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Date May 25, 1978

MARITAL STATUS AND THE SELF CONCEPT OF PREGNANT
ADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENT PARENTS

by

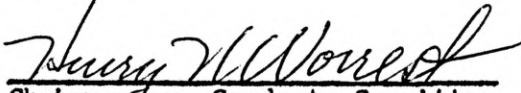
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A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

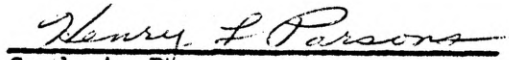
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was the pregnant adolescent, and the adolescent parent. The purpose of the study was to measure and compare the self concept of the students studied. The self concept of each student was measured by a standardized test, "The Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale". The population of the study included students of high school age who were enrolled in an educational program in Great Falls, Montana, during the 1977-1978 school year. Students were identified by school personnel and community agency personnel.

The test data was collected, recorded, and analyzed. Each student was classified by marital status: 1) Those who were married and 2) those who were unmarried. The results of the self concept test scores of each individual student were determined and recorded. The mean score of each group was recorded, then compared. The comparisons were statistically tested using the t-test for independent samples. The accepted level of significance was at the .05 level.

The results of the statistical test showed no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups, based upon marital status. The information on the composition of the group shows that the majority of the students are not married, and there were more twelfth grade students than students in any other grade level.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Problems concerning adolescent pregnancy and adolescent parenthood have received increased attention for the past several years, by many groups and agencies. Studies of these problems have dealt with the causes of pregnancy, and have attempted to provide personality profiles of the adolescent who becomes pregnant. The focus of this study was to measure how the adolescent girl felt about herself during her pregnancy. The marital status of the pregnant adolescent was the determining factor used to establish the group comparisons for this study.

The self concept has been the focal point of many studies researching personality and behavior. Arthur Combs (1975) in his research states:

People behave in terms of their self concept. What a person believes about himself affects everything he does, even what he sees and hears and, hence, is of tremendous significance in determining how effectively he will be able to deal with the world in which he lives. (p. 300)

Knowledge and understanding of the self concept has been useful information for professionals dealing with pregnant adolescents. It has provided the counselor with an additional approach to use during a time when critical decisions are being made by the adolescent.

The setting for the students used in this study, prior to pregnancy or parenthood, was a public high school. The pregnancy

interrupted a period of personal and social growth; and in many cases, resulted in marriage. The emphasis of this study was to consider how that interruption was dealt with, and if the self concept of the married adolescent was paralleled in her unmarried counter-part.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to measure and compare the self concept of pregnant adolescents, and adolescent parents, in two groups: 1) those who are married, and 2) those who are not married.

Applications and/or Contributions

The understanding and knowledge of the self concept was not the focus of this paper. The researcher accepted the significance of the relationship that exists between the self concept and behavior. As William Purkey (1970) wrote, "the ways we react to people, tasks, and roles, therefore, are those which seem to us to be most consistent with our self image. We express our self concept with our behavior" (p. 13). As counselors and social-service professionals deal with pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents, an understanding of the self concept becomes a very important factor in forming a relationship.

The focus of this paper was the adolescent who became pregnant. Most of the subjects were attending high school at the time the pregnancy was confirmed. Since pregnancy occurred prior to marriage,

the decision to marry or to remain unmarried, was made within an educational setting.

This study was an attempt to clarify some specific feelings of the pregnant adolescent. If the reactions to pregnancy were based on the self concept, the decisions made were also directly related to the self concept. This allows a counselor or educator a very specific frame of reference as they begin the process of encouraging students to establish some realistic goals, both for the immediate situation and for future applications.

General Questions to be Answered

The following questions were answered, regarding the self concept comparisons that were significant for each group.

1. How many girls made contact with the alternative school to continue their education?
2. How many referrals were made through the schools?
3. How many referrals were made through community agencies?
4. What percentage of the identified students decided to marry?
5. What percentage of the identified students that did not marry decided to establish single parent homes?
6. Did the married adolescent have a more positive self concept than the unmarried adolescent?

7. Did the married adolescent female parent have a more positive self concept than the unmarried adolescent female parent?

8. Did the married, pregnant adolescent have a more positive self concept than the unmarried pregnant adolescent?

General Procedure

The population for this study was identified as students who withdrew from the regular high school setting, and enrolled in an educational program, called The Continuing Education Program, which was designed to serve adolescent parents and pregnant adolescents. The population also included students who were referred by other community agencies.

The measurement of the self concept was based upon the results of the "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale." The population was identified after enrolling in the Continuing Education Program and they were grouped according to their marital status. After the determination of marital status they were again subdivided to indicate which students were pregnant or already parents.

Limitations and/or Delimitations

Limitations: This study was restricted to include only the adolescent who became pregnant, and chose not to abort the fetus. The population was limited to female students who were identified by school

and agency personnel as being pregnant, or parents. It did not include all the girls who left school, only those who reported the pregnancy to a school official. There was also an age limitation. The age of the female was eighteen years old or younger, at the time of conception.

Delimitations: The delimitations as determined by the investigator were to limit the study to the 1977-1978 school year. Another delimitation was to limit the study to include only those students attending a public school program in Great Falls, Montana. The identified population was enrolled in the Continuing Education Program of the Great Falls Public School District. The student population included students in grades 9-12. The investigator relied on the voluntary co-operation of the identified students.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms were defined as they related to this study.

Adolescent: A female between the ages of 14 and 18, or one who had reached an educational level somewhere between grades 9-12.

Married: Married refers to the legal contract and also included a female who entered into a relationship with a male partner in an independent living arrangement.

Self Concept: (For the definition of this term see self-esteem)

Self Esteem:

When we speak of high self-esteem, then, we shall simply mean that the individual respects himself, considers himself worthy; he does not necessarily consider himself better than others, but he definitely does not consider himself worse; he does not feel that he is the ultimate in perfection but, on the contrary, recognizes his limitations and expects to grow and improve. (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31)

Self Image: (See self esteem)

Specialized Educational Program: This term refers to the Continuing Education Program, sponsored by School District #1, in Great Falls, Montana: which was designed specifically to serve the pregnant adolescent, and the adolescent parent.

Unmarried: In this study this term applied to a female who was not living in an independent household with a male partner. She was either living alone or she was living with parents and/or legal guardians.

Summary

The focus of this study was the pregnant adolescent, and the adolescent parent. The purpose of the study was to measure and compare the self concept of the students studied. The self concept of each student was measured by a standardized test, and groups were formed on the basis of the marital status of each student. The population of the study included students of high school age who were still in an educational program. The study was limited to students living in Great Falls, Montana, during the 1977-1978 school year.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Four academic disciplines were identified and investigated in compiling and reporting this review of related literature. The field of psychology provided the background information of the value and significance of the self concept. The field of medicine provided some significant information regarding the physical and physiological well being of the pregnant adolescent and her infant. Education provided the institutional and the social settings in which most adolescents were functioning prior to pregnancy. Sociology was the discipline that best unified the other areas as it dealt with the pregnant adolescent as a significant unit of society.

Self Concept

Explanation of the Self Concept. To provide the reader with a general understanding of the self concept there were two authors who provided an easily understood explanation of what was meant by the self concept. One explanation of the self concept was offered by Arthur Jersild (1965) in an article which explored the process of self understanding, the following statement was made:

When we speak of 'the self,' we mean, among other things, a system of ideas, attitudes, appraisals, and commitments pertaining to one's own person. The person experiences these as

distinctly belonging to him, and all of them together constitute the person's awareness of his individual existence and his conception of who and what he is. (p. 532)

An additional explanation of the self concept was offered by Comilla Anderson (1965), in an article exploring the effects of the self image on behavior. She states:

Everyone has an image or a concept of himself as a unique person or self, different from every other self. This concept pertains to one's self both as a physical person and as a psychological person--i.e., each one has a physical self-image and psychological self-image. (p. 2)

In this author's opinion there are two self-images that come together to provide each person with a concept of himself.

There are many factors that go into the formation of the self concept and each of these factors is molded by a variety of outside influences. The effects of outside forces have influenced and molded the self concept of individuals into what it is presently. Therefore, in order for people to understand themselves and to evaluate their actions, a knowledge of their individual self concepts offers a primary source for providing opportunities for change.

Adolescence and the Self Concept: The adolescent is still very much involved in forming his self concept. The range of experiences, social groups, and personal awareness is greatly expanded for the adolescent. This is the setting for the adolescent's development. To identify some specific areas the adolescent is most

involved with, a study was done to measure the effects of certain factors on the self concept. Rosenberg (1965) indicated that the self-image was the respect that the individual had for himself as he interpreted the reactions he observed in others. The study reviewed the adolescent in various settings and concluded that the adolescent developed his self-image through his interaction in the sub-groups he related to. The study was New York based and, therefore, reflected much information on the sub-cultures that prevail in that city. Religion was also a very powerful force in such a setting because often there were parallel boundaries in the religious groups and the sub-culture groups. Therefore, in his conclusions Rosenberg felt that, in considering the factors that influenced the development of the self concept, it was necessary to look at the groups that the adolescent identified with. (p. 80)

The statements of Jersild (1965) also support the Rosenberg study and go farther by identifying some specific groups that most directly affect the self concept.

A very large proportion of children at all ages describe or appraise themselves favorably and unfavorably in terms of social criteria--their relations with people, their feelings about them, and the attitudes they have toward others. Many children also assess their worth or worthlessness in terms of their relationship with their parents. Here again, as in connection with the development of other forms of self-appraisal, it appears that there are many possibilities for misinterpretation and irrational self-disparagement. (p. 532)

The interpretation of other's reactions is a major factor that the adolescent must deal with. The problem the adolescent may have in interpreting others' reactions may be related to his past experiences, and as Rosenberg points out,

Whether the egophobe is right or wrong about these things--whether he is accurately reading or is misreading the effect he has on others--these are the assumptions upon which he operates; these are the thoughts and feelings that guide his actions. (p. 187)

Therefore, the adolescent who sees himself in a negative way has a negative self concept, low self-esteem, and his actions will support these feelings.

To look more specifically at the problem of adolescent identity, the review of a study done by Schaffer and Pine (1972) points out the desire for adolescents to satisfy their need gratification through groups other than the family because it is at these times that family identity is gradually being tested. Parents no longer exercise the same controls that were present in earlier years. This brings to focus the problem or conflict in the adolescent who wants to remain in his childhood, and all the security it provides, and the need to explore and experience some things independently.

The adolescent who successfully moves through this age period actively seeks gratification on all levels from within the self, from outside the family of origin, and eventually from the original family in a new way. (Schaffer, p. 515)

In an attempt to discover what specific factors influence the self concept in a positive direction instead of a negative direction, Rosenberg (1965) states: "The feeling that one is important to a significant other is probably essential to the development of self-worth" (p. 146).

Significance of the Self Concept: The significance and the affects of the self concept on behavior were additional theories that seemed pertinent to this study. The value of studying the self concept is the insight it provided in explaining an individual's behavior. The explanation of behavior starts in the past, and includes present and future behavior patterns also. In further explanation of her theory of behavior, Anderson (1965) states:

The pattern of life of every individual is a living out of his self-image; it is his road map for living. People can be counted on to behave according to their own patterns. This consistency is not voluntary or deliberate, but compulsive, and generally is outside of awareness. (p. 8)

If, indeed, this is the case, it then becomes an important step to provide individuals with the opportunity to discover their behavior patterns and the relationship of these patterns to their self concept. It would also seem reasonable to encourage some changes in the self concept, which will then provide the choices necessary to alter behavior patterns.

In a recent work that explored visualization as a technique to be utilized in changing the self concept, Samuels (1975) explored

how to bring about those changes. His theory suggested that if you had a negative self concept or visualization of yourself, your actions contributed to that failure. Negative visualizations come from a variety of sources and the only way that negative factors can be changed is to bring them out into the open, identify them, and make a commitment to change them.

An additional report that provided some insight to specific things which can affect the self concept was a study which explored the effects of pregnancy on the self image, more specifically, the body images of pregnant women. The study (Toylor and Digrazia, 1977) was designed to assess the effects of pregnancy on women as revealed through human figure drawings. Although the evidence and conclusions were not surprising, they do offer an additional piece of insight into the psychological effects of pregnancy. The conclusions of the study were:

The composite impression, then, is that even in relation to another high-stress medical control group, pregnant women revealed their heightened body preoccupation, insult to body narcissism, sexual maladjustment, diminished self-esteem, and feelings of increased insecurity by means of their graphic representations. (p. 570)

As the previous studies have emphasized, the understanding of the self concept as it relates to behavior has significant implications for adolescents and more specifically for the pregnant adolescent.

There are implications for the adolescent who becomes a parent as well as the implications for the infant.

This review of related literature does not include a study of the self concept of children from a single parent family, but in his study, Rosenberg does make a statement about the self concept of children from very young families, and families that have gone through divorce. (Young families do have the highest divorce rate.)

Among children of very young women, 53% of the children of divorce, but only 33% of the children from intact families, had low self-esteem. Indeed, if the woman is now young, married early, had a child soon thereafter, and was soon divorced, the children are twice as likely as average to have low self-esteem. (p. 94)

If there are significant factors to deal with in working with the pregnant adolescent and the adolescent parent, they are the following. First, to realize that they are still going through the adolescent developmental age. Second, to realize the significance of the self concept upon behavior patterns and thus on role expectations and the decision making process. Third, to realize the complications of the pregnancy and its effects on the physical and psychological well being of the woman. The fourth factor is less clearly defined as it relates to the infant born under the previously stated conditions. There is an issue here that must deal with the quality of life and a cycle that perpetuates itself. The issue presented here is not a question of how or why the pregnancy happened, but rather, now that

it has happened, what is the best way to deal with the fact. The student must be free to deal with the issue in her own way, but the professional must feel an obligation to assist, and an understanding of the self concept is a reasonable and rational place to start.

Adolescent Pregnancy

Profiles of the Pregnant Adolescent. When success is measured by social adjustment, some adolescents do not successfully move through adolescence. They become pregnant. It was not the purpose of this paper to determine the causes of adolescent pregnancy, but the information provided in such studies, did serve as the basis for the study of this problem. In an interview study conducted by Schaffer and Pine (1972), one of their findings was that the students interviewed felt that they had not received good "mothering" nor were they receiving it presently. Therefore, the students felt a need to establish a warm mothering relationship to replace the needs that had not been filled in their own lives. (p. 517)

Another recent study that supports the theory of adolescent needs and attitudes was reported by Abernathy (1974). The report on these findings was:

There apparently is a psychological and experiential constellation which predisposes women to risk contraceptively unprotected sex. Specifically, factors such as self-esteem, feelings about each parent, and the parent's marriage appear to be causally related to the variables of sexual and contraceptive behavior. (p. 662)

In addition to the social, and personality profiles presented in these studies, the sexuality of the pregnant adolescent was considered. In dealing with the question of adolescent sexual activity that results in pregnancy, the girls' relationship with the father of the baby was examined. According to the Schaffer and Pine (1972) report, the girls had established a relationship with the father of the child, 6 to 7 months prior to conception. (p. 518) These figures were confirmed by a study conducted by Pope. (1967) His conclusions were: of the 567 cases reviewed, 60% of the white women had gone with the father of the child, at least six months. The percentage was higher among the negro women, with 78% in that category. The relationship that had been established resulted in 86% of the white couples planning to marry or going together; with 89% of the negro couples in that group. These figures represent the couples' commitment to each other at the time of conception. (p. 559)

These studies show that in the case of the unwed mother the majority of the time the relationship with the father of the child had been established for a period of at least six months. Averaging the remaining group, there were 16% of the couples who had not had a previous relationship.

Through the investigation of the background factors that make up the profile of the pregnant adolescent, the following statement seemed to summarize the findings best:

Vincent's study of unmarried mothers (1961) concluded that no single factor of age, religion, socioeconomic status, personality type, family structure, or relationships accounted for the occurrence of pregnancy out-of-wedlock. In stead, individual configurations of the various factors occurred and must be studied to understand the individual girl. Our case studies confirm this conclusion. (La Barre, 1972, p. 544)

In terms of providing the reader with a profile of the adolescent who did, or who will, become pregnant, this study cannot do that. It has only attempted to offer a brief view of several studies that have been conducted.

Health concerns of mothers and infants. Within the literature concerning the pregnant adolescent, the field of medicine has made a considerable contribution. One of the major contributions has been in the area of statistics gathering and evaluation. The data is reviewed and published annually.

Stine, Rowland, and Sweeney, in their report in 1964, included as part of their data the effect of prenatal care on the infant. Mothers in the 25 to 29 age groups, as compared to 17 year old mothers, had half as many under weight births. Even more to the point was that in cases where there was no prenatal care, the mortality rate in infants was three times greater than in mothers that had received some prenatal care. Thus having reported on the need for prenatal care, they continued on to report the percentages of mothers actually receiving prenatal care. It was found that 8% of the school age mothers received no prenatal care, but the older mothers in the 25

to 29 age group had only 4% in that category. Also, of importance was the fact that only 22% of the school age mothers sought prenatal care in the first tri-mester, as compared to 46% of the older mothers.

(p. 4) The complications that were mentioned have applied to the infant. There are also the health considerations of the mother.

La Barre (1972) stated in her study, "teen-aged girls are a high-risk group for complications of pregnancy and delivery, especially toxemia and prematurity" (p. 551).

In a study conducted by Mariam Birdwhistle (1971) specific prenatal needs and problems were identified. The study was conducted through a public school, as students were identified as being pregnant. In this study, there were 98 identified students. Of special interest was the number of prenatal visits of the identified group. A total of 30 students, reported no prenatal care. Of these 30 students, 20 of them had complications with the pregnancy or delivery. There were 57 students who reported having at least one prenatal visit. Of those students, there were 26 who were reported as having complications. Three students elected not to leave school, and chose to remain in school up to the time of the delivery. Of these three students, all three students had complicated deliveries. (p. 457) The data from this study was not sufficient to focus on specific conclusions, however, it did point out an area for future studies and did provide

an additional approach that could easily be used by other agencies and programs that deal with adolescent pregnancy.

Educational Options for pregnant adolescents. The literature concerning the educational goals of the pregnant adolescent reflects some of the historical changes that have come about in the past ten to twenty years. When Hathaway and Monachesi (1963) reported their findings in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), which focused on the high school drop out, it was found that of the female drop outs, 53% left school due to marriages or illegitimate pregnancies. Their study did not confirm the popular belief at the time: that there were personality factors common to the adolescent who becomes pregnant. To this theory the report states:

There have been many studies of the unmarried pregnant girl. So far as we are aware, this sample is the only one of any size in which the personality testing occurred before the pregnancy. Studies that have used girls already pregnant compared to a control group of girls have reported personality differences. (p. 53)

However, there were some changes found in personality, that occurred when the group was re-tested. That difference was reported as:

If there is a true contrast in these data, then it may be that, like delinquency, illegitimate pregnancy has a measurable effect upon the personality structure so that only longitudinal studies can analyze the predisposing personality factors. (p. 54)

In an attempt to understand why the marriage occurred, it was stated,

"... no doubt a real reason behind many of the marriages was that

the girl lacked interest in school" (p. 94). This explanation was supported in a study by Osofsky, Braen, DiFloio, Hagen, and Wood, (1968) which was conducted on students enrolled in an educational program designed for pregnant students. In their survey, they found that 50% of these students had attendance problems in the school previously attended, and that approximately 20% were said to have had difficulties with school authorities. (p. 101)

In a study which dealt specifically with marriage and its relationship to dropping out, Bauman (1967), found that ". . . persons who marry during school are more likely to drop out of school than persons who do not marry while in school" (p. 675). The dropout rate was 6.3% higher for women. In addition to dropping out of school, the persons who marry young are likely to suffer in other ways too. As the study pointed out, ". . . dropouts are more likely to experience marital instability than graduates" (p. 674). Thus, the student who became pregnant, or married, did not have a very good chance to finish school, nor could she look forward to a very stable future.

In the early 1960's, it was oftentimes school policy to request students to leave school during pregnancy. As student rights became more of an issue, this policy was challenged. The feeling that a student should be allowed to remain in school became more

prevalent. When girls were allowed to stay in school, however, as the study by Birdwhistle (1971) pointed out, there was then the problem of the lack of prenatal care. Some studies at that time were still recommending that the girl stay in school, with special considerations. Stine, et al. (1964) proposed that the pregnant adolescent could stay in school and receive adequate prenatal care, and that the girl not be asked to leave until she needed to care for the infant. He also recommended that the school personnel be versed in dealing with the problem so as to make the girls' attendance at school as pleasant as possible. This then placed the responsibility on the school staff, and more specifically, on the counseling staff.

As the Birdwhistle study (1971), points out, of the students who left school that were pregnant and had counselor contact, 15 of the 16 did have prenatal care. As more was learned about the effects of prenatal care and nutrition, it was obvious that the lack of care and control of the pregnant adolescent was not the best method of treatment.

Since the early reports of high school drop-out figures and the social reactions and concerns for these students, there emerged a new educational alternative. One of these programs, located in New York, as reported by Osofsky et al. (1968) was ". . . an attempt to provide a unique medical, social, psychological and educational service for pregnant adolescents" (p. 90). The program, entitled

"The Young Mothers Educational Development" (Y-MED) was in operation for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ years at the time of the report. Of special interest in the Y-MED program was an evaluation of the medical services. The report stated that the average number of prenatal visits was 11, and that all but 9% of the students had at least six visits (p. 94). This was certainly a better record than what was reported earlier.

One other study which supported the idea of a special educational program for the pregnant adolescent was reported by LaBarre (1972). This program, located in South Carolina, pointed out: ". . . a major advantage of the special school situation is the opportunity to belong to a peer group, so important to adolescents" (p. 543). In the past several years more similar programs have been developed and the studies of these programs have added a new dimension for dealing with the problem of the pregnant adolescent.

Results of pregnancy during adolescence: The marital status of the adolescent has significant impact on the lives of the individuals involved as well as on the infant's life. Regarding the single parent Bernstein (1971) points out:

The adolescent unmarried mother who keeps her child has to reconcile the continuing demands of her responsibility as a mother with her needs as an adolescent. It is a difficult task. Her needs as an adolescent may suffer because often she finds herself in a social limbo. It is difficult to accommodate a baby's schedule to the spontaneous activity that constitutes so much of adolescent social life. The novelty

of the baby may attract her friends for a time. But when the novelty has worn off, she may find that she and her childless contemporaries have less and less in common to talk about. Contacts become fewer, until finally she is without suitable companionship. If she is unable to arrange for the care of the baby, she may have to drop out of school, becoming further removed from contact with her contemporaries. The potentially harmful effects of such isolation on the unmarried mother and on her attitude toward her baby need hardly be spelled out. (p. 136)

The problem was thus defined. An adolescent female parent does not have a very optimistic outlook, nor does her child. Thus, as McMillan (1967) points out in her study of low-income mothers:

Since female-headed families are more likely to be poor--comprising one-fourth of the low-income group and ten percent of the total population--it is felt that the low income mother is the logical family member to be used to promote family progress. (p. 282)

In the light of some of the previously reported educational progress for pregnant adolescents, it becomes obvious that something can be done.

The single adolescent parent is not the only one to suffer some serious consequences. The married adolescent does not face a very positive future either. The problem of divorce in youthful marriages was mentioned previously. In addition to the problem of divorce the other leading problems of early marriage are both loss of educational opportunity and, consequently, the potential of job opportunities and occupational advancement. In a study by Coombs, Freedman, Friedman, and Pratt (1970) that was designed to measure the

effects of premarital pregnancy on marriage, it was found that early marriage which was prompted by pregnancy caused the loss of education. (p. 816) The study went on to show that through the loss of education, the premaritally pregnant group, for the most part, was not able to improve upon their educational situation. To go even further it was pointed out that ". . . the premaritally pregnant group had less assets at every educational level" (p. 819). The study goes on to say that even though a few couples will upgrade their educational level, most of the premaritally pregnant couples in the study did have the poor educational preparation with which they began their marriage. (p. 819)

The study by Rosenberg (1965) cited earlier, did tie together the self esteem of an individual and job frustration. He states:

As the results of the study it was found that the lower the self esteem the higher the expectation of occupational frustration. Feeling they would like to have a certain job, yet feeling they would not be able to enter that occupation.

The person lacking self-esteem sees the attainment of a status occupation as something that will enhance his self-esteem. Yet it is his low-self esteem that keeps him from achieving this goal. Thus his feeling of himself pre-determines failure. (p. 238)

SUMMARY

This chapter has been a review of the literature pertinent to the understanding of the self concept, the pregnant adolescent, and the adolescent parent. The self concept is an area somewhat new to the literature, but it has some far reaching implications. An understanding of the adolescent in her world is imperative. The health of both the mother and infant are important considerations and need to be examined. The adolescent is required to make several life-long decisions during her pregnancy and this then becomes the focal point at which she requires some help and guidance. If the self concept is an important part of the person's personal and social adjustment, then it becomes even more important that some kind of change be made in the negative self concept that so many pregnant adolescents have.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The problem of this study was to measure and compare the self concept of pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents in two groups; 1) those who are married and 2) those who are not married. Comparisons were made within each group as well as comparing the groups to each other.

The following chapter describes the population, its composition, and the method of identification. It describes the investigative procedures, as well as the data collection procedure. The organization of the presentation of the data is previewed. The hypotheses and proposed analysis of the data are discussed.

Population Description

The population for this study was identified as the group of a high school student population that became pregnant. The age group of that population included the 9-12 grade levels. The students in those grade levels, who became pregnant or who were parents made up the population for this study. This population was identified by counselors, or other school personnel in the public high schools in Great Falls, Montana. Other community agencies, such as Family Planning, Cascade County Welfare Department, and the City-County

Public Health Department, were also utilized in identifying the student population.

Investigative Procedures

The total number of students tested represented part of the group of students enrolled in the Continuing Education Program. Two categories of high school age students were identified for this study. One student group was married; the second group was unmarried. Within each category there were two sub-groups. There were: 1) married pregnant adolescents, and 2) married adolescent parents. The unmarried category also had two sub-groups, which were: 1) the unmarried pregnant adolescent, and 2) the unmarried adolescent parent.

The investigation was limited in that the self-concept test was administered after the pregnancy had been verified, and also after the decision to marry or remain unmarried. There was no attempt made to measure the change in self-concept that might have taken place due to pregnancy. The investigation was only concerned with the comparison of the self-concept scores representative of each group.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study was based upon the results of testing. The student population was screened after enrollment in the Continuing

Education Program. The purpose of the test was explained and each student was allowed the choice of participation. Those students who agreed to participate were then identified by a number and letter code. The test was administered and supervised by the researcher.

The "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale" was the testing instrument used. This test was selected by the researcher on the basis of tests reviewed in The Seventh Mental Measurements Yearbook, by Burros. (1972) In the opinion of Bentler, one reviewer, "the scale possesses sufficient reliability and validity to be used in research, as recommended by the authors" (p. 306).

Method of Organizing Data

The data for this study as presented in Chapter IV, was recorded by a variety of tables which show the group composition, significant scores, mean scores, percentile rankings, and percentage comparisons.

The tables show the composition of the population and the composition of the groups. Group scores are recorded as mean scores in a variety of circumstances. The scores reflect mean scores for the following groups: 1) married students, which includes both pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents, and 2) unmarried students, which includes both pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents.

The distributions reflect the married and unmarried groups in relationship to the total group distribution. Mean scores

were also recorded according to grade level in both married and unmarried groups.

Statistical Hypotheses

The measurement of the self concept in married and unmarried adolescents was based on the following hypothesis. Since the pregnancy occurred before the test of self concept was administered, there was no attempt made here to discover the effect of the pregnancy on the self concept.

Hypothesis 1: Null Hypothesis: There will be no measured group difference in the mean scores of the self concept recorded by students who are married, and those students who are not married.

Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a measured difference in the mean scores of the self concept of married students, and those students who are not married.

The data for this study was analyzed by hypothesis testing. The hypothesis was tested by using the t-test for independent samples. The level of significance that was accepted by the researcher was at the .05 level.

In addition to the data determined by the hypothesis testing, the following questions were answered. 1. What percentage of all students enrolled in the Continuing Education Program were married? 2. What percentage of students were not married? 3. How many

unmarried students elected to establish single parent homes? 4. Which identified areas of the self concept were different among the married and unmarried groups?

Precautions Taken for Accuracy

The mathematical calculations were made by the researcher using a hand calculator. All figures were checked at least three times. The statistical analyses were checked by a statistician at the College of Great Falls, and the computations were made by the Computer Service at Montana State University.

Summary

This chapter has presented the procedures to be used in the data collection and the analysis process. The student who became pregnant was identified by school personnel in the public school system in Great Falls, Montana. Several other community agencies were also used to identify the student population. As students were identified they were interviewed, and the "Piers-Harris Childrens Self Concept Scale" was administered.

The test data was collected, recorded and analyzed. Each student was classified by marital status: 1) those who were married and 2) those who were unmarried. The results of the self concept test scores of each individual student were determined and recorded.

The mean score of each group was recorded, then compared. The comparisons were based upon the marital status of each group.

The data was statistically tested and precautions were taken to assure accuracy. The statistical selection and information was provided by a statistician.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The problem of this study was to measure and compare the self concepts of adolescents on the basis of their marital status. The population for the study was selected from high school students who were enrolled in an alternative school program for pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents. Students were tested by using the "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale," and the mean scores of each group were compared.

Analysis of data

The statistical analysis performed on the hypothesis of this study did support the Null Hypothesis as stated: There will be no measured group difference in the mean scores of the self concept recorded by students who are married, and those students who are not married. The Alternative Hypothesis which stated: There will be a measured group difference in the mean scores of the self concept recorded by students who are married, and those students who are not married was not supported.

The data for the study was tested by using the t test for independent samples which measured for the significant differences of the groups' mean scores. The measurement was made, and at the .05 level of significance, for a two tailed test, there was not a

significant difference in the mean score comparisons. Table 1 shows the scored analysis of the statistical data.

TABLE 1
STATISTICAL DATA OF
MEAN SCORES

Group Size	Marital Status	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation
18	Married	55.94	8.98
18	Unmarried	48.28	13.73
At the .05 level of significance $t = 1.98$			
$N = 34$ the level of significance is 2.042			

As Table 1 shows, the t score of 1.98 does fall within the accepted level of significance for the accepted value of t . It must then be accepted, that there was no significant difference in the self concept of students who became pregnant, or parents, on the basis of their marital status.

Data was also compared on the mean scores of each group by grade level. Table 2 shows these comparisons.

TABLE 2

MEAN SCORES BY MARITAL STATUS
AND GRADE LEVEL

Grade level	Married	Mean Scores	Unmarried	Mean Scores
9	-	-	2	49
10	1	67	7	49
11	5	60	5	48
12	12	53	4	45
Totals	18	55	18	48

This table illustrates the mean scores of each group at the various grade levels. These scores were not statistically tested and were recorded as a point of interest to indicate which group did have the highest and lowest mean scores.

The subjects of this study were of special interest due to their unique educational setting. Table 3 illustrates the population that was available and the representation by grade level of the group the sample represented.

TABLE 3

PROGRAM SUMMARY BY
GRADE LEVEL

Grade level	Total Number Referred	Referral by School	Referral by Agency
9	3	1	2
10	17	4	13
11	16	10	6
12	28	17	11
Totals	64	32	32

Table 3 shows the group of sixty-four students who had contacted the Continuing Education Program and indicated an interest in completing or continuing their education. Of the total number of students who made contact, thirty-two or one-half of the group was referred through a school program and the other one-half came from community agencies. The figure represented in the community agency group also reflects those referred by individuals with no school or agency affiliation. The primary agencies represented were: Social and Rehabilitative Services - Child Welfare Division, the Cascade County City-County Public Health Department, and the Family Planning Agency of Cascade County.

Table 4 shows the population by marital status from which the student sample was taken.

TABLE 4
STUDENT POPULATION BY
MARITAL STATUS

Grade level	Married	Unmarried	Single Parent Home	Adoption	Unknown
9	-	3	1	1	1
10	2	15	7	1	7
11	7	9	7	1	1
12	16	12	8	-	4
Totals	25	39	23	3	13

As Table 4 indicates, of the sixty-four students contacting the Continuing Education Program, 38% of the students were married, and 62% were unmarried. The percentages of student marriages increased as the grade level increased. It should be noted that none of the ninth grade students chose to marry. The tenth grade had 12% of the students married, with 88% not married. The eleventh grade had 44% of the students electing to marry and 56% of the students not married. The twelfth grade had the highest percentage of married students with 57%, and the unmarried group having only 43%.

In considering the data of the unmarried group the following information was informative. In the unmarried group, 60% of them elected to establish single parent homes. Of the remaining group, 7.5% had elected to place the child for adoption, and the remaining 32.5% were still pregnant and no decision had been reached.

This population represented both the adolescent who was pregnant and the adolescent who was a parent. Table 5 shows the mean scores, percentile rankings, and numbers of pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents.

TABLE 5
MEAN SCORES AND PERCENTILE RANK
BY PARENTAL STATUS

Marital Status	Number of Students	Raw Score Means	Group Percentile Rank
Single	18	48	36th
Pregnant	17	47	33rd
Parent	1	66	85th
Married	18	55	55th
Pregnant	11	59	66th
Parent	7	50	41st
Totals	36	52	46th

The group size of the single parent was so small that it was not appropriate to draw any comparisons. In looking at the comparisons of the married and unmarried pregnant adolescents, it would appear that on the basis of percentile score comparisons, the married pregnant adolescent does show an average self concept, whereas the unmarried pregnant adolescent shows a self concept which falls below the average range. The table also shows some differences between the married pregnant adolescent and the married adolescent parent, with the married adolescent parent also below the average range.

The average range, as determined by the authors of the test were listed for both the mean scores and the percentile range. The average raw scores were considered to be those between 46 to 60. The average corresponding percentiles were between the 31st and the 70th percentile.

The authors of the "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale," provided an additional area for study by identifying six cluster areas. The areas that were identified and compared were: 1) Behavior 2) Intellectual and School Status 3) Physical Appearance and Attributes 4) Anxiety 5) Popularity 6) Happiness and Satisfaction.

The following table represents student responses to the identified questions by the percentages of "yes" and "no" responses

in each group. Individual tables for each cluster appear in the Appendix.

TABLE 6
SUMMARY TABLE OF
CLUSTER SCORES

Cluster	Married	Unmarried
Behavior	95%	80%
Intellectual and School Status	64%	58%
Physical Appearance	39%	32%
Anxiety	48%	33%
Popularity	85%	77%
Happiness and Satisfaction	91%	73%

The percentages shown on Table 6 represent the percentage of answers in the appropriate category. The answers were all scored in a positive direction. Therefore, a high score reflects a positive self concept for that cluster. In comparing the percentages, Table 6 shows that the area of the greatest difference was in the Happiness and Satisfaction cluster. Although the cluster was not the lowest in the ranking order, it did produce the widest range difference. The next two clusters to show a wide range were the Behavior and the

Anxiety clusters, with a range of 15% in each. The cluster with the least amount of range difference, was the Intellectual and School Status cluster.

Table 7 gives the cluster scores in a ranking order according to each group, in descending order. The ranking order was the same with the exception of Popularity and Happiness and Satisfaction.

TABLE 7
CLUSTER SCORE RANKINGS BY
MARITAL STATUS

Married	Unmarried
Behavior	Behavior
Happiness and Satisfaction	Popularity
Popularity	Happiness and Satisfaction
Intellectual and School Status	Intellectual and School Status
Anxiety	Anxiety
Physical Appearance	Physical Appearance

No statistical tests were used to analyze or compare the cluster scores, since they were not designed to draw an analysis of a personality profile. The value of the cluster scores was to identify

some specific areas in which individual students had the greatest degree of difficulty establishing positive self concepts.

Summary

The hypothesis of this study was tested by using the statistical t test for independent variables. On the basis of the tested data, the Null Hypothesis was supported: there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups, based upon marital status.

In addition to the group mean scores, information was reported on the composition of the population. The majority of the students were unmarried and the grade level to have the largest number of students was the twelfth grade.

Certain questions were designated by the authors of the test, as belonging to a cluster. There were six identified clusters that were recorded and compared.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Summary

The problem of this study was to measure and compare the self concepts of married and unmarried pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents. The self concept scores of each group were the focal point of the study, and the marital status of the students was the dividing factor. The influence of the pregnancy was not the issue being considered.

This study involving the self concept of the pregnant adolescent and adolescent parent was an attempt to better understand how to deal with students who were pregnant. It was also an attempt to aid the professional person in helping students recognize and set some realistic goals. Through an understanding of their behavior and an awareness of their self concept, students have an opportunity to adjust their behavior patterns to meet their goals.

The sample for this study was drawn from a select population of students who became pregnant and contacted an alternative educational program. The study was limited to students enrolled in school during the 1977-1978 school year, and who lived in Great Falls, Montana. The students were enrolled in the Continuing Education Program sponsored by the Great Falls Public School District.

The review of literature for this study was a review of studies dealing with self concept and adolescent pregnancy. Topics relating to adolescent pregnancy and adolescent parenthood were found in the literature of several academic areas. Medical journals offered many studies on the health concerns of both mothers and infants. Studies dealing with adolescents and their social and emotional adjustment were also reviewed. The educational programs that have been established for pregnant adolescents offered an opportunity to understand how programs can provide support for the adolescent and the infant.

Data for this study was gathered by using the scores from the "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale." Students' scores were divided into two groups; one group was married and the other group was unmarried. The test was administered by the researcher to the students who volunteered to be part of the study. Mean scores of the two groups were compared and statistically tested.

The hypothesis of the study was to compare the mean scores of the two groups tested to determine if there was a significant difference between the groups based on marital status. The t test for independent samples was used to test the hypothesis. Statistical data results were computed at Montana State University in the Computer Center.

The results of the statistical testing did support the Null Hypothesis as stated: There will be no measured group difference in the mean scores of the self concept recorded by students who are married, and those students who are not married. In addition to the hypothesis testing data, information regarding the general composition of the student population was provided. Six identified cluster areas were also compared and the results of these comparisons, although not statistically tested, were reported.

Conclusions

A review of this study supports the following conclusions.

1. There was no significant difference in the group mean scores of students based on their marital status. As the statistical test results show, the mean scores did not vary significantly when compared at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the marital status of the pregnant adolescent or the adolescent parent, does not significantly influence the student's self concept.

2. The mean scores for pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents, are not significantly different from the groups used to establish the norms for the "Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale."

3. Physical appearance and attributes produced the most negative influence on the measured self concept. (This conclusion supported a study previously cited.)
4. Anxiety produced the second greatest negative influence on the self concept.
5. The population of the student group studied indicated the majority of the students were unmarried.
6. The percentage of student marriages increased by age and grade level.
7. There were more students enrolled at the senior level than any other grade level.

Recommendations

Much further research needs to be done in order to deal effectively with the problems of the pregnant adolescent, and the adolescent parent. There are many questions to be answered which relate the adolescent parent to other problems of society such as; child abuse by young parents, post natal mortality and physical defects in infants of young parents, and the high divorce rates among young married couples.

This study attempted to focus on one aspect of the adolescent parent and pregnant adolescent by relating the self concept to the

marital status of the students. Regarding the additional research needed to better understand the self concept, Carl Rogers (1965) states:

We need much deeper research into the way in which the individual views himself, and the fashion in which his internal view of experience influences his behavior. Finally we need penetrating investigations of the ways in which such views of experience may be altered in the direction of realism and self-acceptance. (p. 527)

In addition to research dealing with the self concept, there are specific studies that need to be conducted regarding the pregnant adolescent and the adolescent parent. Professionals need to consider the most appropriate approach to use when dealing with students who are parents, or students who will soon become parents.

To further clarify the issue of the marital status of pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents, much additional research is needed. Studies which include the following issues would be appropriate.

Recommendation 1: Studies should be designed to clarify the specific treatments that can be applied to encourage changes in the pregnant adolescent or adolescent parent with a negative self concept.

Recommendation 2: Research should be made available that could identify specific factors that have the greatest influence on the self concept of the pregnant adolescent and adolescent parent.

Recommendation 3: Available data that would show under what specific conditions awareness of the self concept can produce a

behavioral change in the pregnant adolescent and the adolescent parent would be extremely pertinent.

Recommendation 4: Studies could be designed that would show what affect behavioral changes and self concept changes will have on altering the decisions made by pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents.

Studies that deal with these issues would provide much needed information for counselors who deal with pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents. The emphasis must be to deal effectively with these students. The treatment that is provided will affect many others and there is an opportunity provided to enhance the quality of life.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

2817 6th Avenue North
Great Falls, Montana 59401
March 24, 1978

Counselor Recordings and Tests
Box 6184 Acklen Station
Nashville, Tennessee 37212

Dear Sirs:

I am currently working on a professional paper, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Education at Montana State University.

I have used the Piers-Harris Childrens Self Concept Scale, by Ellen V. Piers, Ph.D., and Dale B. Harris, Ph.D., as my testing instrument. I am interested in receiving permission to use a copy of the test instrument in my final paper. I would appreciate any help in contacting one of the authors or their agent, in order to receive this permission.

Thank you for your help and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jo Hatch

Mrs. Jo Hatch

Dear Mrs. Hatch:

We are hereby granting permission for you to use the Piers-Harris Scale in your paper.

Thank you,

Rosetta Mosley
Rosetta Mosley
Office Manager

APPENDIX B

THE PIERS-HARRIS CHILDREN'S SELF CONCEPT SCALE

(The Way I Feel About Myself)

by

ELLEN V. PIERS, Ph.D.

and

DALE B. HARRIS, Ph.D.

Published by

Counselor Recordings and Tests

BOX 6184 ACKLEN STATION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37212

Here are a set of statements. Some of them are true of you and so you will circle the yes. Some are not true of you and so you will circle the no. Answer every question even if some are hard to decide, but do not circle both yes and no. Remember, circle the yes if the statement is generally like you, or circle the no if the statement is generally not like you. There are no right or wrong answers. Only you can tell us how you feel about yourself, so we hope you will mark the way you really feel inside.

1. My classmates make fun of me yes no
2. I am a happy person yes no
3. It is hard for me to make friends yes no
4. I am often sad yes no
5. I am smart yes no
6. I am shy yes no
7. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me yes no
8. My looks bother me yes no
9. When I grow up, I will be an important person yes no
10. I get worried when we have tests in school. yes no
11. I am unpopular yes no
12. I am well behaved in school yes no
13. It is usually my fault when something goes wrong yes no
14. I cause trouble to my family yes no
15. I am strong yes no
16. I have good ideas yes no
17. I am an important member of my family yes no
18. I usually want my own way yes no
19. I am good at making things with my hands yes no
20. I give up easily yes no

21. I am good in my school work yes no
22. I do many bad things yes no
23. I can draw well yes no
24. I am good in music yes no
25. I behave badly at home yes no
26. I am slow in finishing my school work yes no
27. I am an important member of my class yes no
28. I am nervous yes no
29. I have pretty eyes yes no
30. I can give a good report in front of the class. yes no
31. In school I am a dreamer yes no
32. I pick on my brother(s) and sister(s) yes no
33. My friends like my ideas yes no
34. I often get into trouble yes no
35. I am obedient at home yes no
36. I am lucky yes no
37. I worry a lot yes no
38. My parents expect too much of me yes no
39. I like being the way I am yes no
40. I feel left out of things yes no

41. I have nice hair yes no
42. I often volunteer in school yes no
43. I wish I were different yes no
44. I sleep well at night yes no
45. I hate school yes no
46. I am among the last to be chosen for games yes no
47. I am sick a lot yes no
48. I am often mean to other people yes no
49. My classmates in school think I have good ideas yes no
50. I am unhappy. yes no
51. I have many friends yes no
52. I am cheerful yes no
53. I am dumb about most things yes no
54. I am good looking yes no
55. I have lots of pep yes no
56. I get into a lot of fights yes no
57. I am popular with boys yes no
58. People pick on me yes no
59. My family is disappointed in me yes no
60. I have a pleasant face yes no

61. When I try to make something, everything seems to go wrong yes no
62. I am picked on at home yes no
63. I am a leader in games and sports yes no
64. I am clumsy yes no
65. In games and sports, I watch instead of play yes no
66. I forget what I learn yes no
67. I am easy to get along with yes no
68. I lose my temper easily yes no
69. I am popular with girls yes no
70. I am a good reader yes no
71. I would rather work alone than with a group yes no
72. I like my brother (sister) yes no
73. I have a good figure yes no
74. I am often afraid yes no
75. I am always dropping or breaking things yes no
76. I can be trusted yes no
77. I am different from other people yes no
78. I think bad thoughts yes no
79. I cry easily yes no
80. I am a good person yes no

Score: _____

APPENDIX C

CLUSTER SCORES

I. Behavior

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
22	-	100%*	23%	77%*
34	-	100%*	12%	88%*
35	*77%	23%	*83%	17%
76	*100%	-	*94%	6%
78	-	100%*	39%	61%*

* denotes the appropriate response category

II. Intellectual and School Status

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
5	*55%	45%	*38%	62%
21	*72%	28%	*72%	28%
53	12%	88%*	28%	72%*
66	45%	55%*	34%	66%*
70	*50%	50%	*44%	56%

III. Physical Appearance and Attributes

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
15	*66%	34%	*38%	62%
54	*33%	67%	*38%	62%
60	*55%	45%	*44%	56%
63	*11%	89%	*11%	89%
73	*33%	66%	*33%	66%

IV. Anxiety

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
7	23%	77%*	62%	38%*
28	39%	61%*	56%	44%*
37	67%	33%*	89%	11%*
74	45%	55%*	50%	50%*
79	84%	16%*	78%	22%*

V. Popularity

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
3	6%	94%*	17%	83%*
40	17%	83%*	34%	66%*
46	12%	88%*	23%	77%*
51	*77%	23%	*72%	28%
58	17%	83%*	12%	88%*

VI. Happiness and Satisfaction

Question Number	Married		Unmarried	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
2	*100%	-	*88%	12%
39	*94%	6%	*66%	34%
43	17%	83%*	45%	55%*
50	12%	88%*	23%	77%*
52	*94%	6%	*83%	17%