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LYLE, JULIE ANNE

MOTHER-DAUGHTER COMMUNICATION AND THE DAUGHTER'S
PERCEIVED SELF-ESTEEM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

M.A. 1984

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER COMMUNICATION AND
THE DAUGHTER'S PERCEIVED SELF-ESTEEM

by

Julie Anne Lyle

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following words from a favorite Robert Frost poem summarize both my personal and academic motivation over the last few years:

"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

I have chosen to travel the road less tread on as it seemed to hold the challenges, potential and uniqueness that I desired. The journey has been exciting and presented me with a variety of people, circumstances and experiences that I have learned from and feel grateful for. Even though I have traveled alone, there have been those incredibly significant individuals who have helped in mapping out my route and provided the nurturance to my sometimes failing motivation, stamina or humor. As I come to the end of this particular path, with the completion of my Master's degree, and begin looking to those unpaved paths of the future, there are those friends, family and professionals who I wish to let know of my special heartfelt appreciation.

First, to my Counseling and Guidance peers and teachers who, over the last two years, contributed to my personal and professional growth through challenging courses and useful discussions. A special "Thank-you" to Patti Carone, Leah Cox,

Sue Hanick, Lisa Kearsley and Gail Scarborough whose understanding, acceptance and love has given new meaning to the word "friendship".

Second, to Dr. Betty Newlon, who greeted me with a warm smile and handshake in January, 1982 and has since guided me through my academic endeavors with a perennial "go for it!". And, to the committee members for this paper, for sharing their professional assistance in my interest area and providing me with the confidence to see this goal to its completion.

With love to my parents who helped me to build my own self-esteem by sharing my goals, respecting my individuality and loving my life as their own. And a special word of thanks to my sister, Kelly, whose adolescent experience has inspired this paper and shown me that sisters and best friends can be one in the same.

Last, I would like to thank each person who takes the time to read this paper and who shares similar concerns, curiosities and interests in the area of family interactions and its tremendous impact on the maturing individual's self-concept, and that this paper will inspire future research and evolution in the area of adolescence and its significance to the entire human developmental process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.	vii
ABSTRACT.	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.	1
Purpose of Researching the Self-Concept	3
Purpose of Researching the Adolescent Self-Concept.	4
Purpose of Researching the Parent's Role.	5
Purpose of Researching Communication.	6
Theoretical Rationale: Purpose in Combining Research in Adolescence, Self-Concept, Parent-Child Interaction and Communication	8
Clarification of Assumptions.	9
Definition of Terms	10
Statement of the Problem.	11
Hypothesis to be Tested	12
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.	13
Introduction.	13
Self-Concept Studies.	13
3. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.	20
Instruments	21
The General Population Questionnaire.	22
The Index of Self-Esteem.	22
Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory	25
Respondents and Procedures.	28
Methods of Analysis	31
The Correlation Coefficient "r"	32
The t-test.	32
4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.	34
Testing with the ISE and the PACI	35
Summary	40

TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Continued

	Page
5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY.	44
Summary of Purpose, Procedures and Results	47
Limitations.	48
Implications -- Suggested Strategies	52
Suggested Strategies	53
Assessment Testing in the Counseling Setting.	54
Education-Parent Training and Information.	56
APPENDIX A: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.	60
APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PARENTS AND PARENTS' PERMISSION SLIP.	62
APPENDIX C: GENERAL POPULATION QUESTIONNAIRE.	64
APPENDIX D: INDEX OF SELF-ESTEEM.	66
APPENDIX E: PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION INVENTORY	68
REFERENCES	71

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Distribution of Subjects According to Age and Home Setting. .	29
2. Scores on Self-Esteem Scale and Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory	37
3. Critical Value of t if $p > .01$	39
4. Means Obtained in Measurement of Self-Esteem and Mother-Daughter Communication	42

ABSTRACT

During the last two decades, there has been a growing awareness among human behavior professionals regarding those ingredients which the parents adds to the developing child's emotional maturation. Following this trend of research, this paper explores two naturally occurring variables: female adolescent self-esteem and mother-daughter communication. Twenty-four girls, ages 15 through 18, were surveyed through the use of specific testing instruments, the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) and Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (PACI), selected to evaluate the degree of female adolescent self-esteem and mother-daughter communication. The findings, through correlational statistics, indicate a strong relationship between self-esteem and mother-daughter communication.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Whenever two people meet there are really six people present -- there is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other sees him, and each man as he really is (William James, 1890, p. 10).

"Self-concept and "self-esteem" are two fairly synonymous, constructs which have been questioned, explored and researched for the last forty years. As the nucleus of hundreds of hypotheses, a variety of psychologists, counselors and social science professionals have been intent on defining the "human self-concept" by investigating its antecedent conditions and consequences and generally attempting to formulate some basic guidelines to explain how self-concept originates and how one's level of self-esteem either increases or decreases.

The concept of self-esteem is in no way absolute. Its determinants, variations and complex nature are continuously being challenged. An introductory overview of this present body of research is adequately provided by three major contributors to the field of self-concept; Lecky, Sullivan, and Horney.

Lecky (1945) considers the self to be the "nucleus of personality" which is both constant and changeable and, as an adjunct to this, that each person's self is individually unique while concurrently having a social origin. Following this perspective

Sullivan (1947) and Horney (1950) see the origins of the young self as being in the hands of "significant" people, i.e., parents. Sullivan pursues this idea one step further in that the attitudes and feelings of these significant people can be communicated to their offspring. The consequence of such a supposition is that the familial experiences of a young person play an important role, and serve an integral function, in the development of one's self-image and esteem. Communication theorist, George A. Miller (1974), combines the above mentioned positions in a brief synopsis statement, "when a child is born, it is part of its own mother who, by verbal and other play, begins to teach the child its own separate existence and identity" (p. 150).

For the purposes of this paper, two areas of human experience will be studied: 1) one's perceived self-concept at a particular developmental period, adolescence, and 2) one's perceived level of communication with a significant other, the mother. The area of the adolescent female's self-esteem and its contingency on her communicative capacity with her mother sheds light on the following questions: How is self-concept most appropriately and operationally defined? How does one's self-image originate? And when its existence is identified, what factors, such as communicative interaction, augment or decrease an individual's perception of self? What significance does one's self-concept have on a person's overt behavior? And lastly, how, if any, is this significance measured?

The idea of "self-understanding" is intricately blended with one's ability to identify feelings of self-worth, to integrate or

dispose of values imposed by others and to develop an overall awareness of solving the perennial dilemma of one's "raison d'etre", or "Who am I?"

In these chapters, the self-concept, as it correlates to communication, will be reviewed and tested and in turn, hopefully pave one more part of the path in the expanding discovery of the "human self".

Purpose of Researching the Self-Concept

Dr. Stanley Coopersmith (1967) who was a dedicated and prominent researcher in the area of self-esteem, recognized the significant magnitude of an individual's self-image as it was associated with one's personal satisfaction and effective functioning. From her popular parent-help handbook, Your Child's Self-Esteem, Dorothy Briggs (1970) places tremendous importance on the self-concept and writes that "...self-esteem is the mainspring that slates every child for success or failure as a human being" (p. 10). It quickly becomes apparent that self-concept is a facet of the human identity which has been, and continues to be, defined, evaluated and applied to an abundance of populations and circumstances. Its value in unraveling a few of the millions of questions involving human psychology is immeasurable. The following comments by Arthur Combs (1949) summarize the necessity of continuing the pursuit of greater knowledge of an individual's self-concept, "...recognition of the importance of self-concept as a dynamic in human behavior must

certainly be regarded as one of the most fruitful contributions of humanistic psychology" (p. 20).

Purpose of Researching the Adolescent Self-Concept

For approximately the last twenty-five years, adolescence has been in the spotlight of child development research. Often categorized as the developmental period of "storm and stress" in a young person's life, parents, peers and society demand that the 13-18 year old male or female bring their childhood and adulthood into harmony with one another while experiencing a minimum of distress, damage or discomfort (for both the adolescent and parent!). This, however, seems to be a bit of an ideal or unrealistic expectation. According to Ginott (1969), this task is quite severe. "Adolescence is a period of curative madness in which every teenager has to remake his personality". Another identification of the tasks which today's adolescent performs is in 1) establishing final independence from family and peers, 2) relating successfully to the opposite sex, 3) preparing occupation for self-support and 4) creating workable and meaningful philosophy on life (Briggs, 1970).

Some of the components of "adolescence" such as the lack of behavioral and emotional stability, physical and biological changes in appearance and the progressive switch in roles (i.e., from student to worker, child to potential parent) all contribute to the young person being perceived and responded to differently by him/herself and others (Gergen, 1971). These elements coincide with the increased

concern the teen has of how others view him/her and how he/she perceives or considers their unique self. All in all, these above listed aspects of adolescence call on the teen to re-organize his/her self-concept in order to accommodate the growth and maturation process. This extensive impact, during adolescence, on the young person's self-concept seems to be apparent and the following quote by Peterson (1971) appropriately summarizes the purpose in pursuing adolescent self-concept research, "While adolescence seems to be a good time of life at which to study the development of self-concept, few developmental theories or empirical studies exist" (p. 99).

Purpose of Researching the Parent's Role

"In our societal structure built up over hundreds of years, the family constitutes the individual's first environment and prefigures his later, more extensive socialization" (Deutsch, 1944, p. 154). In every societal context, parents have innately had the responsibility of providing food, clothes, shelter and preferably positive educational and life experiences for their offspring. During the last century, with the advent of "family therapy" and interest in parent-child dynamics, the role of being a parent has been assigned a much more demanding and serious script. Virginia Satir (1972), a popular California family therapist, sees parents as being in the business of "peoplemaking", where parents have a heavy hand in creating the adult their child will become. Alfred Adler (1958), renowned for his humanistic approach in dealing with

people, feels the "...child's self-concept is affected by many variables, but none as important as the self-concept and self-esteem of his/her parents" (p. 40). Parents are the mirror which the child looks into when creating his/her own identity (Briggs, 1970) and through verbal and nonverbal contact, the parent transmits his/her feelings and ideas to the developing child. The child's view of self, feelings of personal worth and of being loved and cared for are all reflected in the parental interacts. Sears (1964), another prominent researcher in self-concept, reflects a similar position. The belief that the attitudes which the parent gives the child to make him/her feel loved, wanted, accepted and respected will produce a similar attitude in the young person of being worthy and successful. The message seems to be very clear, parents make an incredibly integral contribution to their son or daughter's physical intellectual and emotional maturation. Borrowing again from Dorothy Briggs' philosophy on parent-child interaction, the key to successful parenthood lies in helping children to build high self-esteem and therefore, both parents and children need to share in the common goal of accepting and valuing themselves and each other.

Purpose of Researching Communication

Communication serves as the vehicle of developing and maintaining relationships of all kinds; family, industry and international, as well as one's own personal awareness system. "To understand himself, man needs to be understood by another. To be

understood by another he needs to understand the other" (Hora, 1959, p. 231). This "understanding" through communication which Thomas Hora spoke of is exemplified in Miller's work in human interaction from which he concluded that "communication brings the human person himself not only to the knowledge of things and other persons, but also to his own self-awareness" (1974, p. 138).

There is a growing trend among both human service professionals and behavioral scientists in recognizing family communication as one of the major elements of human development and family interactions (Bienvenu, 1969).

Communication based on its technical foundation, is identified as syntactics (transmitting of grammar, words, tone), semantics (the meaning of language, words, etc.) and pragmatics (communication affects on behavior). All three categories represent elements of the communication process and supply each individual with a tool through which he/she can learn of others and him/herself. "Communication may be viewed as the index of family operations and the means whereby the family, transacts of the business of life" (Scherz, 1962, p. 11). Upon acquisition of language, or a system of communication, a channel of perceiving others and of being perceived, opens up for the youngster. Language has been cited as the central factor in the development of self-concept (Felker, 1974). It is through language and a system of common communication that people of all ages, and at every developmental stage, find out about their worth as a person (Satir, 1972). "Although a person is unique, and

no one man knows what it's like to be this 'I' that I am, I only become aware of myself as myself only through communication with others" (Miller, 1974, p. 166).

Man is a communicating being, an entity within himself which, in order to survive, depends on a system of communication which allows him to interact with his environment, peers and most significantly, himself.

Theoretical Rationale
Purpose in Combining Research in Adolescence, Self-Concept,
Parent-Child Interaction and Communication

Adolescence is a time of evaluating one's emotional and physical make-up. Today's teenagers are met with an increasing amount of input from parents, peers and society which they sort through or combine to assist them in their self-discovery process. Communication between parents and their adolescents is frequently tense, difficult and without satisfying resolution. Teens seem to resent the offered help and reject any hint of guidance from their parents while also reaching out for their continued attention, love and acceptance.

It seems obvious from the previous three sections, the body of literature and research on self-concept and its adjuncts is complex. Yet, there does exist a paucity of specific research investigating how one's self-concept is effected due to one's communicative interactions with parents. Bienvenu (1969) notes that "studies dealing exclusively with the measurement of parent-adolescent communication appear extremely limited" (p. 117). For

the purpose of the following research, self-concept has been identified within a particular population, adolescent females, and paired with one parallel aspect of behavior, communication between mother and her adolescent daughter. Evidence has been collected (Journal, 1964) that in today's families, where love is supposed to prevail, there is a tragic lack of understanding, listening, and empathy among parents and their adolescent daughters/sons, in short, a lack of communication which is creating feeling into breakdowns between parent-adolescent relations. Ruth Wylie (1961), in her book appropriately titled The Self Concept, highlights the purposive aspect of this paper, "...all personality theorists who are concerned with constructs involving the self accord great importance to parent-child interaction in the development of self-concept" (p. 121).

Clarification of Assumptions

For the purpose of this paper, the following assumptions have been identified as they relate to this research on the adolescent's self-concept and its potential correlation to the communicative relationship between the female teenager and her mother.

1. The self-concept is acquired, not inherited. An individual's self-concept (one's self-perceptions) evolves from birth through the experiences she has with others and her environment; primarily the relationships she has with immediate family members, parents, siblings and extended family (Wylie, 1961).

2. Self-concept is dynamic within each person, continually changing throughout life and potentially affecting every thought, feeling and behavior.
3. Parents serve as the models of self-esteem, and to whom children must look to for verification of their own self-worth.
4. Parents who demonstrate positive self-concept and feelings of high self-esteem provide respect, acceptance, encouragement and support to their children (Adler, 1959).
5. Adolescence is a developmental period of heightened awareness of one's personal, physical and mental characteristics accompanied by an internal journey of discovering answers to "Who am I?" and "Do I like who I am?".
6. Developing a means of communication is the most critical activity of man; as people are communicating beings (Miller, 1974) with all communication being learned (Satir, 1972), a person creates his/her images of others and self through interacting.
7. All behavior is communication, therefore, one cannot not communicate.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined according to their use in this study:

Self-Concept/Self-Esteem -- A person's overall feelings, beliefs and perceptions about him/herself. The organization of qualities

that the individual attributes to him/herself (Kinch, 1963), consisting of dimensions; physical body self, social self, and cognitive ability self (Samuels, 1977).

Adolescence -- The transitional, developmental period between childhood (puberty) and adulthood, with specific focus on individuals from 13 to 18 years of age. During this time, young people work to establish their unique identities as adults while experiencing a combination of physical, emotional and cognitive growth.

Communication/Communicative Interaction -- Any messages or information passing between members of a group of two or more people (Bienvenu, 1969), vehicle of social interaction and the process of transmitting feelings, attitudes, facts, beliefs and ideas between living beings, including verbal as well as non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, touch, gestures and hearing.

Pragmatics -- The behavioral effects of communication. From "pragmatic" framework, all behavior (not only speech) is communication and all communication effects one's behavior. Each person is affected by behavior/communication of the other person (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967).

Statement of the Problem

If the contributors of the female adolescent self-esteem could be assembled together, aspects such as physical appearance, mental aptitude, family constellation and socioeconomic status would

all prove to be valid antecedents providing her with either positive or negative ingredients towards her ever changing self-esteem and self-image. Yet, questions such as "What impact, if any, does the adolescent female's relationships with her mother have on her growth to adulthood?" and, "What importance needs to be given to how mothers communicate to their teenage daughters?", would remain unanswered and unaccounted for.

It is in critical consideration of these questions that the following research on the adolescent female's perception of herself, as well as her evaluation of the communicative relationship with her mother, is based.

Hypothesis to be Tested

Due to the nature of the parent-child interaction and its complex influence on the development of the child's self-concept, this study focuses on the continuing maternal contribution to the female's self-concept, during adolescence, through their patterns of communication. By testing the adolescent female subjects on both self-esteem and mother-to-daughter perceived communication measures, the anticipated conclusion is as follows:

The adolescent female who perceives herself to have high self-esteem will also perceive a positive communicative relationship with her mother.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review was initially assembled to investigate studies, experiments and relevant literature which collaborated on the two areas of interest for this paper: female adolescent self-concept and mother-daughter communication. This initial goal was not met due to the scarcity of information on this combination of constructs. For this reason, the following literature review focuses on those studies, and articles, that contain research on some element of one's self-concept and its antecedent developmental conditions, with special consideration to those studies pertaining to the relevance of communication as it relates to human development as well as the adolescent/youth self-concept and the degree to which it changes to become more or less negative or positive due to interaction with the teen's parents.

Self-Concept Studies

As early as the 1900's, Cooley (1902) was pursuing the idea of one's self-concept and the possibility of its lineage to one's early social experiences and interactions with significant others, namely the parents. Cooley's basic hypothesis, which was later

developed (Rogers, 1951; Satir, 1982), was that the child who shared positive experiences with his/her parents and whose parents' dealt fairly and warmly with him/her would be more likely to have positive self-views and consider themselves to be valuable and worthwhile. Cooley's popularized metaphor of the "looking-glass self" and G. H. Mead's (1956) concept of the "generalized other" placed the early twentieth century spotlight on the importance of others in the development of the young person's self-concept. Stanley Coopersmith's work in the late 1960's promoted many later self-esteem studies (Bienvenu, 1971; Dickstein, 1978; Felker, 1971; Gecas, 1971; Wylie, 1961) and established the critical foundation for the most serious exploration of the influences on the young person's self-concept. It was from Coopersmith's reknowned 1967 study which identified a wide variety of experiences and antecedent conditions, such as intelligence, maternal employment, socioeconomic status and religion, that have the potential to either increase or decrease the young person's degree of perceived self-esteem. Coopersmith's findings, gathered from an early adolescent male population, clearly identified those boys who had differences in their perceived sense of self-esteem. He found that those who perceived their mothers as being attentive and available for discussion and sharing had higher self-esteem than those who viewed their relationship with their mothers as being distant, non-verbal, and lacking the attention, support and acceptance that was desired by the young boys. The overall determination

from this self-concept study was that the young teen's self-esteem was positive related to congenial and warm interactions with their mothers and fathers.

As an adjunct to the earlier self-concept research (Jersild, 1951; Mead, 1934), the question of which parent, if either, holds a more significant role in regards to influencing their growing daughter or son's self-image development, was posed and investigated by many (Ausubel et al, 1954; Baruch, 1976; Dickstein & Posner, 1978; Flora, 1978; Schaefer, 1969; Sears, 1970).

All of these studies come together in consensus that the adolescent girl is more influenced by her mother than her father, as there exists a measurable tendency for the female child, and later teenager and young adult, to identify with her mother. Sears (1970) concluded that the same sexed parent, for example the mother, serves as an important role model whose behaviors and attitudes the female offspring try hardest to duplicate. Other research (Echols, 1979; Kezur, 1979) has noted that the daughter takes cues from her mother's emitted self-esteem and therefore, mothers who have high levels of self-concept generally provide an environment of positive growth and acceptance and seem to raise children, namely the daughters, who value themselves as worthy and capable individuals (Gordon, 1976; Walters & Stinnett, 1971).

Dorton (1979) and Wilburne (1978), in separate studies, researched possible correlations between mother and daughter pairs

and the differences and similarities of attitudes regarding careers, and marriage and children and determined that the mother does serve as a significant other to her daughter's attitude formation. In fairly synonymous studies (Heilbrun & Norbert, 1970; Hoffman, 1975; Parnell, 1976), mother and daughter pairs participated in taking a series of personality and self-concept tests and found that liberated mothers had liberated daughters, anxious mothers raised anxious daughters and self-confident mothers had self-confident daughters.

It becomes increasingly more obvious that most aspects of a parent's behavior have a compelling impact on the child's growth (Hoffman, 1974). Two valid questions stemming from this finding are 1) Which behaviors, on the part of the parent, are most likely to influence the child's formulating self-concept? and 2) To what extent do these parental actions continue to have an effect on the young individual's emotional development throughout adolescence?

Carl Rogers (1951) seems to have inadvertently responded to these questions by identifying those characteristics which are essential to effective interpersonal functioning. These traits, empathy, genuineness and positive regard for others and self are those that have also been cited as necessary parental behaviors which, when perceived by the child, facilitate high self-regard and self-esteem in the offspring (Miller, 1976).

Graybill (1978), in a replication study of both Sears' (1964) and Coopersmith's (1967) work, further investigated the

relationship of the 7-15 year old's perception of his/her mother's interactions and his/her self-esteem. Those students with high self-esteem viewed their mothers as accepting, understanding and Dickstein (1972) writes that the "nature of self-esteem varies with age, with a different type of self-esteem being appropriate to each form of the self-concept" (p. 23). From Dickstein's (1974) study of 507 early adolescents, high self-esteem subjects appeared to enjoy more relaxed and rewarding relationships with their parents than those subjects with poor self-concepts. Lastly, a pertinent point of interest from this research was an identified element of the warm relationship with parents that the high self-esteem children shared. It seems that these children described family mealtimes, especially dinner, as those times when the entire family came together and enjoyed lively conversation regarding everyone's activities from the day, whereas those children with low self-esteem did not view mealtimes as a family affair but instead scattered fragments of time with little to no sharing of positive communication.

Through the use of an Interpersonal Communication Inventory (ICI), Bienvenu (1971) measured patterns, characteristics and styles of communication and discovered that "an appropriate view of self is seen as imperative for healthy and satisfying interaction with others" (p. 384). In an earlier study also by Bienvenu (1970), and later by Flora (1978), a significantly positive relationship between the adolescent female's self-esteem and her perceived level of

communication with her parents was statistically found to be valid. The self-concept of the parent, self-concept of the adolescent, and their patterns of communication are all tightly woven together so that the parent who is rejecting and judgmental will communicate that to the child who will in turn integrate this message into his/her perception of self as being unworthy and unloved. Adolescents who were found to have low self-concepts perceived the communication with their parents as being definitely more nonconstructive than their peers with higher self-concept. This led Flora (1978) to conclude that the adolescent's perception of the positive or negative communicative interactions with his/her parents has a significant effect on his/her self-esteem, with special attention to the mother's self-concept and her communication having more of an influence on the daughter's degree of self-esteem than on her son's concept development.

People cannot not communicate. Through facial expressions, body movements, the use of interpersonal space and of course verbalization and tone, every human being interacts with his/her environment (Livingston, 1981). Any social interaction constitutes some degree of communication and the sending and receiving of messages, which have the power to alter one's feelings about others and self (Webster, 1974). "In essence it is believed that a large portion of one's communication is devoted to confirming the other person's view of oneself" (Bienvenu, 1971, p. 381). Communication networks, as they exist within the family system, were investigated

by Yeomans, Clark, Cockett, & Gee (1970). These researchers found that psychiatric patients' family communication was described as contradictory and conflicting in contrast to those subjects from normal family systems, being used as experimental controls, where communication levels were open, realistic and relaxed. Even though this is an extreme population, the findings stress the acute need for positive parent-to-child interaction as it does assuredly have an effect on the child's development into an adult, and potential parent. Rogers (1973) and Ginott (1969) summarize the critical elements of parental communication by maintaining that positive relationships are fostered through communication characterized by expression of open and honest feelings in an environment of acceptance instead of condemnation.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The validity of the self-concept as a measurable psychological construct has been questioned frequently during the past three decades of self-evaluation research (Allport, 1943; Engel, 1959; Lowe, 1961). The premise seems to be that if something exists it can be measured yet, when the "something" is an inner experience such as self-esteem, can these attitudes associated with one's self evaluation be effectively conveyed through the outward activity of taking a self-esteem test? "Is the self-concept a fact which, having an objective existence in nature, is observed and measured; or is it an epiphenomenon of deeper reality, invented by man that he might better study his behavior?" (Lowe, 1961, p. 335). This research is based on the belief that self-esteem and self-concept is a tangible and existing measurable construct which every individual possesses at varying degrees of intensity and with different levels of awareness, due to the person's age and cognitive development.

This research is primarily considered a naturalistic study due to the presence of the two naturally occurring variables; mother-daughter communication and the daughter's perceived self-concept. This type of research represents a correlational study which is designed to investigate a potentially causal relationship between these "uncontrolled" and natural, yet measurable, variables.

It must be noted at this time that it is this researcher's contention that it was not necessary to assess the parents' perception of the relationship with their offspring, as it is the child's self-concept and her perception of parental behavior that explain the variation in self-esteem of the adolescent. Since the child interprets the interactions between herself and her mother, it is her own unique definition of the parental interaction that is most significant to her, as well as for purpose of this particular research (Gecas, 1971). In considering the usefulness of providing the child's responses to the interaction between her and her mother, Montemayor and Eisen (1977) described, "What appears to be the self for the child is only the set of elements from which the adolescent infers a set of personal beliefs and psychic style that uniquely characterize himself" (p. 318).

Instruments

For the purposes of this study, the following indexes were used to measure and assess the two separate variables of self-esteem and the mother-daughter communicative relationship. The basic nature of the study was correlational dealing with naturally occurring variables which were in no way controlled or altered through experimentation.

Three instruments were used in the study: the General Population Questionnaire (Appendix C); the Index of Self-Esteem (Appendix D); and the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (Appendix E).

The General Population Questionnaire

This was a brief three-item questionnaire designed by the researcher to gather the necessary demographic information about the respondents. These questionnaires were attached to the research surveys and upon tabulation/calculation of the results, correlated to the scores per age and living situation so that these dependent variables could be noted and included in the relevant information regarding the two main variables of self-esteem and mother-daughter communication which were being tested.

The Index of Self-Esteem

When measuring any variable of an individual's internal behavior, most notably when dealing with one's perception of him/herself, it becomes a difficult task to select the most appropriate and valid assessment tool. The question which was posed by Lowe (1961) is whether or not the self-concept and one's inner experience can be measured and, if so, what is the most accurate means of measuring this human experience? When utilizing any measurement device for the purposes of evaluating any variable of one's behavior, it is necessary that the instrument have at least two major psychometric characteristics; the scales must be both reliable and valid. The Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) meets both such criteria with a .90 or better reliability, as well as having high construct and face validity (Hudson, 1974). Through split-half and test-retest methods, the ISE reliability was examined and found to have a .95 and .92 item analysis score. The ISE also meets certain other critical

characteristics of a useful scale such as its brief length, ease in its administration, interpretation and completion as well as scoring and tabulation of findings for the experimenter.

The ISE was initially devised as only one, in a set of five, scales to assess the degree, or magnitude, of the potential problem the client was experiencing in several areas of his/her life, i.e., marriage, self-concept, and relationships with others. The ISE specifically measures and reflects the "...extent to which a person feels positive about himself and his social interactions" (Hudson, 1974, p. 1). On the premise that self-esteem is viewed as an affective emotion and a dependent variable which is a function of social interaction, the ISE reflects the subject's affective state of well-being in terms of self-perception. The ISE, like many other self-image tests, is a self-report scale and, as with any instrument used for purposes of noting a person's perceptions, thoughts and feelings is open to misleading information due to the varying degrees of honesty and the client's potential for falsifying information either to the extreme positive or negative. It is suggested in the ISE manual though, that through quickly establishing a favorable and warm atmosphere of trust and sincerity for the subjects, the researcher/tester minimizes the likelihood/tendency of fabricated or faked responses.

The ISE is a 25-item scale that measures the degree of difficulty the adolescent is experiencing in terms of his/her self-concept and self-esteem. Its structure is with half of the items

being positive in nature, i.e., "I think I make a good impression on others" and the remaining items being negative self-statements, i.e., "I feel that others have more fun than I do". The scoring is done by identifying those positive statements on each of the completed scales and reversing the scores so that on a 1 to 5 point system, with 5 being "most or all of the time", those statements responded to with a 5 changed by the tester and marked 1, scores of 4 become 2 and so on with 3 remaining constant. The result of such score inversion is that after the points are tabulated after altering the positive statement scores, providing a final numerical value, the smaller the score of the self-esteem test, the more positive and higher self-concept. A score of 15 on the ISE would then indicate a relatively high perception of self for the individual who had completed the questionnaire. Those scores that range from 35-55 reveal the strong possibility for self-concept problems and lower self-esteem. It must be noted that this, or any other scale of this nature, does not provide any information on the source or cause of presenting problem, as its main usefulness is its applicability in measuring the severity, intensity or magnitude of a client's problem.

The ISE does not appear in the Mental Measurement Yearbooks by Buros. Buros' eighth edition, dated 1978, does not list this scale and therefore evaluation and/or documentation was not available in that area, and therefore it can be verified only to the extent of research and application up to the date of its publication and research carried out by Hudson. Only after its continued use through

counseling and experimental application can its validity and reliability be further determined and established permanently.

Lastly, this index has a "problem-solving orientation" from which it can be implemented repeatedly with the same individual over a treatment period to assess the extent to which self-esteem changes are occurring due to the person's involvement in counseling or therapy.

Parent Adolescent Communication Inventory

This second testing scale was discovered well into the testing period of this research and therefore its position in the testing process did not apply to the 34 pilot study subjects (to be described in a later section). As outlined earlier, the relationship between the mother and her daughter is one which has been explored and questioned over the last century. In Deutsche's work of 1944, "... woman's two greatest tasks as a mother are to shape her unity with her daughter in a harmonious manner and later to dissolve it harmoniously" (p. 294). It is the creation of such harmony that the mother is initially responsible for, yet as years proceed, this often becomes a fragmented task between both mother and daughter so that the daughter learns/acquires the formula for creating a similar environment for her future offspring/family. The Parent Adolescent Communication Inventory (PACI) originated from the self-concept work of Millard Bienvenu in the late 1960's and his understanding of the importance of the parent to child interaction. The inventory serves many of the same functions of the earlier scale in that it can be

especially useful for clinical diagnostic purposes, teaching, assessment of client's change, as well as research. The PACI is most appropriate for the testing of the second variable of this study; mother-daughter communication as perceived by the teenage daughter. The inventory's forty items were created to specifically gauge the degree to which the communication taking place between the mother and her adolescent daughter is positive or problematic. The test is designed to assess the adolescent's perception of the communicative relationship with her mother and it is for this reason that Bienvenu's scale is appropriate for this study.

The reliability of the test is .86 and due to its simple format and quick, convenient use it contains the same ingredients that work for the ISE in being a unique tool for large group evaluation and also individual client testing circumstances. Yet, these elements that appear to increase the usefulness of the PACI also offer possible problems as the instrument can be abused in the area of "fakability" by the test taker, since all answers can only be taken at face value, as in most personality testing devices, and therefore scoring can only be carried out according to the test manual format (Orr, 1978).

The scoring of the PACI is rated with a 1 to 3 value given to each of the forty (40) items. Those items which are of a positive nature are scored 3 and those that the respondent answered which were indicative of poor communication were scored 1. The manual for the test provides a scoring key which enables the tested to correctly identify

the positive and negative statements and their respective scores. The higher the overall accumulated points, the higher or more positive the communication between the teenage female and her mother, and conversely, the lower the total score, the poorer the level of communicative interaction.

Upon discovery of the PACI developed by Millard Bienvenu (1969), it was clear to this researcher that his work most closely approximated this study. The foundation from which he built his testing device was the adolescent's perception of the level of communication between him/her and the parent could provide tremendous insight and understanding in the area of parent child-relations based on the degrees of communication. The forty-item questionnaire details many aspects of investigating the degree of positive or negative communication through positively or negatively worded statements which the teen is instructed to respond to honestly and sincerely as possible. The limitation, as described by Orr (1978) and Bienvenu (1971), is that the items on the PACI are worded so that both parents are considered by the adolescent as he/she progresses through the inventory and therefore the final tabulated score does not reflect the degree of communication with either, separate parents individually but rather both parents and how the child has perceived communication with both. Because the mother-daughter relationship was the focus of this study, a total of 27 items were altered by replacing the word "parents" with "mother" and "father" by "mother". The scoring

still remained the same as the positively and negatively worded statements did not undergo any form of alteration.

In conclusion, the PACI was by far the most appropriate testing tool available for evaluating the adolescent female's perception of her communication with the parents. The drawback in the PACI is that it has not split adolescents' perceptions for both parents and therefore cannot test for specific communication from child to father or child to mother. It was noted by Bienvenu that this was a future goal, to develop two separate communication scales to test both mother and father.

Respondents and Procedures

The population consisted of a total of 26 female subjects, ages 15-18, attending a public high school in Los Angeles, California. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of girls and their ages and living/home situation which was provided through the General Population Questionnaire (Appendix C).

Initial contact with the necessary public school administrators, i.e., principal and dean of student affairs, began the process of approval for the study in the schools. After developing the appropriate Parent Permission slips for distribution (Appendix B), school principals suggested teachers who might be willing to offer their classes for participation in the study. After meeting with the teachers, available class time and necessary schedules were agreed upon. On first contact with the students, parent permission slips were distributed to all interested girls. It was explained

Table 1
Distribution of Subjects According to
Age and Home Setting

Reported Home Setting	Reported Ages for Subjects				Totals
	15	16	17	18	
Both Parents	5	4	2	0	11
Mother Only	0	4	2	1	7
Parent plus Step-parent	0	5	0	0	5
Other	0	3	0	0	3
Totals	5	16	4	1	26

that their voluntary participation was for the purposes of gathering information on the teenage female experience and that all information would be kept completely confidential and anonymous. Time was allowed for questions from the girls and lastly, they were requested to return the permission slips, signed by parent or guardian, by the following school day. Of the sixty slips handed out, 26 were returned which indicated an approximate 45-50 percent return rate.

The testing site was in Los Angeles, California and involved 26 high school girls. Identification numbers were utilized to provide anonymity and assurance to parents and school officials that those girls who had volunteered would in no way be individually identified through publication or any other means of publicity, therefore, utmost confidentiality was assured.

The scales were handed out to the girls, with the General Population Questionnaire being distributed first, with the ISE being introduced next. A brief explanation of the scoring system and overview of some possible vocabulary words that required definition, i.e., competent, self-conscious, and wall-flower. The girls were instructed to keep discussion to a minimum while answering the questionnaires and were encouraged to ask the tester any questions as they worked their way through the items. Upon completion of the ISE, the questionnaires were handed in and the second scale, the PACI, was administered, explaining the scoring and checking procedures. Again, the same instructions were given to the girls to keep conversation to a minimum and take as much time as necessary and that there were no

right or wrong answers, just how they were feeling at the present time. After the PACIs were returned answered, the girls were asked these questions:

1. How do you feel now? Any different than when you took the test?
2. Did you discover anything new about yourself that surprised you or that you want to think about?
3. Have you ever taken a test like this one before?
4. Any other comments or questions?

The girls were thanked for their assistance and cooperation and the total testing time for both scales and discussion was 20-25 minutes.

Once again, the initial goal of this study was to distribute two questionnaire/surveys to a group of 15-18 year old females in order to gather data on the similarities or differences in self-esteem by investigating the communication and interaction between the adolescent female and her mother.

Methods of Analysis

The purpose of collecting data on both the adolescent female's self-esteem and her perception of her interaction with her mother was to determine the degree of correlation between these two naturally occurring variables. The hypothesis was designed to identify the probability of a zero, positive or negative correlation between self-esteem and communicative interactions with teen daughter and mother. This research, therefore, is considered a correlational study, designed to investigate the potentially causal relationship between

these described variables which are "uncontrolled" in terms of experimentation, yet are considered measurable variables due to available testing devices which are utilized to specifically test the extent of these variables and once tested, can be transferred to statistical terms and considered experimentally as opposed to guess-work and speculation. The methods used to test the hypothesis that these two variables are, to some degree, related is the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient, "r" and the t-test.

The Correlation Coefficient "r"

The statistic used to identify, and clarify, the relationship between two sets of scores obtained from similar or dissimilar measuring instruments is the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient "r". It was the Pearson "r" that was used to determine the linear relationship between mother-daughter communication and the daughter's perceived self-concept. The "r" value is used to describe, numerically, the strength of the relationship between two variables with the sign (+ or -) denoting the direction of the relationship. The "r" does not describe the variables in terms of cause and/or effect, but only probable correlations between two variables (Bruning, 1977).

The t-test

Due to the potential for comparison of scores within groups, the independent t-test was used to provide the statistical information as to whether or not the difference between the means groups is

likely on the basis of chance. Attribute variables, which identified sub-groups within the total population of subjects, were age and home-setting according to parent(s) child was presently living with. Differences between the means of females with varying ages and home-settings in regards to their reported self-esteem and communication scores were tested with the t-test (Bruning, 1977).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The hypothesis stated in this study reads 'The adolescent female who perceives herself to have high self-esteem will also perceive a positive communicative relationship with her mother'. Through the application of two separate instruments, the hypothesis was tested for its validity and significance. For purposes of clarification, the results from the testing procedure will be reviewed, with a final overview of the differences, and similarities, within the group and the applied measuring devices for the investigated correlation between adolescent female self-esteem and the level of communication between the adolescent and her mother.

A pilot study, using 34 girls, ages 13-16, was conducted in a Tucson, Arizona public junior high school. The subjects' self-esteem was measured with the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) and her communication with her mother evaluated by the Child's Attitude Towards Mother (CAM) scale, a 25-item questionnaire which was structurally identical to the ISE. The correlation coefficient was calculated for the paired scores, revealing a very low "r" value of .16. The "t" statistic, applied to test the significance of r, was computed to be .93 which indicated the results to be significant only

at the .50 level. From the nature of these preliminary findings, the conclusion drawn was that self-esteem and mother-daughter communication were not associated when utilizing the testing measures ISE and CAM. Therefore, the necessity for obtaining a more appropriate device for investigating mother-daughter communication levels, Bienvenu's PACI, was critical for the continuation of this research.

The 26 girls who participated in the study completed the General Population Questionnaire, the ISE and the PACI. The scores were tabulated and overall statistical analysis computed by the researcher.

Testing With the ISE and the PACI

The testing process with the subject group of 26 adolescent females involved the General Population Questionnaire, the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) and the Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory (PACI). On a 1-5 point scale the subject was instructed to place the number 1,2,3,4,5, which most fit, corresponded to, their immediate feelings. The 1 to 5 range reflected the following degree of significance for the subject to indicate their level of self-esteem:

- 1 Rarely to none of the time
- 2 A little of the time
- 3 Sometime
- 4 A good part of the time
- 5 Most or all of the time

When the ISE was completed, a set of 25 numbers were adjacent to each item. These numbers, after being reverse-scored for the

positively worded items, and all were summed, a final step of subtracting a constant of 25 revealed a score ranging anywhere from 0 to 100. Each self-esteem index indicated a differing final score, where the lower score implied greater self-esteem on the ISE. As explained in the manual for the ISE, an average score of 30 was the marking point which a responding subject either fell above or below in their individual score. A score of 23, for example, denotes a relatively positive degree self-esteem as gauged by the ISE.

Scores from the ISE were calculated as described above, with reverse-scoring on the positively worded items resulting in lower scores denoting greater self-esteem of the respondent. The ISE scores of these 26 female subjects, ages 15-18, were paired with scores from the PACI. The scores summed from the forty-item PACI provided a final numerical value ranging from 0 to 120, with the higher score implying a higher level of mother to daughter communication. It was the set of these 26 paired scores that revealed an entirely different analysis that had not been identified in the described pilot study (See Table 2).

Calculation of the correlation coefficient, determined an $r = -.53$, $p < .01$. The usefulness of the r is that it reflects the strength of the relationship between two associated variables as well as the direction, either positive or negative, of the investigated pairs of scores from a certain tested population. The r value in this circumstance was high, as well as negative in its direction, indicating a negative correlation between the two variables being

Table 2
Scores on Self-Esteem Scale and
Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory

<u>Subject</u>	<u>ISE</u>	<u>PACI</u>
1	16	77
2	38	89
3	38	95
4	32	70
5	6	110
6	26	90
7	13	101
8	24	70
9	49	85
10	15	106
11	37	61
12	53	23
13	14	81
14	26	101
15	33	103
16	55	54
17	26	102
18	19	90
19	39	65
20	18	107
21	21	107
22	37	75
23	27	109
24	26	47
25	29	107
26	32	15

ISE Possible Range: 0-100
PACI Possible Range: 0-120

measured. An interpretation of these findings is that as scores on the self-esteem index increased, to denote poor or lower self-concept, paired scores from the PACI decreased, inferring negative and lower levels of interaction and communication between the adolescent daughter and her mother. The inverse association is also true of a negative correlation in that as self-esteem scores become smaller numerically, a suggested higher of self-concept is identified and the scores from the communication inventory increase, representing positive communication as perceived by the daughter and reflected in her scoring on the PACI.

To test the significance of the r value of $-.53$, the "t" test was performed and a high t value of -3.06 was calculated. With 24 df , and α at $.01$, the two-tailed critical value of t is 2.79 , since the t value of -3.06 exceeds the tabled value, it is concluded that the two researched variables are definitely associated in the population, so that the population correlation coefficient is greater than zero (See Table 3).

Once again, the negative correlation points out an interesting picture according to the scales which were used. As outlined in the Instruments section, the scoring of the ISE was reversed for those 12 positively worded items, providing lower scores to indicate higher self-concepts, while the PACI items were scored from 1 to 3 with the final tally of scores accumulating a high numerical value to express high, positive levels of communication between parent and child. This inversion of the ISE scores coincides with the uniqueness of the

TABLE 3

Critical Value of t if P < .01

Test	SS	df	t	P
Index of Self Esteem	26	24	-3.06	< .01
Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory	26	24		

scoring processes for the two instruments used during the second testing situation, so that large scores on the self-esteem scale did not mean positive self-concepts while high communication scores on the inventory revealed more positive levels of interaction with mother and daughter.

Lastly, from correlational statistics, it was determined that the two variables of adolescent female self-esteem and mother-daughter communication, as perceived by the teenager, are highly significantly related. These findings support the hypothesis being tested that the adolescent female who perceives herself to have high self-esteem will also perceive a positive communicative relationship with her mother. It again must be reminded to the reader and future researcher, that these correlation scores infer no information as to the causality or reasons for the association of the variables (Bienvenu, 1969; Holt, 1978) and that it will only be through serious pursuit of further research, investigation and humanistic interview and exploration that the possible explanations, which are integral to the development of positive self-concepts and interactions with toehrs, will be offered for experimentation and testing.

Summary

From the information provided through this correlational study, a distinct parallel can be drawn between self-esteem and communication scores. Yet, this connection only became apparent when scores from the ISE and PACI were correlated, no significant findings resulted from pairing the ISE and CAM scores as performed

in the pilot study. The question which becomes obvious then is "Why the correlation with self-esteem and mother-daughter communication but not with self-esteem and daughter's attitude toward her mother? The answer to this question is heavily based on speculation with strong consideration to presenting circumstances and variables.

Table 4 displays the means of self-esteem and communication scores according to age and home situation. The means from the subject groups indicate older teens have greater self-esteem and communication than younger revealing a general trend of higher self-esteem among older teens than younger which disagrees with Dickstein (1978) and Coopersmith (1967) who found younger to be positively correlated with higher levels of self-esteem (See Table 1, p. 29, for respondents' ages). Scores of 28.36, inferred a slightly higher perceived self-esteem for those older teens from both parent homes. Through calculation of group means, the t-test for differences between means of two independent groups was integrated into the statistical networking to determine whether the "performance" between the age groups was significant. Age of the respondent significantly effects self-esteem scores, $t(58) = 2.85, p < .01$. Other means that were calculated for the purposes of brief discussion were those of girls' reported self-esteem and home situations. As mentioned earlier, those girls from both parent homes revealed generally higher self-esteem than girls from one parent or parent and step-parent homes. These mean scores were replicated in the communication scores, as girls from both parent homes had higher, more positive levels of communication than their counterparts living in

Table 4
Means Obtained in Measurement of Self-Esteem
And Mother-Daughter Communication

	Both Parents Home	One Parent Only	Parent and StepParent	Overall
Self-Esteem	$\mu =$ 28.36	$\mu =$ 25.88	$\mu =$ 25.75	$\mu =$ 28.81
Mother-Daughter Communication	$\mu =$ 88.91	$\mu =$ 86.75	$\mu =$ 77.25	$\mu =$ 82.31

parent and step-parent homes. Yet, it seems that girls in one-parent living situations reported more positive levels of interaction with their mothers which supports Fox and Inazu (1979) conclusions that girls who possessed more insight into social issues and more advanced healthy levels of communication with their divorced, or single, mothers, yet these same subjects provided complimentary data to past research (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965) that children from broken homes have lower self-esteem than their peers from homes where both natural mother and father are present.

The testing of subjects, with the ISE and the PACI, revealed a significant correlation between female adolescent self-esteem and her communication with her mother.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The self-concept and perceived existence of self-esteem within each individual is complex and not easily defined or diagnosed. Its influences are as mysterious as the "self" and the uniquely individual make-up each person possesses. Based on earlier self-concept research by Wylie (1961), Coopersmith (1967) and later by Dickstein (1978) and Bienvenu (1969), this paper pursued the investigation of only one, of many possible antecedents of the teenage female's degree of self-esteem; her communicative relationship with her mother. "For any daughter, the relationship with her mother is the first relationship of her life, and may also be the most important she will ever have" (Hammer, 1975, p. 3). It was in recognition of the critical importance of this shared relationship between mother and daughter that the question of how either a positive or negative degree of this relationship is transmitted is now being explored by examining the content and pragmatics of communication. The impact of the mother-daughter relationship touches all facets of the maturing female's physical and emotional growth as well as her identity within society. It is the positive, or negative, strength of this association with her mother that can either foster or hinder the young girl's satisfaction and acceptance of her identity and self.

Much of the focus from preceding studies on mother-daughter communication (Fox & Inazu, 1979; Bienvenu, 1969; Kanter & Zelnik, 1972; Dickstein, 1978) has been on the content, or subject matter, of communication between a mother and daughter as opposed to the manner in which interactions take place or are transmitted. The question this researcher was interested in exploring, through human survey, was "How mothers and daughters communicate" instead of "What they communicate".

The pragmatics of the mother-daughter relationship were surveyed from the teenage daughter's perception using one, of the very few, available questionnaires which required adjustments to certain items so that the mother was the only parent being evaluated in the inventory. Working from a research philosophy that self-concept and degree of one's self-esteem is contingent upon environmental input from family and close significant others, the target population of adolescent females was chosen through the subjects availability and provided the data from which statistical correlational inference was drawn pertaining to levels of self-esteem and level of communication between the female subject and her mother. Carl Rogers (1973) and Alfred Adler (1958) have long praised the power of positive interactions and have created counseling theories founded on the formula of developing positive ways of interacting in order to create and maintain one's positive self-image. It was this researcher's goal to lend even more validity and credence to this viewpoint and apply Carl Rogers' perspective that "...interpersonal relationships best

of adolescence and presence of natural parents or broken home circumstances.

It was hypothesized that the level of self-esteem of the adolescent female would be related to the degree of communication between her mother and herself. The experimental hypothesis being surveyed was that the girls who perceive themselves to have high self-esteem would also perceive positive degrees of communication with her mother. The results supported this hypothesis with a significant correlation between self-esteem and mother-daughter communication. Results from mean averaging indicated older females to have higher self-esteem scores than younger teens and girls from both natural parent homes having greater self-esteem than their peers from single parent or step-parent homes.

Limitations

The results supported the hypothesis being tested in this paper. The limitations of the findings, and study itself, require consideration in the following areas: generalization and reliability.

When developing any form of research for purposes of gathering more information pertaining to a particular subject area, one desirable goal is to apply the outcomes to an existing body of knowledge, as well as to the larger, general population. This can also be one of the most outstanding limitations in any correlational research due to the implication of cause and effect. Even though the statistical outcome from the paired self-esteem and communication scores was highly significant for this study, the only valid statement

exist as rhythm-openness and expression, and then assimilation; flow and change, then a temporary quiet; risk and anxiety, then temporary security" (p. 14) and of Virginia Satir, "...parents are in the business of peoplemaking" (p. 3) and therefore the messages parents provide to their offspring, and the interactions that ensue, can greatly enhance or deplete the young person's concept of him/herself as they view life, their place in it, and others.

Summary of Purpose, Procedures and Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the adolescent female's degree of self-esteem and her perceived level of communication with her mother. Self-esteem was defined as a learned, or acquired, internal attribute of an individual and therefore was nurtured through interaction with one's environment (i.e., family, friends, educators).

This investigation into one's self-concept and interaction with parents was carried out with an available population of 26 female subjects, ages 15-18, surveyed through data which they provided from responses to separate self-esteem and communication inventories. The scores from the two scales were paired for each of the subjects, and appropriate correlational tools were applied to the accumulated scores. Averaging of various sub-sets of scores based on the ages of the girls and differing home situations, revealed approximations of the likelihood of changes in the degree of self-esteem due to stage

of adolescence and presence of natural parents or broken home circumstances.

It was hypothesized that the level of self-esteem of the adolescent female would be related to the degree of communication between her mother and herself. The experimental hypothesis being surveyed was that the girls who perceive themselves to have high self-esteem would also perceive positive degrees of communication with her mother. The results supported this hypothesis with a significant correlation between self-esteem and mother-daughter communication. Results from mean averaging indicated older females to have higher self-esteem scores than younger teens and girls from both natural parent homes having greater self-esteem than their peers from single parent or step-parent homes.

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that can be inferred from this is that for those 26 adolescent females, sampled from a small high school in a suburb of Los Angeles, self-esteem highly correlated with communication with mothers.

The task of generalizing data to describe an element, or characteristic, of an entire population is often questionable and difficult to pursue when the tested, or available, subject group is small in number and possess variables specific to one population but which cannot be readily observable in another. One concern when considering generalization of results from small scale research, is to what extent a valid statement regarding the general population in terms of the investigated variables, can be offered? The limitations, in terms of generalization, from this brief correlational study is that there are many influences on the development of one's self-esteem, one of which is the relationship she shares with her mother where communication is the most valuable vehicle through which healthy interactions are built or destroyed. Findings from a study such as this, carried out with a small sample size, do not lend themselves to high degrees of generalizations yet do provide one more piece of supportive input to the puzzle of family systems and the dynamics within, and highlights potential research areas necessitating detailed work on a far greater scale towards conclusive theorems on how parents can truly become skillful, effective and healthy "people-makers".

The issue raised by Orr (1978) in evaluation of the PACI instrument was the potential, as in any personality measurement, for subject responses to be falsified. This aspect of "fakability" of scores, influences the reliability of the findings and increases the probability for skepticism in the eyes of the public and human subject workers. The question of merely evaluating an allusive characteristic such as one's self-esteem has been documented (Lowe, 1961; Montemayor & Eisen, 1977) and noted that the self-concept and self-esteem serve as psychological constructs which, when attempted to be measured and described experimentally, lack the reliability that measurement of more defined variables hold. Can one's inner experience of self-esteem be effectively conveyed through pencil and paper responses to a set of identified statements that, to some degree, reflect how the respondent truly feels? The answer, again, will serve to add large amounts of credibility to self-esteem and personality test reliability.

As a researcher, it was an interesting, yet perplexing, phenomenon to be at the receiving end of the public's scrutiny and concern, in terms of interference in the internal make-up of others through surveys and questionnaires. Experimentation in the classroom, as it was viewed by school administrators who were contacted, was viewed with large variance between acceptance to mistrust and interest to apathy. This issue of obtaining the subject population for purposes of experimentation, survey or observation from the public school setting presents the limitation which most burdened the progress of

this particular research. The mistrust which was encountered seemed to be more pronounced geographically in that the two survey sites were located in different communities within different western states. It was from Tucson, Arizona and Los Angeles, California that the female population was sampled in groups of 34 and 26. In Arizona, the attitude of public high school administrators was marked with acceptance, interest and a willingness to accommodate the researcher's needs while at the same time considering the concerns of the parents, students and confidentiality. In retrospect, the helpful position of the Arizona schools could be attributed to the: 1) college town environment where the university students, and their associated academic endeavors, are respected and readily assisted by the community at large, and 2) mistrust does not appear to quickly permeate the city organizations and institutions as people share a common lifestyle and subculture, which provides a unity as opposed to disharmony.

Yet, the tone of acceptance and assistance changed quickly upon entering the public school system of a small suburb of Los Angeles. The inventory and survey involved were doubted and challenged for their purpose and effectiveness in this study. There seemed to exist a strong apprehension, or fear, of the potential problems which parents would be subject to if their daughters were introduced to, or indulged, in any form of self or family introspection.

Implications -- Suggested Strategies

From the presented analysis of the data obtained in this study, a strong correlation was found between adolescent female self-esteem and her perception of the communication between herself and her mother. Not only does this information support the position of this paper, but more significantly offers certain implications which impact in the areas of family interactions, dynamics and their influences on the self-concepts of developing youth.

The theme throughout this research has been that self-esteem is a learned variable of one's internal functioning and is nurtured through feedback from significant others as well as oneself. The more positive input/responses received from others, the increased probability of one's own thoughts, opinions and feelings being healthy and self-praising. With the formulation of such positive self-views, the individual is grooming and developing a confident level of self-esteem which will certainly impact the interactions he/she has with others. The results of this study support earlier research that has categorized the cycle of positive growth from external input becoming internal ingredients for a person's day to day attitude and feelings (Coopersmith, 1967; Hoffman, 1974; Dickstein & Posner, 1978; Graybill, 1978; Mucklow & Phelan, 1979). The implication here is that continued attention in this area can only benefit parents, teachers, social scientists and human behavior specialists in improving their understanding of creating productive environments of growth for their children and clients.

After gaining an awareness into the area of self-esteem and its influences, the arena becomes open again to a variety of adjuncts to the concept that communication between parent and child influences the way the child sees him/herself. One of the corners of this "arena" is the task of developing plans of actions to implement with mothers and daughters. The goals of improved, strengthened and exciting relationships between parent and child would be met with plans aimed at correcting and creating ways that they communicate. It is to these goals that the following section addresses itself.

Suggested Strategies

It is hoped that clinical-experimental psychology and humanistic-eclectic counseling could one day merge in the research field by sharing the goal of gaining more conclusive, and tangible, information in regards to human behavior as it pertains to issues which the individual experiences in every day life as well as the special client concerns which face the practicing social service workers today. Included in the outstanding research on family interactions (Ausubel, et al, 1954; Piers & Harris, 1964; Gecas, 1971; Flora, 1978) documented information on what ingredients go into making "healthy" families and those which "dysfunctional" families lack has been concise and yet brief. Is there a formula by which parents and their children can learn positive family interactions? Can a counseling program expressly devote itself to an emphasis on self-concept development by teaching ways that others, and the client him/herself, can initiate higher, more desirable feelings of self? And lastly,

is there a consistent and available means by which to evaluate this learning process? It seems that further research gives way to a new set of questions such as these and as noted by Bienvenu (1971), "Improved interpersonal communication is often the specific focus of counseling", it is hoped that counseling and the techniques and strategies therein will lay the foundation for these questions, and others, to be given explanation and answers.

Issues which the client brings into the counseling session are as varied and unique as each individual. Yet, the common theme that has been noted as the nucleus of many client concerns are the undeveloped, ineffective and unhealthy ways that people communicate their thoughts, feelings, opinions, and views. Under the umbrella term of "communication" comes verbal and nonverbal interactions that supply fuel to the fire of poor marriages, teen delinquency, academic difficulties, guilt, and overall negative outlook on life. Communicating through tone of voice, listening, accepting, criticizing and sharing are crucial elements of interacting and supporting another's perception of him/herself and their world.

Assessment Testing in the Counseling Setting

Utilization of bi-monthly assessment devices for the client in counseling can serve as a foundation from which treatment plans are created and goals established. The quick 25-40 item questionnaires such as the ISE, CAM and PACI scales used in this study initiate the client into introspection and clarification of possible problem areas. In terms of testing for self-concept, the surveys

can serve to identify the client's ideal, or wished for, self. This ideal, in turn, can then be brought into the counseling session and discussed openly. It can become a goal which the client is behaviorally working towards by exercising new behaviors and thoughts daily. It can also, as Wylie (1961) points out, be the point of decision making for the client in acceptance of his/her realistic self and its assets as well as those limitations (i.e., physical, financial, etc.) that prevent the ideal self from superseding or integrating itself with the realistic self. Investigation into the congruence between one's ideal self and existing self and how greater acceptance can be achieved are items that can be identified through client's scores on testing indexes and incorporated into counseling treatment plans and goals. Inventories of this nature are easily administered and provide both the client and counselor immediate data on how the client views him/herself and others at a particular moment in time. These surveys become tools that the client can obtain tangible information from about him/herself and provides the counselor an added means of assessment during the client's involvement in therapy. These short form tests have some obvious drawbacks in that they are in no way conclusive of definite problems, or provide any explanation as to the cause or degree of a possible self-concept or interpersonal conflict the client may be experiencing. Yet, they are available, and just one more possibility which could help some clients obtain their goal of positive self-image and interactions with others.

Education-Parent Training and Information

The term "modeling" is taken from the theories of behavior modification and is applied most frequently in developmental research studies of both animals and humans. Because imitation, and modeling of another's actions seems to be an innate function for maturing human beings and animals, the nature of the other's behavior, most likely senior in age, assumes paramount importance. It was in consideration of the influential power of "the significant other" that Coopersmith (1967) pursued much of his research into the part parents play in their children's developing, and ever-changing, self-image and self-esteem. He found that the warm, accepting and attentive parent raised children with positive levels of self-acceptance and self-esteem. Parents who had low self-concepts themselves and who displayed negative, demeaning attitudes toward their sons or daughters, had children who reflected poor levels of self-esteem. A blanket statement of summary in terms of this research, and others (Ginott, 1969; Livingston, 1981), is that a child's self-esteem is contingent upon the type of positive or negative reinforcement, communicated verbally or otherwise from parents and close significant others about physical, cognitive and general attributes and behaviors. If children are to mature to adulthood, possessing positive self-concepts and high levels of self-esteem, then it would seem parents, as well as teachers and counselors, play a leading role in displaying appropriate behaviors and offering positive interactions which children can model and, through the process of maturation, integrate as a

natural aspect of their unique individual personality. "Individuals with low self-esteem lack the capacity to define and deal with their environment but may learn to do so more rapidly and efficiently if they are exposed to persons who are confident and effective" (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 262). Parents need to be able to praise themselves, reinforce positively their own behaviors and attributes, so that their children will learn to do this. Based on the critical ingredient of involvement that parents either mix with love and acceptance or failed to add, Felker and Stanwyk (1973) identified a five-step program for improving levels of self-esteem for children:

1. Adults need to praise themselves. Children can see those "internal" pats on the back we, as adults, give ourselves. Adults need to verbalize their positive assets and share their healthy self-concepts with their children.
2. Opportunities need to be provided for children to evaluate their own work. Teaching children to constructively evaluate their performance, i.e., scholastic and/or athletic ability, assists them in realistic goal setting. Appropriate goal setting, with realistic approximations to the final goal provides the child many more opportunities for success, self reward and confidence building.
3. Children need to be taught reasonable goal setting. Children require positive opportunities to challenge their abilities and extend their capabilities while also learning about their strengths and limits. When children create for

themselves, or have imposed on them, unreasonable goals, they often overextend themselves and experience more despair than success.

4. Children need to be taught self-praise. Providing a child the guidance of when to praise him/herself openly or privately is an adjunct to step number 1 of this five-part learning approach. As parents verbalize their own behavior and reward themselves positively for successes, children are being offered large doses of high self-esteem. And, as parents also encourage children to praise themselves, they are expounding on the naturally occurring phenomenon of "internal self-speech". Just as young children are taught a task, such as reading, they also can be taught self-praise.
5. Children need to be taught to praise others. A significant finding by Marston and Smith (1968) was that persons who are rewarding of others tend to be self-praising and self-rewarding. In a classroom situation, directed activities can be offered where children become comrades with one another through praising each other.

Children require appropriate, positive, healthy models for self-reinforcement and when the majority of statements directed towards self are negative, they imitate this with negative self-statements.

Parents need to be made aware of the various approaches to communication (Arnold, Sturgis & Forehand, 1977; Watzlawick,

Beavin & Jackson, 1967) and further instructed on appropriate disciplinary and reward tactics. School systems need to begin seeing the necessity of parent education, even to the point of being an established criteria for a child's admittance into a school. These measures may appear extreme, yet the statistics on abused, neglected and dysfunctional children, as well as divorce rates, draw a very clear picture of the urgency for such intervention, prevention and parent education and training. Teaching parents how to effectively communicate with their sons and daughters, and having these same parents instruct their children on positively interacting with others, shines a powerful spotlight on a brighter tomorrow for the maintenance of happy and healthy families.

In conclusion, parent training and contemporary learning approaches are integral to improving the relationships between parents and their children. With the intervention of counseling and psychotherapy, clients have improved their self-concepts and maintained higher positive, consistent levels of self-esteem, while having their realistic self become more congruent with the self-ideal (Taylor, 1955). For those mothers and daughters experiencing difficulty in communicating, new approaches, directed at improving their interactions and the way they deal with each other, are available today in both the counseling and educational setting as Janet Chase (1981) writes, "As mothers and daughters begin to change their ways of thinking about themselves and each other, they are changing society" (p. 105). Society can only benefit from strengthening the mother-daughter relationship.

APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

January 24, 1984

Dear Mr. Bertain,

I have recently completed 90 percent of the necessary research towards completion of the thesis for my Master of Arts degree in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Arizona. The thesis is entitled "Mother-Daughter Communications and the Daughter's Perceived Self-Esteem". The two variables being tested are the adolescent female's perceived self-esteem and perceived communicative relationship with her mother. The hypothesis being tested is that those girls who have relatively high self-esteem will perceive their relationships with their mothers as positive, and those girls with lower self-concepts will perceive the interactions with their mothers as negative.

Since returning to Los Angeles one week ago, I have been composing the final three chapters of the thesis. I have found, through analysis of the data I collected in Arizona, that the female respondents to the two scales are only 13 and 14 year-olds, and for both statistical testing and research validity, it would be very beneficial to increase the subject population to include 15-17 year-old females.

It would be greatly appreciated if approximately 30-40 female students (ages 15-17) from El Segundo High School could participate in this research and provide the information on the older female teen.

Please find attached the following:

1. General Questionnaire to identify age and living situation
2. Self-Esteem Questionnaire
3. Parent-Adolescent Communication Inventory
4. Parental Permission Slip (if needed).

The entire time needed for distribution, completion of questionnaires and discussion is 20 minutes and it must be stressed that the girls will not provide their names. Only a consecutive number for correlation purposes will be used for the three questionnaires.

Thank you very much for your assistance and consideration in this matter. I look forward to hearing your response in the near future.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Lyle
645-8755

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PARENTS AND PARENTS' PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents;

Hello. My name is Julie Lyle and I am presently completing my Master of Arts degree in Counseling & Guidance from the University of Arizona. Since my own adolescence, I have been intrigued by the teen years and the changes young people experience as they grow from childhood to adulthood. This curiosity has inspired my present thesis research in the area of the female adolescent's value and belief system. From reviewing relevant literature concerning the self-esteem and self-image of the teenager, it is my belief that one's family atmosphere and the communication between parent and child provide some of the most important ingredients for the youth's positive and/or negative feelings of self-worth.

My interest in El Segundo High School is two-fold: 1) My sister has been a student at the high school for three years and therefore I am familiar with the school system, teachers and students, and 2) Upon returning to California, only a few weeks ago, I realized I had only gathered information from a young teen population (13-14 year olds) and felt that it was necessary to increase my chances of obtaining a better understanding of the adolescent female by surveying the older teen population (15-17 year olds). The El Segundo High School administrators have supported my request and seem to share in my interest in the area of adolescent self-esteem.

Your daughter would be completing two separate questionnaires on the day of the survey. The first is an Index of Self-Esteem which asks the girls to indicate their perceptions of themselves, and the second is an Inventory of Mother-Daughter Communication which asks the girls to indicate their perceptions of how they communicate with their mothers. It must be made very clear that your daughter's name will not appear in any publication, or reference, of this research and that her participation is strictly voluntary and will take place in her classroom under the supervision of her Geometry teacher and myself.

Your consideration in allowing your daughter to complete these surveys is greatly appreciated as it will assist in the completion of my thesis research as well as provide an added understanding of the young female's view of herself.

Thank you very much,

 I, _____, give my daughter
 _____ permission to participate in taking two ques-
 tionnaires for the purpose of compiling information on self-esteem and
 mother-daughter communication. I am also aware that my daughter's name
will not appear in any publication of this research and that she will not
 be identified in written or public presentations of this study at any
 time or under any circumstances.

*PLEASE RETURN TO CLASS TOMORROW

 Parent or Guardian Signature

APPENDIX C

GENERAL POPULATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade _____

GENERAL POPULATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle the appropriate answer:

1) I am: 13 14 15 16 17 18 years old.

2) I am presently living with my:

_____ mother and father

_____ mother and step-father

_____ mother only

_____ father and step-mother

_____ father only

_____ other living situation

4) I am interested in participating in a project where I would find out a little more about myself:

___yes ___no

Thank you very much for your help in answering these questions.

APPENDIX D

INDEX OF SELF-ESTEEM (ISE)

PLEASE NOTE:

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These consist of pages:

APPENDIX D. PAGE 67

APPENDIX E. PAGES 69-70

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APPENDIX E

PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

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