

# PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL NURTURANCE, PUNITIVENESS AND POWER BY SELECTED FILIPINO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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*Ninety-six boys and girls from the lower and middle classes were administered picture cards which attempted to elicit perceptions of parental nurturance, punitiveness, and power. Results confirmed the hypothesis that children perceive mothers to be more nurturant than fathers. There was no significant difference in their perception of punitiveness of both parents. The mother, instead of the father, was perceived to be more powerful. No significant sex and social class differences in the children's perceptions of the three parent variables were obtained. Results were not consistent with Western findings on mother nurturance and father punitiveness and power.*

Any study on the nature of parent-child interaction should not only ask what the parents do to the child, but also how the child perceives the situation. To begin with, "it is not known whether the children are as their parents describe" (McCandless, 1967). Validity studies have shown that there is a tendency for parents to respond to ego-involving questions in the direction of socially acceptable behavior (Wenar, 1961). Verbal responses to emotionally loaded issues are contaminated by a strong motivation to perceive their behavior in a favorable light (Ausubel, Balthazar, Rosenthal, Blackman, Schpoont, & Welkowitz, 1954). The desire of parents to make a good impression on others is a very strong temptation, but the child's view of the same situation/behavior may be very different from that of the parents. The child's "level of cognitive development, his cognitive style, and his defensive repertory" will produce a discrepancy between his parent's behaviors and his feelings about such behaviors (Goldin, 1969). Children see the behaviors of parents from a subjective point of view and give their own meanings to the actuations of their parents. Ausubel, et. al. (1954) state it thus:

*Although parent behavior is an objective event in the real world, it affects the child's ego development only to the extent and in the form in which he perceives it. Hence, perceived parent behavior is in reality a more direct, relevant, and proximate determinant of personal-*

*ity development than the actual stimulus context to which it refers.*

One would realize that whatever children perceive of their parents' behaviors is not only colored by their interpretations of such behaviors. Such interpretations can also set the emotional tone of the parent-child relationship (Serot & Teevan, 1961), and influence not only the child's perception of himself (Symonds, 1949), but also of other individuals he will meet as he grows older (Cox, 1962; Harris & Tseng, 1957).

## *Mother Nurturance, Father Punitiveness*

Kagan (1956) studied 217 boys and girls enrolled in the first three grades, with ages ranging from six to ten years and two months. Answers to questions about mothers and fathers revealed that both boys and girls perceived fathers as less friendly, more dominant, punitive and threatening than mothers.

In a later study, Kagan & Lemkin (1960) adopted a combination of direct and indirect methods to obtain differential perceptions of parents by nursery and first grade school children. The results suggested that on direct and indirect questioning and the use of the picture method, boys and girls saw the fathers as more fear-arousing, more competent, and more punitive than mothers. All labeled the father as punitive and the mother as nurturant. Boys and girls chose the same-sex parent as the model

they wished to emulate and as the parent they "liked the best." The girls seemed ambivalent in that they perceived the father as both more punitive and more affectionate.

Kagan, Hosken, & Watson (1961) investigated the child's conceptualization of mother, father, and self. A variety of symbolic dimensions presumably linked with sex roles of masculinity and femininity as well as aggressiveness and nurturance were introduced into the study. Ninety-eight boys and girls aged six to eight conceptualized the father, when compared to the mother, as stronger, larger, more dirty, more angular and more dangerous. The children conceptualized themselves as being more similar to the same-sex parent. In the picture completion task, the mother was labeled more nurturant, less punitive and less potent than the father.

Droppleman and Schaefer (1963) investigated differences between mothers and fathers as reported by boys and girls in two studies.

In the first study, an inventory of parent behaviors describing components of parental nurturance and control were administered to 165 12 to 14-year-old boys and girls. Mothers were rated significantly higher than fathers on the scales measuring love, nurturance and affection. Boys tended to report fathers as higher than mothers in Irritability and Nagging, while girls reported mothers as higher. Girls reported fathers as clearly higher on the scales of Rejection, Neglect, and Ignoring, while boys reported fathers as only slightly higher. Mothers were also reported as using covert, indirect methods of control more frequently than fathers by both boys and girls.

In the second study, another parent behavior inventory was administered to 68 boys and girls with ages ranging from 15 to 20 years. The results for both boys and girls were consistent with results found in the earlier study. The only discrepancy occurred in girls reports of extreme autonomy. The mother-father difference was not significant in this sample although the mother tended to be rated higher in contrast to the pre-

vious sample in which father was reported as significantly higher. Both studies indicated that mothers were reported as more loving, affectionate, accepting and less ignoring than fathers.

### *Social Class Differences*

Hoffman (1960) studied the differences between middle-class and working-class fathers and mothers on their use of Unqualified Power Assertion (UPA) on their children. UPA was defined as consisting of techniques which, without any qualification, demand immediate compliance. It was hypothesized that the parent's use of UPA related positively to the child's hostility toward other children, his attempts to assert power over them, and his tendency to resist their influence attempts. These relationships were also hypothesized to exist toward permissive authority. Furthermore, working-class parents were thought to use UPA more than middle-class parents.

The sample consisted of 10 working-class and 12 middle-class families with a child attending nursery school in an urban industrial community. As expected, working-class fathers were found to use more initial UPA (initial techniques used) and reactive UPA (techniques employed when the child did not comply initially) than middle-class fathers. Working- and middle-class mothers differed only in initial UPA. It was suggested that working-class mothers, particularly through the nursery school teachers, were more influenced than their husbands by current child-rearing notions regarding disobedience. As a result, their scores were closer to middle-class scores. The findings also indicated that the frequent use of UPA contributed to the development of "hostility, power needs, and heightened autonomy strivings" which the child displaced toward peers, and, to a lesser extent, toward permissive authority figures.

Rosen (1964) gathered data for his study from 367 middle- and lower-class schoolboys eight through 11 years of age. They were asked to respond to a number of statements descriptive of their parents. Results showed that

middle-class boys tended to evaluate their parents' ability, performance and drive more positively than lower-class boys. Middle-class fathers were more likely to be perceived as successful, ambitious, and smart by the boys. In terms of parental self-assurance and security, lower-class fathers were perceived as significantly more nervous, shy, and worried than middle-class fathers. Lower-class mothers were more often perceived as nervous, shy, and worried than middle-class mothers, although none of the differences were significant. In the perception of parental interest and support, more middle-class boys reported their fathers as interested in their school performance and themselves and more responsive to their requests for attention than lower-class boys. Lower-class mothers were also perceived as less interested and supportive than mothers in the middle-class.

### HYPOTHESES

In order to investigate Filipino children's perceptions of their parents, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. More children perceive their mothers as nurturant.
2. More children perceive their fathers as punitive.
3. More children perceive their fathers as powerful.
4. Boys and girls do not differ in their perception of parental nurturance, punitiveness, and power.
5. Children from the middle- and lower-class do not differ in their perception of their parents on the same variables.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Instrument Development*

*The pilot study.* A pilot study was carried out from February 11 to 29, 1980 to gather variables dealing with parent-child relationships. The 53 children were gathered from a public (lower-class) and a private (middle-class) school in Manila. The former was composed of 12 boys and 15 girls in Grade one; the latter, 12 boys and 14 girls in Grade two.

Fathers of the lower-class group were mostly skilled and semiskilled workers while the middle-class fathers were mostly professionals.

A mother and father doll, each measuring eight inches tall and two-and-a-half inches wide, of soft rubber material, and dressed as a male and a female, were presented to the children. After the child was asked which parent he/she liked to talk about first and had pointed to the doll of his/her choice, the researcher asked,

*"Ano ang ginagawa ng mga tatay (if this was the first choice) sa mga batang lalaking (babaeng) kasing laki mo?" (What do fathers do to boys (girls) just like you?)*

The question was repeated for the other doll parent figure.

Frequency counts of responses mentioned by the greatest number of children in both classes representing the variables Nurturance, Punitiveness, and Power were chosen. These were "binibigyan" (to be given), "tinuturuan" (to be taught), "tinutulungan" (to be helped) for Nurturance, and "inuutusan" (to be ordered), for Power. Responses connoting punishment like "pinapalo" (to be spanked) and "pinapagalitan" (to be scolded), were chosen to be the Punitiveness variable.

*The picture cards.* Illustrations used as the instrument were:

1. A boy(girl) shown eating an ice cream cone. (*Nurturance*)
2. A boy(girl) attempting to reach up to the top of a wardrobe cabinet which has books and other toys in it. (*Nurturance*)
3. A boy(girl) crying. (*Punitiveness*)
4. A boy(girl) holding a ball(doll). (*Power*)
5. A sad-looking boy(girl). (*Punitiveness*)
6. A boy(girl) studying, holding a book with his/her left hand, looking down on a piece of paper on which he/she is writing. (*Nurturance*)
7. A boy(girl) going down the stairs. (*Power*)

Three other illustrations of (a) a family consisting of mother, father, boy and

girl, (b) a mother and (c) a father, were drawn and initially used to establish rapport.

*Rationale for the picture method.* For lack of space, testing in the schools was done on the corridors or in a room where the din of children's activities could be heard. The pictures provided a clear, practical means of involving the child in the task presented and prevented the child's interest from lagging.

*Validity.* To determine whether the picture really elicited the intended variables, the pictures were presented to another group of 68 seven to ten year old boys and girls, enrolled in the first three grades in the same schools used in the study. Except for picture 5, as Table 1 will show, all pictures were correctly described as intended.

TABLE 1

*Responses of 68 Children to Picture 5*

Description	N	%
Nakasimangot (Pouting)	3	4
Nakangisi (Grinning)	1	1.5
Parang napapayak (About to cry)	8	12
Nalungkot (Sad)	56	82
Total	68	99.5

*Pretest.* A pretest was done on another sample of 48 randomly chosen Grades one, two and three boys and girls from the same schools. From this pretest, the administration, scoring and analysis of responses of 96 subjects consisting of 48 children each from the public and private elementary schools mentioned were finalized.

*Procedure.* To establish rapport and to preclude a variety of attitudes from operating on the child prior to the test proper, the researcher, hereafter known as E, asked the child to draw anything for a few minutes. Afterwards, E showed the child the drawing of the family. E said,

*"Ito ang dalawang litrato ng nanay at tatay lamang. Alin ang nanay? Alin ang tatay? Magtatanong ako sa iyo tungkol sa nanay at tatay." (Here are two pictures of just the mother and father. Which one is the*

*mother? Which one is the father? I am going to ask you some questions about the mother and father.)*

Following this, the child was shown a set of seven pictures in which the one illustrating a boy was administered to the boys and another showing a girl administered to the girls. E continued,

*"Meron ditong mga litrato na nagpapakita ng batang lalake (babae) pero ang nanay at tatay ay hindi nakikita. Sabihin mo sa akin kung sino ang hindi nakikita sa bawat litrato, ang nanay o ang tatay." (Here are some pictures which show a boy (girl) but the mother and father are missing. Tell me who is missing from each picture, the mother or the father.)*

1. E: "Merong nagbigay sa batang lalake (babae) ng "ice cream." Sino ang nagbigay, ang nanay o tatay?" (Someone gave the boy (girl) an ice cream cone. Who gave it, the mother or father?)

2. E: "Ang bata ay umaabot sa itaas ng aparador para kumuha ng laruan niya. Hindi niya maabot ang laruan kaya't lalapit sa kanyang magulang para tumulong sa kanya. Sino ang tutulong sa kanya, ang nanay o tatay?" (The child is reaching up towards the top of the wardrobe cabinet in order to get his (her) toy so a parent will help him (her). Who will help him (her) get his (her) toy, the mother or father?)

3. E: "Ang batang lalake (babae) ay umiyak dahil siya ay napalo. Sino ang pumalo sa kanya, ang nanay o tatay?" (The boy (girl) is crying because he (she) was spanked. Who spanked him (her), the mother or father?)

4. E: "Hawak-hawak ng batang lalake (babae) ang kanyang bola (maynika) dahil sa pinaglalaruan niya ito. Siya ay tinawag dahil sa may iutos sa kanyang kukunin. Sino ang nag-uutos sa kanya, ang nanay o tatay?" (The boy (girl) is holding his (her) ball (doll) because he (she) is playing with it. He (she) was called and ordered to get something. Who is ordering him (her), the mother or father?)

5. E: "Ang batang lalake (babae) ay nalungkot dahil siya ay napagalitan. Sino ang nagalit sa kanya, ang nanay o tatay?" (The boy (girl) is sad because he (she) was scolded. Who scolded him (her), the mother or father?)

6. E: "Ang batang lalake (babae) ay nag-aaral ng kanyang leksiyon sa iskwela. Siya ay nasa bahay at kasalukuyang tinuturuan. Sino

ang nagtuturo sa kanya, ang nanay o tatay?" (The boy (girl) is studying his (her) lesson. He (she) is at home and is being taught. Who is teaching him (her), the mother or father?)

7. E: "Ang batang lalake (babae) ay nananaog sa hagdan dahil sa may pupuntahan silang mag-anak. Siya ay pinagmamadali. Sino ang nag-uutos sa kanyang magmadali, ang nanay o tatay? (The boy (girl) is going downstairs because he (she) is going somewhere with the family. He (she) is told to hurry. Who is ordering him (her) to hurry up, the mother or father?)

## RESULTS

### *Father-Mother Nurturance Punitiveness and Power*

The frequency scores obtained for each parent for each category were totalled and analyzed by means of the chi-square to find out which parent was perceived to be nurturant, punitive, and powerful.

Since the instrument yielded three items tapping Nurturance, and two items each for Punitiveness and Power, the total responses obtained from each child were 96 multiplied by 3, or 288 responses for Nurturance; and 96 multiplied by 2 or 192 responses for Punitiveness, and another 192 for Power.

TABLE 2

*Children's Responses to Father-Mother Nur,  
Pun, and Pow*

Parent	Nur	Pun	Pow
Mother	187	97	144
Father	101	95	48
Total	288	192	192

*Nurturance.* Table 2 shows that of the total 288 Nurturance responses, the chil-

dren gave 187 to mothers and 101 to fathers. The statistically significant  $\chi^2$  value shows that mothers were significantly perceived by the children to be more nurturant than fathers, ( $\chi^2=25.68$ ;  $= .05$ ). This finding supports the hypothesis that mothers are more nurturant than fathers.

*Punitiveness.* The same table shows that of the total 192 responses for Punitiveness, 97 were given to mothers and 95 to fathers. Analysis showed that one parent is not significantly different from the other in punitiveness. Thus, the hypothesis that fathers are perceived to be more punitive in comparison to mothers was not supported.

*Power.* Table 2 shows that out of 192 possible responses to Power, the children gave 144 to mother and only 48 to father. Analysis showed a statistically significant  $\chi^2$  value. This means that a significant difference in children's perceptions of parental power exists. The hypothesis of Father power was not supported. On the contrary, it was Mother, rather than Father, who was perceived by the children to be more powerful.

To summarize the responses of all 96 children were analyzed by means of the chi-square. Mother Nurturance was confirmed by results. Father Punitiveness was not confirmed as no significant difference between mothers and fathers was obtained. Likewise, Father Power was not confirmed. The opposite finding of Mother Power was obtained.

### *Sex Differences*

To discover sex differences in the children's perceptions of parental Nurturance, Punitiveness, and Power, frequency scores obtained for each parent were totalled and analyzed by means of the Chi-square. For Nurturance, the total responses obtained from the boys were 48 multiplied by 3 items, or 144. An equal number of 144 responses were obtained from the girls. For the two items each for Punitiveness and Power, a total of 48 multiplied by 2 or 96 responses were obtained from the boys and an equal number of 96 from the girls.

TABLE 3

*X<sup>2</sup> Values: Comparing Boy's and Girl's Responses to Nur, Pun, and Pow for Each Parent*

Respondent's Sex	Nur			Pun			Pow		
	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot
Boys	91	53	144	47	49	96	71	25	96
Girls	96	48	144	50	46	96	73	23	96
X <sup>2</sup>	.38			.19			.11		

*Nurturance.* Table 3 shows that the boys gave 91 responses of Mother Nurture as against 96 responses of the girls. To Father, boys gave 53 responses as against the girl's 48. The value obtained (.38) shows that the children did not differ in their perception of Nurture of their parents. The hypothesis of no significant difference between boys and girls in their perception of parents as nurturant was supported.

*Punitiveness.* Table 3 shows that of the 96 responses for Punitiveness, the boys gave 47 to the mother and 49 to the father. The girls gave 50 to the mother and 46 to the father. The girls gave more responses to the mother and less to the father in comparison to the boys but analysis of the difference between sexes revealed a nonsignificant value of .19. The hypothesis of no significant difference between boys and girls in their perception of mother and father punitiveness was also supported.

*Power.* Of the 96 responses to the Power items, the boys gave 71 to the mother and 25 to the father. Girls gave 73 responses to mother 23 to father. Both sexes gave more responses to

mothers than to fathers. The  $x^2$  value of .11 was obtained. The hypothesis of no significant difference between boys and girls in their perception of power of both parents was supported.

The present study thus found no significant differences between boys and girls in their perceptions of parental Nurture, Punitiveness, and Power.

#### *Social Class Differences*

In analyzing social class differences in the children's perceptions of Nurture, Punitiveness and Power, frequency scores were obtained for each parent and analyzed through the Chi-square. Both groups were evenly divided into 24 boys and 24 girls. For the three items tapping Nurture, the total responses obtained from the 48 middle-class children were 48 multiplied by 3, or 144. An equal number of 144 responses were obtained from the lower-class children. For the two items tapping Punitiveness and Power, a total of 48 multiplied by 2 or 96 responses were obtained from the boys and an equal number of 96 from the girls.

TABLE 4

*X<sup>2</sup> Values: Comparing Middle-Class and Lower-Class Children's Responses to Nur, Pun, and Pow for Each Parent*

	Nur			Pun			Pow		
	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot	Mo	Fa	Tot
Middle-Class	99	45	144	43	53	96	74	22	96
Lower-Class	88	56	144	54	42	96	70	26	96
X <sup>2</sup>	1.48			2.52			.46		

*Nurturance.* Table 4 shows that of the 144 responses for each social class group, ninety-nine responses of the Middle-Class group were given to Mother and 45 responses to Father. The Lower-Class group gave 88 mother responses and 56 father responses. Both groups gave more responses to Mother than to Father. However, the  $x^2$  value obtained of 1.84 is nonsignificant. The hypothesis of no significant difference between Middle-Class and Lower-Class children is their perception of nurturance of both mother and father was supported.

*Punitiveness.* Table 4 shows that the Middle-Class children gave 43 Mother responses and 53 Father responses. On the other hand, the Lower-Class children gave 54 Mother and 42 Father responses. Although the former group of children gave more Father responses and the latter group more Mother responses of Punitiveness, the  $x^2$  value of 2.52 obtained did not reach statistical significance. The hypothesis of no significant difference between Middle-Class and Lower-Class children in their perception of parental Punitiveness was supported.

*Power.* Table 4 shows that for both social class groups, the mother got the greater share of responses. Seventy four responses of Mother were given by the Middle-Class group and 70 by the Lower-Class group. Responses to Father were 22 for the Middle-Class group and 26 for the Lower-Class group. Although the direction of the difference between parents was similar for both groups, the  $x^2$  value of .46 obtained is not significant. The hypothesis of no significant difference between the two social class groups of children in their perception of power of both parents was supported.

## DISCUSSION

### *Father-Mother Nurturance, Punitiveness, and Power*

*Nurturance.* The hypothesis that children perceive mothers to be more nurturant than fathers was confirmed. Several views are proposed to explain the phenomenon. First of all, most children remain dependent and need some pa-

rental care at least until they reach adolescence (Hurlock, 1972). Such care is expected from mothers because in them are embedded "deep psychological roots of motherliness" (Josselyn, 1956). Biologically speaking, the human female is best equipped to respond to the needs of a baby because she has been primed, biologically, hormonally, and psychologically during pregnancy (Rossi, 1977). Even where the relationship between husband and wife prior to children was egalitarian, pregnancy and the birth of a first child would involve a shift toward the traditional divisions of family roles (Hetherington & Parke, 1979), wherein the mother cares for the child. So expected is it for her to bring up her children with utmost care and attention that it is viewed as unnatural for her not to do so (Baldwin, 1955).

In Filipino homes, it is expected that mothers take charge of raising children. Her nurturing role starts soon after the baby's birth. Either she breastfeeds the baby or sees to it that the baby is nursed with doctor-recommended formula. The mother later gradually introduces a variety of other foods until the time when the child can eat almost any food that the adult can eat. Mother is also charged with the responsibility for seeing to it that the child remains healthy and well. She takes the baby periodically to the doctor, for immunization shots. When the baby is sick or hospitalized, Mother has to stay with the baby, while Father almost always needs to go to work. Outings are the mother's special responsibility as well, since by the time the baby is able to walk by himself, Mother has learned to anticipate almost any action the child is capable of doing. She must be especially watchful lest the baby gets hurt or injured.

A child who is ready for school is again the mother's important concern. She is so attuned to the child that she remembers almost everything about the child. Compared to the father, dates and places and other facts pertaining to the child can be easily recalled by her. Helping her child with school assignments seems natural and taken for granted.

Family occasions are easily remem-

bered by Mother. When she buys presents, she has an almost uncanny knack for choosing exactly those which her child needs or will enjoy.

It must be remembered that not only mothers who do all these are fulltime homemakers; many mothers who do all these things for their children maintain fulltime jobs outside the home too.

The father's responsibility for the child is discharged in cooperation with the mother. He may remind the mother or remind the mother to remind the household help to attend to the child's increasing needs. He worries when the baby gets sick, perhaps as much as does the mother. He expects, though, for Mother to make the decision as to whether the child is hospitalized or not. He accompanies Mother and child on occasional outings but expects Mother to know exactly what the child needs and to attend to it right away. He also expects her to see to it that the child remains safe and unharmed. He may bring the child to school but prefers the mother to attend to the child's school needs. He may buy presents for the child but would need to be coached by Mother on the appropriate toys for the child. In short, Father complements, rather than supplements mother's child-rearing efforts.

*Punitiveness.* The hypothesis that children perceive fathers to be more punitive than mothers was not supported. This is contrary to Western findings (Kagan, 1956; Kagan & Lemkin, 1960; Kagan, Hosken, & Watson, 1961; and Dippleman & Schaefer, 1963) wherein the father was reported as more punitive than the mother.

The finding implies that mothers and fathers equally served as agents of punishment toward their children. Filipino mothers do discipline their children. In her constant interaction with the child, circumstances are such that any misbehavior can be immediately dealt with by her.

The Filipino father also administers punishment for misbehavior. When the child gets into trouble with the mother, he is initially a passive observer of mother and child. It is not unusual for

Mother to call father in to deal with the headstrong child when she feels a father's intervention is needed.

*Power.* Children in this study perceived the mothers to be more powerful than fathers. This finding is definitely contrary to that of most Western researches (Kagan, 1956; Kagan et al, 1960; Kagan et al., 1961). Western findings of father power were so consistent that in one of the very few studies where the mother was found to be more powerful than the father, Emmerich (1959) wondered whether the results represented a realistic appraisal and not a "systematic distortion" of the family structure as experienced by the girl subjects.

In a study of familial antecedents of responsibility and leadership in adolescents, Bronfenbrenner (1961) found that 15- and 16-year old sons and daughters reported mothers as the primary source not only of nurturance, affection and protectiveness but also of general discipline, material rewards and the making of decisions affecting the adolescent.

The Bronson, Katten, & Livson (1959) study of 100 families also showed that mothers, more often than fathers, were perceived by children as exercising strong authority in the home.

Mother power can be explained by the "continuity-discontinuity" hypothesis of Dubin & Dubin (1965). Inasmuch as the mother is in a more continuous interaction with the young child, she can be authoritative in directing the child's activities without necessarily being punitive.

In the Filipino mother's experience with her growing child, it is not only that mothers manage the household. In the course of growing up, the child sees the mother as dispensing food, presents, and toys. She buys her child's clothes and doles out money even to fathers who sometimes entrust the family's finances to her. She is seen by the child as preparing the meals and attending to the other children. She exerts control in some of their actions and lays down the rules of the house. When children disobey, she punishes them. The child sees

the father in the periphery of the home environment. He may be seen as the co-operating partner and not until he observes something to be amiss does he speak out his mind. As long as the household is running smoothly, he is content with what is happening around the house.

### *Sex Differences*

*Nurturance, punitiveness, and power.* The nonsignificant differences between boys and girls in perception of parental nurturance, punitiveness, and power contrast with the findings of Kagan (1956), Kagan & Lemkin (1960), and Kagan, Hosken, & Watson (1961), who have all shown mother nurturance and father punitiveness and power in their studies. For nurturance, results are similar with those of Bronson, Katten & Livson (1959) in which both sons and daughters did not receive differential treatment from either mother and father. Hess & Torney (1962) reported a developmental age-related decline in the perceived power of the parents. In their study of eight to 13-year-old children, they found that with an increase in age, the shift of perceived power was from father powerful to an equal division of power. The shift was explained as a "progress from social relationships characterized by constraint to relationships characterized by cooperation." As Schneider & Smith (1973) put it, authority is not a question of who has the right to invoke it, but rather who has the expertise or the technical know-how about certain aspects of childrearing. Both parents, therefore, were perceived as present, full participants, and actively interacting with their children as they grow up.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to investigate Filipino, primary school children's perceptions of parents. It sought to determine how children perceived their parents on nurturance, punitiveness, and power. The study also investigated whether differences in perceptions between middle and lower class boys and girls

existed on the same variables.

The hypotheses tested were that mothers would obtain higher scores than fathers on nurturance and that fathers would obtain higher scores on punitiveness and power. Additional hypotheses tested were that no significant difference would be found between middle- and lower-class boys and girls in their perceptions of parental nurturance, punitiveness and power.

The sample of children consisted of 96 boys and girls, half of whom came from a private coeducational elementary school (the middle-class group), and the other half from a public elementary school (the lower-class group).

Seven illustrations of a boy (girl) in various home situations eliciting a mother or father response were presented to each child.

The statistical technique employed to analyze the children's responses was the Chi-square.

Results confirmed the hypothesis that children perceive mothers to be nurturant. However, the children did not perceive a significant difference in their perception of parental punitiveness. The mother, instead of the father, was also perceived to be more powerful.

No significant sex and social class differences in the children's perceptions of the three parent variables were obtained. There was no difference between middle- and lower-class boys and girls in their perceptions of parental nurturance, exercise of punishment, and wielding of power. Speculations as well as data obtained from research literature were advanced for gathered data. Results were not consistent with Western findings.

One important implication of the study pertains to the role of parents in the development of their children. Young children tend to identify with their parents. Identification helps the child to recognize his male or female sex role (Mussen, Conger, & Kagan, 1969). More importantly, he learns the roles that adults have in life. Thus, he learns his own future role as a responsible adult (Johnson et. al., 1965). The degree to which the child identifies with a parent is a function of the parent's

nurturance and affection, competence, and power (Mussen, Conger, & Kagan, 1974).

### *Social Class Differences*

*Nurturance, punitiveness, and power.* Obtained results suggest that socioeconomic status does not affect the children's perceptions of these variables. According to Kohn (1960), physical punishment is resorted to by middle-class parents as frequently as by lower-class parents, but for different reasons. Lower-class parents seek to inculcate qualities that insure respectability, such as honesty, neatness, and obedience while middle-class parents value the development of internalized standards of conduct of inner control. Mendez & Jocano (1975), in their study of urban and rural Filipino families, point out that the families' pattern of authority is neither "patriarchal nor matriarchal but egalitarian." Fathers may be authoritarian in order to impose discipline; but mothers are also authoritarian in matters concerned with child management. Egalitarianism was seen in terms of a husband and wife being co-equal for the family's concern and welfare. Schneider & Smith's (1973) regard for authority as not vested in a particular parent but as the prerogative of a parent under varying conditions of child rearing is especially helpful to consider at this point.

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