Parental self-actualization and child's self-concept

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Parental self-actualization and child's self-concept

by

Mark Edwin King

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INTRODUCTION

Self-Actualization

Historically, the social scientists, in both Europe and the Americas, have concerned themselves with the study of mankind in two modes of existence. Students within the fields of experimental child development, experimental psychology and sociology have primarily been concerned with the study of the normal person. They have studied average behavior as it occurs within the context of experimental conditions, or a segment of behavior chosen from the everyday lived experiences of the subject(s). Clinical psychologists (including clinical child psychologists) have focused the scientific eye on abnormal behavior - abnormal in a negative direction, which we refer to as pathology. Just recently in America, with the emerging popularity of "The Third Force Psychology" (Goble, 1970), students of the social sciences have begun to rigorously investigate the behavior of those persons whose existence can be described as abnormal - but abnormal in a positive direction. These people are considered better developed (as opposed to better adjusted) than most people and have moved closer than the average person toward their fullest possible potential.

This new concern in the social sciences for an existence that surpasses normalcy is deeply rooted in philosophical thought. The idea of surpassing the everyday mode of living as we now know it is often discussed by the two philosophical schools of thought which are probably the most widely followed in the world today - Marxism (Koren, 1967) and
Existentialism (May, Angel and Ellenberger, 1958). While the basic ideas of these two systems are often opposed to each other (economic determination vs. individual free will), and while the tools to reaching the goal are very different (political revolution vs. individual responsibility), the goals for people can be seen as similar to each other and similar to those discussed in the American psychology of Allport (1969), Maslow (1971) and Rogers (1959).

Marx's basic idea of the authentic person is that this person has a "need" to move forward toward progressive self-realization. "To be man is to become man" (Koren, 1967, p. 25). This can be seen in both individual and collective people; however, both individual people and individual societies move at differing rates so that at any given moment, some people are closer to self-realization than others.

Soren Kierkegaard (1944) is generally regarded as the father of Existential thought. He deals in depth with the concept of anxiety. He sees the goal of people not as adjusting so as to become less anxious, but rather, as growing by using anxiety to move toward freedom and full development as human beings. He says, "anxiety is always understood as oriented toward freedom" (p. 138). Kierkegaard says that people's true vocation is to will to be themselves. He further states that most people retreat to "shut in" conditions to avoid the responsibility of freedom, but that the healthy individual moves ahead to actualize his freedom.

The Existential writer who has probably written the most extensively about this topic is the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's famous Superman or Higherman (Kaufman, 1954) is, simply
simply stated, that person who comes close to reaching his or her full potential. (This idea is remarkably similar to the writings of Rogers and Maslow 75 years later.) Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power"

...implies the self-realization of the individual in the fullest sense. It requires the courageous living out of the individual's potentialities in his own particular existence.... Man's task is simple: he should cease letting his existence be a thoughtless accident.... The fundamental drive rather is to live out one's potential (Kaufman, 1950, p. 169).

Since the 1950's, there have been a group of American psychologists who have been influenced by Existential Philosophy, and who have become increasingly influential within the social sciences. Among other aspects, they have emphasized the importance of the scientific study of the healthy personality. Among these psychologists have been Gordon Allport (1969); Combs and Snygg (1959); Abraham Maslow (1971); who has exerted the most important theoretical influence on the present study; and Carl Rogers, who has developed a model of the "fully functioning person" (1969).

Maslow calls his model of the healthy personality the self-actualizing personality because his personality is always an on-going process rather than a completed product. He began his study by trying to understand the mode of existence of two of his teachers (Ruth Benedict and Max Wertheimer). He did this because "these two people were so different from the run-of-the-mill people in the world" (1971, p. 41). In general terms, he states that self-actualization consists of:
...the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, potentialities, etc. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the very best they are capable of doing. They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable (Maslow, 1950, p. 12).

The increasing interest in and importance of the self-actualizing personality to the social sciences can be seen in the 1972 Psychological Abstracts (Volumes 47 and 48) where over 50 doctoral dissertations and many journal articles dealing with this concept are reported. The increased interest by the general population is demonstrated by the fact that, at the time of this writing, the best selling fiction book in the country is the story of a bird named Jonathan Livingston Seagull, who tries to develop his fullest possible potential (Bach, 1970).

Self-Concept

Ruth Wylie (1961), in her often cited review of the literature on self-concept, concludes that persons with a positive self-concept are generally conceded to be better adjusted overall than are persons with more negative self-concepts. More recent research has verified her conclusions (e.g. Nohinsky, 1966; Sears, 1970; and Smith and Teevan, 1971). Self-concept can then be considered an important personality trait, very much interrelated to one's existence in the world.

Many personality theorists have something to say about the development and maintenance of the self. Some of these theorists, Karen Horney (1942); Abraham Maslow (1963); and H. S. Sullivan (1953), consider the
self as a major construct in their respective theories. According to Hall and Lindzey (1957), Carl Rogers has presented the most developed statement of self-theory.

Rogers' theory (1951) focuses on the relationship between three important concepts: self, organism and phenomenal field. The nature of these three concepts and their interrelationships are best described by 33 propositions developed by Rogers and presented in Koch (1959). A brief summary of these detailed propositions follows. The organism (which is the total individual) reacts to the phenomenal field (the totality of experience) to satisfy its needs. The one basic motive or need of the organism is to actualize, maintain and enhance itself (this Rogers originally called the "growth principle"). This basic need is considered an innate characteristic of the organism, and all other needs are only reflections of this one basic need. The organism may symbolize its experiences so that they become conscious, it may deny the experiences' symbolization so that they remain unconscious, or it may simply ignore the experiences.

The self develops out of the individual's interactions with his environment (particularly other persons). As the organism experiences impulses and expresses behaviors, other persons in its environment react to these behaviors. It is this feedback or reaction to behavior which helps develop the self. According to Sullivan (1953), particularly important to the child's developing self is the feedback from "significant others". To the pre-adolescent child, the most significant "significant others" are the child's parents. It seems important to study the
relationship between parent and child relevant to the child's self-concept development.

Statement of the Problem

The present investigation is an attempt to study the relationship between self-actualizing traits of the parents and the self-concept of their junior high school aged child (children). While the ages of the children are controlled and limited in the present study, the author has a professional commitment to the study of the developmental aspect of personality. It is hoped that the present study can become part of a larger project in which the unfolding aspect of the relationship will be investigated.

Personality traits are not developed or maintained in an inter-psychic vacuum but, rather, are influenced by a whole network of social-psychological variables. The present study will investigate how one of these variables, differing sex combinations of parent and child, might influence the relationship between parental self-actualizing traits and the self-concept of the child. There is some research evidence to indicate that this variable may have an influence on the relationship (e.g. Bledsoe, 1964; Richmond, Mason, and Padgett, 1970).

The specific null hypotheses to be tested are:

1. No significant relationship exists between self-actualizing traits of parents and their child's self-concept.

2. No significant difference exists in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-Concept

How a person sees himself and how he feels about what he sees is usually referred to as the person's self-concept, self-esteem or level of self-acceptance. In the literature all of these terms are used, often interchangeably. For the purpose of this literature review all perceptions and feelings about oneself will be referred to as self-concept. A person's self-concept is an important personality variable very much interrelated with all other aspects of the person's existence. This has been supported by literally hundreds of studies. It seems appropriate here to review a sample of these studies, particularly those directly related to the present investigation.

Wylie (1961), in her well-known review of all the self-concept literature (excluding the last decade), concludes that persons with a positive self-concept are generally conceded to be better adjusted than are persons with more negative self-concepts. McDonald (1968), in a more recent review of the literature, states that many recent studies have emphasized the pervasiveness of the self-concept. He cites 18 studies published in the mid-60's to support this statement.

Fromm (1939), in one of his early writings, theorizes that attitudes one holds towards oneself are reflected in the attitudes held towards others. This is supported by the research of Sheerer (cited in Rogers, 1949) and Stock (1949), both of whom did clinical studies having judges
analyze tape recordings of persons undergoing client-centered therapy. They reported that an individual's acceptance of himself is positively related to the degree to which he accepts others (no statistics cited).

Three of the early studies relating self-concept to personality adjustment report somewhat conflicting results. Hanlan, Hofstaetter and O'Connor (1954) studied 60 eighth-grade students using a q-sort of self-reference items and the California Test of Personality. A significant positive correlation \( r = + .46 \) between self-concept and a good overall adjustment was found. Block and Thomas (1955) had 56 college freshman q-sort 80 self-reference items using self, ideal-self discrepancy as the self-concept measure and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory as the adjustment measure. The correlations between the self-concept score and the different M.M.P.I. sub-scales ranges from \( r = - .30 \) to \( r = + .84 \) with a mean of \( r = + .64 \) (12 of 14 scales were significantly related to the self-concept measure). They found the very low and the very high self-concept subjects to be less well adjusted than the moderate self-concept subjects. Chodorkoff (1954) had 30 male undergraduate students q-sort 125 self-descriptive statements, first for perceived self and then, one or two days later, for ideal self. He used two projective tests (the Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach Inkblot Test) to measure adjustment. He reported a curvilinear relationship between self-concept and adjustment that was opposite that reported by Block and Thomas (1955). Both the very high and the very low self-concept subjects achieved better adjustment scores than did the moderate self-concept subjects. The issue of the equivalence of the subjects and
instruments may account for some of the differences in results between the studies, and makes any comparisons difficult.

Many studies have reported a relationship between a low self-concept and psychological pathology. Bruce (1958) studied 86 sixth-grade children (40 boys; 46 girls) by having them make statements about themselves and then having experts rate the statements as to positiveness or negativeness of self-concept. He also gave the subjects the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale. He reported a significant relationship between negative self-concept and high anxiety. Mitchell (1959) studied 100 female college students using the Bills Index of Adjustment and Values as the self-concept measure and the Taylor's Manifest Anxiety Scale, and reported results similar to Bruce. Low self-concept was significantly associated with high anxiety. Bills (1954) found that low self-concept is associated with depression. He used the Bills Index of Adjustment and Values and the Rorschach Inkblot Test together with Beck's scoring system to check for signs of depression. Of the six indicators of depression, five were related to low self-concept (P < .06). Nohinsky (1966) had 40 control subjects from the general population and 68 hospitalized psychiatric patients q-sort 100 self-reference statements that had been pre-rated in terms of whether each represented high or low self-concept. He reported that the control subjects had a slightly higher self-concept (significant at P < .20 level) than did the hospitalized patients.

A relationship between self-concept and school achievement also has been reported both for college students and younger children.
Borislow (1962) reported that students who are underachievers possess a more negative picture of themselves as students both prior and subsequent to academic performance than do achievers. He used 197 college freshman as his subjects. Self-concept was measured using Fiedler's 24 item adjective check list which was rated by the students using Osgood's Semantic Differential Format. Achievement was measured as the relation between grade point average after one year and aptitude test scores. Courson (1968) studied 64 high school students in a private Florida high school. Each student was rated by three teachers in terms of personal adequacy shown in the classroom. Perceived self was measured by the use of two projective essays assigned in an English class (two raters examined each essay; a high inter-rated and inter-essay reliability was reported). The essays were rated for four factors: 1) degree of positive feelings towards self; 2) degree to which subject felt widely identified with others; 3) degree to which subject was open to his experience; and 4) sum of scores for 1-3 above. A high significant correlation was found between all four of the above and the teacher ratings.

Sears (1970) used the Sears Self-Concept Inventory to measure the self-concept of 84 sixth-grade girls and 75 sixth-grade boys. He found that a high self-concept was significantly related to reading ability for both boys and girls (both \( r = .28 \)) and arithmetic ability for boys (\( r = .26 \)) but not for girls. Brookover, Thomas and Patterson (1964) studied 50 seventh-graders and found a significant positive relationship between self-concept (as measured by a q-sort of self-reference items)
and academic performance. They also found that specific self-concepts of ability, which differ from a general self-concept of ability, are related to specific areas of a child's role performance. Wyer (1965) had 525 male and 619 female university freshman and their parents go through an adjective check list rated to measure self-acceptance and parental acceptance. Academic effectiveness was measured by the difference between the grade point average after one semester and scholastic aptitude test scores. Wyer reported academic effectiveness related to self-concept of males (P < 0.05) but not females; and maternal acceptance among males (P < 0.01) but not females.

I have tried to give some support to my statement that the self-concept is an important personality trait very much related to other personality traits and behaviors and does not exist as an isolated variable. Even though the results of the studies are often confusing, sometimes even conflicting with each other, Smith and Teevan (1971), in a recent review article, conclude that while the exact nature of the relationship between self-satisfaction and adjustment has by no means been definitely established, the weight of evidence favors a positive, lineal relationship.

Relationship between Parental Behaviors and Personality Traits and Children's Self-Concept

One of the operating assumptions guiding the current research project is that the self-concept development of a child is influenced, at least to some extent, by the child's interactions with his or her
parents. This common sense idea is supported by the theory of Horney (1945, 1950), Mead (1934), and Rosenberg (1965). The theory of self-consistency (Lecky, 1945) which states that the self-concept is formed early in life, is influenced by factors important to a young child (i.e., parents) and then remains a fairly stable personality characteristic, is supported by experimental evidence. Engle (1959) did a two-year study using 104 sixth-grade and 64 eighth-grade subjects. She had the subjects q-sort self-reference items twice, two years apart. She reported a .78 correlation between the two self-concept tests and indicated that the stability of the self-concept was independent of the age or sex of the children. Carlson (1965) measured, longitudinally, the stability of self-concept during adolescence for 60 subjects. He defined self-concept in two ways: 1) social orientation (salience of interpersonal experiences in the individual's conception of himself;) and 2) personal orientation (conceptions of self independent of concern for social experiences). His self-concept score consisted of the discrepancy score between perceived self and ideal self ratings on 50 self-reference items. Carlson found 1) a sex orientation difference (girls were socially oriented while boys were personally oriented) and 2) high stability between first and last testing of self-concept for both sexes over a six-year period of time. Coopersmith (1967) developed his own self-concept measure which consists of 50 self-reference statements relative to school, family, peers and general social activities. These statements were rated by psychologists as indicating a high or low self-concept. The test-retest reliability of this instrument after a five-week
interval with a sample of 30 fifth-grade children was .88, and the correlation between tests after a three-year interval using a different sample of 56 children was .70. He concludes this suggests that at some time preceding middle childhood, the individual arrives at a general appraisal of his worth, which remains relatively stable over a period of several years.

The only serious challenge to the idea that parents play an important part in the personality development of their children is the work of Van Den Berg (1972), Dubious Maternal Affection, recently translated into English. Van Den Berg suggests that there are social and economic reasons (for example, the importance of keeping women out of the labor market) influencing the way parent-child interaction research is investigated and interpreted. While Van Den Berg is a respected theorist, particularly in Europe, and while this work merits serious consideration, the weight of logic, theory and research in its present state contradicts his findings.

One way to look at the topic of parent-child relations as it concerns self-concept development is to examine this relationship when there are problems with the self-concept development. Psychopathology is considered by Erikson (1968) and Rogers (1947) as either a lack of identity or the development of a negative identity. Much has been written concerning the relationship between certain behaviors or personality traits of the parents and problems, such as psychopathology, for the child. One of the most often cited examples of this relationship is the concept of the "double bind" (Bateson, Jackson, Haley and
Weakland, 1956) and its relationship to childhood schizophrenia. The double bind is essentially a set of parental behaviors which leave the child in a position wherein he or she can never do the right thing. Bateson et al. (1963) and Olson (1972) describe in detail the double bind situation. Briefly, these three conditions must occur: 1) the child is involved in an intense relationship, one that is important to him or her; 2) the child is caught in a situation wherein the other person is expressing two orders or messages at once, one of which contradicts the other; and 3) the child is unable or not allowed to comment on the messages being expressed. In a recent article Stein (1973) presents a detailed case history showing how parental behaviors (including "double bind" behaviors) can be directly related to the development of a schizophrenic child. Sanua (1961), in a review article, cites over 30 studies relating childhood schizophrenia to parent-child interactions. Singer and Wynne (1963, 1965) did clinical case studies, first using clinic patients and later projective techniques, to determine pathology. They showed that parental behaviors that expressed depression, tension or lack of alertness were related to pathological behaviors of the child. They also found that communication styles, especially patterns for handling attention and meaning, were deficient in families of pathological children.

Peterson, Becker, Hellmar, Shoemaker and Guay (1959) interviewed 60 parents, 31 of whom had children in a child guidance clinic and 29 control parents, for one hour and then rated them on 17 of the 30 subscales on the Fels Behavior Rating Scale. They reported five specific
findings as follows:

1) The attitudes of fathers were found to be at least as intimately related as the attitudes of mothers to the occurrence and form of maladjustive tendencies among children.

2) Both mothers and fathers of children who displayed adjustment difficulties were judged to be less well adjusted and sociable, less democratic, and to experience more disciplinary contention than the parents of children with no manifest problems.

3) Clinic fathers were regarded as more prone to offer suggestions, and tended toward extremes along a dimension of activity and organization in the conduct of their affairs.

4) Personality problems among children in the clinic group were found to be relatively independent of maternal attitudes, but appeared to be related to autocratic attitudes and lack of parental concern among fathers.

5) Conduct problems were associated with general maladjustment among mothers in the clinic group, and with evident permissiveness and disciplinary ineffectuality on the part of fathers.

It seems appropriate, in terms of the evidence presented relative to the relationship between parents and psychopathology of their children to summarize the state or the area with a quote from Erikson (1968).
...The oppressor has a vested interest in the negative identity of the oppressed because that negative identity is a project of his own unconscious negative identity - a project which, up to a point, makes him feel superior and also, in a little way, whole (p. 304).

There have been a few studies relating the behavior, attitudes, and personality of parents with the self-concept of their normal or healthy children. Sears (1970) said that before Coopersmith's Antecedents of Self-Esteem (1967), there was little information on the relationship of child-rearing practices to self-esteem. The majority of the studies to be reviewed were preceded by Coopersmith and he is cited in them so, in a sense, his investigation can be considered a classic study even though his work has yet to stand the test of time. Coopersmith studied 85 pre-adolescent boys using his own self-concept test. He also had the mothers of these subjects complete an 80 item questionnaire dealing with parental attitudes and practices. He then interviewed each mother for two and one-half hours and had the subject child answer a series of questions about how he perceived his parents' attitudes and practices of child-rearing. His findings were: 1) mothers of high self-esteem children have a higher self-concept than mothers of low or moderate self-esteem children (p < .01); 2) high self-esteem boys have fathers who are more active and supporting of the mother in child-rearing practices than do low or moderate self-esteem boys (p < .05); and 3) in terms of child-rearing behaviors, the mixture of clear and enforced limits set for the child by the parent, but with considerable freedom of choice for the child within those limits, is associated with high
self-esteem of the child.

Sears (1970) studied 84 sixth-grade girls and 75 sixth-grade boys whose mothers had been interviewed seven years earlier as a part of another research project. He gave the subjects a revised Sears Self-Concept Inventory. He found that warmth by at least one parent was associated with a high self-concept for the child. He broke the subjects into four groups: those having both parents who displayed warmth toward them, those with a warm father and a cold mother, those with a warm mother and a cold father, and those with both parents labeled cold in their parent-child interaction. A t-test between groups found a significant difference between the cold-cold group and the three other groups. Sears concludes that one warm parent is a necessary, but sufficient, condition for a high self-concept child.

Two studies indicate the importance of phenominological considerations; that is, what seems to be important is not the parent's behavior per se but, rather, how the child perceives the parent's behavior. Maxwell (1967) studied 732 adolescent boys, 58 percent Black and 42 percent white. He gave them the Bill's Index of Adjustment Test. He found that perceived family adjustment was significantly related to self-concept. Those subjects who saw their own family relations to be warm and accepting had a more positive self-concept than did those who experienced hostility and rejection in their family. Gecas (1969) had 620 junior and senior high school students take the Bronfenbrenner Parent Behavior Inventory to measure perceived control and support by their parents. They also took a 12-item semantic differential test to
measure for self-concept. Perceived parental support was associated with high self-concept (p < .05) but there was no significant relationship between amount of perceived control and self-concept.

In other studies, Helper (1955) gave 50 high school students Cathell's Adjective Check List to measure self-concept and then interviewed their mothers. He reported that the parental behaviors of consistency with punishment and reinforcement of imitative behaviors were significantly related to the child's self-concept. Wyer (1965), in a study previously cited, found that females whose parents showed a low discrepancy in evaluating their daughters had higher self-concepts than did females whose two parents had a high discrepancy (p < .01). No such relationship was found for the males in the study. Schwartz (1966) measured 40 nursery school children in terms of their self-concept using a behavioral rating scale. The mothers of these children were interviewed using the Sears, Maccoby and Levin interview schedule. The following traits of the mother were related to a high self-concept of the child (p < .05 or better): 1) mother perceived the child as an individual in his own right, 2) mother had a high self-concept, 3) mother had a high acceptance of the child, 4) mother was warm towards the child, 5) mother was satisfied with her current status, and 6) the family as a whole had a warm emotional climate.

Tocco (1970) gave 323 kindergarten and first-grade children the Children's Self-Social Constructs Test and their mothers were administered the "How I See Myself Scale." He reported that the mothers self-concept score was significantly related to the child's self-concept score,
and the higher the mother's self-concept score, the more positive change over a one-year period occurred in the child's self-concept score. Samuels (1969) studied 93 mother-child pairs in which the children were all of kindergarten age. The children were given the Clark-U-Scale Self-Concept test and the mothers were interviewed using the Sears, Maccoby and Levin questionnaire. Mothers of high self-concept children reported to be less punitive in seven of the 13 permissiveness-strictness dimensions measured ($p < .05$ or better). A positive relationship was found between maternal self-concept and the child's self-concept ($r = .55$ for middle-class mothers; $r = .26$ for lower-class mothers). Mothers who reported involvement in community activities had children with a significantly higher self-concept than did those whose mothers were not active. Medinnus and Curtis (1963) studied 56 mothers and their nursery school aged child (3-5). The mothers were given the Bill's Index of Adjustment and Values and the children were given a semantic differential scale of adjectives to measure self-concept. There was a significant relationship reported between mother and child self-concept scores.

The present research attempts to investigate the relationship between parental self-actualization and the child's self-concept. There are no studies reported in the literature directly relating to this relationship. However, there are two reported studied from which some indirect conclusions can be drawn. Since it has been shown that the parents' child-rearing attitudes and practices are probably related to the child's developing self-concept, the study by Swift (1966), indicating a relationship between self-actualization and child-rearing behaviors,
is important to the present investigation. She studied 40 sets of parents who had a child in the first grade (20 had boys and 20 had girls). She gave the parents Schaefer's Inventory of Family Life and Attitudes and the Personal Orientation Inventory. Swift reported that:

1) low control was significantly related to inner directness and positive time orientation, and
2) attitudes of warmth were moderately, but not significantly related to the inner directness and time orientation scales of the P.O.I.

In a somewhat unrelated area, Foulds (1969) reported a relationship between counseling skills and self-actualization. The relation to the present study is that the skills Foulds reports as important counseling skills - emphatic understanding and facilitative genuineness (as measured by three scales developed by Carkhuff) - also can be seen as important skills for a parent to possess. Foulds used 30 graduate students as his subjects and found that the first skill, emphatic understanding, was significantly related to six of the 12 P.O.I. subscales and the second trait, facilitative genuineness, significantly related to 10 of the 12 P.O.I. subscales.

Sex Differences in Self-Concept and Self-Actualization

Self-concept

There is a conflict in the literature between those studies reporting no sex differences in self-concept and those studies reporting differences in the direction of female superiority. Among the latter studies, Richmond, Mason and Padgett (1970) gave the Tennessee
Self-Concept Scale to 150 undergraduate students. They found that girls scored significantly higher than boys on the family self sub-scale, but that there were no other significant differences even though girls scored slightly higher on all of the sub-scales. Ausubel, Balthazar, Rosenthal, Blackman, Schpoont and Welkovitz (1955) studied 40 fifth and sixth-grade children. The subjects took the 80 item "Could You Ever" test to measure self-concept. The girl subjects perceived themselves as significantly more accepted and valued by their parents than did the boy subjects. Gecas (1969), in a study already cited, reported that the female subjects had a significantly higher self-concept score than did the male subjects. Schwartz (1966), in a previously mentioned study, reported that significantly more girls than boys had a high self-concept score.

Bledsoe (1964) studied 271 fourth and sixth-grade boys and girls using a self-concept adjective check list adopted from the Bill's Index of Adjustment and Values. His results indicate that the girl subjects in both grades had a significantly higher self-concept than did the boy subjects. He also found that: 1) for boys, the self-concept was significantly related to I.Q. scores, but for girls it was not; 2) for boys the self-concept score was significantly related to California Achievement Test scores, but for girls it was not; 3) for all boys but only for the fourth-grade girls, there was a significant negative relation between self-concept scores and the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Test scores; and 4) the self-concept scores were significantly related to interests (the "What-I-Like-To-Do" inventory) for girls but not for boys.
In another study, Bledsoe (1966) gave 96 girls and 101 boys (grades 4-7) the elementary form of the California Mental Health Analysis. He reports that of the 13 sub-scales, 12 favored the girls, seven at a significant level.

Among those who found no sex difference in self-concept scores was Coopersmith (1967) who, in a pilot study of his instrument, tested 1,748 fifth-and sixth-grade subjects. Mintz (1968) studied 63 children aged five and six years. The self-concept test was a projective one wherein the subjects were asked how they think their classmates would rate them on several personal areas. She found no sex differences. In a study previously cited, Samuels (1969) found no sex differences in the self-concept of 93 kindergarten aged children using the Clark-U-Scale Self-Concept test. The Manual of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) reports no sex differences for any age group, and states that the effects of demographic variables (e.g., sex) on the scores of the scale are negligible.

In a recent article entitled, "Sex Differences in Self-Concept: Fact or Artifact?" Bledsoe (1973) studied the self-concept of 200 boys and 200 girls in the fourth- and sixth-grade using an adjective check list. He found a significant difference in favor of the girls. An item analysis indicates that the items which produced the greatest sex difference (all in favor of the girls) were items associated with "goodness" (e.g., polite and clean) generally considered to be associated more with feminine rather than masculine roles in our culture. Bledsoe concludes
that much of the sex differences described in the literature may reflect
differences in the way males and females describe themselves rather than
true self-concept differences.

There are indications that the self-concept per se of males and
females are oriented along different dimensions, therefore making com­
parison studies difficult to interpret. In a study previously mentioned,
Carlson (1965) found a sex difference in which females displayed a higher
need for social approval and males a higher need for self-approval.
Similar results are reported by Becker (1968) who studied 215 college
freshman using the Crowne-Marlow Social Approval Scale and the Wor­
chel Self-Active Inventory. He also found females with a significantly higher
need for social approval than males and males with a higher need for self-
approval than females. Nidorf (1966) studied 58 male and 60 female under­
graduate students giving each the Gough Adjective Check List as a measure
of self-concept. She found that males had a significantly wider variance
of self image (both positive and negative traits) than did females.
Pedersen and Stanford (1969) gave 34 girls and 37 boys (aged 9-15) the
California Test of Personality, the Sears Self-Concept Inventory and an
identification inventory measuring level of identification with parents.
They found that the self-concept of males tended to be related to their
personalities as measured by the California Test of Personality (p.<.10)
but the relationship did not exist for females. The level of identifica­
tion with parents was significantly related to personality for females,
but not for males. It is, therefore, possible to assume from this study
that the self-concept of males may not be related to their identification
with parents. If this is the case, then we might expect to find in the present investigation stronger daughter-parent relationships than son-parent relationships.

**Self-actualization**

Until recently, there has been little research reported on the general concept of self-actualization. One possible reason for the lag in previous research interest in this area was the lack of a suitable instrument to measure self-actualization. There were, of course, instruments designed to measure specific self-actualizing traits, such as self-concept reported in this Review of Literature, but no global measurement of the trait of self-actualization appeared to exist. With the developing acceptance of the *Personal Orientation Inventory* (Shostrom, 1966), research interest has begun to move in this area.

The P.O.I. Test Manual (Shostrom, 1966) reports that on two samples, one from a large midwestern college (N unreported) and one using 561 college freshman from Southern California, significant differences were found favoring females on the time orientation sub-scale. With the first of the two samples significant differences were found in favor of females on the self-acceptance scale, the nature of man scale and the synergy scale. No differences in favor of males were reported in the manual.

Foulds and Warehine (1971) gave 110 college students (55 males; 55 females) the Personal Orientation Inventory. They report a significant difference in favor of females on 10 of the 12 scales. The 10 scales on which the females appear more self-actualized than the males
are: time competence, inner direction, self-actualizing values, feeling reactivity, spontaneity, self-acceptance, nature of man, synergy, aggression and capacity for intimate contact. LeMay and Damm (1969) administered the Personal Orientation Inventory and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule to 93 male and 101 female freshman college students. They found that for all 12 personal orientation scales there were major differences in the relationship of that scale to the 15 Edwards variables between the male and female subjects. They conclude that there are characteristic sex differences which are reflected in the kinds of needs that accompany self-actualization values.

Schroeder (1973) gave the Personal Orientation Inventory to 568 freshman students before school started and again a second time during the spring semester (post-test N = 448). He reported an initial sex difference (p < .05 or better) on 11 of the 12 scales, all in favor of the women. Only the self-regard scale had no significant difference; however, the mean scores still favored slightly the women students. Schroeder claims that the inner-directed scale is the most representative over-all measure of self-actualization, therefore he looked for pre-post-test differences on that one scale. He reports that there was a significant difference in the amount of change occurring between men and women. On the pre-test the female subjects were 3.0 points higher than the male subjects on this scale. On the post-test the females were 4.4 points higher than the males.

The present study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between parental self-actualization and the self-concept of their junior
high school aged children. There are no previous studies cited in the literature reporting directly on this relationship.
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between self-actualizing characteristics of parents and the self-concept of their junior high school aged child or children. Particular attention is focused on how this relationship is influenced by the sex make-up of the parent-child combination. The specific null hypotheses to be tested are:

1. No significant relationship exists between self-actualizing traits of parents and their child's self-concept.
2. No significant differences exist in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child.

In addition, two ancillary hypotheses to be tested are:

3. No significant differences exist between male and female parent scores on the self-actualization measure.
4. No significant differences exist between male child and female child scores on the self-concept measure.

Subjects

The subjects for the study were 115 families consisting of both parents and their children. Thirty-nine of the families had two children participating in the study. For purposes of analysis, these parent scores were duplicated and the children separated so each family unit
consisted of both parents and one child (N = 154). The children were all in junior high school (grades 7 to 9 inclusive) and ranged in age from 12 to 15 years with a mean age of 13.48 years. By coincidence rather than design, there were 77 male and 77 female children subjects. Because of previously reported race differences in self-concept (McDonald, 1968 and Baumrind, 1971), the study was limited to Caucasian families. The study also was limited to families in which both parents had completed high school. The mean number of children in the participating families was 3.58.

Instruments

Self-actualization

The self-actualizing traits of the parents were measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1966). The inventory consists of 150 items, each item forcing the subjects to pick between two choices of values or behavioral judgments, choosing the statement which seems to apply most to them. For example, item number one required the subjects to choose between these two statements: a) I am bound by the principle of fairness; and b) I am not absolutely bound by the principle of fairness.

The Personal Orientation Inventory (P.O.I.) has 12 scales, each measuring a specific trait of the self-actualizing person. Each of the traits is consistent with Maslow's (1971) theory as to the nature of a self-actualizing person. The 12 specific traits measured and their
definitions from the test manual (Shostrom, 1966) are as follows:

1. **Time competence**: measures degree to which one is "present" oriented.
2. **Inner-directed measures**: degree to which one is internally motivated.
3. **Self-actualizing value**: measures affirmation of a primary value of self-actualizing people.
4. **Existentiality**: measures ability to situationally or existentially react without rigid adherence to principles.
5. **Feeling reactivity**: measures sensitivity of responsiveness to one's own needs and feelings.
6. **Spontaneity**: measures freedom to react spontaneously or to be oneself.
7. **Self regard**: measures affirmation of self because of worth or strength.
8. **Self-acceptance**: measures acceptance of self in spite of weakness or deficiencies.
9. **Nature of man**: measures degree of the constructive view of the nature of man.
10. **Synergy**: measures ability to be synergistic, to transcend dichotomies.
11. **Acceptance of aggression**: measures ability to accept one's natural aggressiveness.
12. **Capacity for intimate contact**: measures ability to develop contactful relationships with other human beings.

Two studies are reported in the literature relating to the reliability of the P.O.I. Klavetter and Magar (1967) administered the P.O.I. twice with a one week interval to 48 undergraduate students. The test-retest reliability coefficients for the different sub-scales ranged from .52 to .82. They concluded that the correlations obtained in this
study are at a level commensurate with other personality inventories. Ilardi and May (1968) present test-retest correlations of the 12 P.O.I. sub-scales using 46 nursing students, with the period between testings being one year. The correlations ranged from .32 to .71. The authors conclude that these correlations are comparable to one year test-retest data from the M.M.P.I. and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule.

The test manual (Shostrom, 1966) reports four studies in which the P.O.I. was used in a clinical setting and was able to discriminate patient from nonpatient populations. Murray (1968) had 26 junior and senior high school teachers rated by over 2,000 students. There was a positive and significant relationship between high teacher ratings and high self-actualization in grades 7 through 10; with grades 11 and 12 being nonsignificant but in the same direction. The test manual (Shostrom, 1966) also reports a study in which P.O.I. scores were related to M.M.P.I. scores. Seven of the 13 M.M.P.I. scales had significant negative correlations with the P.O.I. scales (as expected since the M.M.P.I. measures pathology and the P.O.I. mental health) thus helping to validate the newer P.O.I. by it's relationship to the more established M.M.P.I.

Tosi and Hoffman (1972) did a factor analysis of the P.O.I. and they conclude that the results support the P.O.I. as a measure of the healthy personality, even though they question the necessity of 12 sub-scales. Warehime and Foulds (1973) gave 95 undergraduate students the P.O.I. and the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. They report a significant, negative correlation between the two instruments, proof of a lack of ability to fake good on the P.O.I.
Self-concept

The child's self-concept was measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965). The instrument consists of 100 self-reference items such as "I should love my family more." The subjects rate each item in terms of how they see themselves, using a five-point scale ranging from completely false to completely true. The scale has been standardized with subjects ranging in age from 12 to 68 years and with education ranging from sixth-grade to Ph.D. The manual (Fitts, 1965) reports that the variables of age, education and intelligence do not significantly influence the results.

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (T.S.C.S.) provides an overall, global self-concept scale and eight specific scaled scores dealing with different aspects of the self. These scores are the sums of three rows and five columns, with the rows and columns crossing (see Figure 1). The nine specific scores to be considered and their definitions from the test manual are as follows:

A. Total score: reflects the overall level of self-esteem.

B. Column 1 - Physical self: individual presents views of his body health, skills and sexuality.

C. Column 2 - Moral ethical self: individual describes moral worth, relationship to God, feelings of being a "good" or "bad" person.

D. Column 3 - Personal self: individual describes his sense of personal worth, his evaluation of his personality.

E. Column 4 - Family self: reflects one's feelings of worth and value as a family member.

F. Column 5 - Social self: reflects person's sense of worth in social interactions.
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<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Total score A</td>
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Figure 1. The **Tennessee Self-Concept Scale** scoring

G. Row 1 - Identity: individual describes what he is as he sees himself.

H. Row 2 - Self-satisfaction: individual describes how he feels about what he sees of himself.

I. Row 3 - Behavior: individual's perception of his own behavior.

Fitts (1965) provides reliability information on the **Tennessee Self-Concept Scale**. He gave 60 college students the instrument two weeks apart and reported reliability coefficients ranging from .92 to .67 for the different scales. The .92 coefficient was for the overall, global self-concept score. Congdon (1968) reported a test-retest coefficient of .88 for the overall measure of self-concept using 34
hospitalized mental patients and giving the retest four to six months after the initial testing.

Fitts (1965) gave the **Tennessee Self-Concept Scale** to 369 psychiatric patients and 626 nonpatients. He reports that on every scale there was a highly significant difference between groups. He also cites four other studies, each demonstrating the ability of the T.S.C.S. to discriminate between patient and nonpatient groups. Lefeber (1964) and Atchison (1958) both found significant differences between juvenile delinquents and nondelinquent youths using the T.S.C.S. The test manual (Fitts, 1965) reports that another study found significant negative correlations between the total self-concept score on the T.S.C.S. and 10 of the 13 M.M.P.I. scales.

**Procedure**

All contact with the families was done through the mail. The names of 600 families, each with a child or children in junior high school, were supplied by four different sources. The four sources were: a private (Roman Catholic) junior high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a Jewish Sunday school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the P.T.A. of a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania city junior high school, and the junior high school of Rural Valley, Pennsylvania, located 50 miles from Pittsburgh. Each of the families was sent a letter explaining the study and asking if they would be willing to participate (Appendix A). They were also sent an addressed, stamped envelope for their return form. Out of the
600 letters sent, 242 replied positively. From this group, 85 families were eliminated because they did not meet the criteria of both parents graduating from high school. Eighteen forms were returned with no family name on them. The remaining 139 families were sent the test booklets, answer sheets, return stamped envelopes, a pencil and a letter of instruction (Appendix A). If the completed instruments were not returned three weeks after they were sent to the families, a follow-up letter was then sent (Appendix A). Four families never returned the materials. Twenty of the families returned the data from only one parent and were not included in the analysis for the present study. There were, then, 115 participating families.

Statistical Treatment

The data were scored according to directions in the test manuals (Fitts, 1965; and Shostrom, 1966) and punched onto computer cards. The criteria of significance for the present study was chosen to be the .05 level of probability. For the first major hypothesis, which states that no significant relationship exists between self-actualizing traits of parents and their child's self-concept score a Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed between the P.O.I. scores and the T.S.C.S. scores. For this hypothesis (N = 154) a correlation of .19 is significant at the .05 level.

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1Dr. Leroy Wolins of the Iowa State Statistical Laboratory and Dr. Jack Menne of the Iowa State University Counseling Center served as statistical consultants for the present investigation.
The other major hypothesis states that no significant differences exist in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child. The children were separated by sex and separate Pearson Product Moment correlations for boys' T.S.C.S. scores and their parents' P.O.I. scores, and girls' T.S.C.S. scores and their parents' P.O.I. scores were computed. Both groups had an N = 77. With this sample size, a correlation of .22 is significant at the .05 level.

One ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male and female parent scores of the P.O.I. A t-test for correlated means was used. Differences in the means of fathers' and mothers' scores (t = 1.98, df = 120, a t value of 1.98 is required for significance at the .05 level.

Another ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between boy and girl scores. A t-test for independent samples was used. Differences in mean boys' and girls' scores on the T.S.C.S. (t = 1.98, df = 120, a t value of 1.98 was required for significance at the .05 level.
The other major hypothesis states that no significant differences exist in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child. The children were separated by sex and separate Pearson Product Moment correlations for boys' T.S.C.S. scores and their parents' P.O.I. scores, and girls' T.S.C.S. scores and their parents' P.O.I. scores were computed. Both groups had an N = 77. With this sample size, a correlation of .22 is significant at the .05 level.

One ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male and female parent scores of the P.O.I. A t-test for correlated means was used to test for differences in the means of fathers' and mothers' scores on the P.O.I. With d.f. = 120, a t value of 1.98 is required for significance at the .05 level.

Another ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between boy and girl scores on the T.S.C.S. A t-test for independent samples was used to test for differences in mean boys' and girls' scores on the T.S.C.S. With d.f. = 120, a t value of 1.98 is required for significance at the .05 level.
RESULTS

Major Findings

The null hypothesis stating that no significant relationship exists between self-actualizing traits of parents and their child's self-concept cannot be rejected. A Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed between the nine children's scores on the T.S.C.S. and the 24 parents' scores (12 for fathers and 12 for mothers) on the P.O.I. With N = 154, a correlation of .19 is significant at the .05 level. There were no significant correlations between parents' variables and children's variables.

The other major hypothesis states that no significant differences exist in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child. This null hypothesis is rejected. There were no significant correlations between boys' self-concept scores and their mothers' P.O.I. scores. Correlations between the boys' T.S.C.S. scores and their fathers' P.O.I. scores are presented in Table 1. There are 10 significant correlations out of 108 correlations. They are: Total score (A) with Spontaneity (6) (r = .33); Physical self (B) with Self-acceptance (8) (r = .30); Moral-ethical self (C) with Spontaneity (6) (r = .30); Personal self (D) with Spontaneity (6) (r = .24); Social self (F) with Spontaneity (6) (r = .29); Social self (F) with Acceptance of aggression (11) (r = .22); Identity (G) with Inner-directed (2) (r = .24); Identity (G) with Self-actualizing values (3) (r = .23); Identity (G) with Spontaneity (6) (r = .34); and Identity
Table 1. Correlation between boys' Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and fathers' Personality Orientation Inventory\(^a\) (\(N = 77\))

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\(^a\)Decile points omitted. This footnote applies to Table 2 and 3.

\(^b\)A = Total score; B = Physical self; C = Moral self; D = Personal self; E = Family self; F = Social self; G = Identity; H = Self-satisfaction; I = Behavior. This footnote applies to Table 2 and 3.

\(^c\)1 = Time competence; 2 = Inner directed; 3 = Self-actualization value; 4 = Existentiality; 5 = Feeling reactivity; 6 = Spontaneity; 7 = Self regard; 8 = Self-acceptance; 9 = Nature of man; 10 = Synergy; 11 = Acceptance of aggression; 12 = Capacity for intimate contact. This footnote applies to Table 2 and 3.

\(^*\)\(P < .05\). This footnote applies to Table 2 and 3.

\(^{**}\)\(P < .01\). This footnote applies to Table 2 and 3.
(G) with Acceptance of aggression (11) \( (r = .23) \). The major boy variable related to father is (G) Identity. There are four significant correlations and three correlations approaching significance (.14 to .18) for this son variable. The major father variable as it relates to son's self-concept is (6) Spontaneity. This variable is significantly related to five son variables; the other four correlations with this variable approach significance. The highest correlation in Table 1 is the correlation of these two variables (G-6).

The correlations between the girls T.S.C.S. scores and their mothers' P.O.I. scores are presented in Table 2. There are 11 significant correlations out of 108 correlations. The mothers' P.O.I. scale of Time competence (1) related to the daughters' T.S.C.S. scores of Total (A) \( (r = .23) \); Personal (D) \( (r = .32) \); Social (F) \( (r = .26) \); and Identity (G) \( (r = .29) \). The mothers' P.O.I. scale of Self-regard (7) related to the daughters' T.S.C.S. scores of Total (A) \( (r = .36) \); Moral-ethical (C) \( (r = .23) \); Personal (D) \( (r = .30) \); Family (E) \( (r = .26) \); Social (F) \( (r = .32) \); Identity (G) \( (r = .40) \); and Self-satisfaction (H) \( (r = .23) \). It should be noted that while the mothers scale of feeling reactivity (5) had no significant relationship to any daughter scores, all of the correlations to that scale are negative and approaching significance.

Correlations between the girls' T.S.C.S. scores and their fathers' P.O.I. scores are presented in Table 3. There are 17 significant correlations out of 108 correlations. They are: Total (A) with Time competence (1) \( (r = .23) \) and Feeling reactivity (5) \( (r = -.23) \); Physical
Table 2. Correlations between girls' Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and mothers' Personality Orientation Inventorya (N = 77)

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self (E) with Time competence (1) (r = .32), Self-actualizing values (3) (r = .35), Self regards (7) (r = .23) and Nature of man constructive (9) (r = .29); Personal self (D) with Time competence (1) (r = .24) and Feeling reactivity (5) (r = -.28); Family self (E) with Feeling reactivity (5) (r = -.26), and Capacity for intimate contact (12) (r = -.30); Social self (F) with Time competence (1) (r = .31), Nature of man constructive (9) (r = .27) and synergy (10) (r = .33); Identity (G) with Time competence (1) (r = .30), Nature of man constructive (9) (r = .32) and Synergy (10) (r = .25); and Self-satisfaction (H) with
Table 3. Correlation between girls' Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and fathers' Personality Orientation Inventory\(^c\) (N = 77)

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Feeling reactivity (5) (r = -.23). While the results of daughter-father relationships are variable and scattered, some trends emerge. For fathers, in terms of their daughter's self-concept, Time competence (1) seems related, having all positive correlations, five reaching significance. Feeling reactivity (5) has all negative correlations, four being significant. For the daughter, Physical self (B), Social self (F) and Identity (G) seem most related to fathers P.O.I. scores.
Ancillary Findings

One ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male and female parent scores on the self-actualization measure. This null hypothesis cannot be rejected. A t-test for correlated samples was used to test for differences in the mean scores between fathers and mothers on the 12 scales of the P.O.I. With df > 120, a t value of 1.98 is required for significance at the .05 level. There were no significant differences. The largest t value for the difference between means was 0.95. There was also no apparent trend, with the fathers having slightly higher scores on seven of the scales and the mothers having slightly higher scores on five of the scales.

Another ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male child and female child scores on the self-concept measure. This null hypothesis cannot be rejected. A t-test for independent samples was used to test for differences in the mean scores between boys and girls on the nine scales of the T.S.C.S. With df > 120, a t value of 1.98 is required for significance at the .05 level. There were no significant differences. The largest t value for the difference between means was 1.61, significant at the p < .20 level. Of the nine scales, the girls had slightly higher mean scores on six scales while the boys had higher mean scores on three scales.
One of the major hypothesis states that no significant relationship exists between self-actualizing traits of parents and their child's self-concept. This null hypothesis was not rejected. In view of the fact that the theoretical framework of this study presented in the INTRODUCTION and REVIEW OF LITERATURE indicate that the parent-child relationship in general is a very important aspect of child development and that self-actualization and self-concept are important parent and child traits respectively, failure to disprove this hypothesis is difficult to understand. However, the results of the second hypothesis give some clarity to the situation. When the analysis is broken down so that the scores of boys and girls are separated into different pools (parent scores have always been separated by sex in that mother and father scores represent different variables) the result is 38 significant correlations between child and parent scores. All of the correlations between boys and their parents that were significant were nonsignificant between girls and their parents and vice versa. By pooling boys and girls scores, as was done to test the hypothesis relative to the relationships between parent's self-actualizing and the child self-concept, significant and nonsignificant relationships merged canceling some of the significant relationships. Therefore, failure to disprove the hypothesis was partly an artifact of the design of the study which did not consider sex differences relative to the first major hypothesis.
A more fruitful understanding of the parent-child relationship can be derived from an examination of the results of the second major hypothesis which looked at the relationship between parental self-actualization and child's self-concept considering possible sex differences.

The second major hypothesis states that no significant difference exists in the relationship between parent responses and child responses with differing sex of parent and child. For an analysis of this hypothesis boys' and girls' scores were separated and two separate Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed. Since parent scores were already separated by sex in that 12 variables were identified as the mother's P.O.I. scores and 12 variables as the father's P.O.I. scores, we were then able to examine four different sets of correlations: son-father, son-mother, daughter-father and daughter-mother. There were 12 parent variables and nine child variables so that each set consisted of 108 correlations between the child's scores and the parents' scores. There was a total of 38 significant correlations out of 432 possible correlations. This is clearly enough to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that the relationship between parent and child responses does differ with differing sex combinations of parent-child.

There were no significant correlations between boys' self-concept scores (T.S.C.S.) and their mother's P.O.I. scores. There were 10 significant correlations between boys' scores and fathers' scores. There were 11 significant correlations between girls' scores and mothers' scores and there were 17 significant correlations between girls' scores
and fathers' scores. A gross examination of these data leads to three observations: first, the relationship is stronger between girls and their parents than between boys and their parents (28 to 10 significant correlations); second, fathers seem to have a greater influence than do mothers (27 to 11 significant correlations); third, the father-daughter combination seems to have the strongest relationship, at least for the variables studied in the present investigation. None of these observations differ greatly with what might be expected by any careful observer of the American family.

The idea that girls have a stronger relationship with their parents than boys is a commonly held conception about the Western family. The results of this study not only support this conception but are supported by previous research. Carlson (1965) has demonstrated that the self-concept of adolescent girls is mostly derived from social, interpersonal experience (including relationships with parents), whereas the self-concept of adolescent boys is more dependent upon a personal evaluation of one's own achievement. As previously reported, Pedersen and Stanford (1969) showed that the personality of females was significantly related to the level of identification with their parents, but the relationship failed to reach significance for males. Given this information, the finding of a stronger daughter-parent relationship (versus son-parent) was predictable.

The finding of a stronger father-child than mother-child relationship was not predictable. Only a small percentage of previous research reports even considered the father's role in child-rearing. Of those
that did, many used second-hand reports - mothers or children reporting about the father. There have been few previous studies with direct father participation. Most of our information about fathers concerns things like the effect of father-absence or of pathologically ill fathers on the child. There is very little information about the function of the father in a normative family setting.

There are two logical explanations of the finding of a stronger father-child than mother-child statistical relationship. First, in our culture, fathers' behaviors and attitudes probably vary more than mothers'. Fatherhood is a role with a wider variety of acceptable behavioral possibilities than motherhood. What mothers do, both instrumentally and affectively, is firmly defined by the culture. Variables, such as working or nonworking mothers, probably only influence the time structure in which the same things are done. Fathers, though, have more socially acceptable possibilities. As examples, there are working fathers who rarely see their children and there are fathers who spend a considerable amount of time with the children. There are fathers who are very physically affectionate and there are fathers who never touch their children. There are fathers who take an active role in raising the children and there are fathers who do not take any position on day-to-day child-rearing issues. It is very possible that the way in which any individual man chooses to live out the role of father may be one of the most important variables in terms of how the developing child views himself.

A second possible explanation for the influence of fathers on their
children's self-concept is that, in our culture, males are generally considered to be more important (in terms of being able to make important judgments) than females. It is not uncommon for a child to hear from a mother: "Your father will have to decide that," or "Wait 'till your father gets home, he will be able to take care of you for what you did." If the father is viewed as the most important member of a family, it is not surprising that his behaviors with and feedback toward the child would be very important in influencing self-concept development.

Another general finding is that the father-daughter relationship is the strongest within the present study. There are two logical explanations for this finding. It has been theorized previously that the father's scores may be more relevant to child scores than the mother's scores, and that daughters' scores would have a greater relationship to parent scores than would sons'. Given these statements it is not surprising that out of the four possibilities, the father-daughter combination is the strongest. The developing importance of social sexuality also may be important here. During the junior high school years, relationships with and feedback from opposite sexed persons becomes increasingly important. Most girls of this age have not yet developed any long-lasting meaningful opposite sex relationships so, in a sense, their father is still the most important opposite sexed figure in the life of the young girl.

Before we examine more closely each of the four sets of correlations it is necessary to mention two cautions concerning any interpretations derived from these data. First, because of the higher intercorrelations
between sub-scales on the T.S.C.S. and the P.O.I., these instruments may represent a few general factors rather than many individual scales. Any interpretation based on the manuals' definitions of the separate scales must be done with caution. Second, it should again be pointed out that the sample subjects are not a representative sample. The subjects represent the upper-middle class, highly educated, conservative in nature, and self-selective because of their willingness to participate in the study. This sampling bias probably does not influence the general conclusions previously mentioned but may strongly influence any specific conclusions. For the set of correlations between mothers' scores and sons' scores, there were no significant findings. This is somewhat surprising and can only be explained by considering all the other possible influences on the developing self-concept of a junior high school aged boy. These influences include achievement activities (i.e. school and sports), peer influence and relationships, relationships with father and family members other than mothers. It is likely that all these other influences pre-empt or at least co-equal the influence of the mother's personality, making it partially, but not significantly, related to the boy's self-concept.

The correlations between the fathers' P.O.I. scores and the boys' T.S.C.S. scores indicate that there are two especially important variables in these relationships. The father's variable of spontaneity (P.O.I.) is significantly related to five of the T.S.C.S. variables and approaches significance with the other four variables. Any explanation for these relationships might fall into the category of fancy guesswork. Since
no reasonable or logical explanation occurs at this time it would seem prudent to just point out that a clear finding of this study is that fathers who are high in spontaneity have sons who are high in self-concept.

Another important variable in the father-son set of correlations is the sons' variable of identity. There are four significant and three correlations approaching significance between identity and fathers' variables (P.O.I.). Identity is described in the T.S.C.S. test manual (Fitts, 1965) as "...what he is as he sees himself" (p. 2). The identity variable is significantly and positively related to the fathers' variables of inner directedness, self-actualizing values, spontaneity, and acceptance of aggression. Identity is positively, but not significantly related to self-regard, self-acceptance and nature of man. Since the identity variable seems to generalize to the majority of father traits, a logical conclusion is that how a boy sees himself is positively related to the general level of self-actualization achieved by the father.

The trend in the relationship between girl's scores (T.S.C.S.) and mother's scores (P.O.I.) is clear. The variable of time competence (P.O.I.) is significantly related to four of the daughters' variables (T.S.C.S.) and approaches significance to three of the others. The mothers' variable of self-regard is significantly related to seven of the daughters' variables and somewhat related to one other. The P.O.I. variable of feeling reactivity is negatively and moderately correlated with all nine of the T.S.C.S. variables. In general, the trait of high self-concept for daughter is positively related to the mother trait of high self-regard, which makes sense if we assume an identification between
between mother and daughter; to higher time competence, a present oriented mother has more freedom to be sensitive to the daily needs of the daughter; and to low feeling reactivity.

Partly because of the large number of significant correlations (17), relationships between the daughters' scores and the fathers' scores are more scattered and the trends less clear than in the mother-daughter set. However, there are definite trends in the father-daughter relationship. The father trait of time competence (P.O.I.) had five significant positive correlations and four approaching significance. As with the mother, the father's ability to live in the present is positively related to a daughter's self-concept. The father trait of feeling reactivity is significantly and negatively related to the other five T.S.C.S. variables. Again, as with the mother, a father's lack of sensitivity to own feelings is related to a high self-concept for the daughter. Unlike the mother, the father trait of self-regard is only significantly related to one daughter trait (physical self). This is understandable if we expect a greater daughter identification with the mother than with the father. The father trait of nature of man is significantly and positively related to three daughter traits and approaches significance with two others. It seems that in general, a constructive view of mankind by fathers is related to high self-concept for daughters.

One somewhat surprising finding is that the trait of physical self for the daughter seems highly related to the father's self-actualization scores (with four significant correlations) and not at all to the mother's self-actualization scores. This may be related to the social-sexual
phenomenon previously discussed wherein feedback from an opposite sexed person takes on increased significance. The daughters' trait of family self-concept (T.S.C.S.) is negatively related to nine of the 12 fathers' traits (P.O.I.), two at a significant level. In general, the more self-actualized the father, the lower the daughter's conception of herself as a family member. Again, this result is somewhat surprising and difficult to explain. The trait of social self-concept is significantly related to three of the fathers' traits, with two other correlations approaching significance and all correlations being positive except for the one involving feeling reactivity. A general conclusion is that social self-concept of the daughter is positively related to degree of self-actualization of the father. As with the son-father correlations, the T.S.C.S. (in this case the daughter) trait of identity is somewhat related to the father's self-actualization scores. There are three significant correlations and two more approaching significance. The remainder of the correlations are very low, four correlations are negative and in general, the relationship of this trait to the fathers' traits (P.O.I.) are mixed and unclear.

One ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male and female parent scores on the self-actualization measure. Another ancillary hypothesis states that no significant differences exist between male and female child scores on the self-concept measure. Neither of these null hypotheses was rejected. The mother and father mean scores for each variable on the P.O.I. and the boy and
girl mean scores for each variable on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale were so similar that the nonsignificant results of the appropriate t tests between means just affirms the obvious. The lack of a significant sex difference on the self-concept measure confirms the test manual (Fitts, 1965) which reports no sex difference in the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and also confirms the majority of studies in the literature which report no sex differences in the trait of self-concept (e.g. Cooper-smith, 1967; Mintz, 1968; and Samuels, 1969). Bledsoe (1973) indicates that the few studies which report sex differences in favor of females usually use instruments biased toward females (items such as polite and clean, generally associated with feminine roles in our culture, are considered to be indicators of a high self-concept) and that these results are probably more an artifact of the test instrument than any actual sex differences.

The lack of any significant differences on the P.O.I. is somewhat more difficult to explain. The test manual (Shostrom, 1966) reports a sex difference in favor of females on one of the 12 sub-scales for one sample and on four of the 12 sub-scales on a second sample. Foulds and Warehine (1971) report a significant difference in favor of females on 11 of the sub-scales. There are three possible explanations for this difference between the present study and previous studies.

The first possibility concerns the developmental factor of age. In all of the other studies, the subjects were college students. In the present study, the subjects taking the P.O.I. are all parents at least old enough to have a child in junior high school. It is possible that
there is an interaction factor between sex differences and age.

A second possibility concerns the idea of a matched sample. In the present study, the male and female subjects are paired through marriage. Since Maslow (1971) indicated that self-actualizing people generally picked other self-actualizing people as mates, this matching factor may have depressed sex differences.

A third possibility is that any sex difference in self-actualization as measured by the P.O.I. is weak and variable, only being significant on some of the variables with some of the samples. This would explain the differences between previous studies in which sex differences were reported for from one sub-scale variable to 11 sub-scale variables.

The present study may have found no significant differences by chance alone. Since publication access in the social sciences is generally limited to those researchers reporting significant results, it is impossible to tell how many other research projects may have found results similar to the present study. The only firm conclusion that can be drawn is that more studies are needed in order to make the meaning of the present results clear.

Implications for Future Research

The present study is a good example of both the strengths and limitations of investigatory research as it is traditionally carried on within the social sciences. People have two modes of existence in the world, one is as an object. People have physical properties which can
be codified, and they are often reliable and predictable. Yet people are also subject. They have experiences, give an existential meaning to their world and will things to happen. The experimental social sciences are limited by a narrow understanding of the concept of science and, thus, limited to the study of man the object. Phenomenological psychology (Giorgi, 1970) has been designed to study man the subject. Either method by itself is wrong, in that its limitations insure a lack of understanding of the phenomenon being studied. What I am suggesting here, and I would like to use the present study as a situated example, is a combination of the traditional and the phenomenological methods.

This study found that fathers who were high in spontaneity generally had sons who had higher self-concepts. I trust this data in the sense that I believe that his spontaneity-high self-concept relationship does exist. However, I have no way of explaining or understanding why it exists. Any possible explanation is limited to guesswork. It is quite a paradox to consider this fact that after all the rigors of science, one's understanding is left to guesswork. There are some things that can be done to increase the probability of taking a correct guess. For example, we can do an item analysis of all those items in the sub-scale spontaneity and check each item's relationship to the child's self-concept. This might increase the possibility of taking a good guess as to the meaning of this relationship. As of now I have no idea what is occurring within this relationship. However, the end result would still be a guess, a hypothesis, a theory. In terms of understanding man the object (which is what investigatory research is limited to), the
discussion section of journal articles and dissertations could be omitted without any resulting loss in understanding.

Phenomenology attempts to have the subjects share their experiences with the researcher. This requires as open ended an interview situation as is possible since any structure imposed on the subject in some ways influences, limits and even determines the resulting data. What I think is needed to understand the present data is to interview the subjects and allow them to reveal the meaning of the data. For the specific example of trying to understand the spontaneity-self-concept relationship, one could interview boys who have fathers who have scored high and low on the sub-scale spontaneity. The data would be the boys' reports on how they experienced father, how they experienced their relationship with father, and the meaning of father and his behaviors to them. By reflection on the protocols (trying to avoid the temptation of premature closure) one could look at the structure of the meanings of father for boys of both high and low spontaneous fathers. An understanding of any differences in the general structures of the two groups would probably lead one to an understanding of the relationship between the two variables.

One should not consider this as a criticism of the methodology used in the present study. I hope the present study added to our knowledge of parent-child relationships. The preceding was an attempt to consider how we can expand this understanding. This researcher is interested in the project of trying to tie together experimental and phenomenological methods.
Another implication for future research concerns the important concept of development. It seems obvious that the relationship between parental self-actualization and the child's self-concept will change during different stages in the life of the parents and the child. This study needs to be repeated using families with children both younger and older than the junior high school aged children in the present study. A major difficulty in this proposition is that there really is no suitable self-concept instrument for younger children.

A last implication for future research concerns the idea of social variables. The results of the present study clearly indicate that the variable of sex make-up of the parent-child combination is a major influence on the relationship between parental self-actualization and the child's self-concept. There is almost an unlimited number of social variables that could possibly influence this relationship. For example, religion, place of residence, sibling order of child, education of parents, etc. Since any one study is limited in the number of variables that can be investigated and controlled, a number of additional studies are needed to see how different social variables influence the parent-child relationship.
SUMMARY

The present study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between self-actualizing personality traits of parents and the self-concept of their junior high school aged children. Particular attention is paid to the influence of the sex make-up of the parent-child combination to this relationship. This study also attempts to investigate sex differences in self-actualization among parents and sex differences in self-concept among children.

The subjects were 154 families, each consisting of a father, a mother and one child of junior high school age. There were 77 male and 77 female children. Self-actualization was measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory. Self-concept was measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale. All families were contacted and tested through the mail. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were used to examine the relationship between self-actualization and self-concept. A t test between means were used to investigate sex differences on the self-actualization and the self-concept measures.

The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between parental self-actualization and the child's self-concept in general, but that the variable of sex make-up of the parent-child combination has an important influence on this relationship. Out of 108 correlations, there were no significant correlations between boys' scores and mothers' scores; there were 10 significant correlations between boys' scores and fathers' scores; there were 11 significant
correlations between girls' scores and mothers' scores; and there were 17 significant correlations between girls' scores and fathers' scores. Girls had a stronger relationship to their parents than did boys; fathers had a greater influence on their children than did mothers, and the strongest sex combination was father-daughter. There were no significant differences between mothers' and fathers' scores on the self-actualization measure, and there were no significant differences between girls' and boys' scores on the self-concept measure. The results were discussed and implications for future research considered.
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The support of Dr. Samuel Clark, Dr. Ellen Betz, and Dr. Glen Smith as committee members is gratefully acknowledged.

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A special thanks to the families who participated in the research project.
APPENDIX A: LETTERS TO PARENTS
Dear Mr. and Mrs.,

I am writing to ask for your help with a research project on which I am presently working. This project is attempting to investigate the relationship between mentally healthy (not psychologically ill) parental traits and the self-concept of their junior high school age child-children. I am particularly interested in seeing whether or not place of residence (rural versus urban) is a factor in this relationship.

Your name and address was obtained through the cooperation of your child's school. If you give your consent, I will send each of you a short (15 to 20 minutes) paper-and-pencil test to complete and return to me. I will also send a short test for your child. Let me point out three things about this procedure: (1) The instruments measure varying degrees of averageness in terms of personality traits. The tests do no measure illness in any way. (2) Over 200 families will be involved in this project. Your scores will be used in conjunction with other families (for example, I will compare all rural families with all urban families). Your family will not be analyzed separately and at no time will your responses be identified with you as an individual. (3) The results are strictly confidential. Code numbers (to match parent and child scores) rather than names will be used and no one will have access to your scores. However, if you request it, for your information only a short summary of your family's results will be sent to you. You may find them of some interest.

Aside from assuring you that this is a worthwhile project designed to help us better understand parent-child relationships, I would like to be able to compensate the members of each family in some way for their time and effort. Unfortunately, this research budget, as most family budgets this year, is rather lean and the amount of money available would not begin to compensate you for your efforts. However, I would like to be able to recognize your contributions in some concrete manner. Therefore, each family will be able to name a charity of its choice. The two charities receiving the most mention will receive a contribution through this researcher, in the name of all the participating families. So, in a sense, you will be donating a few minutes of your time to both science and charity.
If you are willing to participate, please fill in the enclosed form and drop it in the mailbox as soon as possible (it is already stamped). You will be hearing from me a few weeks. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark E. King
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology
Name:
Address:

I am willing to participate in your research project. I understand that the results are strictly confidential, to be used only for this research project.

Yes ________ No ________

Education of Father: grade completed ____________________________

Education of Mother: grade completed ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of All Children</th>
<th>Age (at last birthday)</th>
<th>Grade in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>7.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I would like to receive a summary of our family's test results.

Yes ________ No ________

Name of charity ____________________________
Dear Mr. and Mrs.,

Thank you for your positive response to my recent letter asking for your help with my research project.

The directions for your participation are as follows: Parents should use the test booklet marked P.O. I on the top of the front cover. The answer sheets to be used are the white and red I.B.M. answer sheets enclosed (be sure to use the one labeled father or mother appropriate for you). The directions are on the front of the test booklet. I am looking for your first judgment, so please take the test quickly - it should take you no more than about 20 minutes. There is one additional direction that is important: The answer sheets have numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) rather than letters (A, B) for your responses. Please use number 1 in place of A, and number 2 in place of B (this refers to directions on test booklet which tells you to respond A or B - ignore number 3, 4, and 5). So each of the items should have a 1 or a 2 marked next to it.

Your child should take the test in the blue booklet, The Tennessee Self-concept Scale. The directions are on the front, inside cover. Please tell the child that he or she need not fill in any information (such as name, grade, time, etc.) asked for on the green answer sheet which they are to use. - The test booklet goes on top of the answer sheet. You will notice the numbers do not go in order, but as you slide the booklet along the answer sheet you will notice that the numbers on the booklet and answer sheet correspond (2 booklet pages for each answer sheet row) and the test is easy to take because of this. The test should take the child no more than 15 or 20 minutes to take.

When you are finished please put both test booklets and the answer sheets in the enclosed return envelope. I would appreciate it if you could do this within the next ten days. If you have not done so (on the paper you originally returned to me) please indicate on a separate piece of paper the charity of your choice and let me know if you would like a short summary of your family's results. (This will take about 30-60 days.)

Again, I would like to thank you for your time and effort. If I can ever be of help to you in any way please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Mark King
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology
Dear Mr. and Mrs.

A few weeks ago, after you indicated a desire to participate in my research project, I sent your family two psychological questionnaires and answer sheets. As of this date, I have not received these booklets and completed answer sheets from you.

If you have already mailed this material, and our notices have crossed in the mail, please accept my thanks again for your cooperation.

If you have not yet mailed them to me, I would appreciate it if you would fill out the questionnaires and return them within the next few days. These test booklets are copyrighted and are, therefore, expensive to purchase. This research project has only a limited number of test booklets and the success of the project depends on a fast turnover from one family to another.

Within a few weeks after receiving your results, I will be sending you a summary of your family's score, if you so requested. I will also inform you of the two charities to which contributions have been made in the name of the participating families.

Sincerely,

Mark King
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology
APPENDIX B: NONSIGNIFICANT STATISTICS
Table 4. Correlation between boys' Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and mothers' Personality Orientation Inventory\(^a\) (N = 77)

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Decile points omitted.

\(b\) A = Total score; B = Physical self; C = Moral self; D = Personal self; E = Family self; F = Social self; G = Identity; H = Self-satisfaction; I = Behavior.

\(c\)=1 Time competence; 2 = Inner directed; 3 = Self-actualization value; 4 = Existentiality; 5 = Feeling reactivity; 6 = Spontaneity; 7 = Self regard; 8 = Self-acceptance; 9 = Nature of man; 10 = Synergy; 11 = Acceptance of aggression; 12 = Capacity for intimate contact.
Table 5. Mean and S.D. of Personality Orientation Inventory scores of parents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mother</th>
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<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
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<td>Time competence</td>
<td>16.52</td>
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<td>Inner directed</td>
<td>82.29</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>83.39</td>
<td>10.7</td>
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<td>Self-actualizing value</td>
<td>19.65</td>
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<td>Existentiality</td>
<td>19.73</td>
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<td>Feeling reactivity</td>
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<td>Spontaneity</td>
<td>12.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self regard</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>12.39</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-acceptance</td>
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<td>15.62</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of man</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synergy</td>
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<td>Acceptance of aggression</td>
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<td>Capacity for intimate</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>16.59</td>
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<td>contact</td>
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Table 6. Mean and S.D. of Tennesse Self-Concept Scale scores of children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Boys</th>
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<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
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<td>$\bar{X}$</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
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<td>Moral self</td>
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<td>Personal self</td>
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<td>Family self</td>
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<td>Identity</td>
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<td>123.03</td>
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<td>Self-satisfaction</td>
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<td>Behavior</td>
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</table>
Table 7. Intercorrelations of P.O.I. for mothers\(^a\) (N = 154)

<table>
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<th>6</th>
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</table>

\(^a\) Decile points omitted.

\(^b\) 1 = Time competence; 2 = Inner directed; 3 = Self-actualization value; 4 = Existentiality; 5 = Feeling reactivity; 6 = Spontaneity; 7 = Self regard; 8 = Self-acceptance; 9 = Nature of man; 10 = Synergy; 11 = Acceptance of aggression; 12 = Capacity for intimate contact.
Table 8. Intercorrelations of P.O.I. for fathers\textsuperscript{a} (N = 154)

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Decile points omitted.

\textsuperscript{b} 1 = Time competence; 2 = Inner directed; 3 = Self-actualization value; 4 = Existentiality; 5 = Feeling reactivity; 6 = Spontaneity; 7 = Self regard; 8 = Self-acceptance; 9 = Nature of man; 10 = Synergy; 11 = Acceptance of aggression; 12 = Capacity for intimate contact.
Table 9. Intercorrelations of T.S.C.S. for girls\textsuperscript{a} (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T.S.C.S.\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>77</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Decile points omitted.

\textsuperscript{b}A = Total score; B = Physical self; C = Moral self; D = Personal self; E = Family self; F = Social self; G = Identity; H = Self-satisfaction; I = Behavior.
Table 10. Intercorrelations of T.S.C.S. for boys* (N = 77)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>A</th>
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<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>--</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Decile points omitted.

b A = Total score; B = Physical self; C = Moral self; D = Personal self; E = Family self; F = Social self; G = Identity; H = Self-satisfaction; I = Behavior.