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Correlates of Self-Esteem and Social Desirability in Fifth Grade Mainstream and Special Education Classes

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CORRELATES OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY IN FIFTH GRADE MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES

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Abstract

This study was designed as an inquiry into self-esteem and its correlates, using a population of 111 fifth grade students enrolled in a rural county elementary school in southeastern Virginia. The population consisted of 76 children enrolled in mainstream classes and 35 children who had been previously placed in Title I classes for the educationally handicapped. All the Title I children had been in these special classes for at least 6 months prior to this study. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and Behavioral Rating Form provided measures of subjective and behavioral self-esteem and social desirability. For the purposes of this study, correlates of self-esteem were operationalized as general societal standing, intelligence quotient and achievement in school, and differential school class placement. Within the area of general societal standing, the variables examined were race, sex, father's occupational prestige, father's education, birth order, religious denominational affiliation, and presence of father in the home. This information was obtained from the cumulative records maintained by the school system for each child. The Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Scale and the Scientific Research Associates Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics provided individual scores for measured intelligence quotient and achievement in school. It was predicted that subjective self-esteem would not be affected by general societal standing, but would be significantly affected by school achievement and differential class placement. General research questions dealt with the relationships of behavioral self-esteem and social desirability to general societal standing, intelligence quotient and achievement in school, and differential class placement. An examination of these relationships provided the opportunity for some evaluation of Mead's (1934) and Cooley's (1912) "looking-glass self" theory as well as certain aspects of labeling theory. It was confirmed that subjective self-esteem is not affected by general societal standing. Behavioral self-esteem is similarly not related to general societal standing. However, social desirability appears to be positively related to that correlate. As predicted, subjective self-esteem varies in direct relationship to school achievement. A similar relationship was noted between subjective self-esteem and measured intelligence quotient. The data suggest a relationship between both intelligence quotient and achievement in school and behavioral self-esteem and social desirability. The expected relationship between differential class placement and subjective self-esteem did not appear in statistical analysis of the data. There is, however, a demonstrated positive relationship between mainstream class placement and behavioral self-esteem and social desirability. Statistical procedures used were zero order partial correlations; differences of means, Pearson's product-moment correlations, biserial correlations, and t tests. It is suggested that further research into self-esteem and its correlates might reveal variations in the relationships between variables depending upon the characteristics of the population (e.g., age groups and other types of differential placement).

Dedication

To Jennifer, my daughter, with hope that the best antecedents were hers, and to Edward, my husband, who helped supply them.

CORRELATES OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY IN FIFTH GRADE MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Chapter 1

Introduction

Self-esteem is a term frequently used by social scientists and laymen as a general explicant for motivation and behavior. The belief is widespread that self-esteem is associated significantly with personal satisfaction and "effective functioning." This study has been designed as an inquiry into the correlates of self-esteem; three general areas of investigation have been considered. These consist of the relationship of self-esteem to general societal standing, to Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and achievement in school, and to specialized class placement within a school setting. The variables studied have been grouped into clusters based upon data considered appropriate for each area.

In terms of "general societal standing," the variables emphasized included race, sex, and education and occupation of parents. These variables refer to "societal standing" in the context of social status/prestige. There were three additional variables--birth order, religion, presence of father in the home--included as well, although these refer to social status in its broader sense, that of social position rather than prestige.

For the second major area of investigation--that of the relationship of self-esteem to IQ and academic achievement--the variables included intelligence test scores as well as standardized achievement test scores in reading and mathematics. For the third

general area of investigation--that of the effects of specialized placement--primary emphasis was given to the relationship between self-esteem and inclusion in a mainstream or regular classroom as opposed to a self-contained special classroom designed for "slow learners." In addition, a sociogram was utilized to assess the relationship between self-esteem and popularity; two issues were questioned here--the significance, if any, of the relationship between peer evaluation and feelings of self-worth, and the relationship between peer evaluation and a behavioral rating of self-esteem as perceived by the child's teachers.

Basic to this study of self-esteem and its correlates was a question concerning the three measures of "self-esteem" provided by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) and Behavioral Rating Form (BRF). In the first place, subjective self-esteem is concerned with a self-report of feelings of worth. The SEI itself is designed to measure this attitude. Behavioral self-esteem is that rating of esteem given a child by his teacher and is measured through Coopersmith's Behavioral Rating Form. Since the BRF theoretically measures behavioral manifestations of the child's feelings of self-worth, subjective self-esteem and behavioral self-esteem should be positively and significantly correlated to each other.

Given that self-esteem is an attitude, and therefore is measurable through the use of an attitude scale such as the SEI, one confronts the possibility of contamination of results due to social desirability (SD). Thus, the Coopersmith Inventory includes

the SD subscale. The concern in this study was to ascertain the extent to which social desirability is a factor in self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory, and, if it is a positive factor, the change in results due to partialing out the social desirability factor. (See Appendix for the three measures in the Coopersmith Inventory.)

In order to understand the evaluative nature of self-esteem, one must turn to the broader concepts of self and self-concept. Fitts (1971) states that there is

> something about a person that summarizes all that he is and serves as a supramoderator of his functioning . . . there [is] some type of vital and relevant data about a person that supersedes other things in importance to the individual and thereby expresses his true raison d'etre . . . an individual's concept of himself somehow cuts across, condenses, or captures the essence of many other variables (motives, needs, attitudes, values, personality) . . . [pp. 2-3].

The self and the self-concept have been topics of concern for behavioral scientists since the late nineteenth century. For students of philosophy, theology, and education, as well as the social sciences, self-concept has become a central construct for understanding people and their behavior. Studies by Rogers (1951), Combs and Soper (1959), Lecky (1945), Wylie (1961), and others give evidence of the rise of a theoretical system known as self-theory.

In essence, self-theory is based upon the principle that an

individual's reaction to the phenomenal world is due to his perceptions of this world.

> Probably the most salient feature of each person's phenomenal world is his own self--the self as seen, perceived, and experienced by him. This is the perceived self or the individual's self concept . . . The self concept, or self image, is learned by each person through his lifetime of experiences with himself, with other people, and with the realities of the external world [Fitts, 1971, p. 3].

Although man lives in a changing environment, his self-concept remains relatively stable. Furthermore, this self-concept functions as the "frame of reference" for an individual in his interactions with the world around him. Thus, the bond between self-concept and behavior is made clear: the self-concept is derived from social interaction and in turn influences behavior (Fitts, 1971).

In viewing self-concept, one is focusing upon a complex phenomenon that includes as components content (also known as self-as-object), process (self-as-doer), and evaluation (self-as-judge). It is with regard to the last dimension that self-esteem comes into play. Not only is man aware of content and process, but, as man, he assigns values to these perceptions. Thus, one speaks of self-esteem as defined by Coopersmith (1967)--"a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself [p. 5]."

Chapter 2

Review of Theory and Literature

Self-esteem has been viewed as having a positive correlation with one's general societal standing. Thus, being black in a caste-like white society has been seen as having negative effects on the development of self-esteem. As expressed by Gordon (1969), the theoretical basis for the assumption of low self-esteem among blacks is that

> a member of a disparaged and discriminated against social category is likely to internalize the meanings appended to the culture's stereotypes and to the social realities of the way he is treated, and thus come to conceive of himself in cognitive and evaluative terms very similar to the discrediting rejection accorded his group by the society's majority [p. 38].

The sociological theorizing of Mead (1934) and Cooley (1912) underlies this assumption that a low societal standing will in general result in low self-esteem. In these theories, an individual's feelings about self are to a great extent the result of the reflected appraisals of others. If, then, a person is treated as an inferior, "his sense of personal value should assuredly be low [Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971, p. 2]."

When looking at race as a variable in differential self-esteem, much of the research and theory supports the hypothesis of a lower self-esteem for blacks. Clark (1965) refers to "pernicious

self and group hatred, the Negro's complex and debilitating prejudice against himself [p. 21]." Given this, "Negroes have come to believe in their own inferiority [p. 64]." Frazier (1957) speaks of the black bourgeoisie and its "deep-seated inferiority complex [p. 24]." Kardiner and Ovesey (1951) characterize black personality in such terms as "self-hatred," "self-contempt," and "low self-esteem," seeing these as resulting from the negative appraisals of blacks given by others.

Proshansky and Newton (1968) refer to the "heavy psychological costs of low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness and basic identity conflict [p. 178]" carried by blacks. This conflict "tends to nourish feelings of self-doubt and a sense of inadequacy, if not actual self-hatred [p. 191]." Thus, the black "characterize(s) himself in unfavorable terms, that is, . . . reveal(s) a negative self-image [p. 191]."

Pettigrew (1964) has written extensively on the subject of the black identity conflict, seeing this as

> inextricably linked with problems of self-esteem. For years, Negro Americans have had little else by which to judge themselves than the second-class status assigned them in America. And along with this inferior treatment, their ears have been filled with the din of white racists egotistically insisting that Caucasians are innately superior to Negroes. Consequently, many Negroes, consciously or unconsciously, accept in part these assertions of their inferiority. In addition, they accept the

> American emphases on "status" and "success." But when they employ these standards for judging their own worth, their lowly positions and their relative lack of success lead to further self-disparagement [p. 9].

"Evidence" of low black self-esteem has been offered based upon studies indicating that black children show preference for light-skinned dolls, pictures, or puppets as opposed to those with brown skin (Clark & Clark, 1947; Goodman, 1952; Landreth & Johnson, 1953; Morland, 1958; Stevenson & Stewart, 1958). In addition, several studies have indicated that black children show self-esteem problems in psychotherapeutic sessions (Brody, 1963; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1951).

> While many of these studies are of a high order of excellence, they characteristically suffer from certain limitations with regard to method: (1) self-esteem has almost invariably been inferred by the investigator from indirect evidence rather than direct examination; (2) the samples have rarely been representative so that it is difficult to know to what populations they properly apply [Rosenberg & Simmons, undated, p. 3].

McCarthy and Yancey (1971) reviewed much of the literature dealing with the race/self-esteem question and postulated alternative interpretations of the available empirical data as well as theoretical underpinnings. Subsequently, several studies have yielded results that do not support the traditional view of low black self-esteem. Yancey, Rigsby, and McCarthy (1972), using

mini-Coopersmith scales, obtained no significant differences in the self-esteem of blacks and whites in Nashville, Tennessee, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Furthermore, they questioned the conclusions drawn from studies supporting the traditional viewpoint due to methodological problems.

Heiss and Owens (1973), using National Opinion Research Center (NORC) data for blacks and whites in northern urban areas, found no significant differences in self-esteem for blacks and whites except in the lower classes where blacks had slightly higher self-esteem scores. Gordon (1963) found that on a 10-item self-esteem scale, junior college blacks scored higher than whites. McDonald and Gynther (1965) administered 128 adjectives from the Interpersonal Check List and found high school blacks to be significantly higher than whites in self-esteem. The extensive Coleman study (1966) indicated no significant differences in self-esteem among 559,000 third-, sixth-, ninth-, and twelfth-grade black and white students. In terms of academic self-concept, McDill, Meyers, and Rigsby (1966) found that black high school students scored higher than whites. Rosenberg (1965) found blacks to be somewhat lower than white high school students; however, the difference was not significant. Using the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Wendland (1967) found that black eighth graders' mean scores were significantly higher than whites'. Using the same self-concept measure, Powell and Fuller (1970) found similar results for junior high school male students. Bachman (1970) reported that black tenth

graders were substantially higher than whites on self-esteem scores. In sum, the empirical data disconfirms the traditional beliefs on the race/self-esteem issue.

Social class and its relationship to self-esteem forms another area for review when considering general societal standing. Just as Mead (1934) and Cooley (1912) held important theoretical positions for understanding self-esteem and race, so they are useful also in dealing with class position. A presumed positive correlation is found in much of the literature concerned with the relationship between social class and self-esteem. An assumption has been made that

> persons higher in the system . . . are more successful in the eyes of the community and receive the material and cultural benefits that should lead them to believe that they are generally more worthy than others . . . we would assume that children from higher status families are more apt to have enhancing material benefits and to receive more respectful treatment [Coopersmith, 1967, p. 82].

The results of Coopersmith's (1967) study reveal a weak, nonsignificant relationship between self-esteem and social class. Rosenberg (1965) found a weak but significant relationship, which may in fact be due to his larger sample size. Nevertheless, upon examining the data, one is left with the understanding that children from different social classes do not experience the amount of difference in self-esteem that is suggested in the layman's

popularized assumptions. Thus, one study (Rosenberg) indicates that there is no clear and definite pattern of relationships between social class and positive and negative attitudes toward the self. The other study (Coopersmith) indicates that

> though persons from the upper and middle classes are more likely to express favorable self-attitudes than persons in the lower group, the differences between groups are neither as large nor as regular as might have been expected [p. 83].

Soares and Soares (1969) studied the self-perceptions of advantaged and disadvantaged children (seen in terms of social class) and found that the disadvantaged children held generally more positive self-perceptions.

There are research studies which disagree with the findings of Coopersmith (1967), Rosenberg (1965), and Soares and Soares (1969), however. In particular, Ausubel and Ausubel (1963); Crovetto, Foscher and Boudreaux (1967), and Hawk (1967) in Rosenberg and Simmons (undated); report that disadvantaged children are characterized by low self-esteem as well as self-deprecation. Thus, it is clear that sociological thought concerning the relationship between self-esteem and social class has yet to reach consensus.

Viewing parental occupation as one measure of social class, Coopersmith (1967) found no indication that father's occupation is related to child's self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) noted similar results with one exception--children of men employed in more authoritarian occupations such as the military or police force appear to be

generally low in self-esteem.

In contemporary American society, traditional sex roles supposedly buttress the concept of a generally male-oriented and male-dominated culture. Both as children and adults, males are seen as the more aggressive and instrumental of the sexes, with females serving in traditionally emotional and nurturant roles. With the onset of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s, much was made verbally of the supposed subordinate place of women in society, and of the negative consequences of such role definitions for females. In support of this, Carpenter and Busse (1969) found in their study that, overall, girls are more negative in measures of self-concept than boys. On the other hand, several studies have reported opposite results. Coopersmith (1967, p. 10) found that in both of his initial studies with the Self-Esteem Inventory, the mean score was higher for girls (although not significantly so). Baum (1969) found that girls as a group report higher self-concepts.

Religion represents another of the variables involved in the area of general societal standing. The three major religious groups in the United States (Protestants, Catholics, and Jews) reflect different standings in the prestige and status hierarchy. In addition, both Catholics and Jews reflect minority group status.

> Viewed in terms of social acceptance, there is every reason to expect that Jews, who rank lower in the prestige ladder than Protestants and Catholics, would suffer from fairly negative self-attitudes [Coopersmith, 1967, p. 85].

Analysis of the Coopersmith data, however, revealed no significant differences in self-esteem among Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. In fact, there was a slight tendency (although not significant) for Jews to express higher self-esteem than members of either of the other religious groups. Rosenberg (1965) found that Jews had higher self-esteem; these results, however, were due to the self-esteem scores of firstborn Jewish males.

Birth order was another of the component variables representing general societal standing. The assumption has been made that children from larger families would be lower in self-esteem than children from smaller families due to such interacting conditions as parental attention and emotional involvement. This assumption, however, has not been borne out by research studies. Coopersmith (1967) found no relationship between self-esteem and family size per se. Given this, birth order of siblings was then viewed in terms of its relationship to self-esteem.

> A child who is born early in the sequence of a series will encounter a family environment in which there is little if any competition for attention, affection, and status . . . The later child starts with a potential disadvantage of an established competition . . . [p. 151].

Based upon this recognition, several studies have been designed to clarify the relationship between birth order and personality characteristics (Koch, 1956; Schacter, 1959; Schooler, 1961). The associations revealed in these studies have bearing upon possible

consequences for self-esteem. For example, if children born later in a series are more apt to be poorer in performance, asocial, and schizophrenic (Schooler), then one could postulate that the self-esteem scores of these children would be lower. Coopersmith's data supports the hypothesis that earlier-born children are higher in self-esteem; he found that subjects with high self-esteem "tend to be either firstborn or only children [p. 152]." Rosenberg's (1965) study yielded somewhat similar results. He found that high self-esteem was most common among only children. However, there was no indication that ordinal position (other than only child) was related to self-esteem.

The second major area of investigation in this study deals with the relationship between self-esteem and achievement in school. "In our achievement oriented society, education is a highly valued accomplishment and it would not be surprising to find a relationship between the self concept and (education) [Fitts, 1972, p. 24]." The research in this area has been extensive, albeit not always conclusive. The terms "self-concept" and "self-esteem" are used interchangeably throughout the literature; frequently both are used to apply to scores obtained from the same inventory. In addition, much of the research has been clouded by methodological problems. Currently, the most frequent indices of achievement are standardized achievement test scores and grade-point averages. However, often other variables such as intelligence (as measured by IQ tests) are not factored out. Thus, caution is advised in

interpretation of results.

Brookover, Shailer and Patterson (1964) found in their study a positive and significant correlation between achievement and self-reported self-concept when controlling for measurable IQ. Using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, Campbell (1967) found a low positive correlation between self-esteem and achievement. This parallels Coopersmith's (1967) data, which indicated that the correlation between subjective self-esteem and academic achievement was .30. Both Campbell (1965) and Bledsoe (1967) found a significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic achievement, but only for boys. The results for girls were not significant.

> [S]uccessful students can generally be characterized as having positive self concepts and tending to excel in feelings of worth as individuals. This is in stark contrast to the self-image of the majority of unsuccessful students . . . [Purkey, 1970, p. 19].

Shaw's (1961) study indicated a more negative self-concept for underachievers than for achievers, as well as less mature behavior. Again, the sex of the subject appears to be a variable; results in some studies are more significant for males than for females (e.g., Shaw & Alves, 1963).

In his review of the literature on personality traits and discrepant achievement, Taylor in Purkey (1970) reported that generally the studies showed consensus that "the underachiever is, among

other things, self-derogatory, has a depressed attitude toward himself, has feelings of inadequacy, and tends to have strong inferiority feelings [p. 21]." A few studies, however, have failed to support this general opinion. Holland (1959) found that underachievers not only were not lower in self-esteem, but that they tended to have positive self-concepts.

> In summary, experimental data regarding the self concept and achievement are equivocal when achievement tests are the criteria for performance. The results of numerous studies with highly varied populations are mixed. Generally the two variables show low positive correlations which sometimes exceed chance expectations but often do not [Fitts, 1972, p. 29].

In turning from achievement to IQ and its relationship to self-esteem, most of the literature reviewed focused primarily on the relationship of IQ to achievement or on self-esteem and the child's perceptions of his intelligence. Coopersmith (1967) used the results of a standardized intelligence test (the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children), and found that these scores correlated .30--significant at the .05 level with subjective self-esteem. The correlation between achievement and self-esteem was .28 at the same level of significance, thus a low positive relationship is indicated.

The third major area of investigation in this study involved the relationship between school class placement and self-esteem. The general issue underlying this question concerns the process of

labeling, and therefore possibly stigmatizing, the specially-placed child. The research on labeling theory has been extensive, yet little specifically empirical work has been done in the particular area of class placement and stigmatization.

Within the field of education, and most specifically among special educators, a humanistic trend has emerged which decries labeling as causing negative effects on the child's self-esteem. This philosophical stance has been translated into programming designed to promote the mainstreaming of children into regular classes, to provide additional services within the classroom setting when needed, and to modify the traditional "test-score" approach to evaluating children for possible special placement. In essence, education is currently undergoing an alteration in perspective. The older or more traditional view sought to establish that difficulties were "inherent in the child himself," i.e., some lack or abnormality on the child's part. With this established, the child was then assigned a "special" status (educable mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, educationally handicapped, et cetera) with an accompanying move to a "special" class. This placement constituted physical isolation from the mainstream of regular classes. The new or altered perspective has its basis in a different mode of thinking: difficulties are not necessarily "inherent in the child" (in fact, rarely so) but instead are due to environmental/interactional conflicts involving the child, the child's teacher, classroom and learning situations and possibly family

and peer group as well. From this view, labeling the child as special (which is synonymous in the older view with "requiring special placement/physical separation") is no longer an automatic action. The twin trend in education toward individualization now means that the child may remain within the mainstream, learning through an individualized program (which, in theory, is now designed for all students). As a consequence of mainstream placement, of the lack of physical segregation, there is no institutional labeling of the child as either deficient or abnormal and hence no stigmatization/negative self-evaluation from an institutional source. It is recognized that within the confines of any classroom the students will respond to the behaviors of their peers, classifying some as brighter or more appropriately behaved than others. Nevertheless, it appears (as noted in the studies cited) to be the act of geographical, physical segregation with its accompanying statuses that is related to lessened self-esteem rather than hierarchical ranking by peers within the classroom (Prillaman, 1968).

Dunn (1968); Haring, Stern, and Cruickshank (1958); Kirk (1962); Christopolos and Renz (1969); and Lilly (1970) have all advocated the integration of educationally-handicapped children into mainstream classes. Much of the common rationale for this position deals with the presumed negative effects of labeling and special placement on the self-esteem of these children. Carroll (1967), using the Illinois Index of Self Derogation, studied the effects of segregated versus partially-integrated school programs on the

self-concept and academic achievement of educable mentally retarded students. She found that partial integration resulted in a significant decrease in self-derogations for these children. This was interpreted to mean a heightened self-concept. Meyrowitz (1962) reported a lowered self-concept for children placed in segregated special classes.

No research studies were located that dealt directly with the labeling and placement of a population similar to the Title I "prevocational" children in this study. While not in effect a traditional special education class, these children are nevertheless "educationally handicapped" (this term was used in the original grant proposal) and have been effectively segregated into a self-contained classroom situation. If, therefore, labeling and segregated placement are related (as the authors cited indicate), and if labeling is in turn related to low self-esteem, then these children should show lower self-esteem scores than their mainstream peers.

The final question posed in this study deals with the relationship between self-esteem and popularity (as measured by a classroom sociogram). According to Coopersmith (1967), an assumption is made that "popularity is positively associated with high self-esteem [p. 48]." This assumption ties in with the theories of Mead (1934) and Cooley (1912) mentioned; if self-esteem is affected by the appraisal of self given by others, then a positive appraisal as reflected in popularity status should coincide with high subjective self-esteem. In the Coopersmith study, however, no significant relationship was indicated between popularity ratings within the

classroom and subjective self-esteem scores. Rather, the popularity rating appeared to be related positively to the behavioral self-esteem rating. "This suggests that popularity with one's peers is more likely to be associated with a poised, confident, and forthright exterior than it is with favorable self-attitudes [Coopersmith, 1967, p. 49]." Caution must be exercised in interpreting Coopersmith's findings, however. The popularity rating is specific to the classroom, and the scores cannot be generalized to indicate popularity in other social situations. It is possible that initial approaches toward others are concerned with behavioral attributes rather than subjective self-esteem, but the latter may in fact achieve a higher value in situations that are more open-ended and less task-oriented than the classroom milieu.

Research Propositions

For the purposes of this study, several questions have been raised and several predictions made concerning self-esteem, the interrelationship of the self-esteem measures, and the three major areas of investigation. These include:

a. What, if any, is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and social desirability as measured by the SEI and the SD subscale?

b. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and behavioral self-esteem as measured by the SEI and the Behavioral Rating Form? A positive relationship was predicted.

c. What, if any, is the relationship between social

desirability and behavioral self-esteem as measured by the SD subscale and the Behavioral Rating Form?

d. "General Societal Standing"--

i. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and race? No significant differences were predicted for blacks and whites. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and race?

ii. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and sex? No significant differences were predicted for males and females. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and sex?

iii. What, if any, is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and father's occupational prestige? No significant relationship was predicted. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and father's occupational prestige?

iv. What, if any, is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and father's education? No significant relationship was predicted. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and father's education?

v. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and religious denominational affiliation? No significant differences were predicted for Catholics and Protestants. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and religious denominational affiliation?

vi. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem

and birth order? A positive relationship was predicted for first-born and/or only children. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and birth order?

vii. What, if any, is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and presence of father in the home? What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and presence of father in the home?

viii. What are the relationships, if any, between social desirability and race, sex, father's occupational prestige, father's education, religious denominational affiliation, birth order, or presence of father in the home?

e. IQ and Achievement--

i. What is the relationship between IQ and subjective self-esteem? A positive relationship was predicted.

ii. What is the relationship between IQ and behavioral self-esteem?

iii. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and achievement in reading and mathematics? A positive correlation was predicted.

iv. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and achievement in reading and mathematics?

v. What, if any, is the relationship between social desirability and IQ?

vi. What, if any, is the relationship between social desirability and achievement in reading and mathematics?

f. School Class Placement and Popularity--

i. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and class placement? A significant difference in mean subjective self-esteem scores was predicted between children in mainstream classes and those in the Title I "special" classes.

ii. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and school class placement in mainstream or special classes?

iii. What, if any, is the relationship between social desirability and placement in mainstream or special classes?

iv. What is the relationship between subjective self-esteem and popularity as measured by a sociogram?

v. What is the relationship between behavioral self-esteem and popularity as measured by a sociogram?

vi. What, if any, is the relationship between social desirability and popularity as measured by a sociogram?

Chapter 3

Methodologies

Data for this study was collected at a rural county elementary school in southeastern Virginia. The school has a student population of almost 700, with a teacher-student ratio of approximately 1 to 28. The socioeconomic status of the children ranges from lower class to upper-middle class, with the majority being drawn from the middle class. Approximately 19% of the children are black; no other minority groups are represented. Of the students involved in this study, 29% of the total were black.

The children chosen for inclusion in this study were fifth graders, ranging in age from 9 to 11. This age group was selected so that the normative data obtained by Coopersmith (1967) could be used for comparative purposes. In addition, rather than study self-esteem and its relationship to variables associated with an age group in general (as has been done by Coopersmith and others), this study was designed to identify intergroup differences as well. (Thus, school class placement was utilized as a mechanism for division into two groups--those children in mainstream fifth grade and those in a special class setting.)

Due to the size of the fifth-grade population, it was decided to include all fifth graders rather than a sample. Thus, a total of 111 students was studied. The mainstream population was defined as those children in the regular fifth-grade classrooms, and

consisted of 76 students. Of this number, 67% were male, 33% were female, 11% were black, and 89% were white. The special class population was defined as those children enrolled in a self-contained Title I classroom for the educationally handicapped. Eligibility for this program is based upon scholastic achievement in reading and mathematics, with emphasis on the former. According to the guidelines for eligibility, students must be achieving at least one grade-level below their assigned grade in school. The majority of the students, however, are further behind than one year. The Title I program is set up as prevocational in that an intensive approach is taken to reading and mathematics through prevocational activities such as cooking, sewing, home nursing and carpentry. The children receive instruction in all subjects within the Title I classrooms. Resource classes such as music and physical education are given to the Title I students as a separate group; even activities such as lunch reinforce the isolation as these children eat as a group at separate tables in the cafeteria. For all intents, then, these students are labeled as special children and in effect are segregated from the mainstream of the school. The Title I population used in this study consisted of 35 children, of whom 51% were male, 49% were female, 31% were white, and 69% were black.

Three separate data sheets were obtained for each child in the study in addition to sociogram information. These data sheets included a subjective self-esteem inventory (the SEI), a Behavioral Rating Form (the BRF), and a Data Sheet (see Appendix).

The Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory was chosen as the primary instrument for measuring subjective self-esteem. The original SEI was based upon items selected from the Rogers and Dymond (1954) scale, to which Coopersmith added several original items. In final form, the SEI consists of 50 items concerned with self-attitudes in the areas of peers, parents, school, and personal interests. Although these four areas can be scored individually, previous studies have revealed no significant differences between the self-appraisals given for each area.

> This suggests that either preadolescent children make little distinction about their worthiness in different areas of experience, or, if such distinctions are made, they are made within the context of the over-all, general appraisal of worthiness that the children have already made [Coopersmith, 1967, p. 6].

Therefore, the use of a total score as an index to self-esteem is legitimized when dealing with a similar population.

For the SEI as an index, reliability studies indicate a .88 correlation after a 5-week period and a .70 correlation after a 3-year interval (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 5). According to Coopersmith, this suggests that "at some time preceding middle childhood the individual arrives at a general appraisal of his worth, which remains relatively stable and enduring over a period of several years [p. 5]." Although one's appraisal can be situationally affected by incidents or environmental changes, such appraisals appear

to revert to a "customary level when conditions resume their 'normal' and typical course [p. 5]."

In addition to the 50 items on the SEI, there are eight items designed to measure "defensiveness"--distorting appraisals of self in the direction of social desirability. Theoretically, if the social desirability subscale is related significantly to subjective self-esteem as measured by the SEI, then partialing out the effects of social desirability should result in a more valid report of an individual's feelings of self-worth.

The Coopersmith Behavioral Rating Form was also obtained for each child in the study. The fifth-grade teachers were asked to rate each student on a 13-item, 5-point scale of behaviors that are presumably behavioral manifestations of self-esteem. These items are concerned with specific behaviors as expressed within the relatively circumscribed setting of the classroom: the child's responses to failure, self-confidence in new situations, sociability with peers, and need for encouragement and reassurance.

A supplemental Data Sheet was collected for each child. The information contained herein was collected from the cumulative records of the students, and consisted of the following: sex, race, religion (by denomination), IQ, achievement scores in reading and mathematics, occupations of father, distribution of siblings in the family, presence or absence of father in the home, education of father, and presence of adults in home other than father and mother. The last item was deleted from the statistical procedures due to

insufficient data.

After approval was obtained from the School Board and the principal, the SEI was administered to small groups of children by the writer and an assistant, both of whom were familiar to the students. No teachers were present during the administration. The directions were read aloud, as well as each individual item, so that reading ability would not be a consideration for the student. The SEI was not administered in the classroom in an effort to reduce possible "test-situation anxiety." Sociogram information was obtained at the same time.

After reviewing the items on the Behavioral Rating Form, the teachers were asked to complete these for each student without consulting with other faculty members. The writer and an assistant reviewed the students' cumulative records to obtain information for the Data Forms. All materials were coded at the school to negate the possibility of releasing any confidential information.

Chapter 4

Results

A major objective of this study was to view the relationships among the three measures of "self-esteem" provided by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and Behavioral Rating Scale. A zero order correlation shows no significant relationship between subjective self-esteem and social desirability. Subjective self-esteem is, however, significantly related to behavioral self-esteem as measured by teachers' ratings, although the correlation coefficient is low. Behavioral self-esteem is also related significantly to social desirability (although again the correlation coefficient is low). These relationships are presented in Table 1.

Self-esteem and "general societal standing" was also a primary area of investigation in this study. Race, sex, occupation of father, and education of father were used as variables representative of "societal standing" in the status/prestige sense of the term. Religion, birth order, and presence of father in the home were used as variables representative of "societal standing" in the more broad sense of status/position. Means were computed for social desirability, subjective and behavioral self-esteem with the dichotomous variables (race, sex, and presence of father in the home). A comparison of the means, shown in Table 2, confirms several of the predictions made in this study; first, no significant differences are found in subjective self-esteem between males

TABLE 1

Zero Order Partial Correlations for Subjective Self-esteem, Behavioral Self-esteem, and Social Desirability

	Behavioral Self-esteem	Social Desirability
Subjective Self-esteem	0.23*	-0.06
Behavioral Self-esteem		.26*

*$p < .01$.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Means for Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem with Race, Sex and Presence of Father in Home

	Subjective Self-esteem		Behavioral Self-esteem		Social Desirability	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Race						
Black	58.93	13.35	44.46	6.39	4.56**	1.72
White	62.15	16.58	48.01	8.81	5.99**	1.72
Sex						
Male	62.18	16.24	47.60	6.33	6.00*	1.59
Female	60.74	14.92	46.61	10.78	5.18*	1.83
Father in home						
Present	61.41	15.98	47.34	8.51	7.75*	1.63
Absent	64.67	12.24	44.29	4.86	4.14*	2.55

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

and females, between blacks and whites, and between children whose fathers are present in the home and those whose fathers are absent; secondly, there are no significant differences found in behavioral self-esteem between males and females, between blacks and whites, and between children whose fathers are present in the home and those whose fathers are absent; and third, significant differences are found in mean social desirability scores between males and females, blacks and whites, and children whose fathers are present in the home and those whose fathers are not.

Biserial correlation coefficients were computed for the dichotomous variables (sex, race, and presence of father in the home), social desirability, and subjective and behavioral self-esteem. These results are presented in Table 3.

Product-moment correlation coefficients were computed for parental occupation and education with social desirability and subjective and behavioral self-esteem. As predicted, no significant relationships are found for the subjective self-esteem measure and father's occupation and education. The same lack of significance is evident for behavioral self-esteem and father's occupation and education. However, significant relationships are demonstrated for the occupation/education variables for father and social desirability. The more education obtained by the father, the more likely the child will respond in the direction of social desirability. The more prestigious the father's occupational standing, the more likely the child will respond in the direction of social desirability. These results are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 3

Biserial Correlation Coefficients for Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem with Sex, Race, and Presence of Father in Home

	Social Desirability	Subjective Self-esteem (self-rated)	Behavioral Self-esteem (teacher-rated)
Sex (male)	0.28	0.17	0.08
Race (white)	0.43	0.23	0.26
Father present in home	0.44	0.17	0.10

TABLE 4

Product-moment Correlation Coefficients for Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem, and Father's Occupational Prestige and Education

	Subjective Self-esteem	Behavioral Self-esteem	Social Desirability
	Occupation		
Father	0.07	0.16	0.26**
	Education		
Father	0.00	0.05	0.39*

*$p < .001$.

**$p < .01$.

Religion and birth order were utilized as variables representative of status in the sense of social position rather than prestige. Means were computed for these variables and social desirability, subjective self-esteem, and behavioral self-esteem. A comparison of means reveals no significant differences in either subjective or behavioral self-esteem between religious groups (due to sample size of $n = 1$, the scores for the Jewish child were not compared). However, religious affiliation appears to be a factor in terms of social desirability; a comparison of means indicates that Catholics respond more in the direction of social desirability than do Protestants. These findings are presented in Table 5.

The prediction made with reference to subjective self-esteem and birth order was not confirmed through a comparison of mean scores for each group, as no significant differences were established. Also, no significant relationship was demonstrated between behavioral self-esteem and birth order. However, a significant difference was found between children with siblings and socially desirable responses. Only children tend to respond significantly less in the direction of social desirability. These results are presented in Table 6.

The relationship between self-esteem and achievement in school formed a major area of investigation in this study. The variables considered included IQ scores (from the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Scale), and achievement scores in reading and mathematics (from the Science Research Associates [SRA] Achievement Tests). As presented in Table 7, product-moment correlations were

TABLE 5

Relationship between Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem, and Religious Denominational Affiliation

Religion	Subjective Self-esteem		Behavioral Self-esteem		Social Desirability	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Catholic	61.33	10.86	46.50	8.76	6.83*	1.17
Protestant	62.01	5.79	45.29	3.62	5.56*	0.56
Jewish	76.00		60.00		7.00	
No preference	55.00	13.50	52.33	3.78	5.83	1.94

*$p < .01$.

TABLE 6

Relationship between Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem, and Birth Order

Birth order	Subjective Self-esteem		Behavioral Self-esteem		Social Desirability	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Only child	69.43	14.32	47.14	8.11	3.71*	2.36
Eldest	60.50	16.89	47.03	7.55	5.69	1.49
Middle	60.79	15.72	48.15	7.46	5.42	1.81
Youngest	62.16	15.29	46.41	9.89	6.22	1.51

*$p < .01$.

TABLE 7

Product-moment Correlation Coefficients for Intelligence Quotient and Achievement in Reading and Mathematics and Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem and Behavioral Self-esteem

	Subjective Self-esteem	Behavioral Self-esteem	Social Desirability
Intelligence quotient	0.25**	0.26**	0.31***
Reading achievement	0.37***	0.27*	0.20*
Mathematics achievement	0.28**	0.18*	0.23*

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

***$p < .001$.

computed for each of these variables and social desirability, subjective and behavioral self-esteem. IQ appears to be a low positive correlate of both forms of self-esteem as well as social desirability. The achievement scores for both reading and mathematics are also positively related to social desirability and subjective and behavioral self-esteem.

The third major area of investigation in this study involved the relationship between self-esteem and school placement. Means and standard deviations were computed for the two self-esteem measures and social desirability with inclusion in either mainstream or special classes. As shown in Table 8, the results fail to support the prediction that those in mainstream classes score significantly higher in subjective self-esteem. However, the children in mainstream score significantly higher in behavioral self-esteem. Significant differences also are indicated between social desirability scores for those in mainstream and those in special classes. Children in mainstream classes tend to respond more in the direction of social desirability than do those who are specially-placed.

An analysis of the sociogram data was completed, with product-moment correlations computed for popularity and social desirability, subjective- and behavioral-self-esteem. As shown in Table 9, the results reveal no significant relationship between the self-esteem of children and their peer popularity. With social desirability, the correlation is a very low although statistically significant -.17, suggesting possibly that those children with higher popularity ratings tend to respond less in the direction of social desirability; i.e., are less inclined to try to "impress" others.

TABLE 8

Relationship of Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem to Placement in Mainstream or Special Classes

Placement	Subjective Self-esteem		Behavioral Self-esteem		Social Desirability	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Mainstream class	62.79	16.70	48.71*	8.85	5.65*	1.74
Special class	59.65	13.00	43.85*	5.84	4.41*	1.79

*$p < .01$.

TABLE 9

Product-moment Correlation Coefficients for Popularity (as measured by a Sociogram) and Social Desirability, Subjective Self-esteem, and Behavioral Self-esteem

	Subjective Self-esteem	Behavioral Self-esteem	Social Desirability
Popularity	0.11	0.08	-0.17*

*$p < .05$.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In viewing indices of self-esteem and social desirability, the findings of this study indicate that self-esteem as perceived subjectively and self-esteem as perceived by teachers through the child's behavior are significantly related to one another, although only to a small extent ($r = .23$; see Table 1). Therefore, extrapolations cannot be validly made from a knowledge of a single score. Although theoretically the behavioral self-esteem measure relates specifically to behavioral manifestations of the individual's subjective feelings of self-worth (Coopersmith, 1967), the correlation indicates the relative independence of the two self-esteem measures. Reviewing the items on the Behavioral Rating Form leads to the speculation that perhaps the teachers are responding to an individual's poise or to his conformity to those behaviors which are considered acceptable and appropriate within the classroom setting by both teachers and administrators.

The correlation between subjective self-esteem and social desirability ($r = -.06$; see Table 1) indicates that no significant relationship exists between the two factors as measured by the Self-Esteem Inventory. Although social desirability has been shown to be a contaminant of many attitude scales, the lack of relationship between the two Coopersmith (1967) subscales indicates that social desirability is not yet a factor in measured

self-esteem in this age population. Given that the SD subscale does in fact correlate positively with other variables and exhibits a moderate mean and standard deviation, a social desirability set is being measured. However, this set is not, according to the findings of this study, related to an individual's reports of subjective feelings of self-worth.

A low but significant correlation has been found between behavioral self-esteem and social desirability ($r = .26$; see Table 1). This can be interpreted to mean that those children who are more highly rated in behavioral self-esteem are also those who tend to respond more frequently in the direction of social desirability. Since the SD subscale appears to be significantly related to what may be loosely termed "attributes necessary for or indicative of success in school," it may be that teachers are responding to these attributes in a positive way when evaluating an individual child on the Behavioral Rating Form. Thus, the child who is bright, achieving well in school, and placed in a mainstream class will tend to be more highly evaluated on behavioral self-esteem by his teacher and will also tend to respond more frequently in the direction of social desirability.

Given the relationships (or lack of relationships) between subjective self-esteem, behavioral self-esteem, and social desirability, one may turn to the first major area of investigation in this study, that of "general societal standing." This area was broken down into component variables for analytic purposes. Focusing

on race, it was predicted that no significant differences in mean self-esteem scores would be found between black and white children. This prediction was confirmed in terms of both subjective- and behavioral-self-esteem (see Table 2). This finding is in agreement with much of the recent literature (Coleman, 1966; McCarthy & Yancey, 1971; Powell & Fuller (1970) in Rosenberg & Simmons, undated; Rosenberg, 1965; Yancey, Rigsby, & McCarthy, 1972) and stands in opposition to the more traditional assumption of low self-esteem for blacks. In terms of the theories of Cooley (1912) and Mead (1934)--the "looking-glass self"--race as a status variable within the general societal value system is not a relevant factor in the appraisals of self obtained through interaction with "significant others." Thus, the assumption that blacks per se occupy a lesser position in the society and hence should have lower self-esteem is not supported since "significant others" appear to be those involved in the intimate primary group. The findings of this study and those cited show that if individuals develop self-esteem through interaction with others, the "others" must be restricted to those involved in the primary group.

Social desirability scores were found to be significantly different for the two racial groups studied, with a higher SD score for whites. Given the significant relationships between social desirability and father's education, father's occupation, and child's IQ, it is possible that bright white children from middle-class homes have learned these socially desirable responses, whereas black children do not appear to have learned these responses to the

same extent.

There appears to be no significant difference in subjective self-esteem scores between males and females. This data supports Coopersmith's (1967) early findings. In addition, there appears to be no significant difference in behavioral self-esteem between males and females. Thus, sex per se does not appear to be a significant factor in self-esteem. However, social desirability scores indicate that males tend to respond more in the direction of social desirability than females ($\bar{x}$ for males = 6.00, $\bar{x}$ for females = 5.18).

"Social class" was defined for the purposes of this study in terms of father's occupational prestige and education. No indication was found that these two variables are related to the child's subjective or behavioral self-esteem (see Table 4). However, social desirability appears to be significantly related to both father's occupational prestige and his education. Thus, the more prestigious the occupational standing and the more education obtained by the father, the more likely the child will respond in the direction of social desirability. As noted above, these may be learned responses to the socialization pattern and values of the middle class.

According to the data, the presence or absence of father in the home does not relate to self-esteem, either subjective or behavioral, in any significant way (see Tables 2 and 3). This does not agree with Rosenberg's (1965) findings, nor does it support the

popular notion that the absence of a father negatively affects the child's feelings about himself. Caution is noted in interpreting the data from this study, however; the results are not compelling due to the small number of children with fathers absent from the home (n = 7).

Social desirability appears to be related positively and significantly to the presence of father in the home (see Tables 2 and 3). The biserial correlation coefficient is +.44 in the direction of the presence of father at home. Given the significant relationship between social desirability and father's occupational prestige and education, and given that more middle-class families are characterized by the presence of a nuclear family (father, mother, and children), the +.44 correlation coefficient between SD and presence of father in the home may offer additional support for the conjecture that it is the middle-class child who is more likely to respond in the direction of social desirability.

Being Catholic or Protestant does not appear to be a significant factor in either subjective or behavioral self-esteem (see Table 5). Due to the size of the Jewish sample (n = 1), these scores were deleted from comparisons. Essentially similar scores were reported for Catholics and Protestants, paralleling the results found by both Rosenberg (1965) and Coopersmith (1967). In terms of social desirability, however, a significant difference is indicated; Catholics tend to respond more in the direction of social desirability than do Protestants (see Table 5).

Birth order does not appear to relate significantly to either subjective- or behavioral-self-esteem. This finding includes the scores for only children as well as those with siblings, regardless of the position of the latter in the family series. Rosenberg (1965) found significantly higher self-esteem for only children; Coopersmith (1967) reported higher self-esteem scores for both only children and firstborn. The difference in findings between this study and the two cited above may in fact be due to the sample size (n = 7).

To review briefly, none of the component variables of "general societal standing" were demonstrated to relate significantly to subjective self-esteem. Neither race, sex, father's occupational prestige, father's education, presence or absence of father in the home, nor religion were found to have significant bearings on the child's self-reported feelings of self-worth. This general set of findings adds further support to the stipulation that the "significant others" so basic to the "looking-glass self" theory must be restricted to the intimate primary group if self-esteem is in fact developed through interactions with others. The presence or absence of characteristics directly related to a general societal value system is not directly related to a child's feelings of self-worth.

None of the component variables of "general societal standing" were demonstrated to relate significantly to behavioral self-esteem as evaluated by teachers. However, direct relationships

were found between social desirability and all of the component variables: sex (males), race (whites), occupational prestige and education of father, presence of father in the home, religion (Catholics), and birth order (children with siblings).

The second major area of investigation concerns the relationship between self-esteem, IQ, and achievement in school (see Table 7). The data indicate that the child's view of his self-worth (subjective self-esteem) is correlated positively with IQ, although the magnitude of the correlation is low ($r = .25$). These results support those obtained by Coopersmith (1967). Behavioral self-esteem also appears to be related significantly to IQ, although again the magnitude of the correlation is low ($r = .26$). The third correlation, that of IQ and social desirability, is also significant ($r = .31$). Thus, it appears that a slight positive relationship does exist between measured IQ, subjective- and behavioral-self-esteem scores and social desirability.

The results for achievement are similar to those for IQ (see Table 7). In reading, a significant relationship is demonstrated between achievement (as measured on the standardized SRA Achievement Test) and subjective self-esteem ($r = .37$). Mathematics achievement (as measured by the SRA Achievement Test) is similar in its relationship to subjective self-esteem, although the correlation is not as high ($r = .28$). In terms of "behavioral self-esteem," the data suggest a low but significant relationship to achievement, especially in reading ($r = .27$; in mathematics $r = .18$).

Thus, while the child who is achieving appears to feel positive about himself, he also tends to be more highly evaluated by his teachers in terms of behavioral self-esteem than his less-achieving peers.

Social desirability also appears to be positively related to achievement in reading and mathematics (see Table 7). Thus, it is the children who are achieving well who are relatively high in self-deceit or social desirability. These are also the children who are more highly evaluated by their teachers in terms of behavioral self-esteem. These findings support the relationship noted earlier between social desirability and behavioral self-esteem ($r = .26$); within the school setting a general but low relationship appears to exist between doing well in schoolwork, responding in the direction of social desirability, and being noted by teachers as having high behavioral self-esteem. The teachers appear to be responding in terms of those behaviors indicative of success in school.

In terms of the "looking-glass self" theory, if teachers are seen as members of a child's primary group and thus function as "significant others," then interaction between teachers and students will contribute to the development/maintenance of self-esteem. If the child sees the teachers' appraisals as positive, then his feelings of self-worth will be enhanced. If teachers view "successful" behavior in school as positive and hence reinforce it, they will in fact be reflecting positive appraisals of those children manifesting such behavior. Thus, the interdependency of the two

self-esteem measures and the "looking-glass self" theory can be conjectured.

The third major area of investigation in this study deals with the relationship between self-esteem and class placement within the school setting (see Table 8). In view of labeling theory, the children in mainstream education should express a higher subjective self-esteem than those placed in a special classroom. The data concerning this relationship do not, in this study, support this proposition. Although the mean SEI score for mainstream children is slightly higher than that for the Title I children, the difference is not significant. One could conjecture that because traditional special education classes are also found in this school, the Title I children are therefore not perceived (or do not perceive themselves) as being as "deficient" as those in the classes for the mentally retarded. Therefore, the contrast between Title I and mainstream is not as pronounced. One could also speculate that the specific educational programs ongoing in the Title I classes are perceived by the participating children as being "more enjoyable" than the typical approach to academic subject matter, due to the "task-success" orientation of the prevocational curriculum. In other words, subject matter content is taught through sequential tasks designed to facilitate successful accomplishment of each and thus reduce the possibility of feelings of failure. In order to test this hypothesis, self-esteem scores would be needed prior to placement in Title I in addition to scores obtained shortly after

placement. If a substantial difference in mean scores occurred, then possibly the act of placement itself could be seen as involved with lowered self-esteem. If self-esteem scores were also obtained after a lengthy period in the Title I class, and these scores returned to the level measured prior to placement, then one could surmise that the act of placement resulted in a temporary and situational lowering of self-esteem. In essence, the presumed negative effects of labeling on self-esteem would not be seen as ongoing.

A third speculation concerning the results of this study involves the variable of the teacher's interactions with the children in the Title I classes. If, according to the "looking-glass self" theory, the teacher is perceived by the child as a "significant other," and if the teacher interacts with the child in such a way that the child perceives the reflected appraisals as positive, then this supportive interaction would enhance (or maintain) the child's self-esteem and thus preclude placement in Title I from negatively affecting the student.

Still dealing with the "looking-glass self" theory, one could speculate that placement per se does not affect children of this age population as long as those defined as "significant others" maintain positive appraisals of the child. Thus, if teachers are not construed as part of the intimate primary group, their appraisals--whether positive or negative--will have little effect on the child's self-esteem. For this age group, possibly parent(s) and best friend(s) comprise the child's "significant others" rather

than a larger group including school personnel and classroom population as a whole. If this is the case, then the appraisals derived from parent and friend will have impact upon self-esteem, but the more general and abstracted concept of placement may have in fact no relevance to the child's perceptions of himself. In essence, "placement" here may function as a component of "general societal values," and thus have little or no effect on self-esteem (as appears to be true of race, sex, father's education and occupational prestige, et cetera).

In terms of behavioral self-esteem, the mean scores for mainstream and Title I children are 48.7 and 43.9, respectively, which is significant at the .01 level. The biserial correlation coefficient is .21 in the direction of mainstream placement. Thus, teachers have very slightly higher evaluations of those students who have not been placed in special classrooms. Given the definition of the special classroom as a place for the "educationally handicapped" who are below grade level in achievement, this finding is consistent with the positive relationship between behavioral self-esteem and school achievement.

Social desirability also appears to be positively related to placement in mainstream classrooms (see Table 8). The mean SD scores are 5.6 for the mainstream children and 4.4 for those in Title I, which is significant at the .01 level. A biserial correlation coefficient of .62 was also computed in the direction of mainstream placement. This supports the general pattern noted

earlier in this discussion; the child who is bright, achieving well in school, from a middle-class background, and white is also the child who tends to respond more in the direction of social desirability. Since these characteristics are more true of mainstream children than they are of the Title I students (especially achievement and race), the positive relationship between mainstream placement and social desirability is an expected one. The general relationships demonstrated between social desirability and father's occupational prestige and education, presence of father in the home, achievement in school, and placement in mainstream class indicate that social desirability is most frequently an attribute of the child who is by environment and circumstance in a situation characterized by "middle class." Thus, one could speculate that it is the prevailing values/socialization pattern characteristic of the middle class that gives rise to social desirability.

In brief, reviewing the data regarding placement in mainstream as opposed to special classes, the children in mainstream classes tend to have slightly higher subjective self-esteem scores, tend to be more highly rated on behavioral self-esteem, and tend to very markedly respond more in the direction of social desirability.

The final relationship viewed in this study was that between self-esteem subscales, social desirability, and popularity as measured by a sociogram (see Table 9). No significant relationship was demonstrated between subjective self-esteem and peer

evaluation, which parallelled the findings of Coopersmith (1967). Furthermore, no significant relationship was demonstrated between behavioral self-esteem and peer evaluation. This finding is in opposition to that of Coopersmith, who found that popularity tended to be positively related to behavioral self-esteem. In terms of social desirability, a very low but significant negative correlation was computed for popularity and the SD scores ($r = -.17$). Thus, to some slight extent the more popular children do not tend to respond in the direction of social desirability as frequently as their less-popular peers. The total popularity findings, especially the lack of relationship between subjective self-esteem and peer evaluation, are somewhat inconsistent with the "looking-glass self" theory. If peers are considered as significant others and if their appraisals are construed as negative (an extrapolation from the sociogram), then these children should presumably evidence lower self-esteem than those whose popularity ratings are high and who therefore can construe their peers' appraisals as positive. Given all of the journalistic observations as well as some quantified evidence (Miyamoto & Dornbusch, 1956) this finding is more than a little surprising. Two possible explanations are that children at this age either do not "pick up" peer evaluations or, if they do, are unaffected by them in terms of their own personal feelings of self-worth.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study was designed as an inquiry into the correlates of self-esteem. There were three general areas investigated: the relationship of self-esteem to "general societal standing," to IQ and achievement in school, and to specialized class placement within a school setting. For the purposes of this research, the working definition of self-esteem was that of Coopersmith (1967)--"a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself [p. 5]."

The instruments used in this study were the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, which provided scores for both subjective self-esteem and social desirability; the Behavioral Rating Form, which provided a rating of self-esteem given a child by his teacher; and a Data Sheet, which provided personal information on each of the children. Thus, for each of the 111 fifth-grade students participating in this study, three measures of self-esteem were collected--subjective self-esteem, behavioral self-esteem, and social desirability. The students involved attend a rural county elementary school in southeastern Virginia, and include those children enrolled in regular or mainstream fifth-grade classes and those enrolled in self-contained Title I classrooms for the educationally handicapped which were structured around a prevocational curriculum.

Analysis of the three measures of self-esteem utilized in this study indicates that self-esteem as perceived subjectively and self-esteem as perceived by teachers (as evidenced by the child's behavior) are related to one another only to a slight extent ($r = .23$). The relative independence of the two measures is supported by the low magnitude of the correlation. Nor is subjective self-esteem related significantly to social desirability as measured by the SEI. Although the data reveal that a social desirability set is being measured, it apparently is not related to the individual child's report of subjective feelings of self-worth. However, social desirability does show a slight but significant relationship to behavioral self-esteem. Thus, the child who is rated more highly on behavioral self-esteem is also the child who will tend to respond more frequently in the direction of social desirability.

The first general area of investigation examined the relationship of self-esteem to "general societal standing." It was predicted that no significant differences in mean subjective and behavioral self-esteem scores would be found between black and white children. This prediction was supported by the data in this study.

It was predicted that no significant differences would be found in mean subjective and behavioral self-esteem scores between males and females. Isolation of the variable, sex, supported the prediction.

Another focus in terms of "general societal standing" was that of social class, which was defined for the purposes of this study through father's occupational prestige and education. Again, it was predicted that no significant differences would be found in mean subjective or behavioral self-esteem scores between children with fathers who are low on the occupational prestige scale and have less education and those children whose fathers rank high in occupational prestige and education. This prediction was confirmed by the data in this study.

Religious denominational affiliation was employed as a variable in "general societal standing." No significant differences in mean subjective and behavioral self-esteem scores were predicted for Catholics and Protestants. The differences were not statistically significant.

A positive relationship was predicted between subjective self-esteem and birth order for firstborn and/or only children. This prediction was not supported by the findings of this study, possibly due to sample size ($n = 7$). In addition, no significant differences were found for behavioral self-esteem and birth order, whether only child, firstborn, or positioned later in the sequence of siblings.

No initial prediction was made concerning subjective and behavioral self-esteem and presence or absence of father in the home. According to the data, the presence or absence of father in the home does not relate to either subjective or behavioral self-esteem

in any significant way. These results, however, are not compelling due to the small number of children with fathers absent from the home (n = 7).

In sum, none of the component variables of "general societal standing" were demonstrated to relate significantly to subjective or behavioral self-esteem--race, sex, father's occupational prestige, father's education, religious denominational affiliation, birth order, or presence of father in the home. This set of findings, while contradicting some of the literature, does support the "looking-glass self" theory which states that one's feelings about oneself are derived from interaction with "significant others." These findings support the primary group nature of "significant others," demonstrating that the presence or absence of characteristics directly related to an abstract societal value system are not, in and of themselves, directly related to a child's feelings of self-worth.

The data from this study concerning social desirability and "general societal standing" reveal a somewhat different picture from that which emerged from the analysis of the relationship of "general societal standing" to subjective and behavioral self-esteem. Direct relationships were found between social desirability and all of the component variables: sex (males), race (white), occupational prestige and education of father (higher), presence of father in the home, religion (Catholic), and birth order (children with siblings). It is suggested that children from "typical

middle-class homes" have learned to respond more frequently in the direction of what is considered in a middle-class value scheme to be socially desirable. It is further suggested that this socially desirable "ideal" is inculcated through the socialization process.

The second general area of investigation in this study was directed toward analyzing the relationships between self-esteem and IQ and achievement in school. The data demonstrate, as predicted, that a positive relationship exists between subjective self-esteem and measured IQ, although the magnitude of the correlation is low. In addition, a low but significant positive relationship also exists between measured IQ and behavioral self-esteem. Thus, it appears that the child whose subjective self-esteem and behavioral self-esteem scores are somewhat higher is also the child whose measured IQ is somewhat higher.

The results for achievement in school are similar to those for IQ. The data support the prediction of a positive relationship between subjective self-esteem and achievement in reading and in mathematics, although the magnitude of the correlation with mathematics is somewhat lower than that for reading. The findings of this study also demonstrate a low but significant relationship between behavioral self-esteem and achievement in reading and mathematics, although the correlation for mathematics is again lower than that for reading. Thus, it appears that the child who is achieving well also seems to feel positive about his self-worth, and

at the same time also tends to be more highly evaluated by his teachers in terms of behavioral self-esteem than his less-achieving peers. The findings of this study also indicate a similar pattern for social desirability. A positive relationship appears to exist between social desirability, measured IQ, and achievement in reading and mathematics in school.

The third major area of investigation in this study concerns the relationship of self-esteem to placement in school. The results here are surprising. With reference to the concepts of labeling theory, it was predicted that a significant difference in mean subjective self-esteem scores would be found between children in mainstream classes and those in the Title I "special" classes. The results do not support this prediction. Although the mean SEI scores for the two groups of children are slightly different, with the mainstream children scoring higher, the difference is not significant. Apparently, then, placement of the child in a special class is unrelated to feelings of self-worth as reported by the subjective self-esteem measure. Placement may in fact be similar to other components of "general societal standing" in its effects, and thus not be a critical factor in terms of the reflected appraisals of significant others as indicated in the "looking-glass self" theory.

With regard to behavioral self-esteem, the results of this study indicate that teachers tend to have very slightly higher evaluations of the mainstream children than of those placed in

special classrooms. Since the Title I classrooms were designed for the educationally handicapped child who was working below grade level, and since behavioral self-esteem appears to be positively related to school achievement, this finding is not surprising. Social desirability also appears to be related positively to mainstream placement. Given the positive relationship between social desirability and achievement in school, this finding is also not surprising.

The final relationship considered in this study is that of self-esteem and popularity as measured by a sociogram. No significant relationship was demonstrated between subjective self-esteem and popularity, nor between behavioral self-esteem and popularity. For social desirability, a very low but significant negative relationship was demonstrated, indicating that to some slight extent, those children who are more popular with their classmates (within the confines of their specific classroom) do not tend to respond in a socially desirable direction as frequently as their less-popular peers. The popularity findings, especially concerning subjective self-esteem, are somewhat surprising in light of the "looking-glass self" theory. One would expect that the children who were more highly evaluated by their classmates--i.e., were more "popular"--would, therefore, manifest higher self-esteem as a result of positive reflected appraisals. However, given the age of these children, it is possible that those who are considered to be "significant others" are parents and other members of their

immediate families as well as peers who may not in fact be enrolled in the same classroom.

The general findings of this study support the proposition that a child's "general societal standing"--those attributes which are ascribed to him--have little effect on his self-esteem, either subjective or behavioral. His measured IQ and achievement in school do appear to be related positively to self-esteem. Within the confines of the school, his placement in mainstream as opposed to special classes appears to be unrelated to subjective self-esteem, although placement in mainstream is related to some slight extent to the teacher's behavioral rating of self-esteem. Popularity as measured by a classroom sociogram does not appear to affect self-esteem, either subjective or behavioral.

The findings for social desirability demonstrate that the child who is male, white, in mainstream classes, has a higher measured IQ, is achieving well in school and from a middle-class background tends to respond more in the direction of social desirability than do his peers. These general relationships indicate that social desirability appears most frequently as an attribute of the middle-class child. It is, therefore, suggested that it is the socialization pattern reflecting the prevailing values most characteristic of the middle class that gives rise to social desirability.

Appendix

Appendix

Data Sheet

Name _____

1. Sex Male _____ Female _____

2. Race White _____ Black _____ Oriental _____

Indian_____ Spanish-American_____ Other_____

3. Religion (be as specific as possible) _____

4. IQ _____ Name of Test _____

5. Achievement Scores: Name of Test _____

Reading _____

Spelling _____

Arithmetic _____

_____

6. Occupation of parents:

Father _____

Is he regularly employed?

Yes _____ No _____ Unknown _____

Mother _____

Is she regularly employed?

Yes _____ No _____ Unknown _____

7. Distribution of siblings in family:

Only child___ No older siblings ___

Older and younger siblings___ No younger siblings___

8. Father present in home:

Yes _____ No _____

9. Other adults in home besides mother and father: Identify

Yes _____

No _____

10. Education of parent (if known):

Grade completed--mother _____

Grade completed--father _____

Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)

Name _____

Please mark each statement in the following way:

If the statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Like Me."

If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Unlike Me."

There are no right or wrong answers.

		Like Me	Unlike Me
1.	I spend a lot of time daydreaming.	_____	_____
2.	I'm pretty sure of myself.	_____	_____
3.	I often wish I were someone else.	_____	_____
4.	I'm easy to like.	_____	_____
5.	My parents and I have a lot of fun together.	_____	_____
*6.	I never worry about anything.	_____	_____
7.	I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.	_____	_____
8.	I wish I were younger.	_____	_____
9.	There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.	_____	_____
10.	I can make up my mind without too much trouble.	_____	_____
11.	I'm a lot of fun to be with.	_____	_____

		Like Me	Unlike Me
12.	I get upset easily at home.	_____	_____
*13.	I always do the right thing.	_____	_____
14.	I'm proud of my school work.	_____	_____
15.	Someone always has to tell me what to do.	_____	_____
16.	It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.	_____	_____
17.	I'm often sorry for the things I do.	_____	_____
18.	I'm popular with kids my own age.	_____	_____
19.	My parents usually consider my feelings.	_____	_____
*20.	I'm never unhappy.	_____	_____
21.	I'm doing the best work that I can.	_____	_____
22.	I give in very easily.	_____	_____
23.	I can usually take care of myself.	_____	_____
24.	I'm pretty happy.	_____	_____
25.	I would rather play with children younger than me.	_____	_____
26.	My parents expect too much of me.	_____	_____
*27.	I like everyone I know.	_____	_____
28.	I like to be called on in class.	_____	_____
29.	I understand myself.	_____	_____
30.	It's pretty tough to be me.	_____	_____
31.	Things are all mixed up in my life.	_____	_____
32.	Kids usually follow my ideas.	_____	_____

		Like Me	Unlike Me
33.	No one pays much attention to me at home.	_____	_____
*34.	I never get scolded.	_____	_____
35.	I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.	_____	_____
36.	I can make up my mind and stick to it.	_____	_____
37.	I really don't like being a boy--girl.	_____	_____
38.	I have a low opinion of myself.	_____	_____
39.	I don't like to be with other people.	_____	_____
40.	There are many times when I'd like to leave home.	_____	_____
*41.	I'm never shy.	_____	_____
42.	I often feel upset in school.	_____	_____
43.	I often feel ashamed of myself.	_____	_____
44.	I'm not as nice looking as most people.	_____	_____
45.	If I have something to say, I usually say it.	_____	_____
46.	Kids pick on me very often.	_____	_____
47.	My parents understand me.	_____	_____
*48.	I always tell the truth.	_____	_____
49.	My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.	_____	_____
50.	I don't care what happens to me.	_____	_____
51.	I'm a failure.	_____	_____

	Like Me	Unlike Me
52. I get upset easily when I'm scolded.	_____	_____
53. Most people are better liked than I am.	_____	_____
54. I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.	_____	_____
*55. I always know what to say to people.	_____	_____
56. I often get discouraged in school.	_____	_____
57. Things don't usually bother me.	_____	_____
58. I can't be depended on.	_____	_____

Of all the people in your class, who is your best friend?_____

After that person, who is your next best friend?_____

After that person, who is your third best friend?_____

*Item on the social desirability subscale.

Behavioral Rating Form

Name _____

1. Does this child adapt easily to new situations, feel comfortable in new settings, enter easily into new activities?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

2. Does this child hesitate to express his opinions, as evidenced by extreme caution, failure to contribute, or a subdued manner in speaking situations?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

3. Does this child become upset by failures or other strong stresses as evidenced by such behaviors as pouting, whining, or withdrawing?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

4. How often is this child chosen for activities by his classmates? Is his companionship sought for and valued?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

5. Does this child become alarmed or frightened easily? Does he become very restless or jittery when procedures are changed, exams are scheduled or strange individuals are in the room?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

6. Does this child seek much support and reassurance from his peers or the teacher, as evidenced by seeking their nearness or frequent inquiries as to whether he is doing well?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

7. When this child is scolded or criticized, does he become either very aggressive or very sullen and withdrawn?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

8. Does this child deprecate his school work, grades, activities, and work products? Does he indicate he is not doing as well as expected?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

9. Does this child show confidence and assurance in his actions toward his teachers and classmates?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

10. To what extent does this child show a sense of self-esteem, self-respect, and appreciation of his own worthiness?

___very strong ___strong ___medium ___mild ___weak

11. Does this child publicly brag or boast about his exploits?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

12. Does this child attempt to dominate or bully other children?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

13. Does this child continually seek attention, as evidenced by such behaviors as speaking out of turn and making unnecessary noises?

___always ___usually ___sometimes ___seldom ___never

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