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A COMPARISON OF THE SELF-ESTEEM OF BLACK AND WHITE
HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

*Not on
Vital*

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SUMMARY

This study investigated the level of self-esteem of black and white high-school students using the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. One hundred and eighty six subjects were used, 68 of them being white while 118 were black. A validation of the Rosenberg scale for the black sample was attempted using a correlation between the scale score and a rating of the subjects by teachers. The results of the study showed no significant difference between the self-esteem levels, while the validation study failed to confirm the validity of the test for black subjects in South Africa. However, the validation study was rejected as inconclusive and the results of the comparison accepted as confirmatory of previous research.

An incidental positive finding revealed that white males have higher self-esteem than white females,. The theory and past research of self-esteem comparisons between racial groups is reviewed. The conclusion is reached in this study that the concept of self-esteem has outlasted its usefulness in the field of comparisons between racial groups and research of a qualitative nature can provide further data for the understanding of differences between racial groups.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem has yielded an immense amount of research in clinical and social psychology yet, while providing valuable findings, it still defies accurate definition. There is a degree of consensus amongst the theories to the degree that self-esteem pertains to a generalisation of a person's sense of well-being or worth. The importance of this is obvious in the case of both individuals and groups as it suggests a dimension of mental health which can be measured. Measurement in turn makes possible comparisons across time, individuals and groups. The comparisons can be interpreted and findings result in greater knowledge of personal development, psychotherapy and inter-group dynamics.

The scientific advantages of the measurement of self-esteem have resulted in the development of scales which partially meet the requirements of scientific rigour on one hand and usefulness on the other. Each scale reflects the author's conception of self-esteem and is designed for a particular purpose and is therefore standardized for a particular group. Thus self-esteem scales differ on the basis of purpose, theoretical assumptions, target population and psychometric properties. This makes selection of appropriate methodologies for research extremely difficult. Assuming a scale or methodology can be found or developed, its validity remains uncertain as there are no solid criteria against which to validate the scale or method. Self-esteem research is therefore often characterised by a number of assumptions or arbitrary decisions. Despite this, valuable results are obtained which will hopefully contribute towards a coherent theory.

A long tradition of studies into the effects of racial prejudice has developed in America. One of the favourite dimensions for comparisons across ethnic groups has been self-esteem. Considering the potential that a measure of self-esteem holds for evaluating overall mental functioning, this popularity is easy to understand. It stands to reason that research into racial prejudice is also of great importance in a country such as South Africa where racial discrimination remains an entrenched part of society. This study is therefore a limited attempt to apply to the South African situation some methodology which has evolved in America, in an attempt to investigate whether the results can increase our knowledge of local circumstances.

Self-esteem comparisons between blacks and whites in America have resulted in a confusing set of possibilities. Originally, findings were consistent with the intuitive assumption that as blacks were the victims of prejudice their self-esteem would suffer and therefore be lower than that of whites. Contradicting results then started appearing where blacks were scoring equal to or higher than whites. The response of the researchers was to modify their theory, accept the finding as a historical development, or question the methodology. In South Africa, where there are more cultural variables (and therefore more methodological problems), findings are no clearer. Early research (Gregor and McPherson, 1966) showed signs of lowered self-esteem in black children. Qualitative research has observed lowered self-esteem in blacks while quantitative research has shown no significant differences between self-esteem scores of blacks and whites. As yet these findings are exploratory so it was decided to use quantitative methodology to investigate whether a difference does exist between the self-esteem of a group of black adolescents when compared with their white counterparts. In addition it was decided to test the validity of the scale for the black group as it has not been used for this purpose before. Without some degree of validation the situation can arise where significant differences are found but where the dimension on which the

differences are situated remains ill-defined.

Note : The naming of social groups in South Africa is a sensitive issue to those who wish to avoid discrimination on the basis of race. The author has chosen to use the terms "white" and "black" as descriptive terms while the "black" group must of necessity be divided into "Coloured" and "indigenous black". It is hoped that no offence will be taken to the use of these terms.

CHAPTER 2

SELF-ESTEEM : THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2. Before proceeding to describe the main theoretical work related to self-esteem, it is necessary to situate self-esteem as a subset of self-concept. Gordon (1969) defines self-concept as the structure of self-referential meanings available to a person's conscious interpretative processes. He posits four levels of abstraction. At a concrete level there are specific self-representations which can be regarded as the data which would answer a question such as "Who am I?". The next level is characterised by his four "systemic senses of self" which are the senses of competence, self-determination, unity and moral worth. The third level of abstraction is the sense of personal autonomy. The fourth and most global and content free evaluative dimension of self-conception is self-esteem.

2.1 The Original Theory

2.1.1 William James

William James is considered to be the earliest psychologist who engaged himself in describing the self. His work is still considered as standard reference for developmental discussions of self-esteem, and as a result of the difficulty surrounding the elusive concept of the self, James' work remains definitive. Gordon (1969 : 353) quotes James (1892):

Self-appreciation - This is of two sorts, self-complacency, and self-dissatisfaction Language has synonyms enough for both kinds of self-appreciation. Thus pride, conceit, vanity, self-esteem, arrogance, . . . , on the one hand; and on the other modesty, humility, confusion, diffidence, shame, mortification, contribution, the sense of opposite classes of affection seem to be direct and elementary endowments of our nature.

Thus the idea of self-esteem as a rather general bipolar dimension of self-evaluation is introduced. Many qualitatively distinct states which James mentions are located along this dimension.

Of particular importance in the work of James is the self-evaluative aspect of self-esteem. He is best known for his work on the I - Me dichotomy in which the total self (person) is differentiated into two "discriminated aspects" - the self as the knower, and the self as that which is known, or, the agent of experience and the contents of experience (Wells and Marwell, 1976 : 15). Both these aspects are essential to a self-reflexive act as without both, the process of self-consciousness is logically impossible. As will become apparent, however, the self as the object of experience is particularly difficult to deal with.

James (1890, cited by Wells and Marwell, 1976 : 15), in describing the self stated that, "a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his". In this he introduces the ideas of appropriation and/or identity. He divided the self into three constituent parts :-

1. The material Me, which refers to his possessions, his family and all material things with which he might feel a sense of unity.

2. The social Me, which referred to the recognition a person receives from others and which James situated in the minds of the other.
3. The spiritual Me, which referred to the states of consciousness (feeling and emotion) reflected on or perceived by the person himself.

James claimed that in order to understand the Me in a total sense it is necessary to look at both the constituents of the Me and the feelings and emotions they arouse (self-appreciation) as well as the acts which they prompt. He described people as possessing a basic self-seeking tendency, tied to the need for self preservation, which leads to a supposition that preservation and elevation of self-esteem is a nearly universal human objective.

James considered the self to be a totally conscious phenomenon, the evaluations a person places upon himself being dependent upon his aspirations. To quote James :-

With no attempt there can be no failure; with no failure, no humiliation. So our self-feeling in this world depends entirely on what we back ourselves to be and do. It is determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities; a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success, thus :-

$$\text{Self-esteem} = \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Pretensions}}$$

Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator. To give up pretensions is as blessed a relief as to get them gratified; and where

disappointment is incessant and the struggle unending, this is what men will always do ... Everything added to the self is a burden as well as a pride ... our self-feeling is in our power (Gordon, 1969 : 354).

Thus we have a concept of self-esteem based on two important principles introduced by James : He made a theoretical split between a subjective and an objective "I" and introduced a comparative process of evaluating two aspects of the self which is known by the self as the knower.

2.2 The Symbolic Interactionists

Following James, a group of sociologists known collectively as symbolic interactionists investigated the qualitatively distinct forms of evaluative reflexive consciousness. Major theorists from this group are Cooley, who provided a discussion into the various phases of "I", and Mead who provided a more general differentiation between the senses of self-respect and superiority.

2.2.1 C.H. Cooley

Cooley confined himself to what James described as the social Me. He stressed the continuity between the individual and society, considering the self inseparable from its social milieu, or the other persons with which it interacts. Cooley is perhaps best known for his idea of the Looking-glass self, based on the premise that an individuals conception of him or herself is determined by perception of other peoples reaction to him or her (Wells and Marwell, 1976 : 16).

A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principle elements : the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of self feeling.

Therefore, a sense of self always involves a sense of other people, distinct and particular or vague and general.

Cooley used the idea of appropriation to explain the aquisition and experience of self, which comes to include that which is identified with or possessed by the person. A child uses the concept "me" as an object of behaviour synonymously with "my" and through this process children come to view aspects of themselves as objects of their cognitions and actions. This remains a social process in the sense that "mine" can only be defined in opposition to "not mine". In this way the sense of self as an appropriative feeling is defined by opposition within the larger social setting.

The self was seen by Cooley as a type of instinct functioning to unify and stimulate the individuals behaviour. Like James and others he assumed a motive towards self-appreciation which was innate and functional to the individual's survival. Cooley did not deal explicitly with self-esteem but saw self-feeling as an aspect of his looking-glass self. It follows from the motive towards self-appreciation that the self must protect itself from negative influences. He considered the self, as James did, to be a conscious process, although his theory did allow for preconscious or habitual behaviour (Wells and Marwell, 1976).

2.2.2 G.H. Mead

Mead produced a developmental theory of the self which, to many, remains one of the most cogent and systematic. He placed central importance in his theory of the self in the I - Me distinction, by which the person became an object to himself. Like Cooley, Mead saw the self as a product of social interactions in which the person saw himself reflected in the behaviour of the other. However, Mead organised this hypotheses around the use of symbols which, he believed, typified uniquely human behaviour (Wells and Marwell, 1976).

With the appearance of the self, "human" behaviour becomes identifiable. Mead saw intelligent and rational behaviour as being self-conscious and made possible by the person's ability to take the role of another person, and to see himself as an object. Of central importance in this process is the use of significant symbols. This process, for Mead, remained on a conscious level of awareness.

The symbolic usage of language in the development and operation of the self is an important theoretical contribution. This process is implicit in many later theories of the self and self-esteem. Mead's concept of the "generalized other" is made possible through the process of symbol formation where, through the use of language, a person develops the ability not only to take the role of particular others, but also to build an internal symbolic representation of generalized others which correspond to the representation of society within the individual. In this way a more global sense of the self is possible instead of a mere atomistic collection of situational selves such as James' theory allowed. Thus a general sense of self-esteem becomes possible.

Another important theoretical contribution made by Mead was his inclusion of attitudes in the theory of the self (Wells and Marwell, 1976). He saw taking the role of the other also as taking the attitude of the other with respect to the person himself. The idea of the self as a collection of reflexive attitudes which emerge within the context of a social situation thus became possible. Mead saw that the idea of multiple selves and a global self as complementary rather than exclusive and believed that self-esteem is an aspect of self-attitudes in general. The importance of this will become apparent through the work of Rosenberg (1965) which influenced this study.

2.3 The Neo-Freudians

This loosely associated group of therapists and personality theorists shares a common concern for both unconscious or more emotional influences on the self, and self-esteem, as well as conscious cognitive and evaluative self-processes. Social structure and interaction between the individual and his social context are dealt with far more explicitly than Freud allowed himself, while symbolic communication is regarded as deeply implicated in the process of normal and pathological socialization. (Gordon, 1976). The neo-Freudians rejected the idea of libidinal energy as the energizing force behind all behaviour and instead gave the self a causal role as a mediator between basic drives and social reality.

2.3.1 Karen Horney

For Horney (1946), the basic process of life is the fulfilling of the potentialities of the self which are present at birth. She named this process self-realisation. Basic anxiety resulting from the experiences of a child in a potentially hostile world

was the primary causal force. This anxiety led to a need for security in which self-esteem played an important part. Horney based her theory on the assumption that it is the wish of each person to value himself and to be valued by others. Self-esteem or self-alienation can result from this wish. Horney elaborated the concept of the self by describing idealized, potential and actual states, where the potential qualities refer to the "real self" which is compared with actual qualities of the "actual self". The "idealized self" refers to a fantasy-self created by neurotic adjustment to a growing discrepancy between the "real self" and the "actual self". This theory explains the grandiosity often found in insecure people.

2.3.2 E. Erikson

Erikson regarded self-esteem as being based on the successful resolution of each of the epigenetic crises in the life cycle. After the negotiation of each crisis self-esteem is consolidated or confirmed, although he saw the overall sense of ego-identity, after adolescence, as being of extreme importance to the overall sense of self-esteem (1959 cited in Gordon, 1969). Erikson (1964), makes special reference to the identity problems encountered by the Negro adolescent. Using a social perspective, he points out the importance of mastering of experience, but for an intact sense of identity and therefore self-esteem to develop, this mastery must be a successful variant of the methods used by the group to which he belongs. The individual's sense of self-esteem may be based, in mature adulthood, on any or all of Erikson's postulated developmental crises : trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, ego identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity (Gordon, 1969).

2.3.3 Carl Rogers

Carl Rogers (Pervin, 1975) placed great theoretical emphasis on the development of the self, which symbolizes a body of experience. Related to the self is the "ideal self" which is the self-concept which an individual would most like to possess. Rogers considered "self-acceptance" or positive self-regarding attitudes as basic to mental health. This state is achieved through congruence between a person's perception of himself and his experiences. Incongruence, when an individual is unaware of it, makes him vulnerable to anxiety and consequent low self-esteem. Rogers took a strong interest in the necessary antecedents for self-esteem. For him, a child (or a patient in therapy), needs a climate where he can experience fully, can accept himself and can be accepted by his parents, even if they disapprove of particular pieces of behaviour. Congruence and high self-esteem are the result of unconditional acceptance wherein the individual is not forced to ignore his own perceptions of experiences because they are at odds with those upon whom he relies.

2.3.4 H.S. Sullivan

For Sullivan (1953), the beginnings of the self-system are located in the avoidance of the anxiety of being a "bad me" and receiving disapproval or experiencing deprivation from the powerful maternal object. Instead, the early learning experiences promote learning to be the "good me" which brings satisfaction from the mothering one. For Sullivan self-esteem or the personification of the "good me" is content free and dependent upon the attributes approved of and encouraged by the maternal figure. In this way the self-system becomes an organisation of educative experiences called into being by the necessity to avoid

or to minimize incidents of anxiety (p 165). Sullivan's theory is totally social-psychological in that his description of the self is wholly interpersonal and, like Mead, he stresses the function of symbol formation in its development. The self is entirely learned and requires no inherent self-drives or potential selves, according to Sullivan. He saw the self as a dynamism: "a relatively enduring pattern of energy transformations which recurrently characterize the organism in its duration as a living organism", (p 103). This pattern of energy transformations included aspects of the "good me" and the "bad me" and their interplay determined the overall level of self-esteem.

2.3.5 H. Kline

Kline (1971) deserves a place among the abovementioned names as he typifies the modern theorists relating psychoanalytic theory to self-esteem. Kline draws our attention to the ego-ideal, a part of the super-ego system. The super-ego uses harsh punitive methods to drive the ego away from prohibited thoughts, feelings and behaviours. In contrast to this, Kline reminds us that the same psychic structure utilizes libidinal powers to appeal to the ego with promises of love and self-esteem for its efforts to fulfill certain aims and aspirations. The ego-ideal is considered to be the images of loved objects which are absorbed by the ego through fear of their loss. Kline refers to simplified definitions of the ego-ideal likening it to the image of the individual as he would like himself to be. To differentiate between the super-ego and the ego-ideal, the former is based on castration anxiety, while the latter is based on loss of love from admired objects. The super-ego and the ego-ideal both affect the self-image which in turn reflects the degree of self-esteem attained by the individual (Kline, 1971).

2.4 The Self-Esteem Theorists

While the theorists mentioned so far have dealt with self-esteem only in an oblique manner, there are some researchers who have concentrated on self-esteem and attempted to derive cogent theories based on empirical research. The two most important of these theorists are Coopersmith and Rosenberg. Their theories remain largely on an individual level of explanation although Rosenberg tended in his later work to investigate self-esteem as it applied to groups.

2.4.1 M. Rosenberg

The emphasis of Rosenberg's work is on the development of a positive self-image during adolescence (Rosenberg, 1965). At first his investigations were concerned with the development of self-evaluative behaviours in terms of the adolescent's social milieu, that of the family in particular. Self-esteem was then related to subsequent social behaviours. His later work (Rosenberg and Simmons, 1972) was directed towards comparing the self-esteem of black and white high school pupils. Attitude is a central concept for Rosenberg and is related via reference groups to antecedent, consequent, and structural aspects of both social and personal behaviour. He views self-esteem as an evaluative attitude. He made little distinction in quality between attitudes to other objects and to the self, although he did admit that the level of importance may differ.

Rosenberg's research dealt with ability-specific evaluations and attitudes, his theoretical intention being to investigate the self-image as a global personality property. Self-attitudes have a reflexive evaluative component which allows for a

"self-estimation" to be made of the attitude object (which could be the self). In other words a person makes an evaluation of the importance of a particular attitude. All self-estimates are not equally important and vary according to the self-value of the attitude, "how much he cares about the quality", (Rosenberg, 1965 quoted by Wells and Marwell, 1976 : 51). A type of psychological summation takes place on each self-estimate weighted by its corresponding self-value which then provides a sense of overall self-esteem. Thus Rosenberg relates specific types of self-esteem to overall self-esteem in a linear way.

Rosenberg's research methodology used extensive cross-sectional sample surveys and the interpretations of correlations in causal terms. He discovered that people with low self-esteem ("egophobes") show more personality characteristics indicating neurotic tendencies, report greater difficulties in social interaction and have less expectations of success than individuals with high self-esteem (1965). The effects of the person's social context on his direct experience of insecurity and negative evaluations and the availability of supportive reference groups (family or peers), are used to explain these tendencies. For example, Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) found that black children in integrated schools have lower self-esteem than those in all-black schools. This finding was confirmed by Simmons, Brown, Bush and Blyth (1978).

2.4.2 S. Coopersmith

Coopersmith (1967), discusses self-esteem using an assortment of psychoanalytically based theories. He regarded the avoidance of unnecessary assumptions more important than a unified theory. His work was also concerned with the development of self-esteem although he restricted his subjects to pre-high school children.

Coopersmith took self-esteem as a general personality characteristic, not a momentary attitude or an attitude specific to individual situations. He defined self-esteem as an attitude an individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself. His correlational results were similar to those of Rosenberg : High self-esteem subjects were found to be more assertive, independent and creative and less likely to accept social definitions of reality unless they were in accord with their own observations, to be more flexible and imaginative, and capable of more original solutions to problems.

Of particular importance is Coopersmith's conclusions with respect to antecedents of self-esteem. It appeared that children are influenced in their self-judgements through a process of reflected appraisal in which they take the opinions of themselves expressed by others who are important to them. He isolated three kinds of parental attitude and behaviour which facilitate the development of high self-esteem. Firstly, the degree of acceptance, interest, affection and warmth expressed to the child were necessary. Secondly, the type of discipline used was more likely to be firm, fair and more reward orientated than punishment orientated, and aimed at managing undesirable responses rather than harsh treatment or loss of love. Thirdly, a democratic system existed wherein the child was accepted as having rights and opinions within a set of rules (Coopersmith, 1967).

The analytically orientated aspects of Coopersmith's work allows for a distinction between a subjective expression of self-esteem and a behavioural expression. He was thus able to consider the difference between true self-esteem (where a person actually feels worthy and valuable) and defensive self-esteem (where a person feels unworthy but is unable to admit to this). Thus,

"The process of self judgement derives from a subjective judgement of success, with that appraisal weighted according to the value placed upon different areas of capacity and performance, measured against a person's personal goals and standards and filtered through his capacity to defend himself against presumed or actual occurrences of failure", (Coopersmith, 1967 : 242).

2.5 The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations

An attempt to allude to the pertinent theories affecting self-esteem would not be complete without mention of processes on the level of social groups. The theories mentioned thusfar have made mention of the social context experienced by the individual via his family and peers. There is a large body of research and theory which looks at the influences of the group on the individual, other groups on the individual and one group on another. In the American tradition of reductionism we can consider theories such as Festingers (1954) theory of Social Comparison wherein he established a series of postulates which proposed that individuals are driven to compare themselves with others and to do so in ways that will preserve their own self-esteem. Likewise, this is generalized to groups which are compelled to create and maintain a positive social identity vis-a-vis other social groups. This theory has in part been used to analyze the effects of groups on other group's self-esteem as well as on individual self-esteem. Pettigrew (1967) developed a theory of Social Evaluation, the basic tenet of which was that human beings learn about themselves by comparing themselves with others and the second tenet of which was that the process of social evaluation leads to positive, neutral or negative self-ratings which are relative to the standards set by the individuals employed for the comparison (p. 245).

For our purpose this theory is important in that Pettigrew also addresses the links between individual and group effects.

Although these two representative theories are social psychology, they still describe only individual strategies and do not account for the changes in self-attitudes of a group across time. Tajfel (1978) describes the perceived failure of the individual to be assimilated by a group promising self-esteem, through constraints imposed by that group. Rather than trying to cope or change as an individual, (for example by attempting to identify with the dominant group) a strategy is employed whereby the identity of the oppressed group is changed to become positive as in the effects of Black Consciousness. Self-esteem therefore, is a variable in group dynamics such as those proposed by Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theory of social comparison processes (cited in Milner, 1981). They suggest positive social differentiation from the outgroup as an answer to the effects of prejudice. This, they suggest, can take place through competition on alternative dimensions to those usually exploited, and changing of value systems.

2.6 Determinants of Self-Esteem

Having reviewed the major theoretical literature on self-esteem, certain characteristics can be distinguished. Self-esteem is considered to be a self-referential attitude which is partly cognitive but mostly affective. It can be, in common with any other attitude be positive or negative, although it is suggested that a natural mechanism exists which attempts to keep it positive.

The determinants of self-esteem also appear to be both cognitive and affective and exist at every stage of a

persons life. However, the early experiences of a child of relations with the parents seem particularly important. The conditions required for the enhancement of self-esteem are that the child can experience himself fully, can accept himself and be accepted by his parents (Rogers) while Coopersmith includes fair discipline. Thus a mechanism exists whereby a child learns about his worth from significant others and the environment. At a later stage a comparative component intrudes upon the self-concept where the person compares his own knowledge or experience of himself with an internalized, generalised, symbolized "other". This internal image of the other derives from all interpersonal experiences and would include cognitive learning processes. Global self-esteem is therefore a function of knowledge and feelings about the self and knowledge and feelings about the other.

It can therefore be appreciated how social political and economic influences can affect the self-esteem of an individual and therefore the group to which he belongs. Poverty can affect family composition and relationships and therefore alter prerequisites for the development of good self-esteem. Alternatively political ideology can enhance or undermine the identity of a group which in turn affects the self-concept of the individual and eventually the self-esteem of the individual. Group identity appears to form an important component of individual identity and consequently plays a strong role in group dynamics while attempting to maintain a positive self-esteem for the individuals in the groups. It is therefore possible to say that the knowledge of and attitudes of an individual towards the group to which the individual belongs, and towards other groups, has an effect on the individuals self-esteem.

2.7 Hypothetical Predictions of Black Self-Esteem in South Africa

The socio-political situation in South Africa is difficult to describe. However, there are certain characteristics which are relatively clear. Socially, politically and economically the white group has until recently held power over the black group. In the opinion of some this has not changed. In the light of the theories discussed above on the determinants of self-esteem, there are therefore a number of reasons why it would be predicted that black South Africans would have low self-esteem.

The socio-political conditions encountered by blacks in South Africa have resulted in wide-spread poverty and economic desperation. The system of control of labour has tended to disrupt family life as families are often split as members seek work away from home. Child rearing has often been disrupted for this reason as children are moved from one caretaker to another. Emotional stress as a result of financial need has also disrupted family life. Changing social structures have led to the erosion of traditional values and the psychological security derived from these has been lost. Thus on the level of interpersonal relationships in the nuclear family it is likely that the prerequisites of good self-esteem found in a nurturant environment are absent.

Beyond the interpersonal experiences within the family and immediate social environment, blacks experience relationships with whites. They can either be affected by making comparisons between their own disadvantaged circumstances and those of whites or alternatively be treated as inferior on a personal level. In both situations conflicts will arise between their own need for self-enhancement and the message that they are

inferior. The theory suggests that this results in an untenable position when they come to idealise the white identity without having access to it. The application of James' Law makes it clear that low self-esteem will result.

A more subtle but equally powerful source of information about the "other" is through the mass media. Through white control of most of the media the black person is exposed continually to information which undermines self-esteem by emphasizing the disparity between the experienced self and the idealized other which becomes the self-ideal. Thus by means of political and economic control whites in South Africa are able to preserve their group identity and the self-esteem of the individuals in it by placing the blacks in "identity traps" (du Preez, 1980), which results in lowered self-esteem of that group.

Du Preez' concept of the identity trap explains the mechanism whereby a social group imposes a set of rules on another group to rigidify interactions which would otherwise cause anxiety to the first group. In South Africa, the black person has been expected to accept the negative value of being black (which lowers self-esteem), to provide security for the white identity.

In summary, a consideration of the generalities of the South African blacks' socio political situation and the theoretically posited antecedents of self-esteem leads to the hypothesis that black self-esteem will be lower than that of white self-esteem. Results of research in America and South Africa will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

INTER-RACIAL COMPARISONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

3. It has been mentioned previously that the history of self-esteem comparisons between racial groups has been diverse and intriguing. The diversity has stemmed firstly from differences in methodology. There are many studies which compare self-esteem as interpretive findings using theoretical perspectives which may or may not pertain directly to self-esteem. For example, black children being unable to correctly identify with a black doll is interpreted as reflecting lower self-esteem. Alternatively, there are studies which attempt to measure self-esteem by direct methods. Secondly, there are differences in the research as a result of theoretical differences such as whether it can be treated as an entity or must be treated as an aggregate of component parts. Thirdly, there are differences in the level of reductionism present in the research as some studies which investigate self-esteem in the individual are applied to group strategies and explanations, while other studies are specifically aimed at investigating group processes. Fourthly, and as a result of all the abovementioned differences, the results differ greatly and represent all possible outcomes. Finally, the interpretations of results have been criticised for faulty methodology in some cases (e.g. Banks, 1976, who examines faulty statistical analysis) to ideological bias in others (e.g. Adam, 1978, who claims ideological biases in research unwittingly attempting to support political opinions). Thus, the history of self-esteem research is rich in its complexity and the review presented here is intended as representative rather than comprehensive.

The research literature will be discussed in terms of the factors which lead to its diversity. It must be noted that these factors are highly interdependent and have been separated for heuristic purposes.

3.1 Differences in Methodology

3.1.1 The Doll Studies

The original studies which caused alarm about black self-esteem were designed, not to measure self-esteem but the development of social prejudice and identity in children. Clark and Clark (1950) using a colouring-in test with Negro children aged three to seven, concluded that most of the children (88%) were able to correctly identify their skin colour, but showed a marked preference for lighter skins (52% of sample). This result was taken as confirmation of the classic 1947 doll study experiment by the same authors, as 52% preference for light skins deviates significantly from the hypothetical nought percent which can be postulated as "healthy". In this experiment the child subjects were each presented in turn with two dolls, one black and one white. They were then asked to respond to a series of questions such as "Show me the doll that looks most like you" and "Show me the doll you like the most". Thirty four percent of the sample of Negro children indicated the white doll in response to the first question while more than half indicated the white doll in response to the second. These responses were made despite the ability of the children to accurately identify the racial group to which the doll "belonged".

The studies performed by the Clarks' as well as subsequent doll studies, use a methodology which provides results which distinguish between the racial groups under identification. However, the concept of self-esteem is invariably not discussed under aims or

methodologies but rather is first introduced in the discussion sections of the relevant articles. For what is directly evident from the experiments is not a difference in self-esteem. Rather, we are shown that a proportion of black children have a conscious or unconscious desire to be like white children and not like black children. This result is, of course, disturbing in that it indicates a source of conflict in the individuals who demonstrate these particular responses. The conflict suggests that a discrepancy exists between reality and the self-concept, which is an unpleasant affective state according to most psychological theories. It is only by application of personality theory that these results can be interpreted as reflecting self-esteem. Therefore, an important characteristic of the doll studies is that they are interpretative findings wherein the theoretical perspective remains somewhat unclear. The second important characteristic of this methodology lies in the statistical interpretation of results. It must be noted that results are reported in terms of proportion of subjects in a sample who show "unhealthy" responses. The logical implications of this finding are different to findings where the average score for the sample on a measure of "health" is reported. In one case we can infer that some subjects are perfectly healthy and others not, while in the other case all subjects are implied to be influenced in an unhealthy way. The one case raises the question of the effects of confounding variables while the other suggests some universal effect.

Greenwald and Oppenheim (1968) modified the Clark and Clark methodology to include a third doll, coloured in an intermediate skin tone. This resulted in reduced misidentification for the Negro group and an overall conclusion that nothing unusual exists in the Negro children's misidentifications compared to the whites.

Naturally, a value shift could have taken place in the Negro population in the intervening years between 1947 and 1968 so it is uncertain whether it was this or the modified methodology which resulted in different findings. However, Asher and Allen (1969) using the original method of a choice of one out of two (although they attempted to match the dolls sex and age to those of the subjects), found an increase in white colour preference among negro children. One again this was an increase in frequency of misidentification. In contradiction to this again, Hraba and Grant (1970) and Ward and Broun (1972), reported findings of no significant difference between the ability of black and white children in identifying dolls correctly.

From this literature certain issues must be highlighted. There is firstly the fact that although race effects are evident, these effects are only linked to self-esteem by implicit assumptions. Secondly, the results are epidemiological in that they report frequency of deviance and not degree of deviance. Thirdly, the results are inconsistent which suggests the presence of extraneous variables which confound the results.

3.1.2 Interviews

The use of interviewing techniques has been widely used in self-esteem research, either alone or in combination with other techniques. Some studies such as that by Sherwood (1980) rely exclusively on the use of open-ended unstructured questioning to obtain qualitative data. Sherwood used a psychodynamic perspective in investigating racial prejudice in England. She concluded that self-esteem is a variable in racial prejudice but, unlike most other investigators who see self-esteem as a result of prejudice, sees it as a causative element in what she terms a "Vicious

Spiral" of prejudice. Kline (1971), while also using a psychodynamic perspective used both dolls and interviews to investigate the ego-ideal of children and thus their level of self-esteem. His finding was one of low self-esteem in black children as a result of racial prejudice against them. Taylor and Walsh (1979), who used an interview question in addition to a self-esteem scale of their own design, provided a result showing blacks to have at least equal self-esteem to that of whites. However, the interview question was not intended to assess self-esteem but to test the theory of system blame. System blame theory suggests that black people protect their self-esteem by distancing themselves from and blaming social institutions which affect them negatively. (Their findings detracted from this theory). In the study by Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) the interview was of a highly structured form, in fact including verbal responding to their self-esteem scale. Their results indicate that in America black self-esteem is definitely not lower than that of whites.

The use of the interview in self-esteem research demonstrates an important trend. The more structured the questions to which subjects respond, the less likely significant findings of lower black self-esteem are to be found. Related to this is the possibility that the more interpretation required by a measure of self-esteem, the greater is the likelihood that positive findings will result. Thus it is possible that subjectivity may influence findings in such an emotionally charged issue as the effects of social prejudice. Efforts must therefore be made to avoid this error. This can be done through the use of appropriate methodologies.

3.1.3 Inventories and Scales

The most structured of the self-esteem methodologies is the use of inventories or scales which are filled in by the subjects or by the experimenter. The scales are scored according to prescribed methods and criteria and interpretation by the experimenter is reduced to a minimum.

Rosenberg (1965) developed a 10 item scale of self-esteem based on attitude research methodology. The 10 items yield a six point Guttman scale of content-free evaluation of the self. High school pupils in New York of black and white racial groups returned over 5000 questionnaires. The results indicated that overall black self-esteem, based on percentage of low, medium and high scores, was no lower than that of whites.

In an attempt to provide some explanations for this result, Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) modified their procedure by incorporating the Rosenberg Scale into an interview which also investigated other attitudes, social class, group evaluation, racial insulation, family constitution, school performance and aspirations. They concluded that black self-esteem is in general no lower than that of whites as they have their own reference groups which provides the required antecedents of good self-esteem. It is to the degree that the reference group is compromised by exposure to other groups holding different values that self-esteem is lowered.

Yancey, Rigsby and McCarthy (1972) used the Rosenberg Scale and the Langner scale of psychosomatic-symptoms of stress to assess 1,179 subjects of black and white adults in two cities in America. Using a parametric

method of scoring they concluded that race has no systematic effect on self-esteem or symptoms of stress when other relevant dimensions of social position are taken into account. However, these dimensions still accounted for only 16% of the variance in self-esteem and the conclusion was reached that other interpersonal processes are involved.

Other studies using scales and inventories either support the finding of no significant difference between black and white self-esteem (Taylor and Walsh, 1979) or even find black self-esteem to be higher than that of whites (Simmons, Brown, Bush and Blyth, 1978). No results indicating lower black self-esteem using scales can be found when race is the only independent variable. It appears also that methodologies using average scores for groups rather than frequency of categories of self-esteem fail to yield significant differences between groups. It is therefore possible to suggest that results of black/white self-esteem comparisons are affected by the methodology used.

3.2 Differences in Theory

The theoretical approach of various authors has already been described in Chapter Two. However empirical research has been characterised by certain fundamental differences in how self-esteem is viewed by the researchers. These theoretical differences can be related to two questions.

1. To what extent is self-esteem part of a persons awareness?
2. Is self-esteem a global characteristic or is it composed of component parts?

With the exception of the theories with a strong psychoanalytic bias, most theories suggest that self-esteem should be part of a person's field of consciousness. In order to ascertain a person's self-esteem therefore, would require only honesty, self awareness and awareness of one's ego-ideals as prerequisites. However, most research assumes that self-esteem is a hidden quality which required techniques such as projective tests or self-report scales to ascertain it. Alternatively and in most cases, relevantly, there is the necessity to guard against "faking good" or "faking bad". Research to date ranges from the highly projective techniques such as the doll studies and even traditional tests such as the Thematic Apperception Test and Rorschach Test (Lowe, 1961) to Rosenberg's scale which assumes that self-esteem is close enough to awareness to require only six global questions. Self-esteem has thus never been conceptualized in an immediately perceivable way and remains an abstract and only partially operationalized concept. Coopersmith, (1959, cited by Lowe, 1961) perhaps has shed some light upon the degree to which self-esteem is disclosed by suggesting four types : what a person purports to have, what he really has, what he displays and what others believe he has. Research has done little to elaborate this.

Related to this possibility that more than one type of self-esteem exists is the question of measurement. Some scales such as that of Rosenberg (1965) are designed to measure a single global attitude towards the self. Alternatively, many scales include questions at a lower level of abstraction which are related to family relations, peer relations, sexual relations and psychological disorders. The score derived and labelled "self-esteem" is therefore a sum of different types of self-esteem (e.g. Coopersmith, 1967). It is

necessary therefore to understand at what level of abstraction self-esteem is regarded by researchers when comparing results as, at one end of this dimension measurement is easy, but so concrete that the concept disappears while at the other end the concept of self-esteem is difficult to measure as a result of the high degree of abstraction which is difficult to operationalize. Thusfar the natural science paradigm has struggled to solve this paradox.

3.3 Degree of Reductionism

Self-esteem comparisons between racial groups are also characterised by the level at which assessment takes place compared to the level at which results are interpreted. While self-esteem is intrinsically an individual characteristic, comparisons are made between groups. Using natural scientific methods research has been confined to the investigation of the self-esteem of individuals which is then statistically used to describe groups. The validity of this method of statistical inference varies from the Clark and Clark doll studies where relatively small samples were generalized to populations to the Rosenberg and Simmons studies where thousands of subjects were used. The results of black/white comparisons have changed from that of lower black self-esteem in the earlier studies using small (and possibly non-representative samples) to non-significant results in more recent large sample studies such as Rosenberg (1965) and Rosenberg and Simmons (1972). Reductionism in statistical interpretation is not the only form of reductionism,

which takes place on a theoretical level as well. The theoretical problem of defining self-esteem by splitting it into component parts has already been mentioned while reductionism in explanations of the effects of race on self-esteem will be dealt with under section 3.5.2.

3.4 Differences in Results of Self-Esteem Comparisons

Research has provided results which represent all three possible outcomes of a comparison between black and white self-esteem. Some of these results have already been mentioned under other headings to illustrate differences in research. Results will be discussed here according to outcome.

3.4.1 Black Self-Esteem Lower than White Self-Esteem.

The doll studies of Clark and Clark (1950) conducted with children aged three to seven indicate a significant number of black children to prefer a white identity. This was then interpreted as a sign of lowered black self-esteem as white children always chose the appropriate white doll. This result was confirmed by Asher and Allen in 1969 who also reported similar results while social class was not found to be an important variable. Non-empirical research such as that of Sherwood (1980) and Grossack (1956) yields similar results. It is thus possible to establish that results of black self-esteem being lower than that of whites is associated with non-direct methods of evaluation of self-esteem.

3.4.2 Black Self-Esteem Equal to White Self-Esteem.

Greenwald and Oppenheim (1968), using a doll choice technique similar to that of Clark and Clark, the difference being the introduction of a third

intermediate coloured doll, report no significant differences between frequency of misidentification between black and white children. Comparing this result to that of Asher and Allen (1969) it seems likely that the different results are related to the different methodology. The use of scales and inventories as direct measures of self-esteem yielded numerous results of no black/white difference. Most important among these are Rosenberg (1965), Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) and Yancey et al., (1972). For a comprehensive review see Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) or Banks (1976).

3.4.3 Black Self-Esteem Higher than White Self-Esteem.

The fact that some studies indicate black self-esteem to be higher than that of whites, has important implications for understanding the determinants of self-esteem. Both studies which demonstrate this result make use of the Rosenberg scale so it is possible that the scale which is content-free and measures overall self worth is unique in providing such results. Simmons et al (1978) used the six item variation of the scale on 798 high school pupils. They found, based on frequency of levels of self-esteem, that black children had higher rather than lower self-esteem than whites, that girls of both races had lower self-esteem than boys and that broken families affect black children's self-esteem according to whether their schools are segregated or desegregated. Hoelter (1983) re-analysed the 1972 Rosenberg and Simmons data for factorial invariance to investigate whether the scale had the same meaning for both races and sexes. He confirmed this and found blacks to score higher than whites and males to score higher than females. Interpretations for this will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 Interpretations of Results

The results of self-esteem comparisons between black and white groups have led to academic debate on various levels of explanation. Certain authors debate the actuality of the published results while others attempt to formulate and test theoretical explanations for the results.

3.5.1 Methodological Explanations of Results.

The apparent reversal of the results of self-esteem comparisons from lower black than white self-esteem to equal or higher black self-esteem has been in part attributed to different methods being used in the studies. Notwithstanding this, changes have been reported in the outcomes of doll-preference studies. This has led Banks (1976) to firstly re-question the validity of the doll preference studies and secondly to re-examine the statistics of earlier studies. He concluded that the results indicating white preference in black children did not in fact deviate from chance and therefore the lower black self-esteem tradition was foundationless. Williams and Morland (1979) however, criticised Banks for failing to examine certain studies which originally had unambiguously indicated white-preference in blacks. It is therefore reasonable to accept that a preference shift did in fact take place in American black children although the meaning of the shift remains unclear beyond reflecting a change in values at some level.

3.5.2 Explanation of Results, at the Social Level.

At the stage when it was consensually accepted that black self-esteem was lower than that of whites in the U.S.A., this was readily interpreted as the effect of racial prejudice. It was not difficult for authors

such as Kardiner and Ovesy (1951 quoted in Milner, 1981) to state that "The central problem of adaptation is the discrimination he suffers and the consequences of this discrimination for the self referential aspects of his social orientation. In simple words it means that his self-esteem suffers..."(p. 132). Pettigrew (1967) used his well established Social Evaluation Theory to explain this result in terms of comparisons by the black people of their circumstances with that of prevailing American values.

The shift in results to indicate more positive black self-esteem required more elaborate explanations. Pettigrew (1978), proposed that despite being subjected to inferiorizing pressures, black people protect their self-esteem by maintaining a sharp distinction between the "real" personal self and the racial self. This suggests that blacks will tend to have lower self-esteem when evaluating themselves against whites according to white standards i.e. when evaluating themselves in a racial context. Some indirect support for this theory is offered by Asher and Allen (1969) who found that white preference increased in children of higher socio-economic status who were thus more likely to compare themselves with whites.

However, the question remains as to whether the racial dimension determines the overall self-esteem of black people. Yancey et al., (1972) concluded that compared to sexual status, city, age, education, marital status and work force participation, racial status had a minimal effect on the affective state (including self-esteem) of American Negroes. Simmons (1978) states, "one major line of reasoning is that an individual's positive or negative attitude towards himself is influenced less by the larger society and more by the opinions of significant others in his immediate environment (p. 56). This is in part

evidenced by the findings of Rosenberg and Simmons (1972), who found that black children from broken homes had significantly lower self-esteem when in desegregated schools and thus more exposed to different values. However, the problem still remains that white values and standards impinge upon black awareness through all forms of cultural media, irrespective of the degree of integration.

In section 3.3 the problem of reductionism was raised. The explanations for equal or higher black self-esteem has thus far applied to individual strategies of coping and they are unable to account for changes in black self-attitudes (Milner, 1981). Tajfel and Turner used their theory of social comparison processes (Tajfel, 1978) to account for group coping strategies. This theory explains how the position of a group is shifted on certain value dimensions which are generally accepted by society at large when individual attempts at assimilation with a more powerful group are perceived to have failed. Simultaneously instead of shifting the position of a group on other already accepted values, the values themselves are changed. Parity with other groups is thus obtained through positive social differentiation. The individual's payoff for this shift would be a higher self-esteem.

3.5.3 Explanation of Results at the Ideological Level.

Adam (1978) in reviewing shifts in reported results of black/white self-esteem comparisons claimed that certain ideological shifts had taken place in the researchers. Whereas the early studies implying lowered black self-esteem to be the result of racism served as an academic lever for civil rights, as it became a tradition, low black self-esteem came to denote pathology and thus became another form of racism. He criticised the speed with which the

traditional finding of low black self-esteem was abandoned suggesting an easy way out for guilty consciences. Simmons (1978) challenged Adam pointing out that he too was subject to a value system which continued to believe in lower black self-esteem irrespective of research findings. This debate served to highlight the important point Adam was making, namely that in research of this sort, ideology easily influences research findings despite attempts to obviate this using natural scientific objectivity.

3.6 South African Research Findings

Reported empirical research into self-esteem of different racial groups in South Africa is scarce. However, there are indicators that certain similarities exist between the effects of racism on blacks in both the U.S.A. and South Africa. Gregor and McPherson (1966) reported white preference in black children using the doll preference test of Clark and Clark. Based upon this, similar interpretations of low self-esteem in black people in South Africa were made. However, it appears that qualitative comparisons between blacks and whites in this country provide little further evidence of lowered black self-esteem. Neither Edelstein (1972) nor Lobban (1975) report evidence for lowered black self-esteem (cited by Edwards, 1984). Meyer and Raphaely (1978) used a scale of self-acceptance (which is closely related to self-esteem) to compare "Coloured" and white school children and found no significant difference, although the "Coloured" children felt less able to control their life situations than their white counterparts. Heaven (1977) used a semantic differential technique with "Coloureds" to assess attitudes towards themselves and towards whites. It was found that they rated whites more negatively than themselves. Momberg (1976) used the Coopersmith scale of self-esteem to compare

"Coloured" and white self-esteem of university students. He found no significant differences. It therefore seems apparent that "Coloured" self-esteem does not appear to differ significantly from that of whites in South Africa. However, it is important to note that the measures used are based on the "component parts" theory of self-esteem and the results would not necessarily hold on content-free global self-esteem measures.

The self-esteem of indigenous black people in South Africa has been less well researched empirically. Qualitative studies such as those by Manganyi (1973) and du Preez (1980) eloquently illustrate the negative emotional consequences on black people as a result of repressive economic and political pressures. The major thrust of their writings is that black people are placed in untenable positions regarding their own identity as a result of the contradiction experienced between their quest for a positive identity and the negative identity imposed upon them. The implied outcome is a damaged self-concept and low self-esteem. A degree of uncertainty remains and the different conclusions of qualitative and quantitative research need to be reconciled.

3.7 The Research Problem

A review of the theoretical literature on self-esteem made possible a hypothesis that black self-esteem in South Africa should be lower than that of white self-esteem. Similar predictions could be made about the situation in America as racism is still to an extent present there. However, the research literature indicates that in America a shift has occurred in the direction of more positive self-attitudes. There are indications that a similar shift might have occurred in South Africa. Before the shift can be confirmed in

South Africa, further research is required. At that stage the theory must be reworked to explain why, despite negative socio-political circumstances, good self-esteem can be maintained by the black people. The main purpose then of this study is to compare the self-esteem levels of black and white South African high school children.

A second problem to be addressed in this study is one of validity of the instrument. While validity is established by cross validation with other scales of self-esteem and measures of personality variables which are associated with self-esteem, conclusive validation remains elusive. The crucial question is, "within a particular theory, how strong is the link between what the scale measures and the theoretical definition of self-esteem?". This question of validity is of particular relevance when the scale in question is being used on a group with a different culture and language to the group on which the scale was standardised. The second purpose of this study, then, is to test the validity of the instrument for the black group.

Thirdly, certain hypotheses derive from previous research. These hypotheses pertain to differences in self-esteem between sexes and the effect of broken families on self-esteem. These, and other *a priori* hypotheses concerning age and school standard, were also tested.

3.8 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem of black and white high school pupils.

Alternative hypothesis: The mean self-esteem of black high school pupils will be lower than that of white high school pupils.

Hypothesis 2:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects of different ages.

Alternative hypothesis: There will be a significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects of different ages.

This is an a priori hypothesis which has not been tested in the literature reviewed. It is based on the possibility that older subjects may have higher self-esteem as a result of overcoming the crisis of adolescent identity (Erikson, 1959, cited in Gordon, 1969). Alternatively, younger subjects may have higher self-esteem as they are not yet encountering this crisis.

Hypothesis 3:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects in different school standards.

Alternative hypothesis: There will be a significant difference between the mean scores of subjects in different school standards.

This hypothesis applies only to the black group as practical restrictions prevented access to white subjects other than those in standard 10. It is an a priori hypothesis to test the possibility that a greater sense of mastery is experienced by a person who has successfully passed into higher school standards than one who has not. Alternatively the higher expectations in higher school standards may decrease the sense of mastery.

Hypothesis 4:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of older subjects in lower standards compared with younger subjects in higher standards.

Alternative hypothesis: Younger subjects in higher standards will have significantly higher mean self-esteem scores than older subjects in lower standards.

This hypothesis investigates a possible interaction of the effects discussed under hypotheses two and three.

Hypothesis 5:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of males and females.

Alternative hypothesis: The mean self-esteem scores of males will be significantly different from those of females.

Hypothesis 6:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant

difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects from intact families compared with those from broken families.

Alternative hypothesis: The mean self-esteem scores of subjects from intact families will be significantly higher than those subjects from broken families.

Hypothesis 7:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant correlation between the self-esteem rating of pupils by teachers and their scores on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

Alternative hypothesis: There will be a significant positive correlation between the self-esteem rating of pupils by teachers and their scores on the Rosenberg scale.

This hypothesis tests the validity of the Rosenberg scale by comparing its results with those of another measure of self-esteem, a rating of each pupils' self-esteem to be filled in by the class teacher.

Hypothesis 8:

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant increase in the degree of correlation between teacher ratings of self-esteem and self-esteem scores on the Rosenberg scale, as school standards rise.

Alternative hypothesis: The degree of correlation between teacher ratings of self-esteem and self-esteem scores will increase according to school standard.

This hypothesis tests whether English language proficiency affects the validity of the Rosenberg

scale. Assuming that English language proficiency rises with school standard, if this variable does affect validity, the higher the school standard, the higher the correlation will be between the Rosenberg scale score and the teacher rating score.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In section 3.7 the main aim of the study was established as an investigation into whether a difference exists between the self-esteem of black and white high-school pupils. The method chosen to achieve this is the administration, under standardized conditions, of a self-esteem scale to both groups. The mean scores were then compared.

The validity of the Rosenberg scale for the black group was tested using a procedure to ascertain the degree of correlation between the Rosenberg scale scores and another measure of self-esteem (trait validity). The second measure was a derived rating scale of self-esteem to be filled in by teachers, using a definition provided by Rosenberg as the theoretical construct which his scale tests. A high level of agreement between the two measures would imply that the scale is valid as the subjective score from the Rosenberg scale would be confirmed by an objective rating by an observer.

The relationship between the variables of age, sex, school standard and family intactness with self-esteem were investigated by means of statistical analysis. The details of these investigations will be provided in this chapter.

4.2 Subjects

The population from which subjects were selected is

defined as black and white high school pupils in the Port Elizabeth urban area. High school pupils were chosen for reasons of easy accessibility as well as the fact that much of the previous research has dealt with this group. In addition, they are old enough to have been exposed to the socio-political climate long enough for this to affect them, while they have not as yet been affected strongly by the complexities of adult life. The research relevance of this group is increased by the fact that they represent the adult population of the immediate future.

The subjects used were pupils attending two high schools in Port Elizabeth, one white and one black. Each of the schools can be regarded as representative of schools serving each population group in terms of size, subjects offered, socio-economic status of parents and medium of tuition. The white school was an English medium school while this was also the medium of tuition for the black school. The reason for restricting subjects to those being taught in English was that translation of the self-esteem scale would provide standardization problems.

The subjects to whom scales were administered were those pupils present for guidance classes in their schools in the last week of September 1987. In the white school this meant all the standard 10 pupils while in the black school it meant those standard 10 pupils attending school and those standard seven, eight and nine classes taught by a teacher participating in the study. Those pupils tested can be regarded as representative of the rest of their school standards.

In total 186 pupils were tested and rated on self-esteem. Of these, 68 were whites ranging in age from 16 to 20 while 118 were blacks ranging in age from 16 to 26. There were 68 males in the sample and 113

females in the sample. Table 1 shows the distribution of males and females according to race. For the purposes of statistical comparisons, subjects were selected from the samples to control for particular variables.

Table 1

Male/female distribution of subjects across race

	Male	Female	Total
White	22	46	68
Black	46	72	118
Total	68	118	186

4.3 Instruments

4.3.1 The Self-Esteem Scale.

A measure of self-esteem was sought which fulfils certain requirements. In order to reduce experimenter bias, a measure requiring a minimum of interpretation was sought. This excluded projective techniques. It was therefore decided to use a pencil and paper test which could be used by administrators without special training. Furthermore, it was desirable that the measure would be one of global self-esteem rather than content-related to determinants of self-esteem. The conditions for administration also made it necessary for economy of time. Finally it was necessary to choose a measure with good validity, which would still be within the capabilities of black pupils with English as a second language.

To satisfy these requirements, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (1965) was chosen. This is a

ten-item Guttman scale of the Likert format with no neutral category. This scale is self-explanatory to subjects and all that is required is for them to circle one out of four choices on the ten items. The scale is presented in Appendix A. Economy of time is achieved by the small quantity of questions. The scale takes only two to three minutes to complete and therefore did not disrupt the class activities of the subjects.

Rosenberg (1965) devised the scale to rank people on a single continuum ranging from those with low self-esteem to those with high self-esteem. The Guttman scale insures a unidimensional continuum by establishing a pattern which must be satisfied before the scale can be accepted. The patterned relationship of each item with the others determines its adequacy, rather than its relationship with the total score. The reproducibility of the scale is 92 percent while its scalability is 72 percent. These co-efficients are satisfactory in terms of the criteria of Guttman and Menzel (Rosenberg, 1965 : 17).

4.3.1.1 Validity of the scale

The difficulty of establishing the validity of a self-esteem scale has already been addressed in this paper. Gordon (1969) notes that no solid pragmatic performances or agreed upon clinical procedures exist against which to check operationalization tactics. Such methods as the "known groups" method of concurrent validity cannot be applied to self-esteem scales. However certain validity requirements are met by the scale.

4.3.1.1.1 Face validity: In the construction of the scale the author sought to deal explicitly and overtly with the concept of self-esteem. Examination of the items

reveals their manifest content to deal with global self-esteem.

4.3.1.1.2 Trait validity: This involves validation of a measure by other measures of the same concept. Momberg (1976) in testing the validity of the Coopersmith self-esteem scale for white and "Coloured" university students found a valid positive correlation with the Rosenberg scale.

4.3.1.1.3 Construct validity: This involves validation by relation to measures of concepts other than self-esteem in theoretically meaningful ways. Rosenberg (1965) used the theory of Horney (1950) and Angyal (1941) to relate self-esteem to depression and anxiety. Using Guttman scales to measure depression and anxiety and relating these to his self-esteem scale, Rosenberg found $\gamma = 0,3092$ and $0,3398$ respectively. These results are consistent with the theory. Likewise, on an interpersonal level, Rosenberg was able to relate peer group reputation and ability to criticise self to his measure of self-esteem. He does not provide summary statistics for these relationships.

4.3.2 The Teacher Rating Scale for Self-Esteem.

The validity of the Rosenberg scale has been established to a high degree in the U.S.A. for both black and white subjects. Likewise, Momberg (1976) provides evidence that for South African whites the scale remains valid. However, the scale has not been used on an indigenous black South African group. It is possible that as a result of a different language and different cultural values that the validity of the scale will not be upheld. It was therefore decided to attempt validation using a technique where teachers are provided with a definition of self-esteem (see Appendix B) which was authored by Rosenberg (1965 : 31). They

are then requested to rate each subject on a six point scale which does not provide a mid-point. Thus, in addition to providing a second measure of self-esteem based on acquaintance with the subjects, the ability to operationalize the definition by sophisticated users, the teachers being university graduates and experienced teachers, was assessed. Each subject was rated by two teachers separately and these results were correlated with the Rosenberg scale.

4.3.3 The Personal Information Questionnaire.

Personal information was gathered by means of questions on the Rosenberg scale. Names were required to facilitate correlations between teachers' ratings of the pupils' self-esteem and their scores. Age, standard and sex were elicited by simple multiple choice questions. A question was asked about who the subject lived with as a means of establishing whether or not the subject was from a broken family. A choice indicating "mother" or "father" rather than both was taken as indicating a broken family. A question was also included in an attempt to measure socio-economic status by enquiring about the occupation of the family breadwinner. This information was discarded as responses were too general.

4.4 Procedure

Informal contact was made, and assistance secured with guidance teachers at the two schools used in the study. The use of the self-esteem scale was integrated into the vocational guidance programme of the schools in such a way as to facilitate the self-knowledge of the pupils. For this purpose normative results of the self-esteem scale were provided to the teachers who then enabled pupils to compare themselves with their peers on the basis of self-esteem.

The administration of the Rosenberg scale took place during normal guidance periods during the last week of September 1987. The questionnaires were handed out to the pupils and the teacher requested the pupils to complete the questionnaire as it was to be used for guidance purposes. The teacher read through the instructions with the pupils who then completed the scale. The scales were then collected by the teacher. They were given, at a later stage, to the experimenter for scoring.

In the black school, the rating of the pupils on the rating scale was co-ordinated by a confederate. Each black pupil was first rated on the teacher rating scale by this confederate, who had taught the subjects and who were therefore known to him. He requested that each class teacher should separately rate each of the pupils in his or her class. Thus two ratings of each subjects' self-esteem was obtained and provided to the experimenter for analysis. These ratings took place in the same week that the subjects completed the Rosenberg scale.

4.4.1 Analysis of Data

The Rosenberg scale was scored by assigning between nought and three points to each of the ten scale items according to the extent to which the subject agreed or disagreed with each item. The range of the scores was therefore from a possible nought reflecting low self-esteem to 30 reflecting high self-esteem. It was decided to use this method of scoring rather than that of Rosenberg (1965) who condensed the 10 items to yield six contrived scale points. The 30 point method is similar to that used by Yancey et al., (1972) and Momberg (1976) and was used as it is more sensitive to small variations in self-esteem.

The data was analysed by means of the BMDP computer programme. Means of groups were compared using a t-test for the comparison of self-esteem in the black and white standard ten classes (controlled for sex by equal distribution) and by means of two-way or three-way ANOVAS.

The validation procedure for the Rosenberg scale was as follows: Inter-rater reliability was established for each of the school standards as the second rater was a different class teacher. This was achieved by means of a correlation of the six point rating between each of the two raters for each subject. The two teachers ratings for each subject were then pooled for each subject by simple addition and the resultant score correlated with the score of the Rosenberg scale.

The analysed results are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate whether there is a difference between the self-esteem of black and white high school pupils. The second aim was to attempt the validation of the Rosenberg scale for black indigenous subjects while the third aim was to investigate the single and combined relationships of sex, age, school standard and family intactness of self-esteem. The results of these findings will be presented in this chapter as they apply to the stated hypotheses.

5.2 Hypothesis 1

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem of black and white high school pupils.

5.2.1 Comparison between black standard ten pupils and white standard ten pupils: Sex was controlled for by using approximately equal numbers of each sex in both samples.



TABLE 2

Self-esteem scores of standard 10 pupils

	n	x	sd
White	43	19,26	4,09
Black	23	19,65	3,20

$$t = -0,38$$

$$p > 0,05$$

Table 2 shows the means of the self-esteem scores of both black and white standard 10 pupils. The Student's t-test reveals that there is no significant difference between the means ($p = 0,05$; one tailed)

- 5.2.2 Comparison between self-esteem scores of blacks and whites with age controlled.

TABLE 3

Mean self-esteem scores of blacks and whites across age

	Age				Total
	17	18	19	20	
Black	18,91 (12;3,82)	20,25 (20;3,49)	19,17 (23;3,11)	19,44 (16;2,85)	19,44
White	18,73 (22;3,93)	19,24 (33;4,83)	19,80 (10;1,81)	18,00 (3;1,73)	18,94
Total	18,82	19,74	19,48	18,72	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviation)

Table 3 presents the mean self-esteem scores of blacks

and whites across age. The analysis of variance revealed no significant main effect of age ($F = 0,50$; $p = 0,68$). Likewise, no significant main effect of race is present ($F = 0,38$; $p = 0,54$). This corroborates the results shown in Table 2. There is no interaction effect present between race and sex ($F = 0,36$; $p = 0,79$). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

5.3 Hypothesis 2

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects of different ages.

Table 3 summarizes the mean scores of subjects of different ages. The two-way ANOVA reveals no significant main effect of age in either the black or white groups ($F = 0,50$; $p = 0,68$). It is therefore necessary to accept null hypothesis 2.

5.4 Hypothesis 3

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects in different school standards (black group).

TABLE 4

Mean self-esteem scores of black subjects across age and standard.

		Age					
		17	18	19	20	21	Total
Standard	7	19,83 (6;2,22)	19,63 (8;2,13)	20,25 (4;2,50)	18,00 (3;4,36)	20,00 (2;0,00)	19,54
	8	23,00 (2;1,41)	21,44 (9;3,88)	18,14 (7;2,91)	20,20 (5;3,27)	20,80 (5;2,39)	20,71
	9	15,33 (3;4,93)	19,00 (2;7,07)	18,75 (8;3,06)	19,66 (6;2,42)	20,63 (8;4,21)	18,67
	10	16,00 (1;0,00)	17,00 (1;0,00)	20,75 (4;4,27)	19,00 (2;1,41)	18,50 (2;0,71)	18,25
Total		18,54	19,27	19,47	19,21	19,98	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviation)

Table 4 summarizes the mean scores of black subjects according to age and school standard. The acceptance of null hypothesis 2 is supported as no significant main effects of age are revealed ($F = 0,25$; $p = 0,91$). there is also no significant main effect of school standard ($F = 1,80$; $p = 0,15$) or interaction between age and school standard ($F = 1,06$; $p = 0,41$). It is therefore necessary to accept null hypothesis 3.

5.5 Hypothesis 4

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of older subjects in lower standards compared with younger subjects in higher standards.

Table 4 summarized the mean scores of black subjects according to age and school standard. If the null hypothesis was to be rejected, a significant interaction effect between age and standard would be apparent. This was not the case ($F = 1,06$; $p = 0,41$). The null hypothesis must therefore be accepted.

5.6 Hypothesis 5

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of males and females.

TABLE 5

White group : Self-esteem means across age and sex.

	Age			Total
	17	18	19	
Male	20,71 (7;3,30)	23,50 (8;4,72)	19,25 (4;0,96)	21,15
Female	17,80 (15;3,95)	17,88 (25;4,09)	20,17 (6;2,23)	18,61
Total	19,26	20,69	19,71	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviation)

In Table 5 the mean self-esteem scores of white subjects of different ages and both sexes are summarized. There is a significant main effect of sex ($F = 4,98$; $p = 0,03$) the males displaying a higher self-esteem than the females. No significant interaction effect was present ($F = 2,57$; $p = 0,09$).

TABLE 6

Black group: Self-esteem means across age and sex.

	Age						Total
	17	18	19	20	21	22	
Male	19,50 (4;3,42)	20,29 (7;3,86)	18,00 (10;2,83)	19,83 (6;3,92)	20,50 (6;3,62)	17,29 (7;2,87)	19,24
Female	18,63 (8;4,21)	20,23 (13;3,44)	20,08 (13;3,12)	19,20 (10;2,20)	20,28 (11;3,00)	18,17 (6;1,47)	19,43
Total	19,07	20,26	19,04	19,50	20,39	17,73	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviation)

In Table 6 the mean self-esteem scores of black subjects of different ages and both sexes are presented. Unlike Table 5, no significant main effects of sex were present ($F = 0,08$; $p = 0,77$) and no significant interaction effects were present ($F = 0,53$; $p = 0,75$).

From these results null hypothesis 4 must be accepted for the black group but the alternative hypothesis accepted for the white group in that male self-esteem exceeds that of females.

5.7 Hypothesis 6

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of subjects from intact families compared with those from broken families.

TABLE 7

Whites: Mean self-esteem scores of subjects in broken and intact families.

	Family Structure		
	Broken	Intact	Total
Male	22,57 (7;4,27)	20,40 (15;3,66)	21,49
Female	16,93 (14;4,17)	18,69 (32;3,66)	17,81
Total	19,75	19,55	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviations).

Table 7 summarizes the cell means of white subjects from broken and intact families according to sex. The analysis of variance revealed a highly significant main effect of sex ($F = 11,81$; $p = 0,001$) but there was no significant main effect of family structure ($F = 0,04$; $p = 0,85$). There was no significant interaction effect ($F = 3,37$; $p = 0,07$).

TABLE 8

Blacks: Mean self-esteem scores of subjects in broken and intact families.

	Family Structure		
	Broken	Intact	Total
Male	20,50 (14;4,01)	18,03 (29;3,19)	19,67
Female	19,59 (32;2,10)	20,47 (38;3,62)	20,03
Total	20,05	19,65	

(Figures in brackets = cell sizes; standard deviations)

Table 3 summarizes the cell means of black subjects from broken and intact families according to sex. The analysis of variance revealed no significant main effect of family structure ($F = 0,33$; $p = 0,56$) or of sex ($F = 0,29$; $p = 0,59$). The interaction effect between sex and family structure does not reach significance at the 0,05 level ($F = 3,46$; $p = 0,07$). These results lead to the acceptance of null hypothesis 6.

5.8 Hypothesis 7

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant correlation between the self-esteem rating of pupils by teachers and their scores on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

TABLE 9

Correlations between ratings of self-esteem by two raters.

	Standard			
	7	8	9	10
r	0,24	0,73 *	0,54 *	0,34 *
p	0,16	0,01	0,0005	0,02
n	29	29	32	23

* indicates significance, $p < 0,05$

Table 9 summarizes the inter-rater reliability on the teachers' self-esteem rating scale. One teacher rated all the pupils while the second teacher changed from standard to standard. This table reveals that the correlation plots deviated from chance for standards eight, nine and ten but only in the case of the

standard eight class was the inter-rater reliability adequate.

TABLE 10

Correlation between pooled teachers self-esteem ratings and self-esteem scores.

	Standard				
	7	8	9	10	Total
r	0,09	-0,38	0,65 *	-0,39	0,20
p	0,82	0,43	0,05	0,30	0,30
n	29	29	32	23	113

* indicates significance, $p = 0,05$.

Table 10 summarizes the degree of correlation achieved between the pooled rater points of self-esteem for subjects and their score on the self-esteem measure. The overall correlation between black self esteem scores on the Rosenberg scale and the pooled teacher ratings of the self-esteem of the subjects does not deviate from chance and no significant correlation exists between these measures. It is therefore necessary to accept null hypothesis 7.

5.9 Hypothesis 8

Null hypothesis: There will be no significant increase in the degree of correlation between the teachers' ratings of self-esteem and self-esteem scores on the Rosenberg scale, as school standard rises.

Table 10 shows the correlation co-efficients for the relationship between pooled teacher rating of subjects' self-esteem and the scores of the Rosenberg scale. Only standard 9 provides a significant positive

correlation between the two measures of self-esteem. It is therefore not possible to reject the null hypothesis as no discernable pattern exists in the results.

5.10 Summary of Results

Statistical analysis of the data allowed only one null hypothesis to be rejected. It was found that white male self-esteem is significantly higher than that of white females. The results showed that no difference exists between the mean self-esteem scores of black and white subjects on the Rosenberg scale, that no validating correlation exists between the scale scores and the ratings of teachers and that self-esteem does not differ significantly with age or intactness of family structure for whites or with age, sex, standard or family structure for black subjects. The relevance of these results will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

6.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1.1 Black and white self-esteem comparison:

The results of the study led to the acceptance of null hypothesis 1 in that no significant difference was found between self-esteem levels of the black group and the white group. Two types of comparisons were made, one controlling for sex and standard, the other controlling for age. It therefore can be established that the results of this study confirm the findings of American researchers such as Rosenberg (1965), Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) and Yancey et al., (1972). These results are also confirmatory for South African studies such as Edelstein (1972) and Lobban (1975). cited by Edwards (1984). It can now be stated with a reasonable degree of confidence that scale-measured global self-esteem of blacks and whites is similar.

The finding that global black and white self-esteem is quantitatively alike could be naïvely interpreted as reflecting that there are no adverse effects of the socio-political circumstances of black people in South Africa. The link between self-esteem scale scores and mental health has been alluded to and to a degree established by Rosenberg (1965) in his validation of his scale. He demonstrated a correlation with such symptoms of disorder as depression and anxiety. It is therefore tentatively possible to assume that depression and anxiety is no less present in the black

population as in the white population. However, it is not possible to generalize the findings of this study to such a general concept as mental health, especially as mental health has different definitions in different cultural circumstances.

The social psychological implications of results of equal black and white self-esteem have been discussed elsewhere in this study. No data was gathered to investigate alternative social psychological explanations for the results of the self-esteem comparison. However, it cannot be assumed that equal self-esteem scores in two groups are caused by the same effects although it is possible. The similarities between the life experiences of the black and white subjects in this study can only be on a very basic level of human contact and feeling. Beyond this differences are likely to exist whether they be the result of culture, economy or ideology.

6.1.2 Validity of the Rosenberg scale.

The finding of equal black and white self-esteem is contingent upon the validity of the scale. The fact that the Rosenberg scale has not previously been used on black subjects led to the decision to attempt a validation procedure. The validation procedure failed in that no correlation was found between the teacher ratings of the pupils and the results of the scale. Had this correlation been present a degree of validation could be assumed while in the case of the stated results, explanations must be considered.

The first consideration is that the definition of self-esteem provided to the raters was not sufficiently clear. The definition required a degree of interpretation by the raters which was not controlled. This is a direct result of the fact that self-esteem is

by nature a self-attitude which can not be directly observed. Each rater therefore, despite the definition, had to consciously or subconsciously operationalize the definition. The degree of appropriateness of these mental operations by the raters cannot be gauged. However, the inter rater reliability can provide some information on this. It was only in the case of the standard 8 group of subjects that a significant positive correlation was found. Whether this is a result of the superior knowledge of subjects by the raters or the result of extraneous variables is uncertain. However, the overall results of the inter-rater reliability suggest that the teacher rating scale itself failed as a reliable predictor of self-esteem.

That the teacher rating scale failed to achieve sufficient reliability across teachers renders the test for validity of the Rosenberg scale invalid. However, it can be stated that for reasons not investigated, the pooled rater score and the Rosenberg scale score achieved a significant positive correlation for standard nine. This is possibly a result of one of the teachers having a good knowledge of the subjects' self-esteem. However, the fact that in one case the validation was successful suggests that under certain circumstances the Rosenberg scale may be valid for black samples.

A variable which could affect the validity of the scale is English language proficiency. Although the medium of instruction is English, it is possible that individual abilities may affect the scale validity. Hypothesis 8, based upon the assumption that English proficiency would increase with school standard, investigated this. It was found however that no increase in correlation values between teacher ratings and scale scores occurred so language proficiency is

unlikely to affect the validity of the Rosenberg scale significantly in this study.

The results of the statistical analysis can be used as a measure of the validity of the scale. Firstly, the fact that both black and white groups revealed similar means and standard deviations and had similar ranges (black : 12 to 26, white : 10 to 30) suggests that the scale is measuring the same property in both groups. However, the fact that the scale failed to establish any of the theoretically hypothesised differences in the black group casts doubt upon the validity. The eventual finding is therefore an ambivalent one: support for and against validity of the Rosenberg scale for the black population was found.

6.1.3 Age, standard, family and sex differences in self-esteem.

Hypotheses two to six investigated whether self-esteem varied to any significant degree according to groups defined by these characteristics. Only in the case of sex in white subjects was a significant difference found to exist. This finding was reported in Rosenberg and Simmons (1972) and elsewhere. Possible explanations for this finding can be attributed to socialization and the prevailing place of women in society. The self-esteem theorists discussed in this study highlight the comparisons made by the individual between the self-concept and the internalised other or ego-ideal. These can be affected by relationships with others and prevailing social values. Feminist doctrine holds that women are an oppressed group and it is feasible that the ideology of male power and female subordination impinges upon the self-concept and perception of the other.

Age differences were investigated in order to establish whether it does represent a variable in self-esteem research. Within the samples used the difference did not reach significance. Therefore, it does not seem likely that self-esteem follows any obvious pattern within the age range of the sample. Likewise, it was not possible to establish the effects of age appropriateness or different types of peer reputation for particular ages for particular standards (Hypothesis 4).

The effect of family separation was investigated to enquire into the possibility that loss of a parent or the disruption of family life would affect the self-concept negatively and therefore lower self-esteem (Hypothesis 6). In neither the black group nor the white group was this found to be so to a significant degree. This could be partly due to the fact that the question used to categorise the groups was too general. It did not establish why subjects were not living with both parents or the duration or frequency that this was the case.

6.2 Limitations of Study

Practical considerations such as time, ease of access and expense placed limitations on this study on a methodological level. In order to establish the level of self-esteem of white high school pupils only the standard 10 class could be tested. This meant that the effects of standard in whites could not be established and therefore the results cannot be generalized with confidence to all high school pupils.

Secondly, for a study of this sort, sample sizes should be larger. In a number of analyses (for example age and standard) noticeable differences in means were

apparent and it is possible that small cell sizes prevented these from reaching significance.

Thirdly, the design of the validity study was limited by the fact that the white subjects were not rated by teachers and the correlations with the scores established. As the validity of the scale for whites is well established, a failure to achieve the desired correlations would have led to a confident rejection of the attempted method of validation.

A fourth technical limitation was imposed by the small amount of biographical data obtained from subjects. The questions designed to evaluate family composition and socio-economic status were unsuccessful. In the case of the family composition question, the groups were divided into intact and broken family categories on the basis of whether or not the subject lived with both parents. This does not allow for situations such as a subject from an intact family boarding during the school term or in the case of the black sample, living away from the parents after their possible marriage. The variable of SES was not used in this study as subjects did not answer the questions in the manner intended. Their answers confused rank (e.g. manager) with qualifications (e.g. mechanic). This means that the results of the family intactness investigation were confounded while SES could not be controlled for in investigating race affects.

A fifth limitation of the study could have been caused by the need to establish the identity of the subjects. Previous research into self-esteem has usually allowed subjects to respond to scales anonymously. It is therefore possible that social desirability and impression management, which were not controlled for, could have strongly influenced the responses.

6.3 Further Areas of Study

Assuming that the scale was validly measuring the global self-esteem of the subjects, the finding that the self-esteem of both black and white high school pupils is similar needs to be explained. None of the data obtained by the study provides any explanation for this result. It has been mentioned already that equal results does not imply that the determinants of self-esteem for the two groups are the same. The discussion on the determinants of self-esteem demonstrated that many factors can operate in relationships with each other. For example, white political ideology enhancing the self-esteem of white subjects could be compensated for in black subjects by more affirming relationships with their care-givers. It is therefore necessary that studies be undertaken which investigate the different relevance of different determinants on the global self-esteem of different racial groups.

Another vitally important area of the research is the qualitative study of self-esteem and the effects of prejudice. A reductionistic study such as this is useful only for investigating in an atomistic manner an aspect of the life experience of black and white people in South Africa. Unfortunately, it is often what is excluded from the original design that serves in the understanding of the phenomenon. For this reason it is of crucial importance that qualitative phenomenological research be undertaken in an area such as the self-esteem of the different racial groups.

6.4 Conclusion

This study supports the findings that, in South Africa as well as the U.S.A., black self-esteem is equal to that of white self-esteem. A number of theories have

been suggested to explain this finding, but further research is still necessary to support them.

The concept of self-esteem itself has provided a valuable stimulus for research into inter-group relations and the effects of prejudice on social groups. Adams (1978) has alerted us however, to the "subterranean" influences of political and social ideology on self-esteem research. For example, the link between self-esteem and mental health established in this study can be used as a basis to generalize from equal self-esteem in racial groups to equal mental health. This is not necessarily the case however, but does illustrate how a concept such as self-esteem used in a quantitative study such as this can obscure broad areas of concern which do not yet form part of an integrated theory. It is possible, for instance, that certain personality disturbances do not adversely affect self-esteem. Such differences between racial groups would not affect the results of a study such as this.

In conclusion, therefore, it is suggested that self-esteem research in racial contexts may no longer be the optimum focus in studying the possible effects of prejudice. Other research methods need to be developed to facilitate an understanding of inter-group relations. Among these research methods, qualitative research should be included.

APPENDIX A

THE ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

NAME:CLASS:

This questionnaire is to find out how high school pupils feel about themselves. All the information will be treated with confidentiality. All that is required is that you are honest about yourself. Read each question carefully and choose which of the alternatives applies to you. Then circle the number next to the statement which you feel fits best. Do not leave any questions out. There are no correct or incorrect answers. Before you begin, please supply the following information:

What is your age? 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

What standard are you in now? 6 7 8 9 10

Are you: Female 1.

Male 2.

Do you live with your: Mother 1.

Father 2.

Both 3.

Someone else 4.

What is your father's occupation?

(Mother's if breadwinner)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following :

a. I feel I am a person of worth, at least equal with others.

1. Strongly agree

2. Agree

3. Disagree

4. Strongly disagree

- b. All in all, I feel that I am a failure.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- c. I feel I have a number of good qualities.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- d. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- e. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- f. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- g. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree

h. I certainly feel useless at times.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

i. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

j. At times I think I am no good at all.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL QUESTIONS.

SCORE

APPENDIX B

TEACHER : CLASS :

TEACHER'S RATING SCALE OF PUPIL'S SELF-ESTEEM

Please rate each of the pupils in your class on the dimension of self-esteem. High self-esteem will mean that the pupil respects him/herself, considers him/herself worthy, does not consider him/herself better or worse than others, recognizes his/her limitations and expects to grow and improve. Low self-esteem implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt, lacking self-respect and wishing his/her self-picture were different.

	<u>Name of pupil</u>	<u>Self-esteem rating</u> (please circle)					
		LOW					HIGH
1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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