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AUTHOR Kowalski, Gregory S.; Coughenour, C. Milton
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ABSTRACT

Part of a larger study of father-son farms, this study explored the decision-making patterns of farm families which have self-designated father-son, joint farming arrangements. Emphasis was upon the determination of: (1) personal and situational factors which are explanative of the father's or son's perception of decision-making involvement and (2) the multiple effects of these factors on decision-making. Lists of father-son farm operations were obtained from county extension agents. In order to be included on the list, the farm had to possess the following characteristics: (1) operated jointly (to some degree) by a father and son, and (2) the son had to be 17 years of age or older and working full-time on the farm or intend to enter farming or take over the farm. Data were obtained from 145 father-son farms located in 13 selected counties in Kentucky. Two scales measuring the individual's perception of task involvement and general decision-making were developed, with 12 items comprising each scale. Among the findings were: (1) older fathers perceived that their sons participate more in decisions and farm tasks than did younger fathers; (2) the son's perception of his own decision-making involvement varied directly with age; and (3) greater commitment to the joing operation was reflected in perception of a larger personal role in decision-making. (Author/NQ)

FATHER-SON DECISION-MAKING IN JOINT FARMING ARRANGEMENTS*

Gregory S. Kowalski

and

C. Milton Coughenour
University of Kentucky

ABSTRACT

The basis of many changes in agriculture is generally poorly understood. Of the attributes that influence farm-related decisions and possibly subsequent changes, little is known about the farmer's preferences and familial influences. This is particularly the case concerning the effect exerted by a farmer's son(s) or other family members in the farm decision-making process.

The primary focus of the research presented in this paper is the study of the influence of both the father and son in farm decisions within the jointly operated farm. The present paper seeks to explore the relationships among selected personal and situational factors of both the farmer-father and farmer-son and their respective perceptions of decision-making involvement in the joint agriculture operation.

*The investigation reported in this paper is in conjunction with a project of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station and is presented with the approval of the director.

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Father-Son Decision-Making in
Joint Farming Arrangements

Introduction

The study of farm management decisions by rural sociologists and others has generally been conducted with the assumption that the farm operator, usually a male head of a family, had primary, if not exclusive control not only over the daily and seasonal farming operations but also over the allocation of resources and setting of goals for enterprises and the farm in general. Consequently, other family members were assumed to play primarily "supportive" roles in major farm decisions (Benvenuti, 1961; Wilkening, Tully, and Presser, 1962). In recent years rural sociologists have demonstrated concern with decision-making in the family as regards the adoption of farm practices (Sawer, 1973; Wilkening and Bharadwaj, 1967, 1968). In these studies and in others the principal emphasis has been on husband and wife roles in relation to the farm operation. Little attention has been directed toward the influence of the son, or of other family members in the farm decisions.

Problem

Failure to study the influence of a son in the farm decisions is a serious omission, especially, in that as Smith and Zopf (1970:479) point out, "...more involved than ever before...are the close partnership of the father and son in the ownership of that unit from the former to the latter". The primary purpose of this paper, which is part of a larger study of father-son farms, is the exploration of decision-making patterns of farm families which have self-designated father-son, joint farming arrangements. Emphasis is upon the determination of personal and situational factors which are explanative of the individual's, i.e., the father's or the son's, perception of decision-making involvement and upon determining the multiple effects of these factors on decision-making.

Theoretical Perspective

The basic assumption in studying decision-making patterns, accepted by the authors, was that decision-making in farm enterprise activities is a process of selection among alternatives and is a central function of farm management behavior (McQuire, 1974). The present study is concerned with the perceived decision-making contributions of fathers and sons in joint farming arrangements. Perceived decision-making participation refers to the cognitive rather than the actual or behavioral aspect of decision-making. Hence, it is the image of the individual's, i.e., the father's or son's, locus of decision-making that is dealt with here. Identification and selection of decision-task items for inclusion in the questionnaire was based on Parsons' (1956:75-80) delineation of "mechanisms of implementation" of decision-making. As Parsons indicates, the mechanisms of implementation encompass the realms of 1) policy or long-range decisions, 2) allocative or distributive decisions, and 3) coordination or task decisions.

In an effort to more fully understand the decisional process, as it occurs in a joint operation, it was felt that perception of task or job responsibility should be treated separately from that of perception of actual or higher level decision-making. This is equivalent to separating from Parsons' lowest level of decision-making, i.e., coordination decisions, that portion directed toward actual task assignment. Hence, decision-making and task participation were treated separately based on the assumption that influence in decision-making is in part a function of participation in tasks (Strodtbeck, 1954; Wilkening and Bharadwaj, 1967, 1968; Sawer, 1973) and vice versa.

Hypotheses

Directional hypotheses, derived from a conceptual model of father-son decision-roles in a relatively undifferentiated

two-man system comprised of selected personal and situational characteristics, were formulated. Selection of variables, i.e., personal and situational factors, thought to be explanative of the individual's perception of decision-making was based on a review of the relevant literature (Lionberger, 1964; Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971; Sawer, 1973; Wilkening and Bharadwaj, 1967, 1968, 1973).

The father's decision-making score[1] was expected to vary inversely with his number of days worked on the farm. The father's perception of decision-making was expected to vary directly with his age, education, the number of years in joint operation, the number of acres operated jointly, the productive man-work-units (PMWU's) required jointly, and the percentage of gross farm sales from the joint operation.

The son's perception of decision-making involvement was expected to vary directly with his age, education, number of days worked on the farm, the number of years in joint operation, the number of acres operated jointly, the productive man-work-units (PMWU's) required jointly, and the percentage of gross farm sales from the joint operation.

In addition to the bivariate relationships presented, the combined effect of the individual's personal factors and situational factors upon perception of decision-making is of importance. Hence, it may be hypothesized that the individual's, i.e., the father's and the son's, perceptions of decision-making (task involvement-TASK and general decision-making-DM) will vary with his personal characteristics and with salient elements of the situation. The general regression model utilized may be represented as follows:

$$Y_1 = b_o + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \ldots + b_kX_k$$

Where: Y_1 = The respective dependent variable (TASK or DM).

b = The amount of change in the respective Y for a given change in X.

X = Value of the respective indicators (Personal and Situational Factors).

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[1] A negative association will occur where the father is perceived to be the principal decision-maker.

Procedure

Sample. Data for the study was obtained from 145 father-son farms located in thirteen selected counties in Kentucky. To obtain a sufficient number of respondents, lists of father-son farm operations were obtained from county extension agents by request of the Director of the Agricultural Extension Program, College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky[2]. In order to be included on the list, the farm had to possess the following characteristics; 1) operated jointly (to some degree) by a father and a son, and 2) the son had to be 17 years of age or older and be working full-time on the farm or intend to enter farming or take over the farm. Also, if there were more than one son engaged in farming with the father, the son designated for inclusion was the oldest of the sons involved. A total of 290 respondents were included in the final analysis--145 fathers and 145 sons.

Scales and Indices. Two scales measuring the individual's perception of task involvement (TASK) and general decision-making (DM) were developed, with twelve items comprising each scale respectively. The item format conformed to the method of summated ratings or Likert form (Edwards, 1957). Using an item format similar to that used by Herbst (1952) and Sawer (1973), each item was followed by several response categories ranging in value from two to six, e.g.:

	Father Only	Father Mostly	Father & Son Equally	Son Mostly	Son Only
Who decides when to repair farm buildings or fences?	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)

[2]It should be noted that no information is kept or obtained by any agencies (government or private) regarding the nature of joint ownership or operation between family members. For this reason we were compelled to rely on a population listing technique.

The items were scored in the same manner for the fathers and sons to facilitate comparisons (Bailey, 1974). Split-half reliabilities were computed on the final scale items and were found to be .97 (corrected) for the general decision-making scale (DM) and .95 (corrected) for the task involvement scale (TASK) (Kowalski and Coughenour, 1975).

The measures of the individual's personal and situational characteristics utilized are as follows:

Personal Characteristics

1. Age
2. Education
3. Days Worked on Farm
4. Number of Years in Joint Operation

Situational Characteristics

5. Acres Operated Jointly
6. Productive-Man-Work-Units (PMWU): Joint[3]
7. % of Gross Sales from Joint Operation

In addition to the variables stated above, which refer to the individual's personal characteristics and the characteristics of the joint farming operation, the number of acres the father and the son operate independently or separate from one another and the PMWU required for the respective independent operations are included in the multiple regression analysis.

Findings

The results demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2 generally support the bivariate hypotheses stated for the father and the son concerning their perceptions of decision-making (TASK and DM). As expected, older fathers perceive that their son's

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[3]Productive-Man-Work-Units (PMWU) indicates the amount of work accomplished on the farm, in terms of the average amount of work done by a farmer in a ten-hour day using average tools and equipment. Each enterprise has a per unit standard for amount of labor needed under average conditions; hence, PMWU becomes a common denominator for adding various farm enterprises together.

participate more in decisions (DM) and farm tasks (TASK) than do younger fathers. Similarly, the son's perception of his own decision-making involvement varies directly with age. Apparently, the inherent or implicit reason for the formation of the joint operation-succession to and/or transmission of the farm --is associated with age of both father and son such that with increasing age the father perceives that his influence in decisions declines relative to that of the son, while the son's perceptions parallel those of his father.

Contrary to expectations, education is not related to perceived decision-making involvement (TASK or DM) for either the father or son. Similar findings were reported with respect to the wife's involvement in farm decisions by Wilkening and Bharadwaj (1968) and Sawer (1973). Education apparently does not facilitate the integration of the son into the direct decisional process (DM) nor does it provide an impetus for his increased involvement in task-oriented decisions (TASK).

The hypothesized relationships between the number of days worked on the farm by the father and the son and their respective perceptions of decision-making (DM and TASK) are supported. In each case, greater commitment to the joint operation is reflected in perception of a larger personal role in decision-making.

The hypotheses concerning the relationship of number of years in operation jointly to perception of decision-making (DM and TASK) are supported for both the fathers and sons. The longer the persistence of the joint farm operation the more favorable the situation becomes for greater involvement of the son in the decision-making process. This finding is consistent with the association of age with perceived decision-making involvement.

The situational variables hypothesized as explanatory factors of decision-making are somewhat varied in their effect. The number of acres in the joint operation is not explanative of perceived decision-making (DM or TASK) for either the father

or son. In terms of the father-son arrangement, the size of the farm in number of acres does not appear to influence the individual's perception of decision-making, with the possible exception of the son's perception of task involvement (TASK).

While the number of productive-man-work-units (PMWU) required by the joint farm does not appear to be explanative of higher level decision-making (DM) for the fathers or sons, it is explanative of task involvement (TASK) for both. Thus, the son is perceived by the father and by himself to be more thoroughly integrated into farm tasks and related decisions as the joint labor input in the farming operation increases. This appears to be in keeping with the findings of Sawer (1973) concerning scale of operation and decision-making.

The third situational variable--% SALES-JOINT--is demonstrated to be an explanatory factor of decision-making except for that concerning perception of task involvement for the son. The measure of percent sales from the joint operation serves to indicate the relative importance of the joint operation and, as expected, perception of decision-making varies directly with it. Hence, as the operation moves closer to a totally joint economic operation, both the father and the son perceive enlargement of the son's role in the decision process.

Of the seven personal and situational, those of age, days worked on the farm, the number of years in joint operation, and percent of sales from the joint operation aid in the explanation of the individual's perception of decision-making (DM).

The variables of age, days worked on the farm, the number of years in joint operation, PMWU, and percent of sales from the joint operation are important factors in explaining the father's and the son's perception of task involvement (TASK).

The individual's perception of decision-making (TASK or DM) is not influenced solely by any of the personal and situational factors stipulated (although each were hypothesized to have an identifiable and measurable independent effect) but

by all as a part of an interdependent system. With this premise, it is the purpose here to determine the extent of the multiple effect of the individual's personal and situational characteristics upon his perception of decision-making (TASK and DM).

Basically, eight different regression models, following the format presented previously are tested. These models are presented in verbal descriptive form as follows:

Model	Independent Variables		Dependent Variables
1.	Father's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Father's perceived task involvement ($TASK_F$)
2.	Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Son's perceived task involvement ($TASK_S$)
3.	Father's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Father's perceived general decision-making (DM_F)
4.	Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Son's perceived general decision-making (DM_S)
5.	Father's and Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Father's perceived task involvement ($TASK_F$)
6.	Father's and Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Son's perceived task involvement ($TASK_S$)
7.	Father's and Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Father's perceived general decision-making (DM_F)
8.	Father's and Son's personal variables and salient situational variables	on	Son's perceived general decision-making (DM_S)

Each of the regression models treated in this paper include the additional independent variables of the individual's independent acreage and the required PMWU for that acreage. Tables 3 and 4 show the results for the father's (Model 1) and the son's (Model 2) independent variables against their respective perceptions of task involvement (TASK). The Model 1 independent variables explain 45 percent of the variation in the father's perception of task involvement ($TASK_F$), while the independent variables in Model 2

explain 22 percent of the variation in the son's perception of task involvement ($TASK_S$).

The independent variables in Model 3 (Table 5) explain 39 percent of the variation in the father's perception of general decision-making (DM_F), while the independent variables in Model 4 (Table 6) explain 26 percent of the variation in the son's perception of general decision-making (DM_S). The results in Tables 3-6 generally support the findings reported for the bivariate hypotheses, indicating that the situational variables referring to scale of operation are relatively unimportant in explaining the variance in perceived decision-making.

When the father's variables and the son's variables are entered into the regression models together (Models 5-8), the influence of the father upon the son's perception of decision-making ($TASK_S$ and DM_S) and the son's influence upon the father's perception of decision-making ($TASK_F$ and DM_F) are indicated. Inclusion of the son's variables with those of the father's increases the amount of explained variance in the father's perception of task involvement ($TASK_F$, Model 5 - Table 7) by 11 percent and increases the amount of explained variance in the father's perception of general decision-making (DM_F, Model 7 - Table 9) by 10 percent.

Inclusion of the father's variables with those of the son's increases the amount of explained variance in the son's perception of task involvement ($TASK_S$, Model 6 - Table 8) by 19 percent and increases the amount of explained variance in the son's perception of general decision-making (DM_S, Model 8 - Table 10) by 20 percent. The increase in the R^2 with the inclusion of both the father's and son's personal variables in the respective regression models, points to the importance of the significant other in the determination of one's perceived decision-making role. This is especially evident with respect to the father's influence upon the son's perceived decision-making role.

Conclusion

Major findings from the study suggest several general conclusions.

1. For the father, the variables of age, days worked on the farm, percent of sales joint, and the number of acres he operates independently are significant explanatory factors in his perception of the son's involvement in both the general decision-making (DM_F) and task involvement ($TASK_F$) aspects of the joint farming operation. The number of years in joint operation is also a significant explanatory factor in the father's perception of the son's task involvement ($TASK_F$).

2. For the son, the variables of the number of years in joint operation, the number of days worked on the farm, percent of sales joint, and the number of acres he operates independently are significant explanatory factors in his perceived decision-making involvement ($TASK_S$ and DM_S). The son's education is also a significant explantory factor in his perceived involvement in general decisions (DM_S).

3. The situational variables referring to the scale of the joint operation are unimportant as explanatory factors in the father's or the son's perception of decision-making (DM or TASK).

4. When the father's and son's variables are included together, an increase in the amount of explain variance (R^2) for their respective perceptions of decision-making occurs. This indicates the importance of the significant other for the determination of the father's or the son's role in decision-making. Apparently, the son's decision-making role is constrained or restricted until the father begins to withdraw from the operation and/or becomes older; whereas, for the father, the son's variables are not very important with the exception of the number of days the son works on the farm.

Few studies have attempted to tackle the understanding of the interrelationships of the family and the economic enterprise, especially with respect to the joint agricultural operation. The main problem is that of how two individuals interact with each other and also act separately in their mutual and independent striving for survival and for goal attainment. The father and son dyad, most certainly, plays an important role in the ownership and control of large agricultural operations as well as smaller ones. The delineation of this importance and its consequences for the individuals involved constitutes a fertile field for further research with implications both for sociological theory and for application.

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Table 1. Zero Order Relationships for Farthers' and Sons' Personal and Situational Variables and Perceived Task Involvement (TASK)

Explanatory Variables	Task Involvement (TASK) Father γ	Significance	Son γ	Significance
Age	.47 (125)*	.001	.29 (135)	.001
Education	-.04 (125)	.33	.04 (135)	.34
Days on Farm	-.38 (123)	.001	.22 (134)	.01
Yrs. Joint	.40 (126)	.001	.33 (135)	.001
Acres: Joint	.10 (125)	.14	.13 (135)	.07
PLWU: Joint	.13 (126)	.07	.16 (135)	.03
% Sales Joint	.23 (126)	.01	.07 (132)	.20

*Number of Cases

Tabel 2. Zero Order Relationships for Fathers' and Sons' Personal and Situational Variables and Perception of General Decision-Making (DM)

Explanatory Variables	General Decision-Making (DM) Father γ	Significance	Son γ	Significance
Age	.46 (109)*	.001	.31 (119)	.001
Educ.	-.11 (109)	.13	.09 (119)	.18
Days on Farm	-.29 (107)	.001	.17 (118)	.04
Yrs. Joint	.25 (110)	.01	.35 (119)	.001
Acres: Joint	-.04 (110)	.32	-.05 (119)	.30
PMU: Joint	.01 (110)	.47	.04 (119)	.34
% Sales Joint	.29 (108)	.001	.15 (117)	.05

*Number of Cases

Table 3. Model 1 - Father's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Father's Perceived Task Involvement ($TASK_F$)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	Simple R	F-Test
Age	.47	.47	17.80**
Days on Farm	.59	-.38	26.70**
% Sales-Joint	.61	.23	7.14**
Acres: Indep.	.65	.06	9.56**
Yrs. Joint	.66	.40	2.23*
PMU: Joint	.67	.13	.59
Acres: Joint	.67	.10	.28
Educ.	.67	-.04	.25
PMU: Indep.	.67	-.15	.18

* $P \leq .05$ $R^2 = .45$

** $P \leq .01$

Table 4. Model 2 - Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regresaed on Son's Perceived Task Involvement ($TASK_S$)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	Simple R	F-Test
Yrs. Joint	.33	.33	7.05**
Days on Farm	.41	.22	9.07**
Education	.43	.04	1.27
Age	.44	.29	1.52
Acres: Indep.	.45	.09	2.53*
% Sales - Joint	.46	.07	2.28*
Acres: Joint	.47	.13	.48
PMU: Indep.	.47	.04	.22
PMU: Joint	.47	.16	.002

* $P \leq .05$ $R^2 = .22$

** $P \leq .01$

Table 5. Model 3 - Father's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Father's Perceived General Decision-Making (H_F)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	Simple R	F-Test
Age	.46	.46	24.13**
Days on Farm	.53	-.29	13.34**
% Sales - Joint	.58	.29	12.96**
Acres: Indep.	.62	.03	5.95**
Educ.	.62	-.11	1.09
Yrs. Joint	.63	.25	.53
Acres: Joint	.63	-.04	.40
PMMU: Indep.	.63	-.13	.05
PMMU: Joint	.63	.01	.002

* $P \leq .05$ $R^2 = .39$

** $P \leq .01$

Table 6. Model 4 - Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Son's Perceived General Decision-Making (DM_S)

Independent Variable	Multiple R	Simple R	F-Test
Yrs. Joint	.35	.35	8.16**
Days on Farm	.39	.17	7.15**
Educ.	.43	.09	3.14**
% Sales - Joint	.44	.15	6.03**
Acres: Indep.	.47	.07	2.41*
Acres: Joint	.49	-.05	1.08
Age	.50	.31	1.60
PMMU: Joint	.50	.04	.44
PMMU: Indep.	.50	.01	.29

* $P \leq .05$ $R^2 = .26$

** $P \leq .01$

Tabel 7. Model 5 - Father's and Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Father's Perceived Task Involvement ($TASK_F$)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	R Square	Simple R	F-Test
Father's Age	.47	.22	.47	7.59**
Father's Days on Farm	.59	.35	-.38	41.83**
Son's Days on Farm	.64	.41	.17	17.50**
% Sales Joint	.66	.43	.23	7.44**
Father's Acres: Indep.	.69	.48	.06	9.96**
Yrs. Joint	.71	.50	.40	3.11**
Son's Educ.	.72	.52	.14	4.46**
Son's Acres: Indep.	.73	.54	.11	5.23**
Son's Age	.74	.55	.38	2.30*
Father's Educ.	.74	.55	-.04	1.76
Son's PMMU: Indep.	.75	.56	.01	.56
Acres: Joint	.75	.56	.10	.25
Father's PMMU: Indep.	.75	.56	-.15	.26
PMMU: Joint	.75	.56	.13	.05

* $P \leq .05$

** $P \leq .01$

Tabel 8. Model 6 - Father's and Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Son's Perceived Task Involvement ($TASK_S$)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	R. Square	Simple R	F-Test
Father's Age	.36	.13	.36	3.25**
Father's Days on Farm	.48	.23	-.34	31.01**
Son's Days on Farm	.56	.32	.22	16.80**
Yrs. Joint	.58	.34	.33	1.47
Son's Acres: Indep.	.59	.35	.09	5.14**
% Sales Joint	.61	.37	.07	1.71
Father's Acres Indep.	.62	.38	.02	2.79**
Father's Educ.	.62	.39	-.09	3.24**
PMMU: Joint	.63	.39	.16	.71
Son's Age	.63	.40	.29	.92
Son's Educ.	.64	.41	.04	.75
Acres: Joint	.64	.41	.13	.57
Father's PMMU: Indep.	.64	.41	-.10	.23
Son's PMMU: Indep.	.64	.41	.04	.02

* $P \leq .05$

** $P \leq .01$

Table 9. Model 7 - Father's and Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Father's Perceived General Decision-Making (DM_F)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	R Square	Simple R	F-Test
Father's Age	.46	.21	.46	12.48**
Father's Days on Farm	.53	.29	-.29	17.71**
% Sales Joint	.58	.34	.29	15.37**
Son's Days on Farm	.63	.39	.18	10.46**
Father's Acres: Indep.	.66	.43	.03	6.59**
Father's Educ.	.67	.44	-.11	2.67**
Son's FMMU: Indep.	.67	.45	.08	1.03
Son's Educ.	.68	.46	.10	1.68
Son's Age	.69	.47	.33	2.63**
FMMU: Joint	.69	.48	.[illegible]	.22
Yrs. Joint	.70	.48	.25	.50
Acres: Joint	.70	.49	-.04	.42
Father's FMMU: Indep.	.70	.49	-.13	.05
Son's Acres: Indep.	.70	.49	.07	.01

* $P \leq .05$

** $P \leq .01$

Table 10. Model 8 - Father's and Son's Personal Variables and Salient Situational Variables Regressed on Son's Perceived General Decision-Making (DM_S)

Independent Variables	Multiple R	R Square	Simple R	F-Test
Father's Age	.42	.17	.42	5.72**
Father's Days on Farm	.55	.30	-.38	31.23**
Son's Days on Farm	.60	.36	.17	15.50**
% Sales Joint	.61	.38	.15	5.48**
Son's Acres: Indep.	.64	.41	.07	4.84**
Yrs. Joint	.65	.42	.35	1.97*
Father's Educ.	.66	.43	-.11	2.99**
Son's Educ.	.67	.45	.09	2.66**
Acres: Joint	.67	.45	-.05	1.46
Son's Age	.68	.46	.31	.64
Father's Acres: Indep.	.68	.46	-.05	.25
Father's PMMU: Indep.	.68	.46	-.11	.09
Son's PMMU: Indep.	.68	.46	.01	.04
PMMU: Joint	.68	.46	.04	.002

* $P \leq .05$

** $P \leq .01$