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ABSTRACT

This study was based on the premise that teachers bring their values to the classroom and students internalize or reject those values as they are modeled. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to give serious thought to how they view the values they teach. The study examined the attitudes of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers in the public schools of an eight-parish area of Southeast Louisiana about the teaching of certain selected values. An attitudinal survey that contained 17 statements concerning value positions appropriate for use in elementary social studies classrooms was mailed to teachers. Of the 17 statements on the survey, 3 were perceived most positively by the teachers. These statements were: "The social studies classroom should provide for the recognition of the importance of cooperation and concern for others"; "Respect for the rights and property of others should be emphasized as social skills"; and "The need to eliminate prejudice should be an integral part of any social studies class." The value statement receiving the highest negative response was: "Controversial issues should be avoided." (DB)

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ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARD THE TEACHING OF SELECTED VALUES

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Introduction

The task of building values has traditionally been assigned to our schools. Although interactions with parents, peers, and the media all contribute to the acquisition of values, the task invariably becomes the responsibility of the public schools (Maxim, 1991). Within the schools, the values issues have been either consciously or unconsciously assigned to the social studies program (Ellis, 1990). Thus the social studies teacher must deal with the values issues, the purpose of which is to help students become functioning members of a democratic society (Kaltsounis, 1978).

To achieve the purpose imposed upon them by the teaching of values, teachers must be able to equip students with the means for clarifying their values in a reflective manner. They also must deal with the question of what values should be taught (Ellis, 1990).

The authors believe that at some point all of us must ask ourselves, "What things are of importance to us?" The fact that one is a teacher is a major statement of one's values. Teaching

is a profession of service and the classroom a potentiality powerful forum for the teaching of values. Teachers bring their values to the classroom and students internalize or reject those values as they are modeled. Therefore, in the opinion of the authors, it is necessary for teachers to give serious thought to how they view the values they teach. With this in mind, this study on the attitudes of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers regarding the teaching of certain selected values was undertaken.

#### According To The Literature

Nyberg (1990) investigated the issue of values instruction in Arizona schools. The study identified a list of common core values and recommendations for the development and implementation of those values. Several consensual premises underlying values instruction were stated in the study. Among them were that: 1) values need to be taught, 2) values instruction needs to be defined, 3) teachers and administrators play a part in transmitting values, 4) values are taught by instruction, practices and personal examples, and 5) a recognized philosophy of values instruction should be adopted and implemented.

A study designed to investigate how traditional values are represented in today's public school curricula and what rationale for teaching values is most defensible was conducted by Schwartz and Wynne (1985). Eight universals common to all cultures were

identified; means for enlisting the support of teachers to help meet the challenge of managing values transmission in schools were stated.

Lockwood (1990) did a study in which he reviewed research done on the effects of values clarification curriculum on school age subjects. His review was guided by one general question: What do researchers claim is the effect of values clarification on school age subjects? From the thirteen studies on values clarification which he reviewed Lockwood (1990) found that values clarification can influence self-esteem and personal adjustment, reading ability, and classroom behavior. In regard to reading ability the studies reviewed showed that values clarification had a positive impact on reading comprehension. Lockwood also found that values clarification produced a reduction in the frequency and acuity of negative behaviors such as apathy, inconsistency, overconforming and over-dissenting.

Nowhere in the literature did the authors find that the teaching of values was unimportant or unnecessary. If there were any unsolved questions they were primarily what values should be taught, how do teachers react to the teaching of certain values, and what programs and strategies should be used to teach the values. Questions such as these prompted the writers to undertake this study. The attitudes of teachers toward the teaching of values

seemed to the writers to be crucial to meeting the challenges imposed by the transmission of values from one generation to the next.

#### Purpose Of The Study:

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers in the public schools of an eight parish area of Southeast Louisiana regarding the teaching of certain selected values.

#### Procedure:

To determine the attitudes of teachers toward the teaching of values, an attitudinal survey composed of seventeen selected statements was mailed in the Spring, 1991, to the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers in the public schools of eight parishes of Southeast Louisiana. The questionnaire used in the survey was developed by the authors; many of the items were modifications of statements used previously on a number of similar surveys. (See copy attached). Six hundred and nine (609) surveys were mailed; four hundred and twenty-nine (429) were returned. The percentage of returned surveys was 70.4%.

The teachers responding included 307 or 71.6% holding the bachelors degree and 122 or 28.4% having a master's degree or additional education. Of the total respondents, 389 or 90.7% were female.

### The Results:

The attitudinal survey submitted to the teachers contained a total of seventeen statements all representing values positions appropriate for use in elementary social studies classrooms. The teachers were asked to circle the response on the scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) which most closely approximated their attitude toward each statement. (A copy of the statements can be found at the end of this paper).

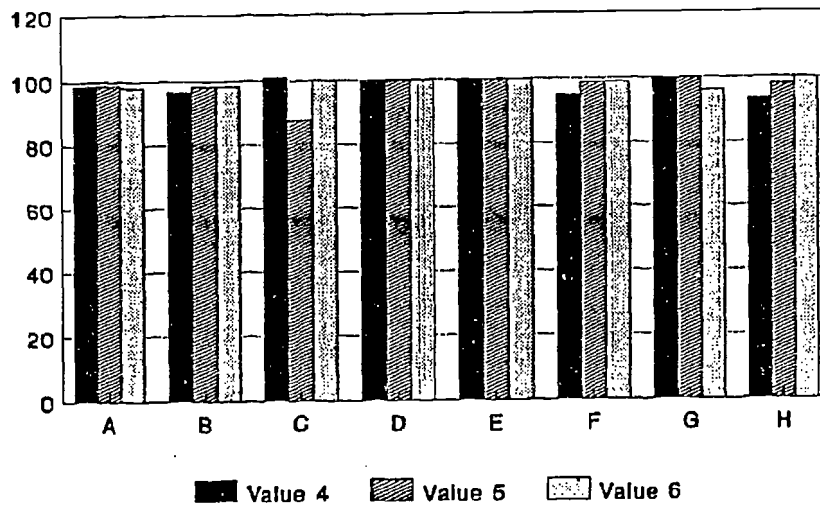
Of the seventeen statements, three (numbers 4,5,6) dealing with the importance of being responsible, cooperative, and concerned for others, respect for the property and rights of others, and the need to eliminate prejudice received the largest number of positive ratings by the teachers.

Table 1 shows the percentage of positive responses for attitudes 4,5, and 6 as perceived by the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers of the eight parishes included in the study. The responses by the teachers to the three values were strikingly similar regardless of the parish in which they taught. Eighty-seven percent (87.5%) of the teachers of Parish C viewed value 5 positively. Other than that there was little difference in the way the teachers viewed the three values.

The questionnaire provided for the acquisition of demographic information about the teachers. It specifically sought information

on sex, educational attainment, age, and grade level taught. The researchers used that information to gain better insight into the perceptions that the teachers from each parish had of the three values.

Table 1  
Percentage, Positive Responses  
Values 4,5,and 6



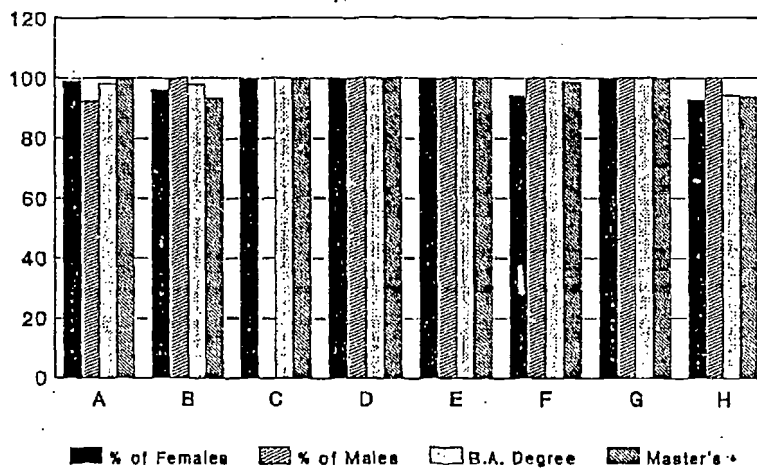
Parishes Identified: A-H

Table 2 presents the percentage of positive responses for value 4 as stated by the male and female teachers of each parish; it also records the perceptions of the teachers of different educational attainment. In each category the percentage was high regardless of the parish in which the teachers taught. Parish C had no male teachers at those grade levels and that accounts for



the absence of a percentage for that parish. Other than that there was little difference in the views of the teachers of the various parishes.

Table 2  
Percentage, Positive Responses  
Value 4: Sex & Education



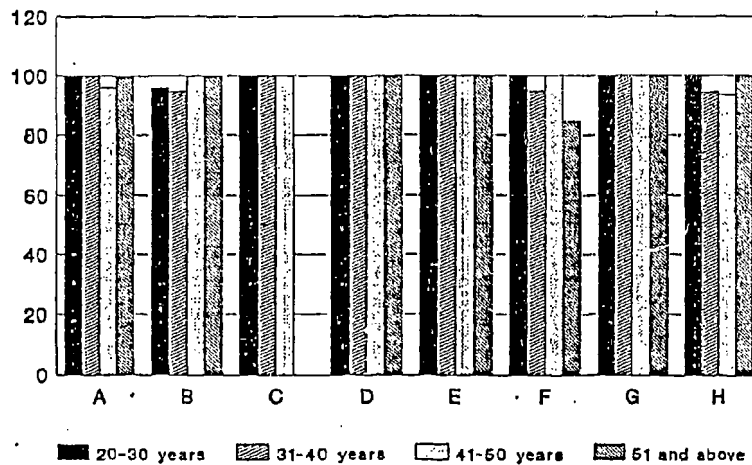
Parishes: A-H

Table 3 shows the percentage of positive responses for value 4 as stated by teachers in various age groups. The data reveal that the teachers held similar views irregardless of age differences. It is interesting to note that the teachers 51 years old and above from Parish F viewed value 4 less positively than did the other teachers of that age group. There were no teachers in the 51 years and above category in Parish C.

Table 4 reveals the perceptions held by the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers from the various parishes who reacted to

value 4. There is little difference among the views of the teachers. The fifth grade teachers of Parish F were somewhat less positive about value 4 than were the fifth grade teachers of the other seven parishes. Parish C had no sixth grade teachers reporting and the sixth grade teachers of Parish H registered a positive percentage of only 81.8 percent.

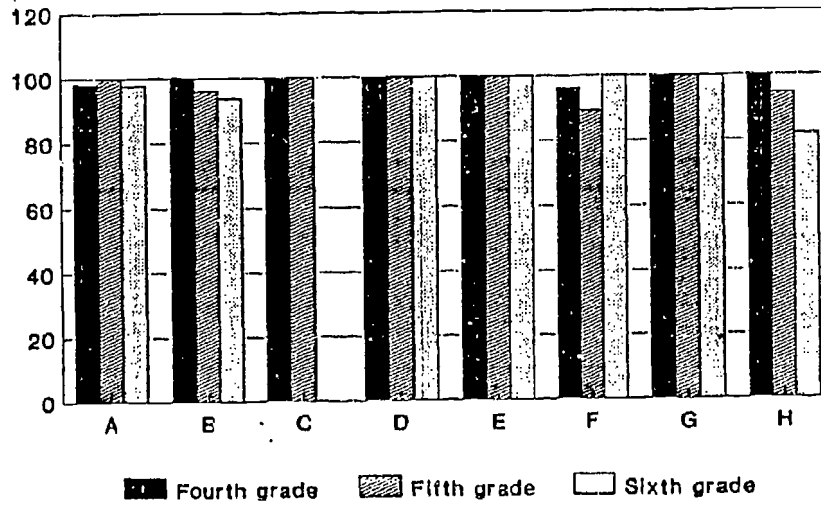
Table 3  
Percentage, Positive Responses  
Value 4: Age



Parishes: A-H

Table 5 centers on value 5 and presents the percentage of positive responses as indicated by the male and female teachers; it also shows the perceptions held by teachers of different educational attainment. Parish C was the only parish that differed from the others in any noticeable manner. A little over eighty-

Table 4  
 Percentage, Positive Responses  
 Value 4: Grade Level

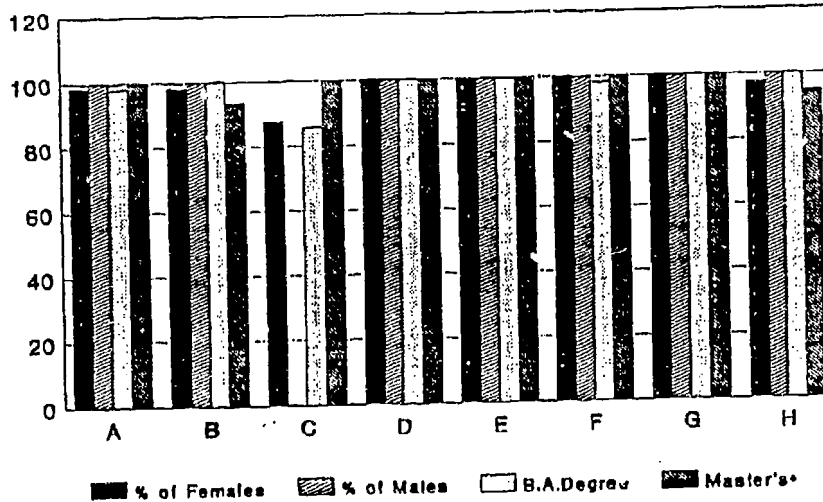


Parishes: A-H

seven percent (87.5%) of the female teachers in that parish reacted positively to value 5; no male teachers from that parish responded and approximately eighty-six percent (85.7%) of the teachers holding a B.A. degree responded positively to the value. The data reveal that the responses of teachers from the other seven parishes are very similar to one another; little difference is shown in any of the categories.

Table 6 shows the percentage of positive responses recorded for value 5 as stated by teachers from various age groups. In Parishes A, B, D, E, F, G, and H there was little difference among

Table 5  
Percentage, Positive Responses  
Value 5: Sex and Education

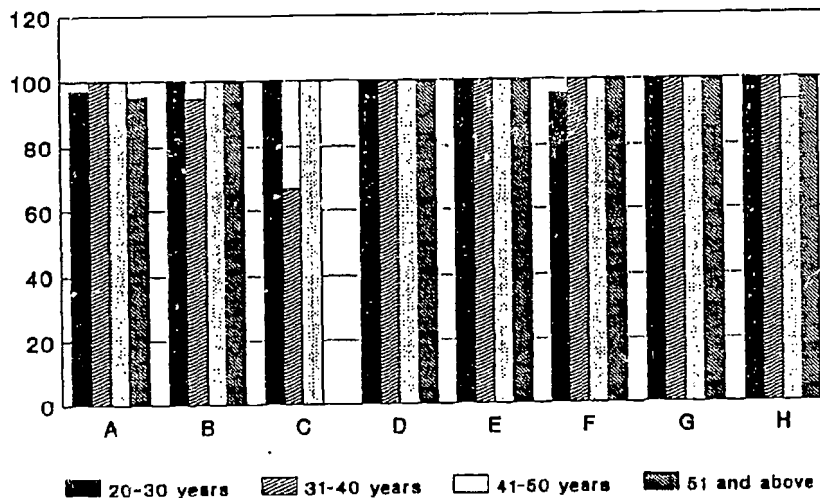


Parishes: A-H

the various age groups within each parish and little or no difference among any of the teachers in those parishes. Parish C had no teachers in the 51 years and above category. In that parish only 66.7% of the teachers in the 31-40 age group responded positively to value 5; this was considerably less than the percentage registered by teachers of that age group in the other seven parishes.

The percentage of positive responses as given by fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers of the eight parishes is revealed in Table 7. Except for those of Parish C, the fourth grade teachers all responded at the 100% level; eighty percent (80%) of the

Table 6  
Percentage Positive Responses  
Value 5: Age

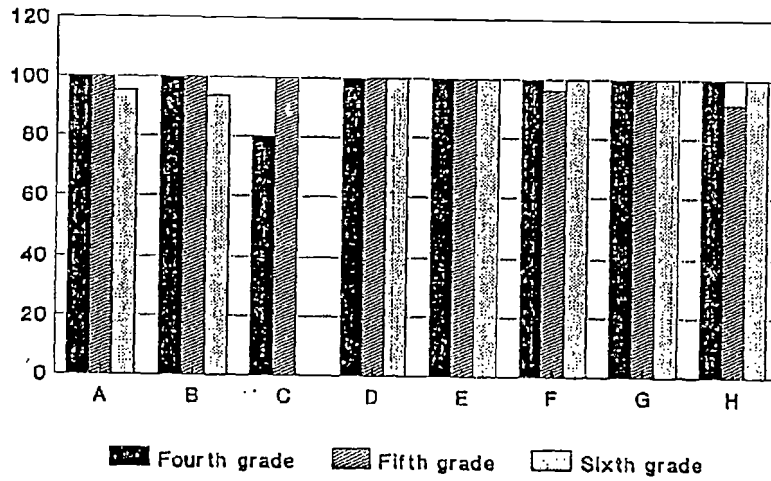


Parishes: A-H

fourth grade teachers of Parish C responded positively to the item. There was little or no difference in the responses of the fifth grade teachers. Parish C had no sixth grade teachers responding; the sixth grade teachers from the other parishes viewed the value in much the same way.

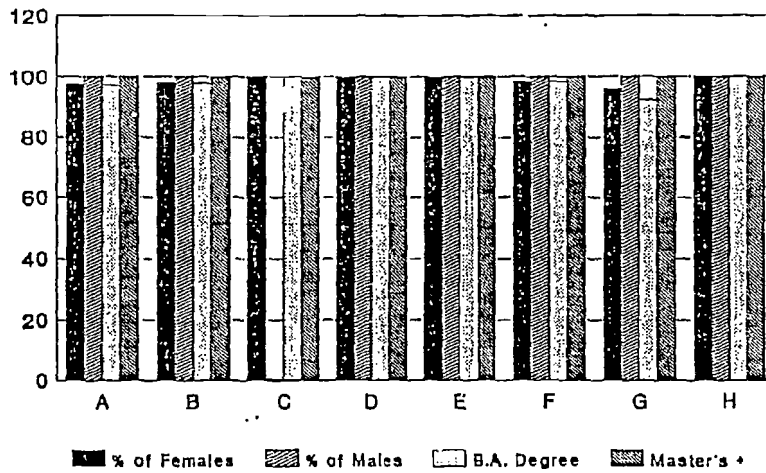
Table 8 centers on value 6 and presents the percentage of positive responses as recorded by the male and female teachers of the various parishes; it also reveals the perceptions of value 6 as held by teachers of different educational attainment. Parish C had no male teachers reacting to value 6; other than that there was little difference in the responses of the male and female teachers from any parish.

Table 7  
 Percentage, Positive Responses  
 Value 5: Grade Level



Parishes: A-H

Table 8  
 Percentage, Positive Responses  
 Value 6: Sex and Education

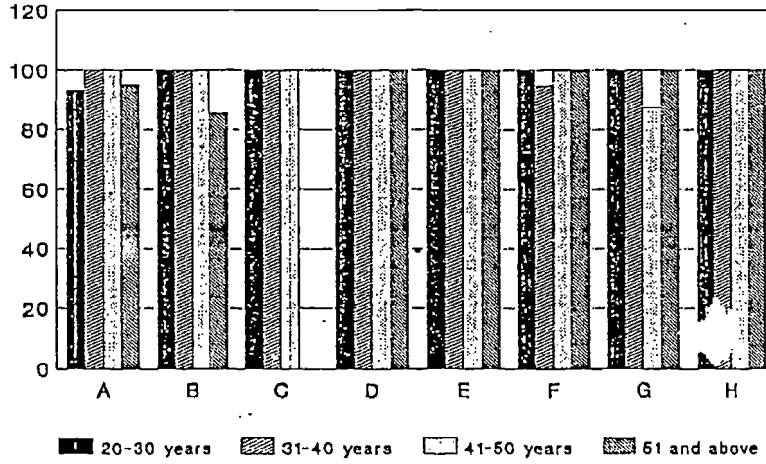


Parishes: A-H

Table 9 presents the percentage of positive responses recorded for value 6 as stated by teachers from various age groups. The teachers in the 20-30 year old category were consistent in the way they responded to value 6; all responded at the 100% level except for those from Parish A; those teachers responded to the item at the 93.7% level. The teachers in the 31-40 year age group were also fairly consistent; only the teachers from Parish F responded at a level less than 100%; theirs was at the 94.7% level. The teachers of Parish G in the 41-50 age group differed in their acceptance of value 6; they accepted it at the 87.5% level as compared to all of the others in that category who gave it 100% approval. There were no teachers above 51 years from Parish C; in six other parishes the teachers accepted the value at the 100% level. In Parish A and Parish B the teachers of that age group reacted differently with the greatest difference occurring in Parish B. Those teachers gave the item an 85.7% level of approval.

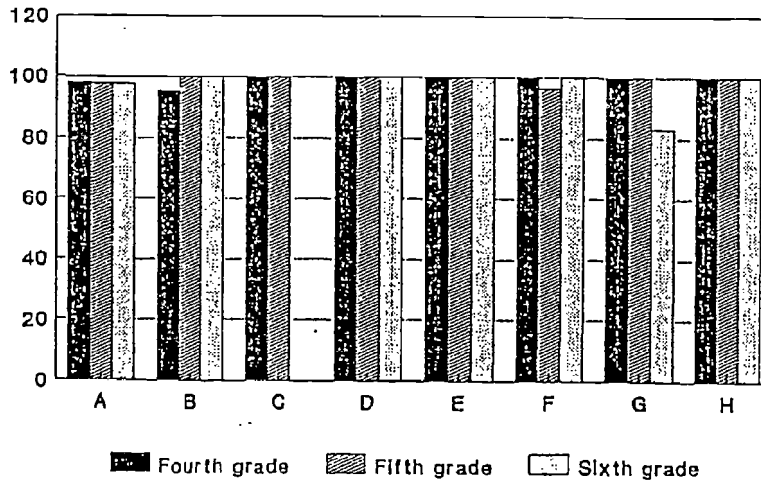
The percentage of positive responses as given by fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers involved in the study is revealed in Table 10. Parish C had no sixth grade teachers involved in the study. The teachers at all three grade levels reacted similarly to the value except the sixth grade teachers of Parish G who gave the item a positive response of 83.3%. All other teachers responded at the 95.2% level or above.

Table 9  
 Percentage, Positive Responses  
 Value 6: Age



Parishes: A-H

Table 10  
 Percentage, Positive Responses  
 Value 6: Grade Level



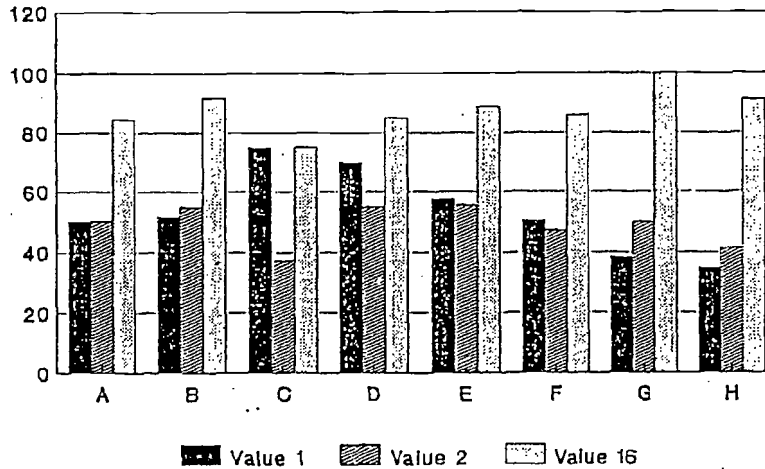
Parishes: A-H



The values receiving the highest percentage of negative responses (those given strongly disagree or disagree ratings) were 1, 2, and 16. Table 11 shows the percentage of those responses by the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade social studies teachers of the eight parishes involved in the study. Value 1 sought reaction to the statement, "the 'right' set of values is a matter of perspective and no one set of values should be taught." The responses by the teachers to value 1 were somewhat varied. The teachers of Parishes A, B, E, and F responded similarly to the value; their responses hovered around the 50% level of disagreement. The teachers of Parishes C and D registered greater disagreement than did the teachers of the other 6 parishes; the teachers of Parishes G and H showed less disagreement with the value than did the teachers from any of the other parishes.

The percentage of responses for value 2, "students must learn to develop their own ideas of right and wrong", are also given in Table 11. The teachers from every parish except Parish C reacted quite similarly to the item; their level of response hovered around the 50% level. Only 37.5% of the teachers of Parish C registered disagreement with value 2. Value 16, "controversial issues should be avoided", received the highest percentages of negative responses of any statement on the questionnaire. The percentages from each parish received from 75-100% negative response from the teachers.

Table 11  
Percentage, Negative Responses  
Values 1, 2, and 16



Parishes: A-H

Table 12 shows the percentage of negative responses for value 1 in regards to sex and the educational attainment of the teachers from the parishes included in the study. No male teachers from Parish C responded. The percent of female teachers from Parishes A, B, E, and F reached near the 50% level while the percentage of female teachers of Parishes C and D was approximately 75%. It is interesting to note that the percent of negative responses from the female teachers of Parishes G and H were only at the 35% level. The data reveal that the responses from the male teachers of Parishes A, B, E, and F were similar to those of their female counterparts. The same can be noted for

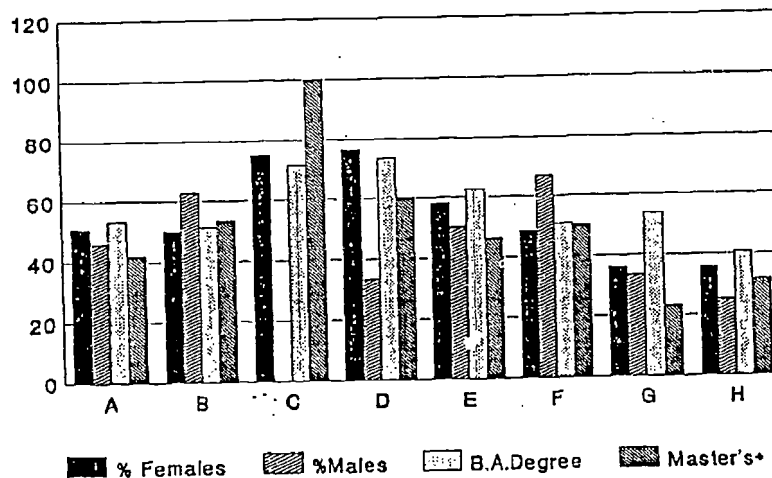
Parishes G and H whose male teachers all responded near the 30% mark. It is interesting to note that only 33.3% of the male teachers of Parish D responded negatively as compared to the female teachers whose responses reached the 76% level. The percent of negative responses were higher with teachers holding the B.A. degree as opposed to the those with the Master's Degree or above in Parishes A, D, E, F, G, and H. The negative responses from the teachers from those 6 parishes reached the 50% level or higher. Only in Parish B and Parish C were the negative responses relative to value 6 higher among teachers holding the Master's degree or above. Note the high level of 100% negative responses scored by the teachers with the Master's degree or above in Parish C and the low percent of 23.1 in Parish G.

Table 13 shows the percentage of negative responses for value 1 as stated by teachers of various age groups. The teachers in the 20-30 year old category from Parishes A, B, F, G, and H viewed the value in a similar manner; in the case of each of those parishes approximately 35% of the teachers in the 20-30 year old age group responded negatively to value 1. The teachers of that age group from Parishes D, H, E, and C seem to exhibit stronger feelings about the value; their percentage of negative responses ranged from 50 to 100%

In viewing the responses of the teachers in the 31-40 year

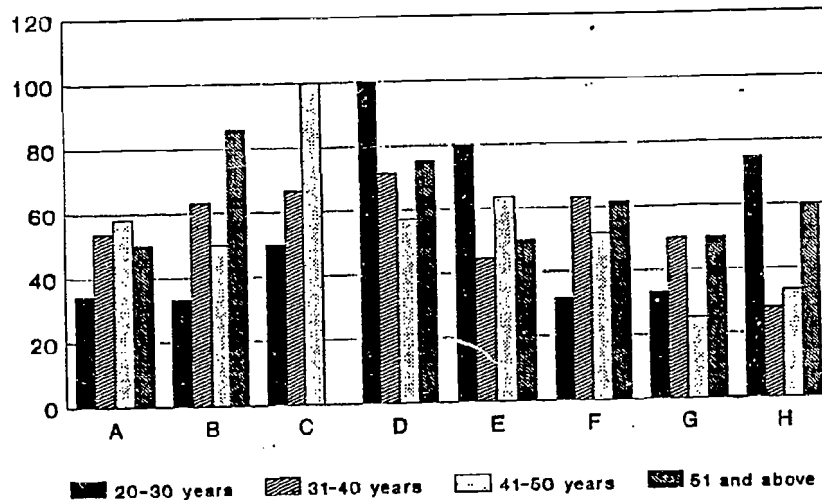
old range, those from Parish H differed noticeably from those of the other parishes. Only 27.8% of the 31-40 year old teachers of Parish H reacted negatively to value 1. One hundred percent (100%) of the teachers in the 41-50 year old group of Parish C responded negatively to the value. Another interesting point in that age category is the reaction of the teachers from Parishes G and H; only 25% of the teachers of Parish G and 33% of the teachers of Parish H responded negatively to value 1. There were no teachers above 51 years of age from Parish C who responded to the survey. In the remaining seven parishes the responses to value 1 from the teachers who were 51 years of age and above ranged from the 50 to 85.7% level.

Table 12  
Percentage, Negative Responses  
Value 1: Sex & Education



Parishes: A-H

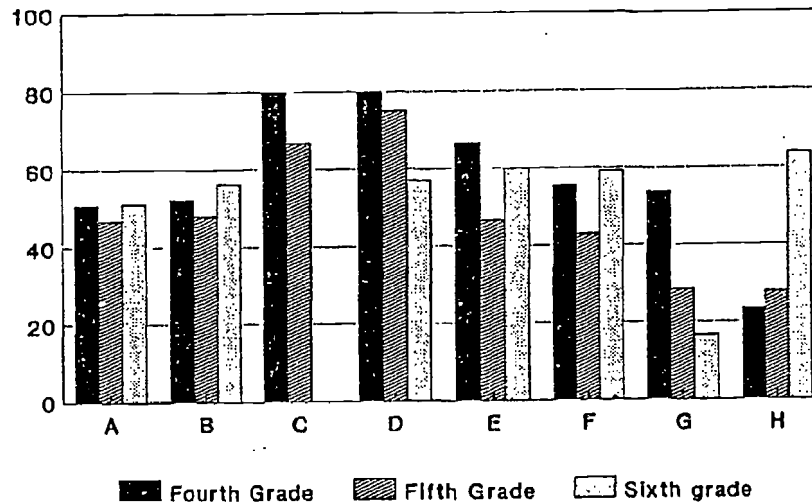
Table 13  
 Percentage, Negative Responses  
 Value 1: Age



Parishes: A-H

Table 14 presents the perceptions held by the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers from the various parishes who reacted to value 1. The fourth and fifth grade teachers of Parish C, D, G, and H responded to the value with a high degree of negativeness; the fourth and fifth grade teachers of Parishes G and H were much less negative about the statement. Except for the sixth grade teachers in Parish G, there was a unified opinion by the other sixth grade teachers towards the value; 63.7% of the sixth grade teachers of Parish H reacted negatively to the attitude. There were no sixth grade teachers from Parish C responding to the survey.

Table 14  
 Percentage, Negative Responses  
 Value 1: Grade Levels



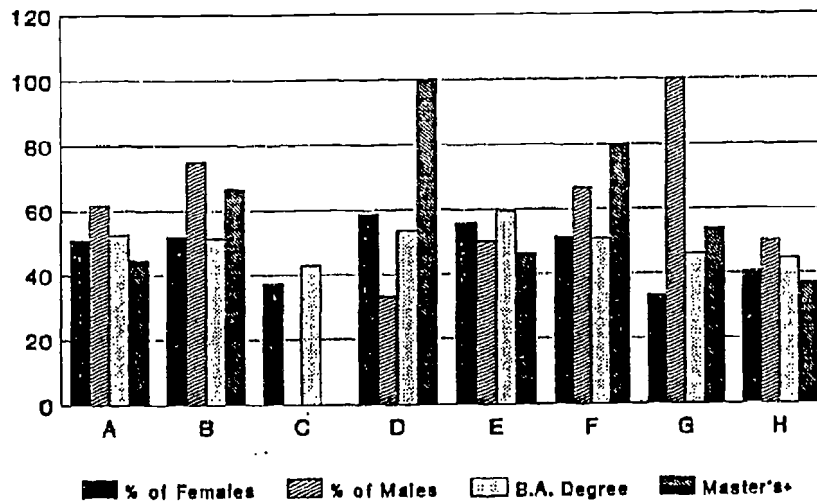
Parishes: A-H

Table 15 centers on value 2 and presents the percentage of negative responses as given by the male and female teachers; it also shows the perceptions held by teachers of different educational attainment. The female teachers of six parishes reacted to the value in similar fashion, all responding at or near the 50% level. Only the female teachers of Parishes G and C differed noticeably; their response was less negative; it hovered near the 35% level. The male teachers of Parish G expressed true concern over the value; their negativism reached the 100% level. On the opposite end of the chart were the males of Parish C who managed only a 33.3% negative response level. The males of the other parishes were

similar in their reaction; Parish C had no male teachers responding to the survey.

There was little difference in the responses of the teachers holding the B.A. degree. There was only one teacher in Parish D with the Master's degree or above; that teacher disapproved of the value thus registering a negative response of 100% for Parish D. There were no teachers from Parish C with that level of educational attainment. Other than the teachers of Parish H who responded at the 36.8% level, there was little difference in the reaction of the teachers from the other five parishes.

Table 15  
 Percentage, Negative Responses  
 Value 2: Sex and Education



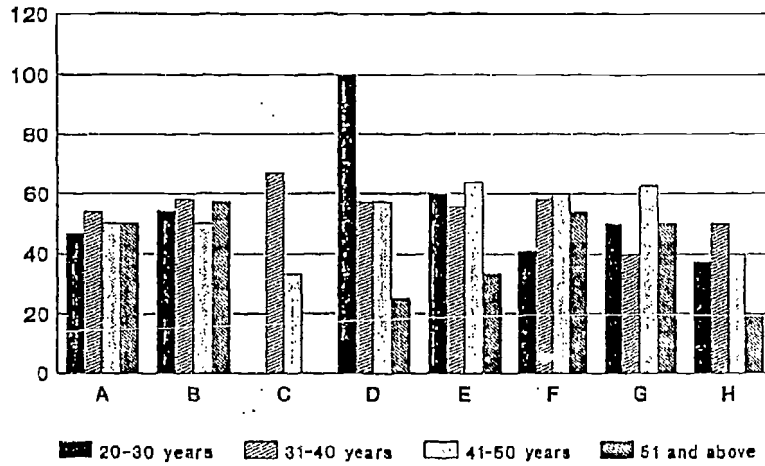
Parishes: A-H

Table 16 reports the percentage of negative responses given to value 2 by the teachers of various age groups. In the 20-30 year old age group the teachers of Parish D exhibited greater negativieness than did the teachers of any other parish; 100% of the teachers viewed the value negatively. The views of the 20-30 year olds from the other seven parishes were not as strong; they recorded negative percentages from a low of 37.5% to a high of 60%. The 31-40 year old teachers from each of the parishes expressed similar feelings about the value. The same was true for the teachers in the 41-50 year old range except for Parish C where only 33.3% of the teachers reported feeling negatively about the value. The teachers of Parishes D, E, and H showed little disagreement with the value. In Parish D only 25% of that age group disagreed, in Parish E it was 33.3% and in Parish H it was a mere 20%. There were no teachers 51 years or above from Parish C responding to the study.

Table 17 shr : the percentage of negative responses for value 2 as indicated by teachers working with different grade levels. The data reveal that the teachers held similar views irregardless of the grade level with which they worked. The noticeable exceptions were: 1) the fourth grade teachers of Parish D, 2) the fourth grade teachers of Parish E and 3) the fifth grade teachers of both Parish C and E.

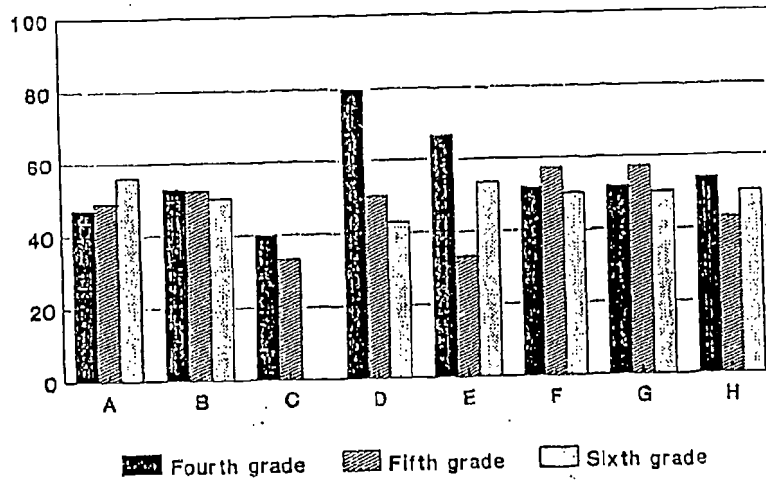


Table 16  
 Percentage, Negative Responses  
 Value 2: Age



Parishes A-H

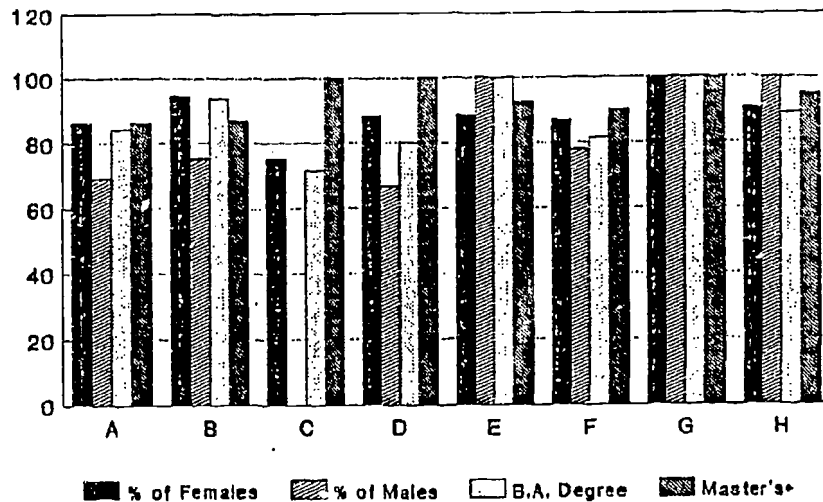
Table 17  
 Percentage, Negative Responses  
 Value 2: Grade Levels



Parishes: A-H

Value 16, "controversial issues should be avoided", initiated the highest levels of negativism. In expressing negative views the teachers were really voicing agreement with the idea that controversial issues are appropriate for discussion in elementary social studies classrooms. Table 18 presents the percentage of negative responses as indicated by the male and female teachers; it also gives insight into the views of teachers of different educational attainment. Each group was near the 70% level of concern; most reached the 100% level. Parish C had no male teachers responding to the questionnaire.

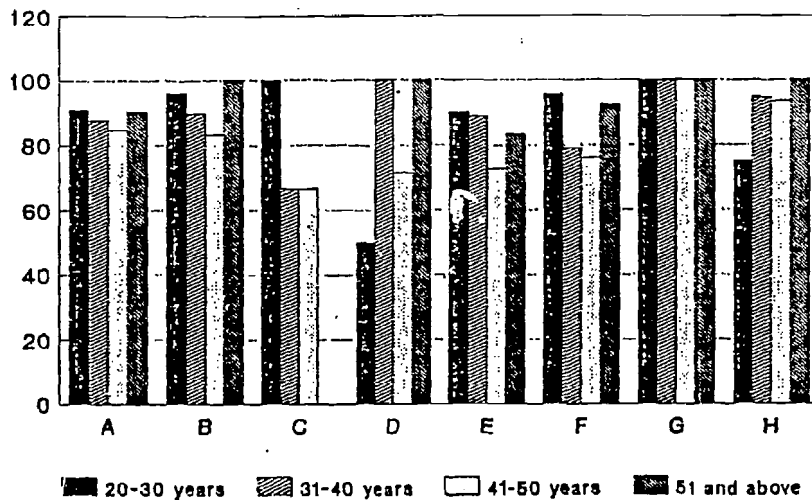
Table 18  
Percentage, Negative Responses  
Value 16: Sex and Education



Parishes: A-H

Table 19 shows the percentage of negative responses for value 16 as stated by teachers in various age groups. Except for the teachers of Parish D in the 20-30 year old age group and those from Parish C in the 31-40 and 41-50 year old groups the percentage of negative responses from the different groups were at the 70% level or above. The 20-30 year old teachers of Parish D recorded negative responses at the 50% level; the teachers from Parish C who were 31-40 years of age and 41-50 years of age recorded negative responses at the 66.7% level. There were no teachers 51 years or above from Parish C responding to the survey.

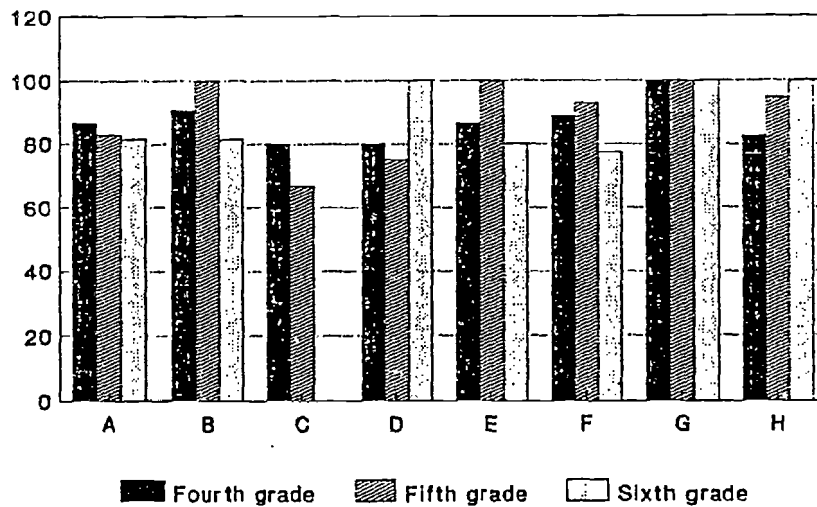
Table 19  
Percentage, Negative Responses  
Value 16: Age



Parishes A-H

The last table, Table 20, reveals the views to value 16 held by fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers of the eight parishes included in the survey. Only the fifth grade teachers of Parish C responded at a level below 75%. It is interesting to note that in Parish G all of the teachers voiced a total rejection of value 16.

Table 20  
Percentage, Negative Responses  
Value 16: Grade Level



Parishes: A-H

### Conclusions

Of the seventeen statements on the questionnaire, three were perceived by the teachers as being the most positive. These were statements 4 ("the social studies classroom should provide for the

recognition of the importance of cooperation and concern for others"), 5 ("respect for the rights and property of others should be emphasized as social skills"), and 6 ("the need to eliminate prejudice should be an integral part of any social studies class"). There was little difference in the way the teachers viewed the three values overall. Some differences in the responses given to value 5 by the teachers were noticeable.

Value 6 garnered consistently high percentage of positive responses. One noticeable difference occurred in the responses of the sixth grade teachers from Parish G; they were less enthusiastic about the value than were any of the other teachers.

The value statements receiving the highest percentages of negative responses were numbers 1, 2, and 16. Value 16, "controversial issues should be avoided", received the highest percentage of negative responses of any statement on the questionnaire.

#### Recommendations:

1. School systems should provide more in-service in value education for their teachers.
2. Researchers should continue to study avenues for teaching elementary social studies teachers how to incorporate values education in their classes.
3. Researchers should investigate the educational training of teachers and the effect, if any, on values education and other aspects of the moral development of children.

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