

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SCHOOL OR SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN IN A DEPRIVED AREA
OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AND THEIR
ATTENDANCE AT
CULTURALLY STIMULATING ACTIVITIES

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ments for the Degree of Master
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by

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ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive study of a selected sample group of forty-seven elementary school children, twenty of whom were successful and twenty-seven of whom were unsuccessful. All the children concerned in the study lived in an environmentally deprived area of the City of Winnipeg, as designated by the Planning Division of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. The study was undertaken in order to consider the relationship between attendance at culturally stimulated activities outside of the home and school performance.

Information was obtained through face-to-face interviews with the parents of the children in the sample group. The interviews were based on a schedule of questions prepared by the research group, designed to query attendance in four specific areas of culturally stimulating activities--Religious Activities, use of Library facilities, and secular activities both within and outside of the immediate community.

It was found that successful school performance was positively related to the child's use of library facilities and to his attendance at secular activities located outside of the immediate community. Unsuccessful school performance was found to be negatively related to attendance at Religious activities and secular activities within the immediate community.

Overall, findings of the study were inconclusive as two of the areas selected as culturally stimulating activities, and formulated into sub-hypotheses, were shown to be negatively related to school performance. Two of the areas selected as culturally stimulating activities, and formulated into sub-hypotheses, were shown to be positively related to school performance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that education is becoming more and more a prerequisite of living in our society today. There is a general awareness of the fact that our society is becoming increasingly more industrialized and urbanized. Associated with and accompanying these developments have been the striking advances made in automation, science, and technological skills. These advances are the result, and have resulted in, a greater expansion of all types of knowledge. Individuals being born into and raised in our society are having placed upon them greater demands for acquiring a more extensive and elaborate education than was required of society's members only decades ago. In simple terms, life has become complex.

At the same time our society is at present enjoying what is commonly referred to as the "age of abundance"; we generally regard ourselves as living in an "affluent society". That is, the advent of industrialization and the extension of technological skills have combined to produce one of the highest standards of living in the world for our society as a whole.

However, in recent times we have also become aware of evidence which reveals that this high standard of living is not all pervasive

throughout the various groups and subsections of our society. In our stratified society we have become aware of the fact that the lowest socio-economic classes or status groups have not increased or bettered their position to the same extent or in the same proportion relative to the higher socio-economic classes or status groups. Paradoxically, the "poor", "culturally disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived", as they are known, are being left further and further behind the general advances that society as a whole is making. It is thought that a good part of the explanation for this lies in the fact that the members of this culturally deprived group generally have not been able to meet the demands for more education and skilled training. The writings reviewed in the following chapter give ample account of the difficulties that children of this culturally deprived group experience in the educational system. Generally, they are noted to do poorly in school, often dropping out at an early age. It is felt that this is the result of not possessing the necessary skills, attitudes and language experiences that are required. The writings and works consulted in the succeeding chapter point to the several facts of the problem more fully. However, suffice it here to say that they illustrate and describe the effects of the child's home and outside of the home environment on his or her performance and adaptation in school. Out of the various cultural, motivational, attitudinal, educational and socio-economic factors involved, it was felt the life styles of the

families of school children would reveal differences in the extent to which they initially prepared and continued to contribute to the child's school performance.

This project was done as a part of a larger inquiry instituted by the Masters' students of the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, into the variations in the educational and culturally stimulating experiences of the families of a selected group of elementary school children living in an environmentally deprived area of Winnipeg, whose school achievement is satisfactory and a group from a similar area whose achievement is unsatisfactory. The educationally stimulating experiences of the parents and their school children respectively, as well as the culturally stimulating experiences of the school children in the home, were investigated by members of three other project-groups. The purpose of this study was to identify certain characteristics of the culturally stimulating activities outside of the home which may be related to the successful or unsuccessful school performance of the children. The study was made during the period of September, 1965 to April, 1966.

It was felt that variations in life style are acutely manifested in the individual child's contacts, activities, and experiences outside the home. Further, it was thought that the outside of the home environment greatly affected and influenced the child through the various possible sources of cultural stimulation. It was

reasoned that children who had had greater exposure to these culturally stimulating experiences or activities would have a greater knowledge or better perception of the wide environment in which he lived in comparison to children who had had less exposure to culturally stimulating experiences. Further, it was felt that these culturally stimulating activities, depending on the child's exposure to them, could contribute significantly to his or her development of basic learning skills as well as to the development of such intangibles as curiosity and desire to learn. The amount of stimulation a child experiences, as well as its sequence and variety, is thought to be closely related to his or her developing adequate language and verbal skills, attention span, and motivation necessary for formal school learning.¹ At the same time it was noted that the culturally deprived family, generally, has little contact with organizations outside of the home and that they involve themselves very little in any community activities.² Thus it was thought that there was a plausible connection between the lack of involvement of the family, and specifically the child, in outside of the home culturally stimulating activities and the child's school performance.

¹ M. Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process", Mental Health of the Poor, ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearl. (New York: The Free Press, 1965) p. 177.

² A Hollingshead and F. Redlich, Social Class and Mental Illness: A Community Study, (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1958) p. 135.

The main hypotheses of the study was that:

The successful or unsuccessful school performance of a selected group of elementary school living in environmentally deprived areas of Winnipeg is related to their attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home.

For the purpose of our study successful school performance will be defined as that which is identified by the classroom teacher as being above average. Similarly, unsuccessful school performance is that which is failing to meet the expectations of the school program. Environmentally deprived areas are those areas defined by the Planning Division of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg as being in transition and falling below socially accepted standards. Culturally stimulating activities are those activities which increase the child's interest and abilities in such areas as verbal and visual skills, abstract thinking, social interaction and attention span.

The following sub-hypotheses were formulated:

1. A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend religious activities.
2. A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful use library facilities.
3. A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend secular activities inside of the immediate community.

4. A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend secular activities outside of the immediate community.

It was felt that there are specific institutions and activities outside of the home which were somewhat more closely related to the school system than others. In specifically choosing the areas of religious activities and the use of library facilities as culturally stimulating activities it was recognized that these would provide a child, should he or she be exposed to them, with an experience that resembled or contributed to his formal class-room learning, i.e., taking lessons as part of a group and being provided with books and other reading material. It was felt that the experience with books and reading material outside of the school and home would be an important factor in a child's initial and continued development of reading ability and vocabulary. The estimates of reading inability among culturally deprived school children is thought to be quite above that for the normal elementary school population as a whole.³ At the same time it was felt that religious activities and the use of library facilities were culturally stimulating activities that were available to a child to attend at a fairly early age.

For the purpose of our study religious activities are defined as being only those experiences of religious service and where religious instruction is predominant. Library facilities are those

³ F. Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York, Harper and Row, 1962,) p. 115.

services which a public library provides. Example would include the showing of movies, the telling of stories and the loaning of books. It was through that there was a certain number of secular activities inside the immediate community provided through various organizations and clubs. It was felt that a child could find his or her membership in such a club or organization as being culturally stimulating. It was also felt that these activities could be designated by name and thus make possible a quantitative analysis of attendance by the school child. Similarly, it was felt that outside of the immediate community there existed a myriad of institutions and facilities which could be designated as providing a child with the opportunity for experiencing culturally stimulating activities. These also could be designated by name to thus make possible a quantitative analysis of attendance by the school child.

For the purpose of the study secular activities are those culturally stimulating experiences which are non-religious in nature. Some of these activities would include those which occur in Neighbourhood Service Centres, in parks and on vacation trips. The immediate community is that area which encompasses all the homes of the sample group and in which all daily living activities take place. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the immediate community will be bounded by the following: The Red River to Redwood Avenue, to Salter Street, to the CPR Tracks, to McPhillips Street, to Notre Dame Avenue, to Balmoral Street, to Ellice Avenue, to

Notre Dame Avenue, to Portage Avenue, to Main Street, to the CPR Tracks, to the Red River. The immediate community as defined above, allows for the inclusion of all of the environmentally deprived areas in which the school children reside.

These particular environmentally deprived areas in question are marked for eventual slum clearance, spot clearance or rehabilitation. There is a high proportion of multi-family dwellings and low rental property within them. The average income per family is \$2800 - \$3600 per year. The population density for these areas is high although there is very diverse land useage with light industry penetrated into residential areas. Generally, there is little open space with few parks or recreational areas.

The children selected as the sample group for study were from families who resided in these environmentally deprived, "blighted" areas. This group of forty-seven school children attended four schools which were located within the referred to areas. This group of children was comprised of twenty successful and twenty-seven unsuccessful students, all of whom were enrolled in grades one to three.

The scope of the study is limited to elementary school children of this particular geographic location. The group of children identified for the study were not randomly selected. We also do not know whether the teachers all used the same criteria in identifying the students for the sample group. The scope of the

study is limited to the extent that certain specific activities or facilities in the outside of the home environment were selected to the exclusion of other possible sources of cultural stimulation for the child. For the purpose of this study we are not taking the health of the children in the sample group into account.

It was assumed (that) in the study that the selected culturally stimulating activities experienced by the children were positive in nature. In turn, it was assumed that these positive experiences would create positive attitudes in the child. As assumption was made that each child had an equal opportunity for class-room learning. It was also assumed that the unsuccessful children had the same basic intellectual potential as the successful children for performing satisfactorily in school. We have assumed, in our study, that any possible differences in the criteria used by the teachers in identifying the school children will not significantly affect the findings. In regard to the interview schedules it was assumed that each parent knew and gave an accurate account of the activities which his or her child had attended or is presently attending.

The information on the attendance of the children at culturally stimulating activities was obtained from their parents through a face-to-face interview with the use of a constructed schedule. It was felt this method would elicit the most accurate results for the purposes of this study. The information obtained through the schedules will be classified in order to effect a comparison between the

successful and unsuccessful children.

In summation, it is felt that the problem of the culturally deprived child, and his unsatisfactory school performance in many cases, is of major concern to education and social workers as well as to other members of the community. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the understanding of some of the factors which facilitate or impede the functioning of the culturally deprived child in the school system.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

In the past several years there has been a resurgence of interest in the problem of poverty generally, by individuals and groups working in the social welfare field. The recognition that poverty can be a disadvantage is not new. Even in biblical times it was not new.¹ Today, however, it has also become evident that our industrial society and its increasingly complex technology is leaving the poor person further and further behind. The increasing need for higher education and new technological skills is very much a factor of life today. S. M. Miller states:

"Skill and educational requirements of industries are increasing ... new labor is employable only if it is high skilled or educated; consequently, the low educated, especially the young, are more disadvantaged in relation to the economic system today than similarly low educated were a generation or two ago."²

Investigators of the problem of poverty have come to recognize its position in a cycle of cause and effect which involves many different variables. For one thing, as Schneiderman states, "Social

¹ E. Herzog, "Some Assumptions About The Poor", Social Service Review, XXXVII, No. 4 (December, 1963), p. 390.

² S.M. Miller, "Poverty and Equality in America": Implications for the Social Services, "Mental Health of the Poor", ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearl (New York: The Free Press 1965) p.13.

work has become more and more sensitized to culturally derived variations in social behavior and attitudes."³ He says further that, "The inclination to view different social-economic or social class groups as manifesting distinctive life styles or cultures has found growing expression in social science and professional literature."⁴ Herzog writes that the term, "the culture of poverty", has come into prominence in the field of welfare research during the past several years.⁵ It has been difficult to define precisely what is meant by the culture of poverty. The group of people affected are often referred to by a number of names such as, "the underprivileged," "the culturally deprived", the disadvantaged", the lower class," as well as others. There has also been a newer tendency to refer to them as the "poor".⁶ Herzog writes:

"Reference to the poor does not, of course, mean the lower layer of a three-way breakdown into upper, middle, and lower social-economic groups. We have had abundant evidence that this lower segment of the traditional three-way break is itself divided into a number of layers. We have evidence too that the life ways of the very lowest layer differ from the others in this same band more than the so-called upper-lower differs from the lower-middle".⁷

³ L. Schneiderman, The Culture of Poverty - A Study of the Value-Orientation Preferences of the Chronically Impoverished? (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1963,) p.3.

⁴ Ibid, p.5.

⁵ Herzog, op cit, p.391

⁶ Herzog, op cit, p.389

⁷ Herzog, op cit, p.390

The use of the term "poor" or any of the other terms is not generally applied to the stable, respectable working class.⁸ What is usually agreed upon is that the "poor" or "culturally deprived" live at, or near, or considerably below what is commonly regarded as the subsistence level. Money is not the sole determinant of membership but it is used by many investigators. Many of these persons have found certain characteristics to be more prevalent among the people living in impoverished circumstances than at any other level. In her summary article Herzog points these out. She states:

"Poverty involves under-employment and scattered irregular, miscellaneous employment often at undesirable occupations; it involves extensive borrowing through formal and informal sources, use of second hand clothing and furniture, and over crowded dwellings and lack of privacy. The poor have a higher death rate, a lower life expectancy, lower levels of health - physical and mental - and of nutrition, than the prosperous; they depend more on home remedies and folk medicine, since medical care is expensive and frightening; they are relatively unlikely to be members of labour unions, political parties, and other organizations; they are more inclined to excessive drinking and to violence than the prosperous".⁹

There is a fairly general consensus that the "poor" or the "culturally deprived" share patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving which deviate in some respects from those of the larger culture and which happen to create some dysfunctional relationships

⁸ Herzog, op cit, p.391

⁹ Herzog, op.cit, p.392.

between themselves and the wider society.¹⁰ What has been noticed as Schneiderman states, is that, "The inevitable product of prolonged poverty is a distinctive life style or culture shared by the impoverished and transmitted from generation to generation through the family's acculturation of its children into the culture of poverty."¹¹

Part of the characteristic picture of the life style of the culturally deprived is a noticable inverse relation of education and income. Education, at least until recently, has been the most useful single indicator of socio-economic status. This is the view of Herzog who writes:

"Sometimes it almost seems as if all the other differences flowed from that one, so over whelming are its apparent results in the lives and thoughts and feelings of the poor. Associated with low education are low school stimulation, lack of motivation to education - often coupled with unrealistic aspirations and unrealistic faith in education as an open sesame to getting on in the world."¹²

It is recognized that children from impoverished circumstances do not generally, as a group, fare as well in school as children from more prosperous circumstances. F. Riessman writes that, "clearly one of the most pressing problems facing the urban school today is the 'culturally deprived child'.¹³ He states that, "The deprived child is not happy at school, does not read well, appears unmotivated,

¹⁰ Schneiderman, op cit, p.8

¹¹ Schneiderman, op cit, p.2

¹² Herzog, op cit., p.392

¹³ F. Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) p.1

is antagonistic to the teacher, possesses no well-formulated career plans, (and) has no quiet place to study."¹⁴ Riessman also goes on to say that the general estimate of reading inability among school children is fifteen to twenty percent, while among educationally deprived children the disability is as high as fifty per cent.¹⁵

In discussing the school-child and education, Jones writes that, "...Social Class shares with intelligence the distinction of being a major influence contributing to variations in scholastic aspirations and achievement."¹⁶ The problem of the culturally deprived within the educational system is perhaps best summarized by Deutsch, who states:

Among children who come from lower-class socially impoverished circumstances, there is a high proportion of school failure, school dropouts, reading and learning disabilities, as well as life adjustment problems. This means not only that these children grow up poorly equipped academically, but also that the effectiveness of the school as a major institution for socialization is diminished. The effect of this process is underlined by the fact that this same segment of the population contributes disproportionately to the delinquency and other social deviancy statistics."¹⁷

Social Class differences in educational behavior are generally thought to operate through the differences in nature of family

¹⁴ Ibid, p.112.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.115.

¹⁶ F. Jones, The Social Bases of Education, Canadian Conference on Children, Toronto, 1965, p.11.

¹⁷ M. Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process", Mental Health of the Poor, ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearl (New York: The Free Press, 1965) p.172.

relationships, family values, and other familiar characteristics. Jones states that, "one reason for upper class superiority in the various aspects of educational behavior ...may be in social class differences in certain patterns of child-rearing."¹⁸

He goes on to say:

"By defining values, goals and social expectations for their children, in the course of socialization, parents can communicate the importance they attach to education, as an activity valuable in itself or as a valued means to occupational success. In addition, parents may communicate the more general values which aid scholastic achievement by emphasizing the satisfactions of individual success and the wisdom of deferring immediate satisfactions in order to achieve more distant goals."¹⁹

Jackson Toby also stresses middle-class parental interest and encouragement as a major factor in explaining the scholastic superiority of middle-class children in comparison to lower class children. He states that, "Middle-class parents convey to their children subtly or explicitly that they must make good in school if they want to go on being middle-class."²⁰ Referring to the middle-class child he says that, "apparently his preschool training prepares him much better for scholastic competition than his lower class classmate...he is stimulated...by the rewards he receives from his parents when he shows vertical precociousness."²¹

Referring to the lower-class child, Sanders states:

¹⁸Jones, op. cit., p. 27.

¹⁹Jones, op. cit., p. 39

²⁰J. Toby, "Orientation to Education as a Factor in the School Maladjustment of Lower-Class Children", Social Forces, 35:3 (1957), 262-63.

²¹Ibid.

" ... it is apparent that some of them fail to develop the kind of orientation which will enable them to submit to school discipline, particularly if their parents do not support the authority of the school as do middle-class parents. Nor are they able to help the child or provide the encouragement and praise which will give him incentives for school accomplishment at the time when he is facing up to the new situation in school. Furthermore, the child may have mechanical ability but lacks the necessary verbal facility which a competitive advantage requires. It may also be that he is less familiar with the kinds of situations treated on standard intelligence tests. Thus the social milieu conspires against his educational success."²²

The underprivileged or culturally deprived child often comes from a home which is busy, crowded and noisy, where no one child is focused upon.²³ Riessman also writes that the underprivileged child seems to have enormous difficulty expressing himself verbally in many situations. There is the recognition that these children do not realize their potential often because of formal language difficiencies.²⁴ Deutsch contends that the lower-class child enters the school situation so poorly prepared to produce what the school demands that initial failures are almost inevitable, and the school experiences become negatively rather than positively reinforced. He goes on to say that, "Children from under-privileged environments tend to come to school with a qualitatively different

²² I. Sanders, The Community: An Introduction to a Social System, (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1958, p.283.

²³ Riessman, op. cit., p.37

²⁴ Riessman, op. cit., p. 74

preparation for the demands of the learning process and the behavioral requirements of the class-room."²⁵ It becomes evident that there are various differences in the kinds of socializing experiences that these children have undergone as contrasted with the middle-class child. The type of stimulation the culturally deprived child receives in his environment is part of his family's general life style. Besides living in overcrowded, sub-standard housing there is little opportunity for individuation. The child's home is often characterized by a scarcity of objects of all types, especially such things as books, toys, puzzles, pencils and scribbling paper. At the same time, this child is restricted to his immediate environment. The world beyond his small neighbourhood is rarely, and often never, seen.²⁶

Hollingshead and Redich in their book Social Class and Mental Illness, comment more or less directly on the general life styles of the various social classes they had established as existing in New Haven, Conn. In reference to the lowest socio-economic level (Class V), they state that, "low educational level combined with recent ethnic origin is correlated with a paucity of reading in all ages."²⁷ They go on to say that in their study, about

²⁵ Deutsch, op.cit., p.172

²⁶ Deutsch, op.cit. p.176

²⁷ A Hollingshead and F. Redich, Social Class and Mental Illness: A Community Study, (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1958) p.127.

eleven per cent of the adults at the lowest socio-economic level did not subscribe to any newspaper or magazine, nor did they use the public library. The authors state, that of this group, "Seventy-six per cent of the families are completely isolated from formal community associations-unions, social clubs, lodges, political associations and so on."²⁸ It is evident of this lowest socio-economic group that only a small minority of the families belonged to and participated in organized community institutions. Sanders writes that, "Within any community it soon becomes apparent that people with different occupational orientations and different income levels develop different styles of life, which includes variations in recreational pursuits".²⁹ Buell also states:

"Some members of the community furnish their own recreational satisfactions; the greater their financial resources the wider the range of possibilities. Their homes will have more space and equipment useful both to old and young for leisure activities ... Those in the lowest brackets (who are often on public assistance rolls) will have little or no money with which to buy recreational extras."³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p.128

²⁹ Sanders, op.cit., p.338

³⁰ B. Buell and Associates, Community Planning for Human Services, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957) p.363.

This would mean, of course, that what is lacking in recreational resources in the home of the culturally deprived child will also be lacking in sources of stimulation. It would also follow that the culturally deprived child, coming from a family with meagre economic resources, would also lack the opportunities for stimulation in the recreational and cultural world of the outside community. The above mentioned researchers have found that families of lower socio-economic status generally have a low level of involvement in the community. The consequences of this for the child of such an under-privileged family are many. However, in relation to the school and educational performance within it, the consequences of the lack of opportunity for stimulation in the outside community environment are, for the under-privileged child, unfortunate. As Deutsch states, "A child from any circumstances who has been deprived of a substantial portion of the variety of stimulation which he is maturationally capable of responding to is likely to be deficient in the equipment required for learning."³¹

³¹ Deutsch, op.cit., p.177

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In the process of attempting to determine the relationship between school performance and attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home the following general method was employed. After the main focus and scope of the study had been decided upon and a review of the available background material had been made, discussion of the areas that were considered significant were isolated. Here the major questions inherent in the study lead to the formulation of the major hypotheses and four sub-hypotheses. Based on the focus of the hypotheses, a schedule was drawn up and later administered to the parents of the selected sample of elementary school children by means of face-to-face interviews. The information, in regard to the school children's attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home, thus gained, was compared to the individual child's school performance. From this, further observations, analyses and conclusions were made in respect to what relationship existed between the school performance of children and their attendance at selected culturally stimulating activities outside of the home.

The group of eighty-eight elementary school children selected

for the study attend four schools in the environmentally deprived areas of Winnipeg, referred to previously in chapter one. They are in grades one to six. The Research Committee at the School of Social Work acquired through the cooperation of the Director of Research of the Winnipeg School District, the names and addresses of these children and were provided with a performance rating for each child. i.e. successful or unsuccessful, as identified by the teachers in the schools.

The pre-test sample for the study was originally to have been a group of twenty-four children attending a pre-kindergarten class in a fifth school within the designated environmentally deprived areas of Winnipeg. Since, however, only fourteen of the original sample of eighty-eight were in grades four to six, it was decided that the same children would comprise part of the eventual pre-test group. As a result the size of the sample group was reduced to seventy-four. Of these seventy-four children in grades one to three, thirty-five were successful and thirty-nine were unsuccessful in their school performance. To enlarge the number of children in the pre-test group fourteen names of families with children were chosen from Henderson's Directory. These families were chosen by the Research Committee of the School of Social Work on the basis of living next-door to children already comprising the pre-test group. However, of this increased potential pre-test sample of twenty-eight,

eight of the families did not wish to participate, seven of the families chosen from Henderson's Directory had no school age children, and two families had since moved. These eliminations resulted in a final pre-test sample group of eleven. The initial pre-testing was done in November, 1965. Of the sample of seventy-four, not all of the parents of these school children were available for the interview employing the revised schedule. Four were eliminated from the sample as one child was actually enrolled in kindergarten, three were not living with their own parents at the time, and three families were not located. Twenty families did not wish to participate in the study. Therefore, in the final testing of the schedule the sample group numbered forty-seven. Of these forty-seven children, twenty were successful and twenty-seven were designated as being unsuccessful. Interviews were made in early January when the schedule was administered to the parents and the information regarding their children's attendance at selected culturally stimulating activities was obtained. Since this sample was selected, rather than being a random one, the extent to which the results of this study can be utilized to draw generalized conclusions is limited.

In order to gain this required data in regard to attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home a formal schedule had been developed. The major hypothesis and sub-hypotheses

had been formulated and then a schedule was set up that seemed appropriate to our objectives in the study. Questions were related to measure attendance at selected culturally stimulating activities outside of the home, specifically to the areas covered by the four sub-hypotheses. These questions were decided upon after consideration was given to whether attendance could be measured for certain activities, whether they were culturally stimulating and whether these selected activities were available within and outside the immediate community. The schedule was pre-tested and later an analysis of the data received was made. From this analysis minor revisions were made which consisted mainly in the reformulation of some questions so as to ensure greater clarity and precision. In relation to the questions pertaining to attendance at religious activities, it was felt that they were too oriented toward one religious faith. Several questions were revised so as to be made applicable to the sample group considering age, sex and religious faith. In addition several questions were added to the schedule so as to measure the amount of opportunity and encouragement available to the children in the sample. A copy of the revised schedule as administered is found in Appendix A.

The four sub-hypotheses referred to four different areas of attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home. For each of these areas, groups of two, three and four

questions were made applicable to the sub-hypotheses. For example the first and second questions dealt with attendance at library facilities. The ninth, tenth and eleventh questions dealt with attendance at secular activities outside of the immediate community. Several of the questions were developed to measure both present attendance and attendance before the child entered school. Several questions were designed to elicit responses in regard to attendance at a variety of similar activities as well as in regard to frequency or quality. The focus of this study is limited, in a sense, to attendance at activities that were specifically outlined in the schedule, although provision was made for the interviewers own responses. For most of the questions, responses of often, sometimes, rarely, and never were substituted for yes or no answers. For the purpose of the study the group considered the first two, often and sometimes, or a "yes" answer to denote a positive answer and the last two, rarely and never, or a "no" answer to denote a negative answer. A range given to either positive or negative answers was employed so as to make it possible to assign relative weights to the responses and thus measure quality of attendance more accurately.

The interviews, for the purpose of administering the schedule, were carried out by all the Masters students participating in the larger four-part study. Each member of the four research groups was assigned a family to approach, and if possible to interview, by

the Research Committee. The interviewers were provided with letters of introduction to take with them to the familys' homes. Since each of the four groups employed a schedule, the four schedules were combined into one composite schedule which was then administered in one face-to-face interview. A face sheet for the purpose of acquiring socio-economic data for each family also comprised part of the total schedule. To ensure reasonable uniformity in the actual administering of the schedule all the Masters students met and two representatives from each group reviewed the questions of their particular section. Here the rationale for the various questions was explained, meanings interpreted, and questions clarified. The questions were worded in such a manner as to call for specific answers, although several open end questions were retained. For our group the open-end questions were designed primarily to measure the amount of opportunity afforded to the school children in the sample group.

The composite schedule was organized to proceed from questions on the child's experiences to the parent's experiences in order to remain as non-threatening as possible. The interviewers were not aware of the school performance of the child at the time of the interview in order to avoid bias. After completion of the interviews letters of thanks were sent to the families which participated.

As with any schedule, one limitation in regard to the schedule

was that a question may limit the parents' responses because of either emotional involvement or distrust and misunderstanding of the purpose of the interview. This latter factor may have special significance in that many of the interviewees were members of various minority ethnic groups, often relatively recent arrivals in this country. In spite of the prior orientation to the various parts of the composite schedule the interviewer may not always have been clear of the intentions of, or rationale for, certain questions. Since many of the interviewees were not well-versed in English, questions may not have been clearly or accurately comprehended.

The plan of analysis centered upon relating school performance to attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home. The major categories were based on successful and unsuccessful school performance and attendance and non-attendance at culturally stimulating activities. The sub-categories were directly related to the four sub-hypotheses and were comprised of religious activities, library facilities, secular activities inside the immediate community, and secular activities outside the immediate community. The relating of school performance to attendance or non-attendance of culturally stimulating activities were effected separately for each of the four sub-categories. For each of these four sub-categories it was determined whether each child was an attender or a non-attender. As either groups of two, three or four questions were related to each sub-

hypotheses and thus a particular sub-category, responses to each questions were considered in determining whether a child was an attender or a non-attender. For each question often, sometimes, or a "yes" answer was taken to denote attendance. Rarely, never or a "no" answer was taken to denote non-attendance. Relative numerical weights were assigned to the different frequencies of attendance denoted in the range of possible responses. These numerical weights representing differences in quality of attendance were tabulated for each child. In relation to the first sub-category, i.e., religious activities, a child was an attender if he was classed as such in both related questions. For sub-category three, a child was an attender if he was classed as an attender in two of the three related questions. For the fourth sub-category, a child was an attender if he was classed as such in three of the four related questions.

Contrasts were shown both in the form of percentages and by means of proportions, taking into consideration the weights assigned to the different frequencies of attendance.

The results were compiled in tabular form. The objective here was to test the four sub-hypotheses and therefore the analysis followed closely the implications already given in the hypotheses. Consideration was also given to the relative significance of other factors such as income and mobility to the major categories and sub-categories. Analyses of findings and observations follow in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER 1V
ANALYSIS OF DATA

For sub-hypothesis one, attendance was tabulated for each child in relation to the two applicable questions. For schedule question four, regarding church attendance, nine of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. These numbers were weighted so as to make a proportion comparable to the numbers of unsuccessful children. As a result, the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 12.12:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, eighteen were classed as attenders. Thus the proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 18:27. For question five, regarding attendance at religious instruction classes, ten of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. After weighting, the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 13.5:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, seventeen were classed as attenders. Thus the proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 17:27. For this sub-hypothesis the results for both questions were combined i.e., children were classed as attenders for this sub-hypothesis if they were classed as such for either

questions four or five. Thus it was found that eleven of the successful children were classed as attenders. Similarly, twenty-two of the unsuccessful children were classed as attenders. In percentage terms, 55% of the successful children and 81.4% of the unsuccessful were found to have attended religious activities. This is contrary to what had been anticipated in sub-hypothesis one.

For sub-hypothesis two, attendance was tabulated for each child in relation to the two applicable questions. Question two, regarding the use of the public library, was eliminated, however, because of the insignificant number of responses. Only six of the total sample group of forty-seven used the full range of library facilities. It was later found that the mobile library served two of the schools so that it was impossible for the children to use the various library facilities as listed on the schedule. For question one, regarding the bringing home of books from the public library, seventeen of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. After weighting the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 22.95:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, fourteen were classed as attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children to the total number of unsuccessful children was 14:27. In percentage terms, 85% of the successful children and 51.7% of the unsuccessful used library facilities. This affirms what had been anticipated in sub-hypothesis two.

For sub-hypothesis three, attendance was tabulated for each child in relation to the two applicable schedule questions. Question ten, regarding attendance at movies, was eliminated, however, after it was found that the wording was such that the responses could not be related to the sub-hypothesis. Consequently, only the responses to question eight, regarding attendance at Neighbourhood Service Centres, Boys' Club, and local playgrounds were utilized. For this question it was found that eleven of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. After weighting, the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 14.85:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, twenty-three were classed as attenders. The proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 23:27. In percentage terms, 55% of the successful children and 85.1% of the unsuccessful attended secular activities inside of the immediate community. This is contrary to what had been anticipated in sub-hypothesis three.

For sub-hypothesis four, attendance was tabulated for each child in relation to the four applicable questions. As stated in regard to sub-hypothesis three, question ten was eliminated after it was found that the wording was such that the responses could not be related to the sub-hypothesis. Question twelve, regarding music lessons, was eliminated because of the insignificant number of

responses. Only three of the total sample group of forty-seven children took music lessons. For question nine, regarding attendance at such activities as the ballet, children's theatre, zoo and Music Festival, nineteen of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. After weighting the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 25.65:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, twenty-two were classed as attenders. The proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 22:27. For question eleven, regarding trips to the lake or farm, other vacation trips and attendance at Day or Resident Camp, seventeen of the twenty successful children were classed as attenders. After weighting, the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 22.95:27. Of the twenty-seven unsuccessful children, twenty-three were classed as attenders. The proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 23:27. As for sub-hypothesis one, the results for both questions were combined. In this case, a child was classed as an attender only if he was classed as such in both questions nine and eleven. It was found, after weighting, that the proportion of successful attenders to the total number of successful children was 21.6:27. The proportion of unsuccessful attenders to the total number of unsuccessful children was 19:27. In percentage terms, 80% of the successful children and

70.3% of the unsuccessful attended secular activities outside of the immediate community. This affirms what had been anticipated in sub-hypothesis four.

Thus, sub-hypotheses one and three were refuted, while sub-hypotheses two and four were substantiated. In relation to the main-hypotheses, the results are inconclusive.

An analysis of other data was made as well. It was found that for the families of the successful children the mean income was \$4336. The median income was \$4200. For the families of the unsuccessful children the mean income was \$3285. The median income was \$2800.

Cross-classification was made between the variables of school performance, attendance at culturally stimulating activities, and income. The numbers of successful and unsuccessful children who were classed as attenders for each of the four sub-hypotheses were tabulated. It was found that seven, or 35% of the successful children were attenders in each of the four sub-hypotheses. Similarly, eight, or 29.6% of the unsuccessful children were attenders in each of the four sub-hypotheses. Of the successful group the average income per person in these families was \$951. For the unsuccessful group the average income per person in these families was \$757. Calculations were also made specifically in relation to sub-hypothesis four i.e., attendance at secular activities outside of the immediate community. For the successful children who were classed as attenders

the mean family income was \$4610. For the unsuccessful children who were classed as attenders, the mean family income was \$3514. For the successful children who were classed as non-attenders, the mean family income was \$3225. For the unsuccessful children who were classed as non-attenders, the mean family income was \$2712.

Calculations were made on the effects of family mobility upon school performance. It was found that twelve or 60% of the successful children had changed their place of residence within the past five years. Of this group of twelve, four children had moved within the immediate community while eight children had moved into the immediate community from the outside. This is in contrast to the twenty, or 74% of the unsuccessful children who had changed their place of residence within the past five years. Of this group of twenty-eight children had moved within the immediate community while nine children had moved into the immediate community from the outside. For the remaining three children, no precise data was available as to the nature of their mobility. Chapter V of this research study shall deal with a summary and conclusions resulting from the analysis of our collected data.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study was to determine whether school performance of elementary school children was related to attendance of selected culturally stimulating activities outside of the home.

The main hypothesis of the study was that "The successful or unsuccessful school performance of a selected group of elementary school children living in an environmentally deprived area of Winnipeg is related to their attendance at culturally stimulating activities outside of the home." This main hypothesis was not substantiated and the findings were inconclusive. This seems due, in the main, to the limitations under which the study occurred and because of the manner in which the sub-hypotheses had been formulated. This finding will be discussed in relation to each of the four sub-hypotheses.

Sub-hypothesis one stated that "A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend religious activities." It was found that 55% of the successful children and 81.4% of the unsuccessful attended religious activities. This sub-hypothesis was not substantiated and the results were contrary to what had been anticipated. As with each sub-hypothesis, the numerical

limitations of the sample limit the extent to which one can make generalized conclusions from this finding. However, in any case, the qualitative or differences in frequency of attendance between the successful and unsuccessful children would not be very great, due to the narrow range of possible attendance periods possible during a one month period. In this case, a child was classed as an attender if he had attended either church or religious instruction classes at least once a month. Further research may clarify whether there actually is a relationship between school performance and attendance as religious activities.

Sub-hypothesis two stated that "A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful use library facilities." It was found that 85% of the successful children and 51.7% of the unsuccessful used library facilities. This sub-hypothesis was substantiated. The greater use of the public library by the successful children would appear to indicate that they are reading more than their unsuccessful counterparts and are somewhat more oriented toward learning.

The findings of the study also reveal the fact that a very small number of the total sample group used the full range of library facilities, i.e. for doing homework, reading, story telling hour and the movie programs. This finding raises questions about the family's awareness of these services or the opportunities afforded them as

residents of environmentally deprived areas.

Sub-hypothesis three stated that "A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend secular activities inside of the immediate community." "It was found that 55% of the successful children and 85.1% of the unsuccessful attended secular activities inside of the community. This sub-hypothesis was not substantiated and the results were contrary to what had been anticipated. Again the numerical limitations in the sample preclude any general conclusions. It is worthy of note, however, that the emphasis of the questions applicable to this sub-hypothesis referred mainly to informal, unorganized activity. This was in response mainly to what the members of the project group felt was a scarcity of formal, organized activity within this immediate community, especially in view of the age range of the children in the sample. Thus the results, at least in part, might reflect the fact that children living in an environmentally deprived urban area are not participants in formal, organized activities. This was found to be the case in a study of families of comparable residence and socio-economic status elsewhere.¹ At any rate the findings of the research group indicated that there was a probable lack of opportunity for cultural stimulation for this age group of children

¹A. Hellinghead and F. C. Redlick, Social Class and Mental Illness: A Community Study. New York: Wiley and Sons Inc., 1958, p. 128.

within the immediate community.

Sub-hypothesis four stated that "A greater proportion of the successful children than the unsuccessful attend secular activities outside of the immediate community." It was found that 80% of the successful children and 70.3% of the unsuccessful attended secular activities outside of the immediate community. This sub-hypothesis was substantiated. Through the difference in proportion of attendance between the successful and unsuccessful children was not very great, the findings did appear to indicate that the successful children attended a greater number of the various activities subsumed under this sub-hypothesis. Limitations in analysis arose from the manner in which attendance was defined. The nature of the activities precluded measurement of attendance in terms of quality or frequency, but instead had to be on the basis of quantity alone. It is this variety of culturally stimulating experiences which is deemed to be an important factor.² However, strictly quantitative measurement of attendance limits the reliability and validity of the results.

In considering the results of the study it is worthy to note that a slightly higher proportion of the successful children than

²M. Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process." Mental Health of the Poor, F. Reissman et al (eds) New York: The Free Press, 1965. p. 177.

the unsuccessful children were attenders in relation to each of the four sub-hypotheses. Also, at the same time, the reader might remember that there were a greater number and variety of activities subsumed under the two sub-hypotheses that were substantiated. This might suggest that the successful children did actually attend a somewhat greater number and variety of culturally stimulating activities than their unsuccessful counterparts.

The influence of two other variables studied might be commented upon here. It was found that the rate of family mobility for the unsuccessful children was 74% while the rate for the successful children was 60%. One might speculate that the higher rate of mobility for the unsuccessful children suggests that it could be a disruptive factor that influenced their school performance. The higher incomes noted for the families of successful children has been found in similar studies of school performance and socio-economic class.³ This may suggest or indicate concomitant factors of different class or value-orientations between families of successful and unsuccessful children generally. It might also suggest differences in the amounts of opportunity afforded children in these families.

As previously mentioned, the limitations under which this study occurred could be held to account for the diverse results obtained.

³F. Jones, The Social Basis of Education, Canadian Conference on Children, Toronto, 1965, p. 27

These limitations arise from the small numerical size of the sample and from the fact that it had also been a selected one. It is also likely that the criteria for attendance used in this study, and in relation to each of the four sub-hypotheses, could not yield accurate qualitative measurements. This study was limited to the extent that attendance at culturally stimulating activities was considered only for the period of time since the children had attended school. In most cases, this would have been only a short period of time from one month to two years. The influence of culturally stimulating activities upon school performance might well depend on the child's exposure to these activities and experiences at an earlier age. This view is, in fact, reflected in relevant research.⁴

In summary, it is hoped that this study has made contribution to the knowledge regarding the relation between school performance and exposure of the child to culturally stimulating experiences. Further research, refining our mistakes and methods could lead to more conclusive data useful to both the education and social work professions.

⁴Deutsch, op. cit., p. 173.

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Part I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Research Project 1965-66

Schedule No. _____

Interviewer _____

Family Name _____

Performance S U

Address _____

School A B C D

Family Members

Name

Age

Living at Home

Father

Yes _____ No _____

Mother

Children

Marital Status (if one parent family) Divorced _____ Separated _____ Widowed _____

Others in Household:

Relationship _____

Ethnic Origin - - - Father _____ Mother _____
(Language spoken by male ancestor on arrival in Canada)

Length of Residence at present address _____

Length of Residence In Winnipeg _____

(If appropriate) Where else have you lived in Winnipeg during past 5 Years?

Father's Occupation _____

Mother's Occupation _____

Gross Family Income _____

Part D

1. Does your child bring home books from the public library?

Often _____ Sometimes _____ Rarely _____ Never _____

2. Does your child use the public library for:

a) doing homework Yes _____ No _____

b) reading Yes _____ No _____

c) story telling hour Yes _____ No _____

d) the movie program Yes _____ no _____

3. Does your child bring home reading material (including comic books) from anywhere other than the public library? If yes, from where?

a) borrowing _____

b) school library (other than texts) _____

c) other (explain) _____

4. Does your child go to church often? _____

sometimes _____

rarely _____

never _____

5. Does your child attend religious instruction classes? (e.g. Catechism classes, Sunday School, etc.)

often _____

sometimes _____

rarely _____

never _____

6. If the answers to (4) and (5) are other than never, who takes the child to the Church or to his religious instructions?

a. himself _____

b. Parent _____

c. sibling (brother/sister) _____

d. other _____

**often - two or more times monthly **sometimes - once a month

**rarely - less than once a month

Part D cont'd

7. If the answers to (4) and (5) are never, why doesn't the child go?

a. distance is too great _____

b. lack of money for fare _____

c. other _____

8. Does your child attend, or has he/she ever attended, any club in this area?

		<u>Attends</u>				<u>has Attended</u>
Boys:	<u>Specify</u>	<u>Of</u>	<u>So</u>	<u>Ra</u>	<u>Ne*</u>	
	Neighbourhood Service Centres	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Winnipeg Central Boys Club	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Playgrounds (local)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Other	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Girls:						
	Neighbourhood Service Centres	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Playgrounds (local)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Other	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. Which of the following has your child attended:

	<u>before he started school</u>	<u>since he started school</u>
zee (Assinaboine Park)	_____	_____
arena (circus, hockey)	_____	_____
museum	_____	_____
stadium (football, etc.)	_____	_____
children's theatre	_____	_____
ballet	_____	_____
swimming pools	_____	_____
symphony	_____	_____
Kildonan park	_____	_____
Musical Festival	_____	_____

9. cont'd

Other _____

10. Does your child attend movies?

often _____ sometimes _____ rarely _____ never _____

If answer is other than never, to what movie theatre(s) does he/she usually go?

11. What has your child done during vacations:

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1963</u>
Trips to the lake or farm	_____	_____	_____

Vacation trips (other than to lake or farm)

Day Camp

Resident Camp

Other (specify)

12. Does your child take music lessons?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes,

a. what instrument? _____

b. where are lessons taken? _____

13. What other activities does your child do outside of the home?

a. after school _____

b. after supper _____

c. Saturday and Sunday _____

14. Do you own a family car in good operating condition? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, do you use the car to take the children to any of the above activities?

Yes _____ No _____