A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND THE SCHOOL SETTING
IN SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

I. Statement of the Problems: What effect does the school setting

have on the development of self-concept among sixth graders?

Does the school setting have a more pronounced effect on male

or female self-concept formation in sixth graders?

II. Methods: The sample was composed of seventy-one sixth graders.

Thirty-four were enrolled in a middle school; thirty-seven were

enrolled in a K-6 elementary school. The instrument used to

measure self-concept was the Piers-Harris Children's Self-

Concept Scale. The data were analyzed by a two-way analysis

of variance. The dependent variable was the Piers-Harris score.

The independent variables were sex and educational setting.

I.Q., SES, achievement and maturity level were used as covar-

iates to permit greater precision in data analysis. A multiple

regression analysis was conducted to determine whether or not

these variables, as a set, would predict Piers-Harris score.

III. Results: Analysis of the data suggested significant correlation

among I.Q., SES, achievement and ability. However, these covar-

iates produced no significant coefficients in relation to the

Piers-Harris score. Additionally, the multiple regression

analysis of these covariates demonstrated no ability to predict

scores on the Piers-Harris. However, of these covariates I.Q.

was most nearly predictive. Analysis of variance for the dependent variable Piers-Harris score and the independent variables, sex, educational setting and their interaction, revealed no significant differences. Consequently, all three original null hypotheses were retained.

IV. <u>Conclusion</u>: The results of the analysis of the data for this study indicate that there is not a significant difference in self-concept as related to sex or school setting for sixth graders. However, the difference in the mean scores for females, even though sex by school setting was not statistically significant, may warrant further investigation. The mean score for females in the middle school was 70.72, compared to 55.2 for those in a K-6 setting. This finding may suggest that the school setting may influence, to a greater extent, self-concept development in females.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband, John, and to my Mother. Their support, faith and encouragement made the completion of this paper a reality.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's educators are interested in developing an optimal

environment which will stimulate learning among our youth. Various

learning theories, techniques and instructional devices have been

ushered to the forefront in an attempt to explain and foster growth in

all areas of learning: psychomotor, cognitive and affective. Some

have not stood the test of time, and have been discarded. Others have

been modified in an attempt to fit the technological orientation of

our times. New ideas are constantly introduced, tested, and eval-

uated. The one unifying goal, since the advent of the industrial

revolution and the elevation of child status, has been to devise a

system which will provide our youth with the opportunity to recognize

their potential, intellectually and socially.

One trend, receiving much current attention, is the reorgani-

zation of the school environment. School districts throughout the

nation are considering, and adopting, the concept of the middle

school. Some middle schools are composed of grades seven and eight;

others contain grades six, seven and eight or five through eight.

Despite their composition, one rationale for their emergence is the

contention that the traditional school setting, K-6 and the junior

high, no longer meets the needs of the student. Some proponents of

the middle school suggest that junior high schools do not meet the

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emotional needs of their students, especially those of the twelve
and fifteen year old. Some suggest that the relationship between a
sixth grader and a seventh grader is stronger than the relationship
between the sixth grader and the younger children in the traditional
school setting. Thus, they argue that sixth graders would be more
appropriately placed with seventh and eighth graders. It also has
been suggested that there would be fewer behavioral disturbances if
a realignment of school settings were undertaken. Removal of the
vast developmental differences within the elementary and junior high
setting, some suggest, would foster greater growth in students, both
cognitive and affective.

Some support for this contention may be gained by reference to a
study conducted by Morris Rosenberg. Rosenberg (1979) reports that
twelve to thirteen year olds tend to have significant self-concept
disturbance. He suggests that the dramatic decline in self-concept,
especially strong in twelve year olds, may be due, in part, to the
impending move into junior high school. This dread may be related to
the fact that in the elementary class, sixth graders are the oldest
and frequently the biggest. However, in the seventh grade these same
people are often the least mature physically.

In his study, Rosenberg compared twelve-year-old students in the
sixth grade with twelve-year-old subjects in the seventh grade. The
setting was a typical Baltimore school district. His hypothesis was
that if junior high school experiences were particularly stressful,
then twelve year olds in junior high school should show greater

disturbance in self-concept than twelve year olds in elementary

school. His data showed that 41% of those in junior high reported

low global self-concepts compared to 22% in elementary school.

Furthermore, 43% of those in junior high school reflected high

levels of self-consciousness compared to 27% in elementary school.

Additionally, 53% of those in junior high reportedly had an unstable

self-concept compared to a reported 30% in elementary school students.

Variables of socio-economic status, achievement, age and ability were

controlled, and were reportedly not a factor in the results. Rosen-

berg also states that the occurrence of puberty was not significantly

different within the same class. Rosenberg concluded from the data

collected that the change from elementary school to junior high school

was a factor in lower self-concepts among twelve year olds.

If one can generalize from this study, then perhaps there is some

validity to the claims of middle school proponents. Conversely, if

the self-concept of the twelve year old is fragile, perhaps those who

support the traditional placement of sixth graders in elementary

school are correct. However, research on affective development in

either setting is scarce. Journal articles as of 1981, dealing with

self-concept and environmental influences such as the school setting,

tend to reflect personal opinion rather than field research. The

study by Rosenberg is an exception in this respect. Despite the

shortage of substantitating research, proponents of both systems would

tend to agree that a healthy self-concept is related to effective

learning, and that any system which fosters its development should be

encouraged. It seems, therefore, that research into the effect of school placement on the self-concept of sixth graders is warranted.

Self-concept, for purposes of this study, will be liberally defined as one's perception of self in relation to significant others. Further, significant others will be defined to include all those in the school setting who impart information concerning the self to the child.

Since self-concept is reportedly linked to school achievement, behavior, and satisfaction, an effort should be made to determine whether sixth grade students in an elementary setting or those in a middle school setting report higher self-concepts. It is the intent of this study to ascertain whether or not school placement and position have a measurable effect on self-concept among sixth graders. To that end, the questions this study will attempt to answer are as follows:

1. Does the school setting affect the self-concept of sixth graders?

2. Does the school setting have a more pronounced effect on male or female students' self-concept?

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Self-concept is a global term constructed of the beliefs and

feelings that raise man above the other animals. Awareness that one

is separate and distinct from one's surroundings may be evidenced by

higher animal life forms, but the ability to integrate and reflect are

uniquely human. Inability to define an adequate self-concept, on an

individual level, can have serious emotional repercussions. According

to Wiles and Bondi (1981) fostering and encouraging the constructive

development of a healthy self-concept is one of the responsibilities

of the educational system. Making educators aware of this truly

unique human phenomenon, and aiding them in arriving at an under-

standing of it, has resulted in many attempts to describe the self-

concept. Many of the most recent attempts to describe the notion of

a self-concept rest on theories developed by earlier investigators

prominent in the fields of sociology and psychology.

Descriptions of Self-Concept, 1960-1981

Videbeck (1960) describes the self-concept as a term, used by an

individual to refer to his organization of self-attitudes. I. J.

Gordon (1966) describes the self-concept as an organization of factors

that vary with age and differ according to sex. These factors were

further identified to include biological aspects of development as

well as all the life experiences. Labenne and Green (1969) describe
the self-concept in terms of the person's comprehensive evaluation of
appearance, heritage, background, abilities, resources, and attitudes,
all of which direct individual behavior. Purkey (1970) indicates that
the self-concept is the belief that an individual holds about himself
and the values attached to it. Furthermore, the self-concept is
described as an organized, dynamic system. Fitts (1972) considers
the self-concept a frame of reference through which the individual
interacts with his world. His description also suggests that the
self-concept significantly influences behavior. Waterbor (1972)
describes the self-concept as that continuous awareness of experiences
essential to a recognition of self. Rosenberg (1979) describes the
term self-concept as the sum total of one's thoughts and feelings in
reference to oneself as an object. In clarification of this descrip-
tion Rosenberg contends that the self-concept is a product of "self-
objectification," which requires the individual to stand outside
himself and react to what he sees in a detached, objective way. This
reaction, leading to an objective evaluation, is one's self-concept.
McDonald (1980) explains the self-concept as being the totality of
a great number of concepts, attitudes and perceptions held by the
individual, and subject to variation dependent upon the situation.
Phillips and Zigler (1980) suggest that the self-concept is a concep-
tualization, or image of self. This image, they contend, requires an
understanding of one's personal qualities, capabilities and attitudes.
Lynch (1981) related the self-concept to the act of processing

information via a set of rules dictated by the environment. Combs (1981) considers the self-concept to be a perceptional organization based on how one has been perceived by others.

Summary. All of these descriptions share certain components. Among these are the idea that the self-concept is an individual, experienced-based evaluation of self, composed of various attitudes and perceptions. It is considered to be an organized and directive force, and developed over time.

Some Theories Relating to Self-Concept Development

Throughout the years philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and psychiatrists have attempted to explain how an individual develops a sense of self. This search for self has, as one of its outcomes, the formation of self-concept. The theories presented below are examples of some attempts to explain the nature of the self-concept. This collection of theories is not all-inclusive, but is reflective of the psychoanalytical, social, psychological, and phenomenological perspectives.

One of the earliest theorists, William James, is recognized for focusing attention on the concept of self, and much of the contemporary theorizing has its basis in his early work. James (1890) described the self as the totality of what an individual considers his possessions, including his body, his unique traits, his characteristics, abilities, aspirations, family, work, friends, and affiliations.

In his attempt to describe the nature of the self-concept, James distinguished between the self as knower and the self as the object of what is known. The self as knower, James felt, did not require significant recognition, and he concentrated his theory on the self as an object.

He further differentiated the self as the object of what is known to include a material self, a social self, and a spiritual self. James suggested that the material self was composed of those things that extended the self, namely the body, family, and one's possessions. The social self, James contended, was built upon the views others held about the individual. The spiritual self was primarily built about one's emotions and desires.

James conceived of the self as a wholeness, but also as a differentiated system. He felt that in the concept of self, all aspects were capable of producing heightened or lowered self-esteem. Further, James viewed the self-concept as being closely allied with the emotions, mediated through feelings of self-esteem, and responsible to the principles of causality. James' theory is somewhat psychoanalytical in that he viewed the ego as being the individual's sense of identity.

Although James' theory may be described as somewhat psychoanalytical, Sherif and Cantril's theory is more so. Sherif and Cantril (1947) relate the idea of self-concept to the ego and the development of ego-attitudes. They suggest that the ego is composed of a myriad of attitudes including personal identity, values, possessions and

feelings of self-worth. These attitudes are not static, but changing dependent upon the powerfulness of a given situation. Ego-attitudes are learned via experimentation and interaction in social situations. Sherif and Cantril report that ego-attitudes guide our thoughts and behaviors as we strive to maintain or shift our status.

William James was not the only theorist to view the self-concept as composed of distinct entities. Allport and Cattell also perceived the self-concept in a similar way. However, they describe the comprising entities using different terminology, and with slightly different characteristics.

Allport (1937) and Cattell (1950), like James, both recognize a facet of the self-concept which separates the self from the environment. Allport describes it as the body self, as did James, while Cattell describes it as the actual self.

Allport, like James, also identifies a social self. Both contend that the social self is strongly influenced by interaction with others, especially those deemed significant. Also, Allport and James both describe a spiritual self, which Cattell termed the ideal self. This component, regardless of its nomenclature, contributes to the self-concept the individual's desires, emotions, and moral code.

Cattell also describes a structural self which he believes to be concerned with self-sentiments. He further suggests that self-sentiments are:

> . . . major, acquired dynamic trait structures which cause
> their possessor to pay attention to certain objects, or
> classes of objects, and to feel and react in a certain way

with regard to them. (Cattell, 1950, p. 16)
The self-sentiments share some common aspects with the material self described earlier by James.

James, Allport and Cattell all suggest that anything that affects, either positively or negatively, any facet of the self carries over to the self as a whole. Additionally, there is a consensus of opinion that effective functioning is dependent upon the formation of an organized, realistic self-concept.

While James, Allport and Cattell tended to concentrate on the entities composing the self-concept, George Mead, a social psychologist, directed his attention to the role of social interaction. Mead (1934) believed that the self becomes an object to the individual when he is able to assimilate the attitudes of others toward himself in a social context. Mead identified two facets of the emerging self, "I" and "me." "I," according to Mead, reacts to that self which arises through the taking of attitudes of others. It is the facet of self which is used in self-identification. "Me," on the other hand, is the organized set of attitudes, words, and gestures of others, which one assumes, imitates and responds to. It is the combination of "I" and "me" that constitutes the self-concept. Mead also stated that, on occasion, the self projected and the self-concept may not be one and the same. He suggested that the projected self may be significant to the extent that it corresponds to what is expected in a given social context.

Like Mead, Percival Symonds (1951) developed a theory of self-

concept built mainly around the social sphere. The self-concept, according to Symonds, is built largely from the reactions and attitudes perceived to be directed at the self from others. Such reactions and attitudes are evaluated and, to a varying degree, internalized. The self-concept that forms may be positive and realistic, or fragile and distorted, dependent upon the quality of the feedback received from others.

Carl Rogers, a noted humanistic psychologist, presented a somewhat similar theory about self-concept formation. However, his theory tends to suggest that the individual has a more active role in determining what will constitute the final self-concept.

Rogers (1951) described the self-concept as an organized configuration of self-perceptions which the individual admits to awareness. He suggested that these self-perceptions include those of personal characteristics and abilities in relation to society and the environment. He felt that one learns to value through experience, and that one tends to value those things that enhance the self. Experiences are organized and incorporated into the self-concept if they are consistent with the already existing self-concept. If experiences are perceived as not relating to the concept of self, they are ignored. Some experiences are denied because they are inconsistent with the self-concept. Rogers believed that those behaviors which are adopted, have been assessed as being consistent with the existing self-concept.

Another approach to the development of self-concept is offered by Kurt Lewin and, later, Donald Snygg and Arthur Combs. These

theorists suggest that the self-concept is, respectively, a region, or an abstraction within a larger individual universe. Lewin (1937) described the individual universe as the life space region, while Snygg and Combs (1949) describe it as the phenomenal field. Despite the designation, they all contend that this universe is composed of personal experiences and perceptions, and that this is the individual's reality state.

In addition, Snygg and Combs contend that the self-concept is an abstraction arising from within the individual's phenomenal field. They suggest that, once it is shaped, it is relatively stable and difficult to alter; however, change is not impossible. Lewin felt that any significantly strong influence, in any region of the life space, could influence the self-concept. Lewin and Snygg and Combs believed the self-concept to be a directive force in behavior.

Summary. Various theories are offered to explain the nature of the self-concept. Some view the self-concept as being composed of distinct entities, each contributing something crucial to the whole. Others view the self-concept as being essentially a social structure. A third view is presented by those holding that self-concept is an abstraction from a larger universe. Despite the many different approaches, it seems that all the theories recognize the self-concept to be an organized, influential, relatively stable, sensitive component of the total person.

Development of the Self-Concept as Related to Age

Theorists tend to agree that self-concept develops over time and is acquired, not inherited. Some theorists attempt to identify the emergence of the self-concept in age-related, developmental stages (Allport, 1937; Ecuyer, 1981; Murphy, 1947; Symonds, 1951; Yawkey, 1980). Snygg and Combs (1949) present the development of self-concept as a facet of the phenomenological philosophy. Lynch (1981) suggests self-concept development via the acquisition of rules. Although their approaches differ, all view the development of a stable self-concept as crucial to the effective functioning of the individual, and feel it to be significantly infuenced by social interaction.

Those attempting to relate self-concept growth to age must make certain concessions. Ecuyer (1981) among others reports that assignment of an age to various phases of self-concept development is an attempt to place growth on a continuum. It is not meant to emphatically imply that each individual makes a given set of accommodations at that specific year of life. There are, as within any human development sphere, variations in the growth of self-concept.

Nevertheless, he describes the emergence of self-concept in age-specific stages. He contends that stage one begins at birth and ends around age two. Stage one is characterized by the child's attempts to differentiate himself from his environment. Successful differentiation results in an awareness of a bodily self. Earlier theorists also tended to view this awareness of separateness as the first milestone in the development of a self-concept.

For example, Allport and Symonds both had suggested that self-concept is developed largely through feedback resulting from external or externalized stimuli. Symonds and Allport agree that many of these perceptions, or awarenesses, come from exploring and comparing the self to the environment and significant others in that environment. Allport believed this development arose from awareness of a body-self, while Symonds attributed the development to feedback resulting from perceptions of self-differentiation.

In expanding on this theory, Murphy contended that the child's developing self-awareness was heavily influenced by how others perceived and reacted toward him, perhaps more so than by self-perception. Murphy contended that feed-back about the self continually flowed between self-perceptions and reported perceptions of self given by others.

In addition to the idea of initial self-awareness, Yawkey suggests that the young child's self-concept tends to be global in nature. The child fashions the feedback he gets from his personal perceptions, and the feedback he gets from others, into a notion of all good or all bad. Additionally, he tends to view himself and others in this way, and acts consistently with this assessment. As the child matures, Yawkey contends, the global nature of self-concept diminishes and the child perceives himself not only as a bodily self, but also as a social and cognitive self.

Following this preliminary stage, beginning at about the age of two years, is the second phase of the development of self-concept.

According to Ecuyer, these years form the bases of the self-concept. It is during these years that language acquisition occurs, and the child's name and use of pronouns give him a sense of recognition, identification, assertiveness, and possessiveness. Language acquisition, he believes, allows the child to verbalize about the self.

Not only do Allport and Symonds concur that language acquisition is a crucial milestone, but they report that name recognition and the use of a growing understanding of the pronouns "I" and "me" strengthen and extend the concept of self. Symonds further contends that language allows the child to think about values, ideals and objects which he identifies. According to Symonds, clarification of the self-concept, thinking, and being able to identify "I" are essential to competitive growth, cooperation, sympathetic behavior and aspiration, all facets required for stage three.

Another aspect of stage two development reported by Ecuyer and Allport is negativism. This period, they contend, is an attempt by the child to assert and confirm his being. It also encourages and provides considerable feedback from others in the environment, thus helping to sharpen the child's self-concept as he expands his role in the environment.

Murphy supports this contention and suggests another facet of this behavior. He believes that the period of negativism, including possessiveness and self-assertion, to be the beginning of a shift from a purely perceptually based concept of self to one based more on the conceptual plane.

One other facet of stage two development reported by Allport may warrant attention. Allport noted that within stage two, the child's image of self is not stable. He suggested that one outstanding feature of the child between the ages of four and six is the ability to merge fantasy and reality. Also, he noted that although the child's world is still basically egocentric, the child is beginning to form a rudimentary understanding of others which provide models of what his behavior should be. He is thus able to make some comparisons and evaluations of himself, something he will be asked to do increasingly in stage three.

Ecuyer believes this third stage begins at about the age of five and extends into the twelfth year. These are, essentially, the elementary school years. Ecuyer notes that entrance into school further expands the child's self-concept. He suggests that the child must adapt to new roles, new ways of evaluating himself, new attitudes and new social experiences. New categories for evaluation of the self are required, and new priorities must ensue.

Allport not only agreed that the entrance into school requires some new assessments by the child, but further contended that it requires the child to incorporate new, and perhaps conflicting, information about himself into his self-concept. Information about the self now comes from peers, and adults other than family. Allport argued that this new data may require a new reality about the self. Additionally, both Allport and Murphy noted that, out of necessity, the egocentricity of early years must diminish. The need to become

part of a group, to be accepted, ushers to the foreground a new dimen-
sion. Awareness of the consequences of behavior on one's acceptance
and an increasing sense of responsibility ensue. The child, toward
the end of this stage, begins to engage in reflective thought and to
assess the self-concept more critically. These behaviors herald the
beginning of stage four.

Stage four, according to Ecuyer, begins with adolescence and
terminates at its conclusion. He cites no specific age for its termi-
nation. Ecuyer reports that during this stage, the adolescent must
add new dimensions to his self-concept. Ecuyer, Allport and Murphy
suggest that these new dimensions include the search for an identity
which will be suitable for adulthood. The concept of self now must
include new concepts about the body, the opposite sex and attainment
of status. Murphy also noted that new allegiances, values and a sense
of independence must be assimilated into the self-concept.

Allport suggested that most of these new components of self-
concept will be filtered by the feed-back received from the peer
group, the authoritarian source at this stage in development. Ecuyer,
Allport and Murphy all contend that this is a crucial stage in the
development of a self-concept. Also, they imply that this often is a
time of vulnerability, and confusion.

A slightly different approach to the development of self-concept
over time is presented by Lynch (1981). Lynch views the acquisition
of a self-concept as dependent upon the adoption of sets of rules.
Initially, Lynch contends, the child possesses sets of rules that

support biological survival. These rules, present at birth, provide the foundation for interaction with environmental stimuli, leading to the formation of more complex rules and algorithms. With the advent of language, at around eighteen months, the child is able to generate many new rules and algorithms, resulting in a rapid growth of self-concept. Lynch believes that it is the acquisition of language that allows for the structuring of self-concept rules. Such rules allow the child to deal with rationalizations, denials and displacement.

The next set of rules to evolve are those that deal with the self in relation to society. Initially these rules are quite primitive, but they do allow for evaluation and comparison of self to others. They tend to be rather rigid, following to some extent the law of all or none. However primitive the rules, successful validation increases confidence and self-esteem, and encourages movement forward to more complex sets of rules.

The rules the child forms next tend to depend more heavily on the verbal, logical and abstract plane. This, Lynch argues, is due to the child's entrance into school. At this time, the self-concept becomes more flexible. Exceptions to rules are permissible; the all or none concept fades. The child becomes capable of setting expectancies and standards in regard to his performances, and gains new dimensions in self-evaluation. Rules are formed for judging how others evaluate the individual. Definite rules in relationship to social reciprocity, such as fair conduct, sportsmanship and social rules for interacting with peers, replace formerly primitive ones. In addition, the concept

of an idealized self begins to emerge, and striving toward the ideal is evidenced.

The last set of rules to emerge, according to Lynch, forms during puberty. Puberty ushers in adolescence, and the developing self-concept gains new focus. Attention is directed toward integrating into the self-concept rules which address the issues of sexuality and acceptance. The rules acquired are culturally sophisticated ones, validating new body characteristics and the extent of social acceptability.

Another perspective on the development of self-concept by age is presented by Snygg and Combs (1949). They view the emergence of the self-concept as arising developmentally from an abstraction of the phenomenal self. They, like others, contend that the self-concept is not present at birth, but they believe this to be due to the fact that the infant has no "self-organization." They argue that the infant responds only to the most intensive stimuli. However, as time passes, differentiation of stimuli occurs, and as differentiation takes place, the phenomenal field sharpens and becomes better defined. The earliest differentiation to occur is the awareness of self as separate from the rest of the phenomenal field. As the process of maturation unfolds the effects of culture on the phenomenal self are evidenced. Society begins to influence the phenomenal field.

Because of social experiences and interactions with others, the child begins to conceive of himself as having a social facet. The way others treat him affects the concept he forms of himself. The child,

as he matures and enters the mainstream of society, enhances his self-concept by identifying and gaining approval from groups or individuals deemed important. Identification with a group leads to the adoption and defense of a set of standards. Snygg and Combs suggest that the phenomenal self, from which emerges the abstraction of self-concept, becomes relatively stable with the passage of time. It is difficult, but not impossible, to change, as is evidenced in the adolescent's striving to integrate a realistic frame of reference for the future.

Summary. Regardless of their specific theories, these authors generally agree that the new-born infant has no pre-established self-concept. The first step in development of a self-concept comes with the ability to differentiate self from non-self. Once such an awareness occurs, the child can begin to evaluate his effect on the environment via feed-back that he receives from his senses and the responses of significant others in the immediate environment.

The advent of language ushers in another dimension in self-concept formation. Language, it is argued, allows the child to assert himself and to assess his self-assertion on the behavior of others.

Entrance into school offers further opportunity for the shaping of self-concept. Egocentricity, out of necessity, begins to fade. New evaluations of self, based on feedback from persons other than the immediate family circle, must be admitted to the existing self-concept. A reassessment may be warranted.

As the child enters the last years of his elementary school experience, new forces begin to exert influence on the self-concept.

There is an increasing tendency to evaluate oneself in reference to the peer group. Such tendencies accelerate as puberty ensues. New interests, values and concerns evolve, and these must be built into a realistic self-concept that will be acceptable in adulthood.

Notable Characteristics of Transescents (10-14 years)

The sixth grade student is neither a child nor a full-functioning adolescent. He is something in between; something recently termed a "transescent." As such, he/she may demonstrate traits common to either the younger child or the adolescent. Within this grade level many individual differences in intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth can be noted. Only recently has much attention been given to this age group, partly as a result of the renewed interest in school placement. This renewed interest has, as one of its consequences, shed new light on the unusual traits and needs of this age group.

Kohen-Raz (1971) identifies the period of late childhood as being from approximately age nine to age twelve. This range, at its upper limits, includes most sixth grade students. He further divides this period into two substages: pre-adolescence, beginning around age ten and terminating at approximately age twelve, and early adolescence, beginning around age twelve and terminating around age thirteen. He argues that classification based on age is tentative, and establishes other criteria for differentiating pre-adolescence from early adolescence. He contends that pre-adolescence can be determined physically

by dental and skeletal analysis and a deceleration of growth. Early
adolescence, on the other hand, is defined as a period between the
lull in growth and the growth spurt characteristic of emerging
adolescence.

The cognitive level of the pre-adolescent is, according to Kohen-
Raz, very similar to that of adults in terms of realism. Basically,
the pre-adolescent functions in the realm of concrete operations. The
early adolescent, on the other hand, is more apt to be entering the
stage of formal operations.

The pre-adolescent's peer affiliation, Kohen-Raz believes,
is likely to encompass the entire group. The early adolescent,
conversely, may prefer the closeness of only two or three others.
There is less emphasis on group activities and identification, and
increasing emphasis on sub-group interaction and feedback. However,
the early adolescent still uses the peer group as a source of public
opinion and value identification.

Klingele (1979), among others (Romano, Hedberg and Lulich,
1973; Wiles and Bondi, 1981), also notes that this is a time of
considerable change. They contend that this is a period of rapid,
sometimes tumultuous growth intellectually, socially, physically, and
emotionally.

Physically, transescents show irregular growth patterns. These
patterns create considerable discrepancies in size, sexual develop-
ment, and muscular control. Excess physical energy may be evidenced
by restlessness, talkativeness, and a need for physical activity.

Others may show signs of listlessness.

Socially, transescents are described as desirous of peer group acceptance and recognition, especially of the same sex, often leading to conflict within the family. The peer group becomes instrumental in the establishment of standards and models of behavior. Children, at this stage of development, tend to be influenced by fads, not only in dress but in language and behavior. There also is a strong sense of justice and fair play evidenced by this age group.

Emotionally, children within this age range are characterized as having many shifts in feelings, often intense in nature. They tend to be fearful, worrisome, anxious and highly sensitive to criticism. Many of these concerns, often exaggerated, are related to the compelling need for acceptance and recognition by peers, and the establishment of independence from parents. They are also reflective of the need to integrate a sense of personal identity.

Intellectually, the transescent may be operating on two levels, concrete and formal. Children between eleven and twelve deal, not only with the properties of the real world, but also may be able to deal with abstractions, generalizations and hypotheses. They may, on occasion, experience difficulty in ordering priorities. Many prefer active rather than passive learning, and are particularly attracted to "real-life" learning opportunities. Transescents also may show an excessive tendency toward egocentrism and authoritarianism.

Summary. The sixth grade student displays some, if not most, of those characteristics described as common to transescents. Sixth

grade students can be found throughout this rather broad spectrum.

In terms of cognitive development, they may be operating in concrete

operations, formal operations, or both. Physically, their appearance

may be similar to that of a child or an adolescent. Their emotional

state is highly variant, and often unpredictable. In the social

sphere, some evidence a preference for large group identification;

others show an increasing tendency for small group affiliations.

Specific Educational Considerations
Regarding Self-Concept Development
Among Transescents (10-14 Years)

The development of self-concept during the middle school years

deserves specific attention. The child on the verge of puberty is

about to encounter a rethinking of his self-concept. The concepts of

childhood no longer fit the child comfortably. The interests, values,

beliefs and priorities are in a state of change. Many of these new

experiences occur within the school setting, and the setting may have

a pronounced effect.

Kagan (1971) suggests that one of the most significant factors

within this developmental phase may be the impending shift in school

setting, from the elementary school to the junior high. Movement into

the new setting causes the child to meet many new people--people who

have different beliefs, values and priorities. The recognition that

alternate sets of values and beliefs exist creates a type of disso-

nance with which it may be difficult to deal.

The new environment also may pose a threat to the childhood self-

concept regarding competency. In many institutions, especially junior

highs, tracking begins via enriched and remedial programs. The child

may be forced to accept a label, which may not be consistent with the

child's self-concept. Those who are at the top may experience doubts

about their ability to succeed. Those not in the top may feel anger

or disappointment, if their self-concept initially was one of better-

than-average academic ability. In some instances they invent

rationalizations to shield their self-concept.

Kagan believes that children in this developmental period need

a strong set of motivational supports. One of his primary concerns

is that the educational setting provide ample opportunity for success

on a personal level, rather than on inter-student comparison. He

contends that a belief in eventual success, particularly in this

developmental period, is crucial.

Concern about the educational environment surrounding the

transescent, especially the twelve year old, also is reported by Paul

Blos. Blos (1971) expresses concern regarding regressive behaviors

which are evidenced by some early adolescents. He contends that this

regressive behavior allows the child to rethink and realign his

earlier self-concept with a more mature frame of reference. The

intensity of the regressive pull, Blos believes, is directly propor-

tional to the degree that dependency or independency is sought. He

also suggests that this pull is stronger for boys than girls. Evi-

dences of the regressive pull may be noted in the school environment.

Because of the possible turmoil and confusion surrounding the

young adolescent's attempts to rethink his self-concept, Blos holds
the opinion that schools need to extend their protective role, rather
than promote academic and social acceleration. He suggests that
despite appearances to the contrary, the young adolescent is still
a child, and prolongation of the early adolescent stage has certain
benefits. Among these he cites the enhancement of the capacity for
complex cognitive function, and the integration of old and new self-
concept components. The school, and its social structure, according
to Blos, provide the framework for arousal of effective responses to
social, moral and spiritual issues.

The social climate of the school also is one of the issues
addressed by Charles Gordon. Gordon (1971) sees the school setting
as having a definite effect on achievement and social acceptance. He
believes that these two aspects are of considerable concern to most
early adolescents. During this developmental phase, he contends,
there is a need for peer group recognition and acceptance, especially
within the same sex. He sees this as being the basis for more exten-
sive relations involving social acceptance. It is within the school
setting, according to Gordon, that many adolescents make their
assessment of their own degree of acceptability, often based on social
and academic comparison.

A slightly different interpretation of the significance of
the educational setting is offered by Snygg and Combs (1949). They
suggest that the process of education alters the phenomenal field, and
that such alterations affect behavior. They further suggest that the

change taking place may be interpreted differently by the child and
the teacher.

According to Snygg and Combs, the child in the educational
setting is continually seeking self-enhancement in immediate goals.
His goals, unlike the teacher's, are not necessarily future oriented.
To interact effectively with the child in the educational process,
the educator and the school environment should concentrate on what
the student thinks about himself in the present. Emphasis should be
placed on helping students perceive themselves in ways that encourage
growth of the phenomenal self.

To this end, the school setting should be structured for optimal
opportunities to see oneself as a responsible, necessary member of
society. Schools which operate democratically run classrooms, with
emphasis on communication, cooperation and self-achievement offer,
according to Snygg and Combs, the best environment for development of
the phenomenal self and development of a positive self-concept.

Summary. Authorities in the field of psychology and child
psychiatry tend to agree that the transescent requires special
consideration in school setting. They imply that this developmental
period is especially important in the eventual successful establish-
ment of an adult self-concept. Further, they suggest that this is
a time when new settings, values, goals and the quest for social
acceptability become very influential in the child's life. Such a
quest, they suggest, may be fraught with fears of failure, confusion
and a myriad of other emotions. These feelings are apt to be

evidenced in the school environment, and therefore a careful struc-

turing of that environment may be warranted.

Review of Literature Summary

Attempts to describe the self-concept tend to convey a similar

message. Most descriptions include the notion that the self-concept

is personal, based on individual perceptions of experiences, and

attitudes of others. It appears to develop gradually, and is molded

as one passes through various stages of maturation. The self-concept,

though dynamic and flowing, tends, once it is formed, to be relatively

stable, and receptive only to notions that tend to reinforce or

enhance it. A substantial amount of energy is directed at maintaining

its integrity.

The child in the middle school years, the transescent, has

characteristics which make him unique and require special considera-

tion. These years, once overlooked by educators and psychologists,

have taken on new significance as information about their importance

begins to emerge. The research is, however, still in its infancy in

terms of understanding their importance in shaping the adult self-

concept.

The school, as a social institution, can, and perhaps should,

play an important role in clarifying and providing input for the

development of the self-concept. Theorists tend to agree that the

development of a healthy self-concept is crucial to the effective

functioning of the individual, and therefore to society as a whole.

Chapter III

Methods

Subjects

The subjects for this study were seventy-one sixth grade
students. Thirty-four (male N = 16, female N = 18) of the students
were enrolled in a middle school consisting of grades six through
eight. The remaining thirty-seven students (male N = 17, female N =
20) were enrolled in a K-6 elementary. Both schools are located in
the state of Kansas.

The middle school curriculum and the K-6 curriculum both stressed
the core subjects of reading, language arts, math, science and social
studies. In the middle school ability grouping was used in reading.
However, in the K-6 school ability grouping was used in reading, math
and language arts. In each setting students changed classes for
reading. Those in the K-6 setting also changed classes for social
studies, science, and in some cases, math.

The subjects enrolled in the middle school were from both urban
and rural areas. The socio-economic status ranged from lower middle
class to upper middle class. The majority were white. Those students
in the K-6 school were also from lower to upper-middle class families.
The community was composed of apartments and family homes. Again, the
majority of students were white.

Instrument

The instrument used to measure self-concept was the Piers-Harris

Children's Self-Concept Scale, published by Counselor Recordings and

Tests, Nashville, Tennessee, 1969. This instrument is divided into

six factors: behavior; intellectual and school status; physical

appearance and attitudes; anxiety; popularity; happiness and satis-

faction. These factors would appear to be closely correlated with

school setting, school position and self-concept and, possibly subject

to sexual variation.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale requires the

student to respond "yes" or "no" to a potentially self-descriptive

sentence. The scale is composed of eighty items and requires fifteen

to twenty minutes of response time. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-

Concept Scale, according to Piers (1969), has a reliability coeffi-

cient between .90 and .87 based on the Spearman-Brown Formula for

grades six through ten. Additionally, it is highly regarded for its

validity and compares favorably with other measures of self-concept.

Piers reports that an attempt was made to build content validity

into the initial scale by defining the universe to be measured as the

areas about which children reported qualities they liked or disliked

about themselves. Some nondiscriminating items, from the initial

scale, were eliminated so that the final scale no longer covers all

areas to the same extent. Those items that were retained are assumed

to be a better reflection of the child's general self-concept.

Studies are cited, by Piers, which reveal the correlation of the

Piers-Harris scores with other measures. When the scale was compared with Lipsitt's Children's Self-Concept Scale, for special education students (12-16 years), a correlation of .68 was obtained (p ⟶.01). In another study using big problems on the SRA Junior Inventory, for 97 children in grades 6-9, a correlation of -.64 was obtained (p ⟶.01).

When using a rating approach to assess construct validity, the teacher's rating showed a Pearson r of .41 (p ⟶.01) for girls to .06 for boys in grade four. In grade 6 the Pearson r reported was .17 for boys and .25 for girls.

Peer ratings reported for grade 4 showed a Pearson r of .26 for boys and .41 for girls (p ⟶ .01). For sixth grade students the Pearson r was .49 (p ⟶ .01) for boys and .34 (p ⟶ .05) for girls.

Piers cites another study by Cox dealing with peer ratings. This study, done in 1966, on boys and girls in grades 6-9 showed a Pearson r for the scale at .43 (p ⟶ .01) for teacher rating, and .31 (p ⟶ .01) for peer rating. The measure used was Socially effective behavior. Using Superego strength as a measure yielded teacher ratings of .40 and peer ratings of .42 (p ⟶ .01).

To further establish construct validity, the scale was adminis-tered to 88 adolescent institutionalized retarded females. The mean age reported was 16.8 and the mean IQ was 70. These subjects, as predicted, scored significantly lower on the scale than normals of the same chronological age, or normals of the same mental age. Other studies report similar findings when comparing institutionalized and

non-institutionalized subjects.

Procedure

Students were tested spring semester by their social studies teacher during regular class time. Permission slips were sent home one week before the testing. The students in both groups received identical instruction regarding the testing procedure. Both groups were read the directions at the top of the test. Students responded on a separate answer sheet to the eighty, yes-no questions by circling the response they felt most correctly described them. To insure confidentiality, all students identified their answer sheets with an assigned student number. Following the tests, the answer sheets were collected and scored by the investigator. To account for such variables as ability and achievement, the teacher was asked to report IQ scores, translated by the investigator into derived scores, and grade equivalent, composite ITBS and SRA scores for each student. Additionally, each teacher completed, for each student, a rating scale designed to evaluate maturity and socio-economic status.

Data Analysis

The independent variables in this study were sex and school setting. The dependent variable was self-concept. Ability, achievement, SES and maturity data were used as covariates.

Hypotheses Tested

The null hypotheses tested were as follows:

1. There is no significant mean difference in self-concept
    scores for students in a K-6 building and a middle school.

2. There is no significant mean difference in the self-concept
    scores of boys and girls.

3. There is no sex by school setting interaction.

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the possible relationship between school setting and self-concept development in sixth graders, and to evaluate whether school setting had a more pronounced effect on the development of the male or female self-concept.

The sample for this study consisted of seventy-one sixth graders. Thirty-four of the subjects attended a middle school; thirty-seven attended a K-6 elementary school. To measure self-concept, both groups were administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale during the spring semester.

Data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance. The independent variables in this study were identified as sex and educational setting. The dependent variable was the Piers-Harris Self-Concept score. Table 1 (page 35) reports the mean and standard deviation data for the total sample on the dependent variable, the Piers-Harris score. Additional data, I.Q. score, maturity level, achievement level and SES, also were collected. These were identified as possibly significant covariates. An effort was made to determine to what extent, if any, these would influence the Piers-Harris score. Table 2 (page 36), reports the means and standard deviation for all variables in the sample; the intercorrelations for the total sample

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR PIERS-HARRIS SCORE
FOR TOTAL SAMPLE BY EDUCATIONAL SETTING, AND SEX

SOURCE OF VARIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
All Boys (N = 33)	68.33	21.89
Middle School (N = 16)	68.19	21.33
K-6 (N = 17)	68.47	23.06
All Girls (N = 38)	62.55	27.83
Middle School (N = 18)	70.72	31.17
K-6 (N = 20)	55.20	22.80
Entire Sample (N = 71)	65.24	25.24

TABLE 2

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR
ALL VARIABLES IN TOTAL SAMPLE

SOURCE OF VARIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Piers-Harris Score	65.24	25.24
I.Q. Score	110.87	15.92
Achievement Level	71.87	21.87
SES Rating	6.86	1.91
Maturity Level	13.46	4.54

are summarized in Table 3 (page 38).

Inspection of the correlational data in Table 3 indicates significant correlations among IQ, achievement, SES and maturity rating, but non-significant coefficients between these variables and Piers-Harris scores. Given the significant intercorrelations among the independent variables of IQ, achievement, SES and maturity ratings, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether or not these variables taken as a set would predict Piers-Harris scores.

Table 4 (page 39) reports the individual analysis of the multiple regression for the covariates. None were found to be statistically significant, and therefore not predictive. However, it should be noted that of these, IQ was closest to being predictive with an F value of 2.71. The critical value of F at the .05 level of significance was 3.98.

Although the regression analysis indicated that IQ, achievement, and maturity ratings did not predict Piers-Harris self-concept scores either as individual variables or as a linear combination of variables, the decision was made to use these variables as covariates to permit greater precision in data analysis.

Table 5 (page 40) summarizes the analysis of variance for the Piers-Harris score, and the three covariates, sex, educational setting, and sex by educational setting. Results of the data analysis suggest that all three original null hypotheses should be retained. The null hypotheses were as follows:

Null Hypothesis 1. There is no significant mean difference

TABLE 3

TABLE OF INTERCORRELATIONS FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE--
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

	PIERS-HARRIS SCORE	I.Q. SCORE	ACHIEVE-MENT LEVEL	MATURITY RATING	S.E.S. RATING
P.H. Score	1.00	0.19	0.15	0.18	0.06
I.Q. Score		1.00	0.76**	0.67**	0.20
Achievement		0.75	1.00	0.71**	0.42**
Maturity				1.00	0.33**
SES					1.00

** $p < .01$

TABLE 4

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS OF
MULTIPLE REGRESSION FOR VARIABLES

SOURCE OF VARIATION	MULTIPLE R	R-SQUARED	D.F.	F.	F_{cv} .05
I.Q. Score	.19	.038	1	2.71	3.98
Maturity Level	.20	.042	2	1.48	3.13
Achievement Level	.21	.042	3	.98	2.75

TABLE 5

SUMMARY TABLE OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
FOR THE SIGNIFICANT INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
AND THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE, THE PIERS-HARRIS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	S.S.	D.F.	M.S.	F.	$F_{cv}._{05}$
Sex	451.65	1	451.65	.73	3.99
Educational Setting	779.68	1	779.68	1.25	3.99
Sex by Educational Setting	1380.05	1	1380.05	2.22	3.99
Constant Errors	1336.42	1	1336.42	2.15	3.99
Regressions	1938.01	3	646.00	1.04	2.75

in self-concept scores for students in a K-6 building and a middle school.

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no significant mean difference in the self-concept scores of boys and girls.

Null Hypothesis 3. There is no sex by school setting interaction. None of the covariates, sex (F = .73), educational setting (F = 1.25), or sex by educational setting (F = 2.22) exceeded the critical value for F which was 3.99 at the .05 level of significance.

Thus, self-concept does not appear, in this sample, to be affected significantly by school setting, by sex, or the interaction between sex and school setting. However, the sex by educational setting interaction may warrant closer scrutiny. Although the mean scores for boys were quite similar (middle school boy $\overline{X}$ = 68.19 Piers-Harris, K-6 boys $\overline{X}$ = 68.47 Piers-Harris), the mean score for middle school girls was 70.72 compared to a mean score of 55.20 for K-6 girls. Although the total mean score was not statistically significant, the discrepancy in the scores of the girls may warrant closer attention.

Chapter V

Summary and Discussion

Summary

This study was designed to investigate the possible relationship between school setting and self-concept development in sixth graders. An attempt was made to answer the following questions:

1. Does the school setting affect the self-concept of sixth graders?

2. Does the school setting have a more pronounced effect on male or female self-concept formation of sixth graders?

After analysis of the data collected for this study, the following conclusions appear valid for this sample:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between school setting and self-concept development among sixth graders. The F value obtained was not significant beyond the .05 level of confidence.

2. School setting does not have a more pronounced effect on one sex than on the other. The F value obtained was not significant beyond the .05 level of confidence. However, as noted earlier, the relationship between female self-concept mean scores in a given school setting suggests that school setting may play a role in the self-concept development of females. The F value for the variable sex by educational setting was more nearly significant with a value of 2.22.

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The critical value of $\underline{F}$ was 3.99 at the .05 level of confidence.

Discussion

The current interest in improving the educational experience for this nation's youth has promoted investigation into many facets of education. In an interview conducted by Johnston (1982), William Alexander, considered by some to be the father of the middle school concept, observed that the school setting can have a pronounced effect on the educational experience. To substantiate this contention, studies which can help to justify or disspell this position are in order. Few have yet to be undertaken, however.

Theodore C. Moss (1971) reports on one study conducted by Robert Glissmeyer which was designed to determine to what extent, if any, achievement scores of sixth graders could be affected by school setting. Results from the study indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between school setting and achievement. Furthermore, it was suggested that additional research relating to school setting and achievement was warranted.

In addition to investigations into the cognitive domain, research is needed in the affective domain. Most educators agree that a maximally effective educational experience must be a balance between academics and the social/emotional development. Most also agree that self-concept influences all other behaviors. It appears reasonable to assume that a setting which fosters and encourages a positive self-concept would be an essential component in an over-all successful

educational experience. Consequently, experts in various fields of child study consider the school setting to be important in fostering a positive self-concept (Blos, 1971; C. Gordon, 1971; Kagan, 1971). Despite this recognition, research in this field appears to be very limited. This may be due to the fact that instruments used to measure self-concept tend to rely on self-report. Most investigators are aware of the limitations of such instruments.

Despite the fact that, in this study, no significant differences were reported regarding self-concept and sex by school setting, the discrepancy between mean scores for girls in the respective settings may warrant further attention. As reported earlier, the mean score for girls in the K-6 setting was 55.20 while that for middle school girls was 70.72. Review of the individual data sheets for both groups reveal that girls in the K-6 setting had more erasures on their individual sheets than did middle school girls in a ratio of 2.95 to 1.33. This might suggest several items for consideration. One consideration might be that the K-6 girls were less sure of their response, less able or willing to give a definitive response. Interviews with the teachers in each setting revealed that there were some observable differences in the middle school and K-6 girls. The teachers in the middle school described the girls as being basically content, self-satisfied and cooperative within their group. They were not into "teen-age" behaviors such as dress fads, boy friends, or cliques. Teachers in the K-6 noted more of these "teen-age" type interests. They also saw the peer group as being more competitive. Since it has

been reported that group conformity and fear of rejection adversely affect self-concept (Romano et al., 1973), it is plausible that some K-6 girls felt themselves to be in a more stressful, less secure peer situation, and this may have affected their self-concept scores adversely. Additionally, Smith and Woody (1981) report that a competitive environment is less conducive to strong self-concept development than is a cooperative one.

The lack of significance for the independent variable, school setting, may also have been affected adversely by the fact that the middle school was in many respects, except for grade placement, much like the K-6 school. The basic program of instruction may not have differed substantially from the K-6 school. Experts in the field of middle school development have stressed not only the setting, but also the philosophy. Johnston (1982) reports in his interview with Alexander the need to insure that the curriculum of the middle school address not only the academics, but also the creative and emotional aspects of development. The middle school used in this study may not have evolved to this extent.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the type of instruments available for measuring self-concept. Instruments designed for measuring self-concept are basically of the self-report variety. Such a design is subject to innumerable possible sources of variation and, consequently, interpretation. It is conceivable that the subject's

current, perhaps temporary, self-concept was influenced by some event occurring prior to the testing situation. If such an event were either strongly positive or negative, in regard to the subject's self-concept, it could have influenced the responses of the subject to questions closely related to his experience. Additionally, self-report scales are subject to selection of responses based on what may be deemed socially acceptable rather than self-descriptive. Some subjects may be unable or unwilling to report personal feelings regarding the self (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976). Despite these limitations, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, according to Shavelson et al. (1976) generally gives a relatively stable picture of self-concept. Because of the variability inherent in self-reporting, such results perhaps should not be generalized beyond the sample.

Another limitation of the study relates to the use of the middle school selected. It is plausible that the use of a middle school more closely aligned with the philosophy which separates middle schools from K-6 schools might yield different results. In his interview with Johnston (1982), Alexander reports that the focus of the middle school must be on the age group and the curriculum, not on organization. Increased attention to affective development is one of the key ingredients in the development of an effective middle school. Alexander suggests that some form of advisor/advisee program is essential to the development of the affective domain, an area of interest to those proponents of middle schools. Further research

into the realm of self-concept development in the middle schools might be more revealing were this type of guidance/counseling program already firmly in place in the middle school being investigated. Unless there is direct, consistent attention given to the affective side of the educational experience, it is highly probable that little difference between self-concept will be noted as significant, based on setting alone.

Recommendations

Further research into the effect of school setting and self-concept development is warranted. To improve the assessment of this relationship further, investigators might wish to compare self-concept scores on various instruments. However, this would necessitate an analysis of the various definitions used to describe self-concept. Also, it might be necessary to design some method for assessing the similarity of the instruments to be used.

Another possible recommendation relates to the screening of the schools to be used. Future investigators might want to investigate the schools to insure that they reflect the over-all philosophy that separates middle schools from traditional schools. It might be appropriate to ascertain to what extent the affective domain is considered in the respective curricula.

Additionally, future investigation into the long-range effect of school setting on the development of self-concept needs to be undertaken. Data collected on the same sample of students at the end of

eighth grade might shed further light on the effect, or extent of impact, of middle school philosophy on the development of self-concept for those between the years of eleven and fourteen.

Final Conclusions

Although this study does not demonstrate any significant difference in self-concept as related to sex or school setting, the issue should not be dismissed. Further investigation into this relationship might yield different results, especially if the middle school used has fully evolved in relation to its curriculum and staff.

Additionally, although not statistically significant in this study, further investigation into self-concept development as related to females in different settings might be desirable. There may be some indication that females are more affected by their educational environment than males in grade six.

It appears that if middle schools can offer an environment more conducive to positive self-concept development in sixth graders, there is a mandate for them to do so. The challenge ahead is to prove that this is indeed the case.

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