

Adolescents indicated high aspirations and expectations. The vast majority of the adolescents aspired to a bachelors degree or more. Similarly, approximately three-fourths of the adolescents expected to be working in a professional or technical occupation. Regarding their choices for an occupation, most stated they were sure their minds were made up. The adolescents in this sample also felt that they were qualified to pursue their chosen occupation with almost three-fourths stating that they believed they have above average ability or better in the area chosen.

Finally, most parents and the adolescents in this sample liked the area where they were currently living. As for future plans regarding place of residence, adolescents and their parents had mixed feelings. Approximately one-fourth of the adolescents hoped they would be living in their parent’s home or out of the home but in the same community as their parents. Approximately one-third of the adolescents hoped they would be living out of state, whereas one fourth did not know where they would like to live. The mothers preferred that the adolescent live out of the home but in the same community (42.6%), and the fathers also preferred that the adolescent live out of the home but in the same community as them (35.2%).

Procedures

Subjects were obtained by sending letters to adolescents and their parents via the school. All sophomores, juniors, and seniors in the four rural county high schools were contacted. Some letters were also distributed at 4-H club meetings and other school
related meetings. The letter explained the nature of the study, inviting potential subjects to return the form to school with their parents signed permission (Appendix A). Each family was offered $25 for participation. These procedures were reviewed and approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee at The Ohio State University, and each parent gave written permission for their child’s participation (Appendix B).

Interviewers indigenous to the counties studied were hired and then trained to administer the questionnaire in the homes of families who agreed to participate. Interviewers followed-up on all permission forms returned by contacting each family by telephone. During the conversation an appointment was scheduled for the interviewer to go to the family’s home to administer the questionnaire to both parents (when both parents were living in the home) and the adolescent. Each family member independently completed the questionnaire.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire, consisting of 65 items for parents and 88 items for adolescents, was given to the sample. Fixed-choice questions, open-ended questions, and various standardized instruments were used. The standardized instruments used for these secondary analyses were the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES III) (Olson et al., 1985), the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) (Barnes & Olson, 1985), and the Bengston’s Measure of Intergenerational Relations (Bengtson, 1982).

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES). The FACES III instrument (Appendix D) is based on the work of Olson, Russell, & Sprekle (1979) and is central to their Circumplex Model (See Figure 1.1). The FACES III instrument is
a twenty-item scale that consists of ten questions to address family cohesion and ten
questions to address family adaptability. The questions are arranged in a Likert-type
response format. The instrument is the third in a series of FACES instruments designed
to assess family adaptability and cohesion. Using the scale researchers can categorize
families into balanced, mid-range, or extreme types, or they can use one of the sixteen
more specific types identified in the Circumplex model.

The Circumplex Model is the used to explain three dimensions of family
behavior: cohesion, adaptability, and communication. With this model families are
assessed on four dimensions of cohesion ranging from disengaged and separated (low
cohesion) to connected and enmeshed (high cohesion). Likewise, families are assessed
on four dimensions of adaptability ranging from rigid and structured (low adaptability)
to flexible and chaotic (high adaptability). The model suggests that healthy family
functioning is generated from moderate levels on each dimension with balance families
(i.e. flexibly separate, flexibly connected, structurally disengaged, and structurally
connected) exhibiting the healthiest style. Mid-range and extreme functioning styles are
also delineated in the model.

The FACES III instrument provides a specific scale for families depending on
their stage in the family life cycle. To score the instrument, responses are summed and
then divided by the number of members that completed the instrument. This scoring
method is utilized to ensure that an accurate measure of family functioning is obtained.
It should be noted that the author of this instrument stresses that when assessing family
functioning, much variability can be seen between family members' responses. This
should not be seen as a weakness of the instrument, but rather it points to the fact that as
many family members as possible should complete the instrument to ensure validity. Therefore, consistency between family members is somewhat lower due to individual differences in perception of family functioning. The present study utilized the responses of both parents and the adolescent on the FACES III instrument.

Previous research with a national sample of 1,140 couples and families (Olson, 1985), indicated that the Pearson (r) correlation within families was .44 for cohesion. Similarly, the correlation for the father-adolescent dyad was .44 for cohesion, and the correlation for the mother-adolescent dyad was somewhat lower with reports of .38 for cohesion.

The Pearson (r) correlation between cohesion and adaptability on the FACES III instrument is almost zero (r=.03) which indicates that the dimensions are two distinct concepts. Correlation between cohesion and social desirability were also low (r=.35) and were zero (r=.00) between adaptability and social desirability.

The Internal consistency reliability for FACES III was adequate; Cronbach Alpha was .77 for the cohesion scale and .62 for the adaptability scale. Combined, the FACES III instrument had internal consistency at the r=.68 level. The Cronbach's Alphas attained for the current study sample was .88 for cohesion and .88 for the total scale.

Parent Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS). The PACS instrument was developed by Barnes and Olson (1985) to assess the communication patterns of families with an adolescent present. The twenty-item instrument (Appendix D) uses a Likert-type scale to assess family communication. The concept of communication addressed in this scale involves issues such as the extent of openness or freedom to exchange ideas,
Open family communication, problems in family communication, and selective family communications were all identified as constructs within the PACS instrument when construct validity was tested. Internal consistency for the entire scale as well as for the three constructs was determined by Cronbach's alpha. Alphas for the main constructs ranged from .80 to .92, and the alpha for the entire scale was .72. The Cronbach's alphas attained for the current sample study for the mother/adolescent communication dyad was .80, and for the father/adolescent communication dyad was .98. The alpha for the current study sample was .92 for the total scale.

**Bengtson's Measure of Intergenerational Relations.** The Bengtson's Measure of Intergenerational Relations (Mangen, Bengtson, & Landry, 1988) is a 14-item Likert-type scale designed to measure intrafamilial consensus on attitudes and opinions (Appendix D). Religiosity, marital norms, and political conservatism were all assessed using this measure. This scale was referred to as the family values - gender (FVG) variable. The Cronbach's alpha for the religiosity portion of the scale is .83 and the alpha for the political conservatism portion of the scale ranged from .73 - .84. The Alphas attained for the current study sample were .64 for the total scale for the mothers and .66 for the fathers. Scoring on this scale was derived by calculating a summed score for the parent dyad to reflect a parental value norm for the areas of religiosity, marriage, and politics.
Family Values – Work Scale (FVW). Taken from a question used in the Occupational Aspiration Scale (Haller & Miller, 1963), this 18-item likert-type scale attempts to evaluate the factors one might view as important in choosing an occupation. Choices ranged from very important to very unimportant. The scale assessed values ranging from high pay and pleasant working conditions to working alone and having the opportunity to live in a rural area. A parental score was obtained by summing the responses of both parents and then obtaining a mean score that reflected their values regarding work. This scale was not standardized and therefore no reliability coefficients were available from the researchers who developed it. Cronbach’s alphas for the study sample were .68 for the mothers and .62 for the fathers.

In addition to the previously indicated instruments, four other independent variables were assessed. They were measured by single-item, Likert-type rating scales. Economic support (ES) was measured by the adolescent’s answer to the question, “If you were to attend college, how much financial support would your parents provide if no other sources of financing were available”. Response sets ranged from (a) much financial support (4), (b) some financial support (3), (c) very little financial support (2), to (d) no financial support (1).

The perceived emotional support that adolescents felt they received from each of their parents to pursue a college education was measured by the adolescent’s response to the following question: “As to continuing your education beyond high school, how encouraging would you say that your father/mother has been?” The response choices were as follows: (a) not applicable, no father present, (b) has strongly encouraged me
(c) has given me some encouragement to continue (4), (d) has never said much about it (3), (e) he feels I would be better off going to work after high school (2), and (f) he feels I should quit high school and go to work (1).

Socioeconomic status (SES) was evaluated by using the parent's level of education. This measure is suggested by McAdoo and McAdoo (1985) as more appropriate in groups where educational attainment is not as highly related to occupational status as in the general population. McAdoo and McAdoo (1985) completed research with minority populations and found educational attainment to be a better indicator of SES than using prestige scores or traditional measures that combine education and income. As with minority populations, rural families' SES may best be represented using educational attainment as the indicator because income in rural areas may devalue the actual impact that education has played.

Regarding socioeconomic status, the parents answered the following question: "What was the HIGHEST grade or year of regular education that you completed?" Response choices were as follows: (a) didn't complete grade school (1), (b) didn't complete high school (2), (c) graduated from high school or have equivalent (3), (d) graduated from a vocational or trade school (4), (e) graduated from a two-year junior or community college (5), (f) completed some college course but do not have a degree (6), (g) graduated from a four year college or university (7), (h) graduated from a graduate or professional school (8), or (i) other (9).

The dependent variable, adolescent educational aspirations, was measured using a single-item question that assessed the extent of education an adolescent would desire
if nothing prevented him/her from getting as much as s/he wanted. Responses to this question from: I would not finish high school (1), I would get my high school diploma (2), I would complete a vocational or trade school program (3), I would complete a two year junior or community college program(4), I would get a bachelor’s degree (5), to I would get a graduate or professional degree (6).

Data Analysis

The dependent variable in this study was the educational aspirations of rural adolescents. The independent variables included parents SES, parental values, family adaptability and cohesion, family communication, the adolescent’s perceived parental emotional support for continuing education beyond high school, and the adolescent’s perceived financial support from parents for continuing education beyond high school. Two models of the relationships between the variables were analyzed. The first model included only the relationships explicitly hypothesized, represented conceptually in Figure 1.1. The conceptual model was analyzed separately for the fathers and the mothers in this sample. According to the hypotheses, the parents’ education level should predict perceived financial support as well as adolescents’ educational aspirations. Perceived financial support should be related to family gender and work values which should, in turn, predict both family cohesion and adolescents’ educational aspirations. Family cohesion is expected to influence perceived support for education and parent-adolescent communication, both of which are anticipated to be related to adolescents’ educational aspirations. The second model was more comprehensive and allowed investigation of relationships that might not have been predicted. It includes all of the relationships tested in the first model plus the following paths: a) parents’
education level to family gender and work values, b) family gender and work values to both support for education and parent-adolescent communication, c) perceived support for education to parent-adolescent communication, and d) both financial support and family cohesion to adolescents' educational aspirations. Both descriptive and correlational analysis were used as well as covariance structure modeling using RAMONA (Browne & Mehls, 1995).

Limitations

(1) Because the findings were drawn from four counties in one Midwestern state and the respondents were predominantly White, the findings will have limited generalizability;

(2) Because sampling procedures relied mainly on voluntary recruitment of families who had children involved in 4-H clubs or other high school functions, the findings may not be representative of other high school students or rural adolescents from other areas;

(3) Because this study was based on the response that individuals gave to self-report, paper and pencil measures, the data are subject to bias that is generated when an individual reports their self perception rather than observable events;

(4) Because of the design of the study and the small sample size, causal inferences cannot be generated from the data;

(5) Because the data collected for the study was obtained during the farm crisis of the 1980s, there may be historical limitations; and

(6) Because the study examined the manner in which a limited number of
theoretically-related independent variables impacted on the educational aspirations of rural adolescents and did not attempt to include all the factors that may be related to this process.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the unique ways that the family system in rural households influences the choices adolescents make regarding educational aspirations. The adolescent's desired level of educational attainment after high school was used to assess adolescent educational aspirations. The independent variables were: (a) parents' SES as measured by both mother and fathers' level of education, (b) parental values for gender and work, (c) family cohesion, (d) family communication, as measured by both the mother-adolescent dyad and the father-adolescent dyad, (e) the adolescent's perceived parental emotional support for continuing education beyond high school, and (f) the adolescent's perceived financial support from parents for continuing education beyond high school.

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

The descriptive statistics for and the zero-order correlations between the variables used in the Fathers' Models and the Mothers' Models are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, respectively. As can be seen in Table 4.1, the fathers' level of education and communication between the adolescent and father were positively correlated with adolescents' educational aspirations. Several variables including perceived financial
support, gender values, and perceived support for education also were positively related to adolescents' educational aspirations. A similar pattern was found for the mothers' variables except that neither communication between adolescents and mothers nor perceived support for education were significantly related to adolescents' educational aspirations.

Most of the constructs in the models were assessed by a single scale or composite, but family values and family cohesion had two measures and consequently could be modeled as latent variables. This would be advantageous because such a representation would yield a reduction in measurement error, a potential confound in most analyses. Gender and work values, however, were not significantly correlated and thus had to be represented as separate measured variables rather than as indicators of a family values latent variable. Cohesiveness and adaptability were correlated, so a family cohesion latent variable was used for this construct in the covariance structure models.

Covariance Structure Modeling

Covariance structure modeling using RAMONA (Browne & Mehls, 1995) and maximum likelihood estimations were conducted separately for the Fathers' Model and the Mothers' Model. In accordance with the recommendations of Hoyle and Panter (1994), the assessment of model fit was based on three indexes: one absolute fit index, the Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Browne & Cudek, 1993; Steiger & Lind, 1980); and two incremental fit indexes, the Tucker-Lewis (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973) or Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Bentler & Bonett, 1980) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1989, 1990). The following heuristics for each
index are used for interpreting good fit: (a) the RMSEA should be less than .05 (Browne & Cudek, 1993) and (b) the TLI/NNFI and CFI should be greater than .90 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1995).

The Mothers' Models yielded good fit to the data according to all three indexes, but there was some disagreement among the fit measures for the Fathers' Models. (See Table 4.3 for the $\chi^2$, df, RMSEA, TLI/NNFI, and CFI values for all models). Both of the fathers' models provided fair fit according to the RMSEA but poor fit according to the TLI/NNFI. The values for the CFI indicated good fit for Model 2 but poor fit for Model 1. The RMSEA is more resistant to problems due to other factors like sample size than the other two measures (Browne & Cudek, 1993; Steiger & Lind, 1980). Thus the results for the fathers' model must be viewed with some caution.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent Educational Aspirations</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Cohesion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesiveness</td>
<td>36.29</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>26.42</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent-Father</td>
<td>66.49</td>
<td>11.19</td>
<td>59.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent-Mother</td>
<td>69.06</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>54.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>73.63</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>83.52</td>
<td>9.83</td>
<td>59.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Education Level (SES)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Financial Support</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Support for Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for the variables in the Fathers’ and Mothers’ Models
<p>| | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fathers

1. Education Level 1.00
2. Finan. Support 30** 1.00
3. Gender Values .32** 0.17 1.00
4. Work Values 0.06 .01 0.02 1.00
5. Cohesiveness 0.04 .33** .00 0.08 1.00
6. Adaptability 0.13 .22* .01 .17 0.46*** 1.00
7. Educ. Support .29** .30** .14 .01 .35*** .25* 1.00
8. Communication .18 .22* .13 .03 .58*** .36*** .42*** 1.00
9. Aspiration .30** .20* .22* .12 .20 .19 .22* .30** 1.00

### Mothers

1. Education Level 1.00
2. Finan. Support 19 1.00
3. Gender Values .20 .17 1.00
4. Work Values 0.03 .01 0.02 1.00
5. Cohesiveness 0.02 .33** .00 0.08 1.00
6. Adaptability 0.04 .22* .01 .17 0.46*** 1.00
7. Educ. Support .10 .24* .18 0.03 .22* .23* 1.00
8. Communication 0.04 .26** 0.04 13 .62*** .35** .24* 1.00
9. Aspiration .33** .20* .22* 12 .20 .19 18 0.09 1.00

* p<0.05  ** p<0.01  ***p<0.001

Table 4.2: Zero-Order Correlations for Variables in the Fathers' and Mothers' Models.
### Table 4.3: Fit Measures for All Models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>parms</th>
<th>Fs</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>TLI/NNFI</th>
<th>CLI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null Model</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>130.63</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>35.13</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>20.73</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Null Model</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>112.08</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>26.62</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** $df =$ degrees of freedom, $parms =$ number of parameters in the model, $Fs =$ sample discrepancy function.

Fathers' Models

**Model 1.** This model only included paths between constructs that had been explicitly hypothesized to be related. Thus, adolescents' educational aspirations were expected to be positively related to fathers' education level, family gender and work values, father-adolescent communication, and perceived support for education. In addition, fathers' education level and family gender and work values were predicted to be related to perceived financial support. Gender and work values also were anticipated to be positively related to family cohesion which, in turn, was to be predictive of both perceived educational support and father-adolescent communication.
Support for five of these nine hypothesized relationships was obtained. (See Figure 4.1 for all of the path coefficients.) Fathers' education level and father-adolescent communication were significantly related to adolescents' educational aspirations and as expected, both path coefficients were positive. Fathers' education level and perceived financial support were also positively related as were family cohesion and perceived support for education. Family cohesion was a positive predictor of perceived support for education. All the remaining hypothesized paths were nonsignificant.

**Model 2.** The second model consisted of all the hypothesized relationships tested in the first model plus several exploratory paths about which no explicit predictions were made. Of the paths included in both models, the only path coefficient which changed dramatically was between father-adolescent communication and adolescents' educational aspirations which was significant in Model 1 but not in Model 2. The values of the remaining path coefficients that were tested in both models did change slightly but their significance levels did not. Consequently, these paths will not be discussed further; instead the results for the exploratory paths will be summarized. (See Figure 4.1 for all of the path coefficients.) First, two additional paths to adolescents' educational aspirations were included in Model 2 - one from perceived financial support and one from family cohesion. Neither path, however, was significant. Second, paths between fathers' education level and family and gender values were added in this model as well as paths between the two family values and both support for education and father-adolescent communication. Fathers' education level was a significant positive predictor of gender values, but none of these other path coefficients were significant. Third, the relationship between perceived educational support and father-adolescent communication was tested, but it too was nonsignificant.
Figure 4.1: Fathers' model 1 with path coefficients.
Figure 4.2: Fathers' model 2 with path coefficients.
Model Comparison. Because Model 1 is nested in Model 2 (i.e., the parameters in Model 1 are a subset of the parameters in Model 2), the two models can be compared to determine which model provides the better representation of the data. The \( \chi^2 \) test of comparison (\( \chi^2 = 35.13 - 20.73 = 7.86, \text{df} = 22 - 13 = 9, p > .20 \)) was not significant. Therefore, Model 1 would be preferred to Model 2, because Model 1, which included only the hypothesized relationships, is more parsimonious than Model 2 and accounts for the data equally well.

Mothers' Models

Model 1. This model is the same as the Fathers' Model 1 (i.e., it only tested the explicitly hypothesized relationships). For the mothers, support for only three of the nine hypotheses was found. (See Figure 4.3 for all path coefficients.) Although family gender and work values, perceived educational support, and mother-adolescent communication also were predicted to be related to adolescents' educational aspirations, only the path between aspirations and mothers' education level was significant. This also differs from the Fathers' Model 1 in which the path between aspirations and communication was significant. Also in contrast to the results for fathers, mothers' educational level was not predictive of perceived financial support. Similar to the results for fathers, neither gender nor work values were related to family cohesion, but family cohesion was significantly related to both perceived support for education and mother-adolescent communication. As in the results for the fathers, the path coefficient for the family cohesion-educational support relationship was positive.

Model 2. Model 2 included all of the paths in Model 1 plus nine additional paths. Several of the path coefficients changed slightly in their values but not their significance levels from Model 1 to Model 2. Thus summarizing these findings again is not necessary. For the new paths, the results were similar to the Fathers' Model 2. (See
Mothers’ education level was found to be negatively related to family gender values and unrelated to work values. Neither set of values was related to support for education or communication, and perceived support for education and mother-adolescent communication were not related to each other. Although the path coefficient for the path from family cohesion to adolescents’ educational aspirations was rather high ($\beta = .31$), the standard error for this estimate ($SE = .20$) was nearly twice as large as the other estimates, and the t-test, therefore, was not significant.

**Model Comparison.** Because Model 1 is nested in Model 2 (i.e., the parameters in Model 1 are a subset of the parameters in Model 2), the two models can be compared to determine which model provides the better representation of the data. The $\chi^2$ test of comparison ($\chi^2 = 26.62 - 15.73 = 10.89$, df = 22 - 13 = 9, $p > .20$) was not significant. Similar to the results for the fathers, Model 1 would be preferred to Model 2, because Model 1, which included only the hypothesized relationships, is more parsimonious than Model 2 and accounts for the data equally well.
Figure 4.3: Mother’s model 1 with path coefficients.
Figure 4.4: Mother's model 2 with path coefficients
Testing of the Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parent’s education level, and adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for attaining additional education beyond high school.

Parental socioeconomic status, as measured by parental education level, was significantly correlated with an adolescent’s perception of their parents’ economic support for their attaining more education beyond high school. Hypothesis 1 was supported for both mother and father models.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parents’ education level, and adolescent educational aspirations.

Parents SES, as measured by parents’ education level, was significantly correlated to an adolescent’s educational aspirations in both models. Hypothesis 2 was supported.

**Hypothesis 3:** There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for additional education beyond high school and family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender.

There was no correlation found between an adolescent’s perception of their parents economic support for their getting more education beyond high school and family values regarding work and gender. Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

**Hypothesis 4:** There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding (a) work and (b) gender and family cohesion.

There was no correlation found between family values regarding work and gender and family cohesion. Hypothesis 4 was not supported.
Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no correlation found between family values regarding work and gender and an adolescent’s educational aspirations. Hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Hypothesis 6: There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school.

There was a significant correlation found between family cohesion and the amount of perceived support an adolescent feels they received from their parents to continue their education. Hypothesis 6 was supported for both mothers and fathers.

Hypothesis 7: There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and father/adolescent communication.

There was a significant correlation between family cohesion and father-adolescent communication. Hypothesis 7 was supported.

Hypothesis 8: There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and mother/adolescent communication.

There was a significant correlation between family cohesion and mother-adolescent communication. Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Hypothesis 9: There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no relationship found between the amount of perceived support an adolescent feels they received from parents to continue their education beyond high school and an adolescent’s educational aspirations. Hypothesis 9 was not supported.
Hypothesis 10: There will be a positive relationship between father/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was a significant correlation between father-adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations. Hypothesis 10 was supported.

Hypothesis 11: There will be a positive relationship between mother/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no relationship found between mother-adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations. Hypothesis 11 was not supported.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of family process variables on rural adolescents' educational aspirations. The adolescents' desired level of educational attainment after high school was used to assess educational aspirations. The independent variables were: (a) parents' SES as measured by both mothers' and fathers' level of education, (b) parental values regarding gender and work, (c) family cohesion, (d) family communication, as measured by both the mother-adolescent dyad and the father-adolescent dyad, (e) the adolescent's perceived parental emotional support for continuing education beyond high school, and (f) the adolescent's perceived financial support from parents for continuing education beyond high school. Both a mother model and a father model were tested to identify the path from parents' educational level to adolescent educational aspirations.

Support for the two models were mixed. In the mothers' model, only mothers' level of education was significantly related to adolescent educational aspirations. In contrast, the fathers' model indicated that fathers' level of education and communication between father and adolescent were significantly correlated with adolescent educational aspirations. The three measures of fit used to test the models...
were not in agreement for the father model. Therefore even though more of the hypotheses were substantiated for the father model, the results must be viewed with caution.

The current chapter will discuss (a) findings of hypotheses, (b) findings generated by the structural equation models for both fathers and mothers, (c) recommendations for theory and research, and (d) implications for policy and practice.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parents' education level, and adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for attaining additional education beyond high school.

Parental socioeconomic status, as measured by parental education level, was significantly correlated with an adolescent’s perception of their parents’ economic support for attaining more education beyond high school. Hypothesis 1 was supported for both mother and father models. In the study sample the higher the attained education level of the parent, the more perceived economic support the adolescent felt s/he would receive for pursuing education beyond high school. The mean score for adolescents’ reported perception of parental economic support of education was 2.19 (SD=.83; R=3.00). Adolescents in the sample, on average, felt they could count on “some,” but not “much”, financial support from their parents. Education, when viewed as an indicator of socioeconomic status, suggests that those individuals with higher levels of education were more likely to have parents with higher incomes and therefore, have more economic resources to contribute to an adolescent’s education beyond high
school. This finding is consistent with the work of Blau and Duncan (1967) who suggest that parental SES impacts adolescent educational attainment by altering the amount of money families have available to spend on resources.

One of the adaptations rural families made during the farm crisis of the 1980s was to reduce the amount of money saved for children’s education (Lobao & Meyers, 1990). The adolescents in this sample did not expect to receive very much financial support from their parents. Moreover, rural adolescents in the sample seem to be taking some responsibility for contributing to future educational expenses. Youth in the study ranked money from their own earnings (36%) as the third most important source of aid behind scholarships/grants (57%) and loans (28%). In rural families, all children typically are seen as being contributors to the family’s economic stability (Lobao & Meyer, 1990) either by working as a means of making their own spending money or by contributing to the daily functioning of the family (Peters, Wilson, & Peterson, 1986).

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between SES, as measured by parents’ education level, and adolescent educational aspirations.

Parents SES, as measured by parents’ educational level, was significantly correlated to an adolescent’s educational aspirations, in both the mother and father models. Hypothesis 2 was supported. Past research has clearly shown that parents’ education has a direct effect on adolescent aspirations when education is viewed as an indicator of socioeconomic status (Blau & Duncan, 1967; McCracken & Fails, 1989, 1991; Rossman, 1996; Sewell et al., 1969; and Thomas et al., 1976). However, only one study could be found where mothers’ educational level was used to assess
adolescent aspirations (McCracken & Fails, 1989, 1991), and a positive correlation was found between mother’s education and educational aspirations of the adolescent.

It should be noted that this sample may not be representative of rural families, in general, as the parents of the study subjects tended to have high educational attainment, especially the mothers. About one-third of the fathers and one-half of the mothers had a bachelors degree or higher. About 60% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers had some post-high school education other than a four-year bachelors degree. These parents may be functioning more like middle-class Americans in their socialization practices than like rural, blue-collar Americans who tend to devalue education (Langman, 1987). Thus support for the hypothesis might suggest a modeling of the value of higher education by parents with higher educational attainment. Higher education is also related to better problem solving, better communication skills, and better access to information (Langman, 1987). Adolescents living in homes where parents have high educational attainment, could feel more confident about their abilities and aspire to higher educational levels.

Adolescents in the current sample also had relatively high educational aspirations. Aspirations for graduate or professional school was the most frequently chosen goal with 54% of the adolescents reporting this choice. Many adolescents also had aspirations for a bachelors degree (27%). Only 3% of the study sample aspired to attain no additional formal education after high school. It seems that adolescents in this sample perceived the need for an advanced education to help them achieve their goals in a changing economic climate. In contrast, 17% of all people age 25 and above living in Ohio have attained some college, 5% an associates degree, 11% a bachelors degree, and
5.9% a graduate or professional degree (US Department of Education, 1997). In comparison to other rural adolescents across the country, the study sample had higher aspirations. Nationally, 6% of all rural youth reported they did not plan on attending college, 71% anticipated going to college right after high school, and another 17% anticipated waiting a year or more to attend college (US Department of Education, 1997).

The study sample also shows that mothers’ educational attainment may be just as significant in the aspiration process as fathers’ educational attainment (i.e., r=.30 p<.01 for fathers’ and r=.33 p<.01 for mothers). A possible explanation for this finding is that in a rural population where economic change and adversity is a way of life, the impact of having a mother who is highly educated and probably working outside of the home, is significant. It is probable that these mothers are providing a role model both for educational attainment and occupational attainment. These mothers are also providing the adolescent with an alternative to the traditional family roles in rural families. However, rural wives’ employment has been found by other researchers to be related to negative outcomes. For example, Godwin, Draughn, Little, and Marlowe (1991) found that compared to non-employed wives, off-farm employed wives work longer hours in all areas of production, were less satisfied with their marriages, and had lower levels of life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perception of parents’ financial support for additional education beyond high school and family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender.
There was no correlation found between the adolescent’s perception of their parents' economic support for attaining more education beyond high school and family values regarding work and gender. The relationship postulated that parents who supported their adolescents’ educational attainment through financial means would have more nontraditional values regarding work and gender. However, because the rural community holds more traditional values in general, the relationship between gender roles and educational aspirations might not be as strong as in urban and suburban populations. Also, researchers (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Moen, Erickson, & Dempster-McClain, 1997) have found that parents provide access to social positions via the economic, cultural, and social resources they provide rather than transmitting actual values and beliefs.

Another explanation for no relationship being found between the variables may be related to the scales used to operationalize the family values construct. As indicated in the findings, the scales for gender and work related values were not significantly correlated. Because of this, values had to be represented separately as measured variables rather than as indicators of a family values latent variable. Examining the constructs as separately measured variables increases the measurement error and possibly confounds the analyses. Also, the scale used to assess work values was not a standardized scale which poses potential concerns. As for the Bengston Intergenerational Scale, its usefulness may also be questionable as it was originally developed as a means of assessing intergenerational values as they grew out of the social and political turmoil of the 1960s (Mangen et al., 1988). In the future, different measures should be used to operationalize the family values construct.
Hypothesis 4: There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding (a) work and (b) gender and family cohesion.

There was no correlation found between family values regarding work and gender and family cohesion. Aside from the concerns already mentioned regarding the construct of family values, and given the fact that past research (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Moen et al., 1997) does support the notion that parents do not transmit specific values and beliefs to their children, perhaps this construct may be assessed more reliably by using a measure that would tap the behavior associated with certain nontraditional values. For instance, researchers might assess the kind and frequency of activities in which the adolescent and parents participate. Also, to tap the family work values, one might explore factors related to the actual work experience of both the adolescent and their parents.

Another possible explanation for no direct relationship existing between family values regarding work and gender and family cohesion is that some researchers propose that the construct of cohesion is curvilinear (Olson, 1985). Perhaps regarding value transmission, even in rural families, extreme forms of cohesion (i.e., enmeshment and disengagement) produce a situation where a lower level of value transmission is passed between the parent and the child. With both extremes, adolescents may distance themselves from the parents' values as a means of navigating the individuation process.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive relationship between family values espoused by parents regarding work and gender and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no correlation found between family values regarding work and gender and an adolescent's educational aspirations. Nontraditional gender and work
values should have the effect of increasing adolescent educational aspirations by facilitating the belief that women and men both have a valued place in the work force and a share in the continuity of home and work life. Again, perhaps that most salient explanation for lack of support for this hypothesis can be found in the measures used to assess the construct. Even though there is evidence that links the attitudes of parents and children (e.g., Mangen et al., 1988; Starrels, 1992), the notion of transgenerational transmission of values becomes problematic in times of large-scale social change because younger generations may depart from the beliefs and values of older generations (Moen et al., 1997). The change in gender roles in rural families brought about by the farm crisis of the 1980s may be a case in point. Each new generation of rural men and women may develop new expectations regarding work and family roles that can only be assessed by measuring the same construct, with the same population over time. Also, there may be a discrepancy between rural men and women's values and their behaviors. This discrepancy can be seen in a woman's desire to be a homemaker but having to work outside the home because of economic conditions. Similarly, this discrepancy can be seen in a man's desire to pursue farming as the sole means of supporting the family but being forced to economically supplement his income with off-farm employment, and seeing the inevitability of off-farm employment for his own children. Thus, educational status alone, especially in a rural population, may not be indicative of nontraditional values regarding work and gender, and thereby fostering higher educational aspirations.
Hypothesis 6: There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school.

There was a significant correlation found between family cohesion and the amount of perceived support adolescents feel they received from their parents to continue their education. If cohesion is seen as a measure of supportive interactions and enmeshment is associated with psychological control (Barber & Buehler, 1996), then the linear relationship found in this study sample between perceived parental emotional support for education and cohesion is expected.

The linear relationship between cohesion and parental emotional support for education is different from the curvilinear relationship postulated for this scale. Olson et al. (1989) views the construct of cohesion as curvilinear with unhealthy forms of the variable on the extreme ends and healthy functioning associated with midrange scores. The findings with the current sample may be attributed to the nature of the dependent variable. Educational aspirations may be an exception within the curvilinear model as the closer a family sees themselves, the more likely adolescents are to perceive emotional support from their parents regarding these aspirations. Another explanation for this relationship is that this is a rural cultural phenomena where closer relationships are not seen as pathological as in urban areas. While in the general population there may be a curvilinear relationship between cohesion and family dysfunction, there may be a linear relationship with a rural sample where the hypothesized problem in family functioning is a relative overemphasis on autonomy, not enmeshment (Anderson & Gavazzi, 1990; Pratt & Hansen, 1987; Rudd, Stewart, & McKenry, 1993). Perhaps in rural families, enmeshment (i.e., high levels of cohesion) would still allow parents to be
supportive of their adolescents' educational aspirations but would function to restrict both the range of choices and the geographical location of their choice for continuing their education (Stewart, 1992).

**Hypothesis 7:** There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and father/adolescent communication.

There was a significant correlation between family cohesion and father-adolescent communication. The more cohesive a family is the more likely there is to be positive communication between family members (Olson, 1985). Cohesive families display higher rates of supportive communication, higher rates of sharing explicit information, and more positive affect (Olson, 1985). Theoretically, communication is seen as essential to the establishment of the type of negotiation process that enables families to make it through developmental stages and enhance the individual growth of its members (Olson, 1985).

Barnes and Olson (1985) report norms on the parent-adolescent scale to be 63.74, with a standard deviation of 12.02 and a range of 67 for the father-adolescent pair. The current study indicates the father-adolescent pair to have a mean of 66.49, with a standard deviation of 11.19 and a range of 59. This discrepancy from the reported norms is probably a result of combining father and adolescent scores to obtain a dyad score verses using the method suggested by Barnes and Olson (1985) of simply using either the parent's score or the adolescent's score. The method utilized for this study was chosen to reflect the dynamic nature of the study and to take into account different views of communication between the dyadic pairs.
Hypothesis 8: There will be a positive relationship between family cohesion and mother/adolescent communication.

There was a significant correlation between family cohesion and mother-adolescent communication. The more cohesive and adaptable a family is the more likely there is to be positive communication between its family members (Olson, 1985). As with father-adolescent communication, mother-adolescent communication is enhanced by higher levels of family cohesion. Olson (1985) supports the idea that families that have higher rates of more supportive communication, higher rates of sharing explicit information, and more positive affect will be more cohesive.

As previously stated, Barnes and Olson (1985) report norms on the parent-adolescent scale to be 65.56, with a standard deviation of 12.10 and a range of 65 for the mother-adolescent pair. The current study indicates the mother-adolescent pair to have a mean of 69.06 with a standard deviation of 9.43 and a range of 54. This discrepancy from the reported norms is probably because the independent mother and adolescent scores were combined to obtain a dyad score versus using the method suggested by Barnes and Olson (1985) of using simply the parent’s score or the adolescent’s score. The method utilized for this study was chosen to reflect the dynamic nature of the study and to take into account different views of communication between the dyadic pairs.
Hypothesis 9: There will be a positive relationship between adolescent perceived support from parents to continue education beyond high school and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no relationship found between the amount of perceived support adolescents feel they receive from parents to continue their education beyond high school and the educational aspirations of adolescents. Contrary to reported findings (Marjoribanks, 1984, 1985, 1986; Sewell et al., 1969) and to the hypothesized relationship for this study, perceived parental support for education did not correlate with educational aspirations. Perhaps for the parents in the study sample, this is evidence of a reluctant, but pragmatic view toward education. Further support for this view is evidenced in the response that almost half of the mothers and one-third of the fathers in the study hoped their child would be living out of their home, but in the same community after they completed their education.

The findings suggest that adolescents can aspire to high educational aspirations without the perceived emotional support of their parents. Another possible explanation that may contribute to the finding may be the need to consider the total amount of significant other influence that impacts on the rural adolescent. Sewell et al. (1969) found that peers, siblings, other relatives, and other adults also impact on adolescent aspirations.

Hypothesis 10: There will be a positive relationship between father/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was a significant correlation between father-adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations. The more positive the communication between
the adolescent and the father, the higher the educational aspirations of the adolescent. Socialization theory supports the notion that the role of the father—child relationship is pivotal in relationship to a child's feeling of competency, especially in roles outside the family (Langman, 1987). When communication is seen as a measure of father-adolescent relationship quality, then positive communication is a sign of support and the father is perceived as a positive role model (Langman, 1987).

**Hypothesis 11:** There will be a positive relationship between mother/adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations.

There was no relationship found between mother-adolescent communication and adolescent educational aspirations. In contrast to the findings for the father, the study sample does not find that mother-adolescent communication is linked to higher educational aspirations for the adolescent. Although mothers may be influential in the socialization of children, especially in regard to emotional and interpersonal relationships, they may not be as influential as fathers in transmitting educational aspirations and providing the monetary means of doing so. Fathers, especially in rural, more patriarchal families function as the “gate-keepers” to extrafamilial activities and experiences with the world of work and gender roles (Parke, 1995). Also, the more patriarchal nature of the rural family may diminish the impact of the mother on the actual aspirations of adolescents.

Another possible explanation for this finding may be evident in the demographics of the current sample. Approximately two-thirds of the adolescents in the study sample were females and approximately one-third of the adolescents in the study sample were males. It is possible that the findings are related to nature of the
mother-daughter communication pattern in this particular sample. Research has generally found that communication between mothers and daughters is more positive than communication between fathers and daughters (Barnes and Olson, 1985; Noller and Callan, 1990; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). However, there is also evidence that daughters and sons disclose different kinds of information to their mothers and fathers (Noller, 1994) which may explain the discrepancy of this study’s findings with other research. Sons are more likely to reveal information regarding work and study, and sexuality and opinions whereas daughters are more likely to reveal information regarding aspects of their personality or general, personal information (Noller, 1994). There may also be higher levels of more negative communication between mothers and daughters in this sample. The employment status of the mothers in the sample, coupled with the more traditional gender roles found in rural families, may place higher demands on daughters to contribute to the maintenance of the household. These increased demands could create tension in the mother-daughter relationship thus contributing to the current finding.

**Fathers’ Model**

In the fathers’ model, adolescents’ educational aspirations were expected to be positively related to fathers’ education level, gender and work values, father-adolescent communication, and perceived support for education. In addition, fathers’ education level and family gender and work values were predicted to be related to perceived financial support. Gender and work values also were to anticipated to be indirectly related to educational aspirations as mediated by family cohesion, perceived educational support, and father-adolescent communication. Support for five of these nine
hypothesized relationships was obtained. (See Figure 4.1 for the path coefficients.) The model for the fathers must be viewed with caution as the three indexes used to assess model fit were inconsistent; however, according to the RMSEA (see table 4.3) the fathers' model did provide a fair fit for the variables in the current study. Since the RMSEA index is more resistant to factors like sample size (Browne & Cudek, 1993; Steiger & Lind, 1980), a decision was made to use this index.

Fathers' education level and father-adolescent communication were significantly related to adolescents' educational aspirations and as expected, both path coefficients were positive. Fathers' education level and perceived financial support were also positively related as were family cohesion and perceived support for education. Family cohesion was a positive predictor of perceived support for education. All the remaining hypothesized paths were nonsignificant. Thus, the picture that emerges for the fathers' model is one in which fathers' level of education has a direct effect on adolescent's educational aspirations but this effect is not mediated by any of the other variables in the study. However, fathers' education does have a significant impact on the perceived amount of financial support an adolescent feels s/he will get for college. The more education a father has, the more likely adolescents are to perceive that they will get parental financial support. Family process variables, specifically family cohesion and father-adolescent communication, have a significant effect on adolescent educational aspirations. It appears that father-adolescent communication intervenes in the cohesion process to communicate support of the adolescents' educational aspirations.

In the model that is presented, the father's education and the quality of the relationship he has with the adolescent is most influential in the educational aspiration
process. The father appears to set an example that the adolescent hopes to emulate because of the good relationship in the family. The father may also be introducing middle-class values that are adopted by the adolescent because of the quality of the relationship in the family and with the father specifically.

Mothers’ Model

This model tested the same paths as the fathers’ model (i.e., it only tested the explicitly hypothesized relationships). In contrast to the fathers’ model, the three indexes used to assess model fit for the mothers’ model all indicated good fit. For the mothers, support for only three of the nine hypotheses was found (See Figure 4.2 for all path coefficients). In the mothers’ model, only mothers’ educational level was significantly correlated with adolescent educational aspirations. Family cohesion was a positive predictor of perceived support for education and mother-adolescent communication; however, neither perceived support for education nor mother-adolescent communication had a direct effect on adolescent educational aspirations. It appears that although mothers and adolescents felt their family was cohesive and their communications were positive, it did not translate into impacting educational aspirations. In other more traditional working class families, where the father acts as the ultimate authority (Langman, 1987) the mother’s overall impact regarding education and work aspirations and been found to be minimized by the influence of the father. Still, the mothers level of education could reinforce the value of higher education in the family and possibly make the adolescent more amenable to higher education. In this manner, the mother could also be functioning as a role model for the adolescent and their educational aspirations.
Comparison of the Father and Mother Models

In both models, parent’s educational level was correlated with adolescent educational aspirations. However, fathers’ level of education also predicted financial support for education whereas unexpectedly mothers’ education did not. Mothers’ education has been found in other studies to have a significant effect on a family’s financial resources, as measured by parents’ report of financial resources (e.g., Brody, Stoneman, & Flor, 1995). In the current study instead of using parents’ actual report of financial resources, the adolescent’s perception of how much of the family’s financial resources could be utilized to help pay for education beyond high school was examined. In rural families where the father may still be perceived as the “head of the household”, regardless of mothers’ educational attainment, perhaps adolescents defer to fathers regarding allocation of financial resources. Rural fathers may be more likely to have power (i.e., financial decisions) especially if the perception is that the mother’s work is to supplement family income (Peter et al., 1986).

In both models, the constructs used to evaluate gender and work values yielded no significant correlations with any of the other variables. Problems with the measures have already been discussed. Family systems theory, as well as socialization theory, supports the notion that family values should have some influence on the educational aspiration process (see Langman, 1987). In contrast, the measures used in this study were perhaps too broad to assess the construct of family work and gender values. Future studies might do well to use a construct that would specifically measure family values regarding educational attainment.
Although family gender and work values, perceived educational support, and mother-adolescent communication also were predicted to be related to adolescents’ educational aspirations, only the path between aspirations and mothers’ education level was significant. This also differs from the fathers’ model in which the path between aspirations and communication was significant. Also in contrast to the results for the fathers’ model, mothers’ education level was not predictive of perceived financial support. Similar to the results for fathers, neither gender nor work values were related to family cohesion, but family cohesion was significantly related to both perceived support for education and mother-adolescent communication. As in the results for the fathers, the path coefficient for the family cohesion-educational support relationship was positive.

In both models the only other variable that had a significant correlation with adolescent educational aspirations, was father-adolescent communication. Father-adolescent communication appears to function as a mediating influence from family cohesion to educational aspirations. Perhaps the characteristic of rural families that is based on a more patriarchal family structure, functions to make communication with fathers essential. The idea may best be described as the father being a “gate-keeper” to the outside world. The finding that mothers and fathers have a differential impact on adolescent educational aspirations may also be an artifact of the gender distribution of the sample (i.e., two-thirds of the adolescents in the sample were female and one-third were male).

Family cohesion plays a significant role in the adolescent feeling supported by their parents to attend college, but this does not appear to translate into a direct impact
on the actual level of educational aspirations. This suggests that there are other factors more pivotal, not mediated by the closeness of family members, that rural adolescents must overcome. Other obstacles rural youth may have to overcome may be the economic climate of the rural community they in which they live (Lobao, 1990) as well as the lack of available role models and resources in rural communities and schools.

In summary, the model presented in this study lends support to the status attainment theory and suggests that rural parents' education level will have a direct effect on adolescent educational aspirations (Blau & Duncan, 1967; & Sewell et al., 1969). Furthermore, the finding that family cohesion impacts both an adolescent's perceived support for education and communication between the parent-adolescent dyads, provides preliminary support for family process variables having some impact on the educational aspirations of rural adolescents.

Recommendations and Implications

Several limitations of this study must be noted. The proposed model is somewhat exploratory in nature as no other study has utilized family process variables to assess parents' impact specifically on adolescent educational aspirations. Thus, the model presented here is not intended to be inclusive of all variables that may impact the process. Furthermore, because the sample size was small and sampling procedures were nonrandom, results should be viewed with caution and should not be generalized to all rural populations. Other concerns addressed in the study sample, which should be considered when interpreting the results, are instrumentation inadequacies, the use of self-report measures, and the homogeneity of the sample (e.g., two-parent, white families).
This sample also represented a distinct group of economically diverse rural families from four counties in Ohio that may be different from rural families in other geographic locations (e.g., Appalachia and western US), and from urban families. Ohio’s rural population is seen as an urbanized rural population, and as such the findings in this study may be indicative of social class differences rather than rural/urban differences.

Recommendations

Additional research into rural adolescent aspirations is warranted given the ever changing economic situation of rural America. Large national, random samples into the status attainment process are needed in order to fully address the role of aspirations. This study indicated the relevance of collecting data from both parents, when possible, as well as the adolescent. Much could be gained by examining the same sample of rural adolescents from different regions of the country. This would make it possible to assess both economic and cultural changes that are impacting the rural adolescent, regardless of geographical residence.

There is a need to include variables that measure the dynamic, reciprocal nature of the family (Bratcher, 1982; Brody et al., 1995; and Lichler et al., 1993). The present study provides preliminary support for inclusion of the construct of family cohesion into the study of adolescent aspirations. The present study also supports the inclusion of parent-adolescent communication in the study of educational aspirations. Wilson et al. (1993) also suggests that parent’s aspirations for their adolescents be
included in the assessment of aspirations. Utilization of multiple measures to assess aspirations, rather than a single-item as in the present study, may better operationalize the dependent variable.

The case for including the construct of family values in the adolescent educational aspiration process is guarded. The measures in the current study do not appear to adequately measure the construct. Future research may want to gain information regarding sex role attitudes from a standardized measure (i.e. possibly the BEM sex-role inventory) or by observations of actual behavior (Conger & Elder, 1994).

The role of maternal employment in rural families and its impact on adolescent aspirations needs to be addressed more extensively. It would be useful to examine the differential impact of maternal employment on the aspiration process separately for adolescent males and females. It would also be helpful to have more information about the mother's employment – the nature of the job, reason for working, and her perception of the impact the employment has had on the quality of her relationships within the family.

Missing from the analysis in the current study is the impact of significant other influences, other than the parents. Past research has found that significant other influence are not restricted to parental influence in rural families (Sewell et al., 1969), and it would be advantageous for future research to also include this in the model. Moreover, a systems model would also suggest the importance of knowing more about the community in which the adolescent and family live, including schools, peer group affiliation, and extra curricular activity involvement.
Implications for Policy and Practice

Aspirations suggest a futuristic orientation and necessitate some type of goal direction (Sherwood, 1989). Aspirations also require an investment of time, effort, and money. These investments come from the individual, the family, and the larger community in which the individual is a member. Therefore, implications for policy and practice are guided by these factors.

Consistent with some other studies, rural adolescents seem to have high educational aspirations (Apostal & Bilden, 1991; Gabbard & Coleman, 1976; Conroy, 1998; and Frese et al., 1979). MacBayne (1987) expressed concern that the economic barriers imposed on rural youth will set them up for failure if they continue to have high aspirations. It seems misguided to translate the threat of economic barriers into helping adolescents lower their aspirations; rather, policies directed toward economic investment in rural communities are in order. Adolescents and their parents need to have access to more information regarding ways to utilize the educational skills they attain to enrich their lives economically and emotionally. In an ever shrinking nation, brought about by advances in computer technology and ease of transportation, rural youth find it easier to access the advantages of urban life and be more aware of options. Moreover, perhaps quality of life and involvement with family and friends is a legitimate aspiration for rural youth and should be facilitated.

Regardless of parents education or income, “...students at all grade levels do better in their academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviors if they happen to have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved” (Connors & Epstein, 1995). How can
parents support their children's educational aspirations? Early and appropriate developmental activities related to literacy, homework strategies, and higher-order abstract thinking will promote high educational aspirations. Furthermore, parents must include themselves in the college and career planning process. Parents need to work with the schools to get information on financial aid, course requirements, and college choices. Rural parents and adolescents need to engage in career/education plans together. Rural parents need to be involved in volunteer activities at the school, learning activities in the home, and governing and advocacy programs at the school (i.e., PTA & PTO). In a small qualitative study of rural parents with various educational levels, Reagan and Rehm (1995) found that parents felt their main role in the aspiration process was to encourage and stress responsibility to their adolescent. Moreover, parents can raise their own aspirations for their children and their academic achievement. Farm families in general need encouragement, advocacy, and exposure to successful role models who will share coping strategies and farm management and small business strategies in community settings.

Education and public schools are the major mechanisms for families to improve their economic and social status and that of their children (Connors & Epstein, 1995). Acknowledging that education is the "great equalizer" provides recognition that families, schools, and communities must work together to combine resources and help children reach their educational goals. Rural schools must be funded at the same level as urban schools in order to assure parity in the status attainment process. Rural school counselors and vocational teachers should also recognize that in the rural America educational system, programs must be designed to educate parents about future job
markets, and the skills and competencies needed by their youth. Teachers also need to be encouraged to deal with their biases and preconceived notions about rural adolescents. Because youth in rural areas have aspirations as high as urban youth, teachers need to know that they can and should nurture these aspirations.

Community and local school boards can increase commitment to education by providing scholarships and funding, improving schools, and developing partnerships with local businesses for work-study opportunities. Local, state, and federal government policies are needed to encourage rural economic and technological development and rural economic diversity. Parents and educators should not only prepare students to leave rural areas but also empower students to stay and invest in the improvement of the local economic base.

Educationally, the past three decades have brought major changes to the rural community. Rural communities not only have access to community colleges, but many rural communities have access to branch campuses of major educational institutions. Scholarships and grant money for local youth to attend branch campuses need to be secure. Although there has been mixed support for vocational education programs in rural communities, it does appear that this source of education provides a needed service to small communities and to rural adolescents by providing them with marketable skills with minimal preparation.

Family life educators, agricultural extension agents, and rural community mental health services can also be a crucial part of the aspiration process. Extension services provide a needed source of information and support for rural areas. In conjunction with the school system and family system, extension services can impact the aspiration
process by providing expanded opportunities for more "urbanized" rural families. Expansion of traditional 4-H programs to include less farm-related projects and more self-directed exploration is already being carried out. This trend, that is to help maintain certain rural values while expanding the options of rural adolescents, should promote aspirations. Educational programs for youth and their families through trusted rural programs such as 4-H, FFA, FHA, and vocational agriculture programs are warranted. Family enrichment programs could focus on stress and time management skills, career planning, decision-making, and communication techniques.

We must remove the structural barriers to education and job opportunities for rural adolescents. Lichler et al. (1993) found that rural economic conditions decrease adolescent aspirations. Raising human capital in rural areas must begin with policies that strengthen the family, including its economic underpinnings – both social and financial capital. This includes support for family leave policies, family life and/or parenting programs specifically designed for rural families, and on-site daycare center for rural businesses. Economic barriers can be removed by attracting new businesses and maintaining community structures to support local small business in rural communities. The family farm operation is vital to many rural communities. Thus, economic and political support for small farm operators is necessary. As Lobao (1990) found, the small farms and the large farm operations are the ones that have the most ability to make it through the economic hardships of the 1980s.

The complexity of the US farm economy is not only tied to local, state, and federal policies but as ever increasingly tied to the global macroeconomic policies (Little et al., 1987). Efforts by farm bureau organizations and other political action
groups to educate the rural community to market and utilize the technology and the
world market better should be supported. In general, a better understanding of how to
support rural communities, the family farms and the small businesses that function
within them is needed.

Since the present study lent support to status attainment theory by finding that
parent’s SES (i.e., as measured by parents’ education level) effects adolescent
aspirations, several recommendations can be made. First, not only do parents need to
recognize that their educational achievements have a direct effect on the aspirations of
their adolescent by providing increased financial resources, but parents also role model
the importance of education to their adolescent. What the parent actually does
behaviorally with his/her own educational attainment may be as important as what the
parent communicates verbally about the importance of education. Encouraging parents
to pursue their own educational goals and providing the necessary financial and
community support for adult educational programs is essential to the process. Second,
in the aspiration process, an adolescent’s ties to his/her family are important, and a more
systemic approach to working with rural families is order. Career development models
must recognize the importance of aspirations in the status attainment process and must
recognize the need to include parents in the process. Inclusion of parents could be
accomplished by developing intervention models in the schools that encourage parents
to share their aspirations for their child and encourage their child to have high
aspirations. Instead of the typical “career day” that many schools have where parents
with different occupations share information about their job, schools could have a
“family aspirations day” where the goal is to get parents and their children to explore
occupational choices together and discuss the educational component. Parents need to be encouraged to attend college fairs at school and take an active role in helping their child understand the differences in post secondary education and the financial aid available from a wide variety of resources.

In summary, parents play a critical role in the adolescent educational aspiration process. In order for adolescents to reach their goals educationally, they must first have aspirations. The current study has shown that parent's own level of education as well as family cohesion and parent-adolescent communication play a role in the process.
Dear Parent:

I am writing to invite your family to participate in a research project on rural adolescents and their families. A research team in the college of Human Ecology at Ohio State University is studying the educational and occupational decisionmaking, social and family life, and stress levels of rural adolescents. We will also be collecting data from their parents (or parent if only one is present in the home) about these matters.

We are seeking rural families with a high school sophomore, junior, or senior present who would be willing to complete our questionnaires. The funding for this project is in no way connected with your county’s educational funding. This study is funded by the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, which is part of The Ohio State University.

Would you and your spouse (if one is present), and your adolescent son or daughter be willing to participate? Participating in the study would entail your making an appointment with one of the following:

Judy Burian, 653-7109
Donna Anderson, 653-8463

some time soon when he or she can come to your home (or meet you elsewhere if you prefer) and meet with you all at the same time. First you will be asked to complete a time record of how you spent the day before the interview and then you will each complete, privately, a self-administered questionnaire. Following your completion of these instruments, the interviewer will seal them in an envelope for return to Columbus and one of you will sign across the envelope flap to ensure that it is not opened until it reaches the University.

There are a few questions in the questionnaires which you may find very personal such as questions about alcohol and drug use and questions about sexual activity (adolescents only). You are free to choose to not answer these questions if you prefer. However, all the information you provide will be completely confidential. Your names will not be on the questionnaires and you will never be described as individuals or as a family. The information obtained from you will be combined with that from other families for analysis. We must conform to strict Federal and University regulations for the protection of confidentiality of persons participating in research studies.

The interview will last 1 ½ to 2 hours. Since we realize that we are asking for a substantial contribution of your time, we will pay your family $10 for each person participating in the study—(i.e. $20 for an adolescent and single parent and $30 for an adolescent and two parents). If two parents are present (even if one is a step-parent), both must participate in the study. Payment will be processed as soon as completed questionnaires are received in Columbus.

If you are willing to participate in this effort, please have each family member who would be participating in this study (your adolescent, you, and your spouse, if one is present) sign below and provide telephone numbers where you can be reached during the day and evening. Then return this letter to your high school office so that an interviewer can contact you.

If you have any questions about the study, please call either of the interviewers listed above.

Thanks very much in advance for your help.
Sincerely,

Nancy M. Rudd  
Professor, Family Resource Management  
The Ohio State University

Please sign if you are willing to participate in this study:

__________________________________________________________________________
Parent

__________________________________________________________________________
Parent

__________________________________________________________________________
Adolescent

__________________________________________________________________________
County of Residence

__________________________________________________________________________
Daytime telephone number  Evening telephone number
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

PARENT'S CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in (and my child participating in) research entitled:

RURAL YOUTH IN A CHANGING ECONOMY: STRESS, COPING, AND EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONAL DECISIONMAKING

_______ Nancy M. Rudd _________ or his/her authorized representative has explained the purpose
Principal Investigator

of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my (and my child’s) participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (and my child is) free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me (or my child).

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ___________________________  Signed: ___________________________

Signed: ________________________
(Principal Investigator or his/her
Authorized Representative)

Witness: _________________________

Should funding be available, the researchers conducting this study would like to reinterview adolescents three to five years from now to determine what they are doing with regard to employment and schooling at that time. To conduct such a survey and to be able to relate adolescents’ future behavior to information obtained in this interview, we need to keep a record of the adolescent’s name along with his or her questionnaire numbers and some names and addresses of people who would be able to help us locate the adolescent. This record will be kept in a locked file in a separate location from the questionnaires so that no one can connect a particular name with a particular questionnaire. If you are willing to have your adolescent’s name on this list, please sign below.

Signed: _________________________
Participant/Parent
ADOLESCENT'S CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in research entitled:

RURAL YOUTH IN A CHANGING ECONOMY: STRESS, COPING, AND EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL DECISIONMAKING

Nancy M. Rudd or his/her authorized representative has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my (and my child’s) participation. Possible benefits of the study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _______________________ Signed: _______________________

Signed: _______________________ Signed: _______________________
(Principal Investigator or his/her Authorized Representative) (Person Authorized to Consent for Participant – If Required)

Witness: _______________________

Should funding be available, the researchers conducting this study would like to reinterview respondents three to five years from now to determine what the adolescents are doing with regard to employment and schooling at that time. To conduct such a survey and to be able to relate adolescents’ future behavior to information obtained in this interview, we need to keep a record of your name along with their questionnaire numbers. This list will be kept in a locked file in a separate location from the questionnaires so that no one can connect a particular name with a particular questionnaire. If you are willing to have your name on this list, please sign below.

Signed: _______________________
Participant/Adolescent
APPENDIX C

FAMILY ADAPTATION AND COHESION SCALE III
PARENT ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION SCALE
BENGTSON’S MEASURE OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS
FAMILY VALUES -WORK SCALE
## FACES III

David H. Olson, Joyce Portner, and Yoav Lavee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>2. ONCE IN A WHILE</th>
<th>3. SOMETIMES</th>
<th>4. FREQUENTLY</th>
<th>5. ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Family members ask each other for help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>We approve of each other's friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Children have a say in their discipline.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>We like to do things with just our immediate family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Different persons act as leaders in our family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Family members feel closer to other family members than to people outside the family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Our family changes its way of handling tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Family members like to spend free time with each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Parent(s) and children discuss punishment together.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Family members feel very close to each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The children make the decisions in our family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>When our family gets together for activities, everybody is present.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Rules change in our family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>We can easily think of things to do together as a family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>We shift household responsibilities from person to person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Family members consult other family members on their decisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>It is hard to identify the leader(s) in our family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Family togetherness is very important.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>It is hard to tell who does which household chores.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FAMILY SOCIAL SCIENCE, 290 McNeal Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108

© D.H. Olson, 1985

# PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION

## Parent Form

Howard L. Barnes & David H. Olson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE CHOICES</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</td>
<td>Moderately Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I can discuss my beliefs with my child without feeling restrained or embarrassed.
2. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my child tells me.
3. My child is always a good listener.
4. I am sometimes afraid to ask my child for what I want.
5. My child has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid.
6. My child can tell how I'm feeling without asking.
7. I am very satisfied with how my child and I talk together.
8. If I were in trouble, I could tell my child.
9. I openly show affection to my child.
10. When we are having a problem, I often give my child the silent treatment.
11. I am careful about what I say to my child.
12. When talking with my child, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.
13. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my child.
14. My child tries to understand my point of view.
15. There are topics I avoid discussing with my child.
16. I find it easy to discuss problems with my child.
17. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my child.
18. My child nags/bothers me.
19. My child insults me when she/he is angry with me.
20. I don't think I can tell my child how I really feel about some things.

**Note.** From *Family Inventories: Inventories Used In A National Survey Of Families Across The Family Life Cycle* (p. 64) by H.L. Barnes and D.H. Olson, 1985, St. Paul, MN: Family Social Science, University of Minnesota.
### RESPONSE CHOICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Neither Agree</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I can discuss my beliefs with my mother without feeling restrained or embarrassed.
2. Sometimes I have trouble believing everything my mother tells me.
3. My mother is always a good listener.
4. I am sometimes afraid to ask my mother for what I want.
5. My mother has a tendency to say things to me which would be better left unsaid.
6. My mother can tell how I'm feeling without asking.
7. I am very satisfied with how my mother and I talk together.
8. If I were in trouble, I could tell my mother.
9. I openly show affection to my mother.
10. When we are having a problem, I often give my mother the silent treatment.
11. I am careful about what I say to my mother.
12. When talking to my mother, I have a tendency to say things that would be better left unsaid.
13. When I ask questions, I get honest answers from my mother.
14. My mother tries to understand my point of view.
15. There are topics I avoid discussing with my mother.
16. I find it easy to discuss problems with my mother.
17. It is very easy for me to express all my true feelings to my mother.
18. My mother nags/bothers me.
19. My mother insults me when she is angry with me.
20. I don't think I can tell my mother how I really feel about some things.

**Note:** From *Family Inventories: Inventories Used In A National Survey Of Families Across The Family Life Cycle* (p. 65) by H.L. Barnes and D.H. Olson, 1985, St. Paul, MN: Family Social Science, University of Minnesota.
**BENGSTON'S MEASURE OF INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE CHOICES</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(D)</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>(SA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Wives should obey their husbands.  
2. Men cannot respect a fiancée who has had sex.  
3. Husbands should have the main say in marriage.  
4. Women's lib makes sense.  
5. Women should not have authority over men.  
6. Every child should have religious instruction.  
7. God exists as in the Bible.  
8. The United States would be better if religion had more influence.  
9. We are all descendants of Adam and Eve.  
10. The United States should be ready to answer any challenge to its power anywhere in the world.  
11. Student demonstrators deserve strongest punishment possible.  
12. Society's most important task is law and order.  
13. It is man's duty to work; it is sinful to be idle.  
14. Most people on welfare are lazy; they just don't do a good day's work and so they cannot get hired.
FAMILY VALUES – WORK SCALE

Below is a list of characteristics occupations might have. Indicate how important each characteristic is to you in choosing an occupation for yourself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Response Choices</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 (VI)</td>
<td>4 (SI)</td>
<td>3 (N)</td>
<td>2 (SU)</td>
<td>1 (VU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Response Choices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. High pay...</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Interesting work...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Work I am good at...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Pleasant working conditions...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Short or flexible working hours...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Interaction with other people...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Work out of doors...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. High status...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Opportunity to help people...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Opportunity to work alone...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Opportunity to be self employed...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Lots of challenge...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. Opportunity to live near parents/family...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n. Opportunity to work with children...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o. Work compatible with family responsibilities...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. Opportunity to live in a rural area...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q. Opportunity to live in a small town...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r. Opportunity to live in a city...</td>
<td>5 VI 4 SI 3 N 2 SU 1 VU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF REFERENCES


121


Wilson, S.M. (1994, February). Research Issues in Dealing with Appalachian Youth. Presentation conducted at the Department of Family Relations and Human Development, the Ohio States University. Albert Davis, Ph.D. (Chair).


