

1994

## Factors associated with self-esteem, sex-role, and academic achievement among adolescents

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors associated with self-esteem, sex-role, and academic achievement among adolescents. Subjects were high school students ranging from 9th to 10th grade. Three forms were used in this study: the Bem sex-role Inventory, the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (CSEI) and the Attitude toward Achievement Inventory. Results showed that adolescents classified as masculine or androgynous in gender-role orientation were found to have higher self esteem than adolescents classified as feminine or undifferentiated. Further, the adolescents classified as androgynous and masculine had higher ability in academic achievement as measured by grade point average. The results also revealed that self-esteem and academic achievement have a positively correlation.

**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-ESTEEM, SEX-ROLE,  
AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

**A Research Paper**

**Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Northern Iowa**

**by**

**Shiou-Shiang Juor**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Arts/ Educ**

This Research Paper by: SHIOU-SHIANG JUOR

Entitled: FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SELF-ESTEEM, SEX-ROLE, AND  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education: General  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Radhi H. Al-Mabuk, Who without knowing me, agreed to be my research paper advisor. His guidance has been invaluable to the completion of this paper.

I would also like to thank Dr. Charles V. L. Dedrick and Dr. Barry Wilson for their special contributions and assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and support.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors associated with self-esteem, sex-role, and academic achievement among adolescents. Subjects were high school students ranging from 9th to 10th grade. Three forms were used in this study: the Bem Sex-role Inventory, the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory (CSEI) and the Attitude toward Achievement Inventory. Results showed that adolescents classified as masculine or androgynous in gender-role orientation were found to have higher self-esteem than adolescents classified as feminine or undifferentiated. Further, the adolescents classified as androgynous and masculine had higher ability in academic achievement as measured by grade point average. The results also revealed that self-esteem and academic achievement have a positively correlation.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Sex-role differences in the sources of self-esteem have been found to exist, and such differences appear to parallel sex-role differences in self definition (Wylie, 1979; Williams, 1977). It has been suggested that the femininity-category, in comparison with masculinity-category, has more problems developing adequate levels of self-esteem. Some studies on sex-role have found that the self-esteem of females is as high as that of males (Kohr, Coldiron, Skiffington, Masters, & Blust, 1988). While others shown that male elementary students have higher self-esteem than female elementary students (Alpert-Gillis & Connell, 1989). Evidence also suggests that female adolescents have lower evaluations of themselves than do male adolescents on esteem-related indicators such as feelings of purpose in life (Harlow, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1986).

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors associated with different levels of self-esteem, masculininty-, feminninity,- androgyny,- undifferentiated,- categories, and academic achievement as measured by grade point average among adolescents

#### Significance of the Study

Adolescence has been identified as a period in the life span during which the development of gender related roles is of primary importance for the development of self esteem and academic achievement. There is evidence that girls are more likely to have lower self-esteem than boys, that high sense of self in American society requires both masculinity and femininity, with a greater emphasis on masculinity than femininity for males and females alike.

The results of the study will provide information pertaining to the following questions:

1. Is there an association between sex-role and self-esteem?
2. Is there an association between sex-role and academic achievement as measured by grade point average.
3. Is there an association between self-esteem and academic achievement?

#### Definition of Terms

The following defined in this section are specific to the field in which this paper was conducted.

1. Academic Achievement - knowledge obtained and skills developed in school subjects as measured by grades recorded on the cumulative grade record and by the rank assigned in the official rank list.

2. Androgyny - " An integration of both masculinity and femininity within a single individual, " in that being "

both masculinity and femininity depend on the situational appropriateness of the various behaviors" (Bem, 1977, p.196).

3. Expectancy of success - one has confidence or assurance in the possibility that what one desires will happen.

4. External locus of control - a person who believes that the contingencies in life are determined by the external environment is referred to as having an external locus of control.

5. Femininity - an individual in the femininity-category is high in feminine traits, such as affection, shyness, cheerfulness, warmth, and tenderness, and love while low in masculine traits, such as assertiveness, forcefulness, dominance, aggressiveness and competition (Bem, 1974).

6. Internal locus of control - a person who believes he or she is able to control the contingencies in life is referred to as having internal locus of control.

7. Masculinity - an individual in the masculinity-category is high in masculine traits, such as assertiveness, forcefulness, dominance, aggressiveness and competition, and low in feminine traits, such as affection, shyness, cheerfulness, warmth, and tenderness (Bem, 1974).

8. Self-concept - the perceived self, one's own

personal existence as views by oneself.

9. Self-confidence - one viewed himself/herself as capable of accomplishing things.

10. Self-esteem - self esteem is a "personal judgement" of worthiness that is expresses in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself/herself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior (Coopersmith, 1967, p.4).

11. Sex-role categories - androgyny, masculinity, femininity are personality traits which vary independently.

12. Sex-role identity - an individual who is in the androgyny, masculinity, or femininity sex-role category tends to act in ways that are consistent with that category (Bem, 1975, 1977).

The hypotheses of this study were as follows

#### Hypotheses

1. Adolescents classified as androgynous will have higher self-esteem, as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory, than feminine or masculine adolescents.

2. Adolescents classified as masculine will have higher self-esteem, as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory, than feminine adolescents.

3. Adolescents classified as androgynous or masculine will have higher academic achievement, as measured by the

Attitude of Achievement Inventory.

4. Adolescents classified as androgynous or masculine would have higher GPA (high GPA=3.5 or above; low GPA=2.5 or below).

5. Self-esteem scores would be positively correlated with academic achievement scores. That is, adolescents who have a higher level of self-esteem would have higher academic achievement.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of five parts. The first deals with the definition, characteristics, and theories of self-esteem. The second addresses gender role development. The third focuses on theories of achievement motivation. The fourth explores the relationship between self-esteem and achievement motivation.

#### Definition of Self-Esteem

The challenge to parents and educators in today's fast-paced world is to enable children to become competent, self-reliant adults. To become such a person they need an accurate and positive perception of themselves and the world about them. The way in which the world is perceived is based on one's experiences and feelings about oneself.

Several theorists addressed the issue of self-esteem. To begin with, Coopersmith (1967) cited several theories of personality which included self-esteem. The neo-Freudians were very attentive to its importance but did not make it central to their theories. Adler considered self-esteem a significant variable but was more concerned about its implications for developmental theory. Rogers (cited in Coopersmith, 1967) "proposed that all persons develop a self-image of themselves which serves to guide and maintain their adjustment to the external world. Since this image

develops out of interaction with the environment, it reflects the judgements, preferences, and shortcomings of the particular familial and social setting" (p.34).

Erikson (1959) added that "self-esteem, confirmed at the end of major crises, grows to be a conviction that one is learning effective steps toward a tangible future, that one is developing a defined personality within a social reality which one understands" (p.89).

Rosenberg (1973) defined self-esteem as, "the individual's global positive or negative attitude toward himself" (p.84). He emphasized the unidimensional nature of this construct, and focused on subjective feelings about the self.

In contrast, Coopersmith (1967) focused on the determinants of self-esteem, which include judgements about efficacy. Coopersmith (1967) wrote:

By self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself. It is a subjective experience which



the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior (p.4).

Battle (1982) agreed with Coopersmith that self-esteem was multifaceted including a general dimension along with social, school, and parental dimensions. Battle maintained that the many definitions of self-esteem all include a subjective, valuative phenomenon which decides the person's characteristic understanding of personal worth.

Gecas (1982) stated that self-esteem deals with both the valuative and the emotional dimension of the self concept. He distinguishes between self-esteem based on "competence, power, or efficacy" (self efficacy) and that based on "a sense of worth" (self worth). Juhasz (1985) stated that "while both include one's idea of self, esteem has a valuative component which is not included in self-concept" (p.877).

William James (cited in Alpert-Gillis & Connell, 1989) described self-esteem as "a certain average tone of self-feeling which each of us carries about him/her, and which is independent of objective reasons we may have for satisfaction or discontent" (p.97).

Burns (1979) stated that self-esteem has been thought of to be a chief variable in deciding individual behavior, adjustment, superiority, pride and happiness. Individuals with low esteem equated with behavioral problems,

maladjustment, inferiority, and unhappiness. In addition to definitions, theorists describe certain characteristics of self-esteem, and it is to this topic that we turn next.

### Characteristics of Self-Esteem

Rosenberg (1965) stated, "When we speak of high self-esteem....we shall simply mean that the individual respects himself or herself, considers himself or herself worthy.... Low self-esteem, on the other hand, implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt" (p.31). Rosenberg (1979) further suggested that self-esteem is a main motive in managing human behavior. The attempt to get an appropriate level of self-esteem and the need to keep a given level of esteem have been suggested as the chief determinants of behavior. Coopersmith (1967) researched the concept of self-esteem and the characteristics associated with it. He believed people possessing high self-esteem function more effectively in life and have attitudes and expectations that allow them to be more active and assertive. They are able to meet their needs and set a fulfilling direction in their lives. Threats and anxiety are met with confidence in the ability to handle the situation or event. Their response to life has a consistent and characteristic style. They are independent, set high goals, and have strong expectations of success. "Children who are high in self-esteem are apt to manifest

independence, outspokenness, exploratory behaviors, and assertion of their rights" (p.253).

Coopersmith also found that certain characteristics accompanied low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is manifested by a lack of trust in self and an apprehensiveness about people and the surrounding world. People having low self-esteem tend to remain quiet in discussions, to be observers rather than participants. Friendships are more difficult for them to form. Often they are self-conscious and very aware of their inadequacies, whether real or imagined. They tend to be pessimistic and also believe that they are powerless and without resources. "Children with low self-esteem are likely to be obedient, conforming, helpful, accommodating, and relatively passive" (Coopersmith, 1967, p.253). The next section presents theories and studies about self-esteem.

#### Theories and Studies of Self-Esteem in Adolescents

Some theories focused on the development of self-esteem in children. Harter (1984) noted that as children approach adolescence, developmental stages change, and the determinants of self-esteem may change also.

Mussen, et al. (1979) indicated that as children reach puberty, they must cope with the physical changes which physical maturity brings, and the implications of this in terms of sexuality and intimacy. They have to deal with

their changing social roles which raise the issues of independence from parents, preparation for an adult vocation, and establishment of an identity separate from their families. Adolescence is also a time when an individual must learn to develop effective social and working relationships with same and opposite sex peers.

Many theories predict self-esteem disturbances as a normal part of development during the adolescent years. Erikson (1968) called adolescence "the last stage of childhood". He focused on identity formation as the central task for young people at this age. He theorized that adolescence is a time when young people struggle to define themselves in terms of the adult world, trying on different roles and seeking a sense of their own identity. Only when they can establish an identity can they go on to the adult task of becoming independent from their parents. Erikson's theory has been popularized as the idea of the adolescent "identity crisis."

Kohlberg (1971) conceptualized the adolescent transition in terms of moral stages as well as cognitive development. The theory held that the center of the adolescent experience lies in both an "intensified emotionality" and a questioning of the validity of society's truths and values. Intensified emotionality is contingent on attaining Piaget's stage of formal operational thought.

Prior to age 12, children see emotions as the objective result of activities and objects. Formal operational thought enables the adolescent to experience emotions as subjective states of the self. The adolescent discovers subjective feelings and moods, as well as ambivalence and conflicts of feeling. The attainment of the stage of formal operations is also a necessary condition for the moral development which Kohlberg saw as the second major change of adolescence, the questioning of social values.

Kohlberg's theory of moral development stated that children develop from a "preconventional" stage based on seeking pleasure and avoiding pain, through a "conventional" stage dealing with reciprocity and the social basis of rules to a "postconventional" stage which social standards can be questioned and "higher" laws are emphasized. Kohlberg believed that the beginning of formal operational thought (around age 11 or 12) is necessary before a child can begin to understand the mutuality of interpersonal relations. As formal operational thought develops more fully (around age 15), the child begins to question the universality of social rules and values, as he moves toward the "postconventional" stage of morality.

Adolescence is portrayed by many theorists not only as a time of physical change, but of change in social role, identity, cognitions, emotions and values. Some research

supported the hypothesis that self-esteem is in a state of transition during the years from 8 through 18, while other studies find that self-esteem steadily increases during the teen years. Most researchers found a self-esteem disturbance during adolescence note a drop in self-esteem between the ages of 12 and 14, with a subsequent rise in self-esteem as the individual reaches adulthood.

Piers and Harris (1964), in their studies compared the self-esteem of children in different grades, and found that self-esteem was lowest in the early adolescent group. They reported no significant difference in self-esteem scores between children in grade 3 and grade 10. However, a recent study by Wolf et al. (1982) found that self-esteem scores increased with age from 10 through 17. Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg (1973) performed a boys and girls study showed different patterns in this age group. The findings of Demo and Savin-williams (1983) and Savin-Williams and Jaquish, were consistent with those of Blyth, Simmons, and Bush (1978). They all noted that longitudinal self report measures showed little stability of self-esteem between seventh and eighth grades, moderate stability between eighth and ninth, and significant stability between ninth and tenth grades. Savin-Williams and Demo concluded that their studies supported the basic notion of stability in self-esteem during the adolescent years.

Jaquish and Savin-Williams (1981) also looked at the correlation between pubertal maturation and self-esteem. They found that pubertal maturation rate was correlated with self-esteem in different groups. Boys who were more physically mature in the seventh grade had lower self-esteem in the eighth grade, while the converse effect was found for girls.

Taken as a whole, the literature does suggest that individuals in the early adolescent group, ages 12-14, are at risk for disturbance in self-esteem. They appear to be susceptible to environmental stress, such as the transition from elementary to junior high school, and the different pressures on males and females. This susceptibility can be related to a drop in self-esteem.

### Gender and Sex Roles

In past years theorists have differed in how they explain the development of an individual's stereotypical, or traditional, masculine or feminine gender role orientation. According to social learning theorists, as children mature, they generalize their learned gender role behaviors to other situations. They adapt or change behavior patterns within situations if contingencies of reinforcement or other learning conditions are altered. In contrast, cognitive-developmental theorists held the view that children's interpretations of differences between the sexes change

predominantly as a function of cognitive development. The child gradually develops concepts of "masculinity" and "femininity", and attempts to match his/her behavior to that conception.

A more recent theoretical perspective is the self-definition model. Lerner et al. (1981) proposed that an individual's self-definition should be compatible with the demands society places on the individual. The basic premise of this theory is that positive personality adjustment in U.S. society requires both masculine and feminine traits. Thus, distinctions between males and females that may have served in acquiring identity in a less complex and technologically advanced era may no longer be adaptive to today's society

Bem (1974) supported the concept of sex roles rather than the gender concepts of male and female. Previously, masculinity and femininity had been treated as if they were the endpoints of a bipolar continuum, most men falling at one extreme and most women falling at the other. From Bem's research, she concluded that a person might be androgynous: both masculine and feminine, both assertive and compassionate, both instrumental and expressive, depending on the situational appropriateness of the various modalities. The term androgyny expressed the integration of femininity and masculinity within a single individual.



After further research Bem (1977a) added undifferentiated individuals to the sex roles of masculine, feminine, and androgynous as the fourth category. Those individuals score low on both the masculine and feminine measures.

Bem (1977) found that self-esteem in men was significantly related to masculinity but not to femininity. In women self-esteem was significantly related to both masculinity and femininity. Androgynous women were highest in self-esteem while undifferentiated women were lowest. Masculine women were slightly higher in self-esteem than feminine women.

Rankin and Parish (1981) found that adolescent females demonstrated significantly higher self-concepts than adolescent males. Lerner, Sorell, and Brackney (1981) in a study of college students found no significant difference between males and females. Galambos, Peterson, Richards and Gitelsun (1984) found that adolescent girls with less positive attitudes toward women were lower in self-esteem.

On the other hand, Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) found highly significant correlation coefficients between masculinity and self-esteem in both men and women. A significant correlation coefficient was found between femininity and self-esteem in both sexes. Androgynous subjects were highest in self-esteem and undifferentiated

individuals were lowest in self-esteem. They concluded that "androgyny may lead to the most socially desirable consequences, the absolute strength of both components influencing attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for the individual" (p.35).

Alpert-Gillis and Connell (1989) indicated that biological gender was less important in predicting self-esteem than sex role personality characteristics. Their study found gender played a less important role in predicting 8 to 12 year-old's self-esteem than did sex role orientation and school competence beliefs. Massad (1981) found that in high masculinity among male adolescents was associated with high self-esteem but in females both masculinity and femininity were positively associated with self-esteem.

Chronological age has been identified as an important factor in measuring adolescent gender-role orientation and self-esteem. Fisher and Narus (1981) concluded that age differences were found for those females classified as androgynous but not females classified as sex-typed and undifferentiated.

Further, Lamke (1982) examined the gender role orientation and self-esteem of 12-15 year-old adolescents and concluded that those adolescents who were classified as masculine or androgynous had the highest levels of self-

esteem when compared to subjects classified as feminine or undifferentiated. Mullis and McKinley (1987) agreed with Lamke's results in their research.

Juhasz (1985) concluded that the importance and influence of significant others in a child's life varied as the child matured. He stated, "In addition, consistency, stability and clarity of aspects of self-esteem can be expected to vary relative to situational demands, potency of needs, and availability of resources for coping" (p.879). McGuire (cited in Juhasz, 1985) found that the direction and intensity of self-esteem changed over time. The feeling of being in control of one's life also enters into the concept of self-esteem.

#### Theories of Achievement motivation

Motivation has a wide variety of meanings. The definition refers to the process involved in arousing, directing, and sustaining behavior. Birren, Kinney, and Woodruff (1981) believed that motivation can be defined as the impulse of an organism to expend energy and to organize behavior in order to reach some goal. Academic-oriented practices in childhood were likely to perpetuate an "achieving society" (McClelland, 1961). McClelland (1985) suggested that there is a relationship between motivation and achievement. Branden (1976) pointed out that self-esteem is the key to man's motivation. Other theorists

claimed that maintenance and enhancement of the perceived self are the motives behind all human behavior.

In the past, there were many theories which speculated about what caused individuals to be motivated to achieve. Some of these theories believed that the mind causally determines our behavior and if we want people to behave properly, we should insure that they receive care and instruction from only the finest people. Recent Cognitive Theory is based on this belief.

On the other hand, other theorists believed that human behavior is motivated by forces outside of our cognitive control. Freud (1917, 1959) pointed out that unconscious forces sometimes motivate us. We are subject to the same natural laws of behavior, including laws related to reinforcement and incentives, as other organism. Adler (1972) and Jung (1923) believed that the unconscious as an area of personality from which comes many of the dictates of our actions; and Skinner (1972, 1948) stated that the acquisition of behavior is through conditioning and reinforcement.

#### Self-Esteem Theory of Motivation to Achieve

The self-esteem theory of motivation to achieve can be summed up in a statement by Branden (1976)

Self-esteem is the key to man's motivation--by virtue either of its presence or of its absence. And perhaps

the most eloquent testimony of the urgency of man's need for self-esteem is the terror that haunts the lives of those who fail to achieve it, the twisted paths along which that terror drives them--and the inevitable wreckage at the end" (p.153).

Lerner (1985) indicated that there are two theories of self-esteem, the "self-esteem now" theory and the "earned self-esteem" theory. The "self-esteem now" theory was concerned with insuring the happiness of children, nurturing their self-esteem and protecting it from injury by discarding standards and discipline at home and at school. The theory of "earned self-esteem" is based on success in meeting the test of reality--measuring up to standards--at home and at school.

#### The Relationship of Self-Esteem to Academic Achievement

Jencks (1972) stated that the "character of a school's output depends on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children. Everything else--the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers--is either secondary or completely irrelevant" (P.97.) The school's output is the outward expression of the self-esteem of children.

Burns (1986) noted that self-esteem is the feeling of acceptance and self-respect that a person has for the perceived self. Self-esteem determines the characteristics

that are expressed in the personality. Thus, self-esteem may be said to be the primary ingredient related to the students that determines the quality of the school's output. If self-esteem is high, the quality of the school's output may be assumed to be high. If self-esteem is low, the quality of the school's output may be assumed to be low (Scheirer & Kraut, 1987).

Many studies indicated the importance of self-esteem as an integral part of school performance. Bledsoe (1964), Brookover, Thomas, and Patterson (1964), and Bodwin (1962) indicated that children with high self-esteem perform better in their school work than children with lower levels of self-esteem. Whitley (1988) also found a consistent positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. A study conducted among young adolescents in a rural school found that self-esteem and intelligence were not significantly correlated, but that self-esteem and academic achievement had a significant positive correlation. On the other hand, opinions varied about the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. After reviewing the causal relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, Scheirer and Kraut (1979) concluded that although self-esteem can be manipulated and academic performance improved, results are at best short-lived and at worst contradictory.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

The subjects for this study were recruited from classrooms at a midwestern high school composed of forty-five males and thirty-nine females 9th and 10th grade levels. The average age of the male students was 15.5; 16,0 for the female students. The subjects participated in this survey on a voluntary basis.

#### Instruments

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors associated with sex-role, self-esteem, and academic achievement among adolescents.

Four instruments were used. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory was used to determine the classification of sex role categories. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was used as a measure of self-esteem. The Attitude of Achievement Inventory was used as a measure of attitude toward achievement. A student information sheet provided data pertaining to gender, grade level and the students most recent GPA.

#### Sex-role Measure

The short form of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) was used to assess subjects' gender-role orientation. This instrument differs from others that measure gender-role

identity in that it treats femininity and masculinity as two independent dimensions, rather than as opposite ends on a single dimension. This structure enables the subject to indicate whether he/she is high on both dimensions (androgynous), low on both dimensions (undifferentiated), or high on one dimension but low on the other (either masculine or feminine).

The form of the BSRI includes both a masculinity scale and a femininity scale, each of which contains 30 personality characteristics selected on the basis of the sex-typed social desirability. That is, a characteristic qualifies as masculine if it is judged to be more desirable for a man than for a woman, and it qualifies as feminine if it is judged to be more desirable for a woman than for a man.

When taking the BSRI, a person is asked to indicate on a 7-point scale how well each of these masculine and feminine personality characteristics describes him/herself. The scale ranges from 1 (Never or almost never true) to 7 (Always or almost always true). On the basis of the person's responses, each person receives an "Androgyny Score," which is defined as the difference between his or her endorsement of masculine and feminine personality characteristics. The greater the absolute value of the Androgyny Score, the more the person is gender typed or



gender reversed, with high positive scores indicating femininity and high negative scores indicating masculinity. As a result of the analysis of each individual's gender-role orientation, he or she is classified as either Masculine, Feminine, Androgynous, or Undifferentiated. Bem stated that the test-retest reliability of the BSRI is .93 over a four-week interval.

### Self-esteem Measure

All subjects completed the Coopersmith (1981) Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI). The CSEI is self-administering and takes about ten minutes to complete. The form of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory is a self-report questionnaire with 25 items measuring evaluative attitudes toward the social, school-academic, home-parents, and general self. Subjects are instructed to respond to items such as "I often wish I were someone else"; "My family usually considers my feelings" and "It's pretty tough to be me" by stating "like me" or "unlike me".

Scoring the forms takes only a few minutes when the scoring keys are used. The examiner has to count the number of self-esteem items the person answers that correspond to high self-esteem or low self-esteem to reach a Total Self Score. For the Adult Form, one has to multiply the total raw score by four to obtain a maximum possible Total Self-score of 100. High scores on the CSEI are consistent with

high self-esteem. The higher quartile in a group can be seen as indicative of high self-esteem; the lower quartile usually indicates low self-esteem.

In two studies conducted with college students by Al-Mabuk in 1990 and 1992 the KR20 for the CSEI were .83 and .89 respectively.

With respect to predictive validity, Coopersmith (1967) showed that CSEI scores are specially related to creativity, academic achievement, resistance to group pressures, willingness to express unpopular opinions, and perceptual constancy.

#### Attitude Toward Achievement Measure

The Attitude Achievement Inventory was used in this study. It was developed by Chang (1991). It is a 15 item test designed to measure one's academic achievement by looking at the internal locus of control, external locus of control, self-concept of ability, and attitude toward learning contexts.

Examples of items are "My success in school is due to luck."; "My failure is due to my bad luck."; "I feel pleasure when I am working hard." and "I study hard because I enjoy knowledge." All subjects are asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how well each of the items describes himself or herself. The scale ranges from "Strongly Disagree"; "Disagree"; "Neutral"; "Agree", and "Strongly Agree".

In this measure the possible scores range from a maximum of 75 to a minimum of 15. A high score indicates positive attitudes toward academic, and a low scores indicates a negative attitude toward academic achievement.

#### Procedure

Subjects were recruited in 9th to 10th grade classrooms at the high school and asked to stay after class if they wished to participate in a study of self-perception. Three of the inventory forms were stapled together, and give to students with a cover page that stated the purpose of the study and a request for personal background information from each subject. The personal background information included gender, age, school year and most recent cumulative GPA. The subjects were informed that they could leave the testing at any time, and were not to place their names on the inventory forms. Subjects were also informed that they could ask questions at any time during or after filling out these inventory form

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors associated with self-esteem, sex-role, and academic achievement among adolescents.

Sex-Role Orientation

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) was used in this study. The category labels and percent responses for males and females in the four gender-role groups were "feminine", "androgynous", "masculine", and "undifferentiated".

One way ANOVA and the Tukey test analyses were used to examine differences between the subjects among the gender role groups, and among subjects types of gender and gender roles.

The median score on the feminine sex role scale is 5.31, and the median score on the masculine sex role scale is 5.04.

From the statistics analysis, there were 27 subjects as undifferentiated-category group, 28 subjects were in the masculinity-category group, 21 subjects were classified as androgyny-category group, and only 6 subjects as femininity-category. More than 50% of the male subjects were classified as masculine and only 2% were classified as feminine. More than 70% of the female subjects were classified as undifferentiated and androgyny groups, and

only 13% were classified as feminine and 15% as masculine (see Table 1).

Table 1

Sex-role Categories Classification

Group Category	Frequency							
	Femininity		Masculinity		Androgyny		Undifferent	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex-combined	6	7.3	28	34.1	21	25.6	27	32.91
Males	1	2.3	22	50	7	15.9	14	31.8
Females	5	13.2	6	15.8	14	36.8	13	34.2

Self-Esteem

The first and second hypotheses examined the relationship between self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory and subjects who were classified as four sex-role categories by Bem Sex-Role Inventory. One way ANOVA and Tukey test were used to test hypotheses one and two. The data analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between adolescents classified as androgynous and feminine or masculine in self-esteem. The

data showed that there were significant [ $F(3,78)=5.70$ ,  $P<.01$ ] differences between that adolescents classified as masculinity and femininity. The mean score for the masculinity-category group was (75.14). The mean score for the femininity-category group was (51.33). The masculinity-category group had the highest mean score than the other groups on the Coopersmith Inventory (see Table 2 for the mean and standard deviation of each group). This means that masculinity-category group has highest self-esteem than the other groups.

Table 2

Mean scores and standard deviations for the Femininity-, Masculinity-, Androgyny-, and Undifferentiated-category groups on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Femininity</b>		
Sex-combined	51.33*	28.89
Males	68.00	0.00
Females	48.00	30.98
<b>Masculinity</b>		
Sex-combined	75.14*	17.33
Males	76.18	15.64
Females	71.33	23.92
<b>Androgyny</b>		
Sex-combined	73.71*	17.00
Males	62.29	20.64
Females	79.42	11.93
<b>Undifferentiated</b>		
Sex-combined	57.78	21.38
Males	58.00	20.68
Females	57.54	22.95

**Note:**

F (3,78)=5.70,  $p < .01$

\* significance

High mean score in the CSEI means high degree in self-esteem.

### Attitude of Achievement

The third and four hypotheses predicted that adolescents classified as androgynous or masculine would have higher academic achievement and GPA than other groups. The data analysis for these hypotheses revealed that adolescents classified as androgynous and masculine had a higher Attitude of Achievement as measured by GPA and the Attitude of Achievement Inventory.

The androgynous-category group showed the highest mean score (50.48). The undifferentiated-category group showed the lowest mean score (44.27) on the Attitude Achievement Inventory (see Table 3).



Table 3

Mean scores and standard deviations for the Femininity-, Masculinity-, Androgyny-, and Undifferentiated-category groups on the Attitude of Achievement Inventory.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Femininity</b>		
Sex-combined	48.67	7.87
Males	51.00	0.00
Females	48.20	8.70
<b>Masculinity</b>		
Sex-combined	50.14*	5.20
Males	49.27	4.72
Females	53.33	6.06
<b>Androgyny</b>		
Sex-combined	50.48*	5.86
Males	49.57	6.05
Females	50.93	5.94
<b>Undifferentiated</b>		
Sex-combined	44.27*	7.31
Males	42.07	7.97
Females	46.83	5.77

Note:

F (3,78)=6.02, P<.01

\* significant

GPA

The students' GPA was not found to be significantly [  $F(3,78)=.854, P>.05$ ] difference among the four sex-role groups (see Table 4).

Table 4

Mean scores and standard deviations for the Femininity-, Masculinity-, Androgyny-, and Undifferentiated-category groups on the GPA.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Femininity</b>		
Sex-combined	3.37	.33
Males	3.07	.00
Females	3.43	.33
<b>Masculinity</b>		
Sex-combined	2.62	1.42
Males	2.44	1.56
Females	3.27	.31
<b>Androgyny</b>		
Sex-combined	2.81	1.21
Males	1.85	1.76
Females	3.29	.32
<b>Undifferentiated</b>		
Sex-combined	2.47	1.43
Males	2.17	1.54
Females	2.79	1.29

$F(3,78)=.854, p>.05$

### Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

Hypothesis five investigated a positively relationship between self-esteem as measured by Coopersmith Inventory and academic achievement as measured by students' GPA and Attitude of Achievement Inventory for all subjects was analyzed through the use of the Pearson R correlation coefficient technique. The results of the data revealed the self-esteem and academic achievement has a positively correlation [R=.45, P<.01].

## CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate factors associated with the sex role identify, self-esteem measures and academic attitude toward achievement among adolescents.

Gender Role and Self-Esteem

The theories in the literature indicated that students with androgynous and masculine sex roles have higher levels of self-esteem as compared to these students with feminine and undifferentiated sex roles. Four hypotheses were tested in this study. The first and second hypothesis predicted that the adolescents classified as androgynous and masculine would have higher self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory, these hypotheses were supported by the results. Alpert-Gillis and Cornell (1989) had found high self-esteem in children more related to sex roles than to gender. Lamke and Mullis (1982) also indicated that adolescents with androgynous and masculine sex roles had higher measure of self-esteem than adolescents with feminine and undifferentiated sex roles. A more androgynous gender-role identification resulted in more positive self-esteem in adolescence and adulthood. In sum, this study is consistent with their researches that the relation of sex role to general self-esteem.

One implication of these findings then would be that parents and teachers do well to encourage the development of both the masculine and feminine traits in children.

#### Gender Role and Academic Achievement

The third and four hypothesis predicted that adolescents classified as androgynous or masculine would have higher academic achievement. The results revealed that the masculine and androgynous groups do have higher academic achievement than other groups. These two group subjects feel that they have good academic work and satisfied with their academic achievement. Self-esteem was hypothesized to be positively correlated with academic achievement among adolescents. The results of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement.

With reference to the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement as measured by the attitude scale or GPA, some researchers indicated that the self-esteem of the child plays a major role in determining his or her success in school and interactions with the world; children with high self-esteem perform better in their school work than children with lower levels of self-esteem. Results are also consistent with the findings of Covington and Beery who found that adolescents quickly learn to assume that their worth as human beings depends on their ability to learn.

Therefore, as their academic achievements improve, so will their feelings of self-worth.

Self-esteem is the motivation behind all human behavior (Brarden, 1976; Rogers, 1951). The foundation of human behavior is developed through early childhood experiences. The development begins with early childhood experiences, of positive attitudes and behaviors in children through love, concern, and support. This result in positive self-esteem which may bring about lasting improvements in academic achievement.

#### Validity of Instruments Used

Perhaps the validity instrument used in this study contributed to the significant findings of this study. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, and the Attitude of Academic Achievement Inventory were used in this study.

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory construct validity was reported by Gaudreau (1977). The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory construct validity was reported by Kokenes (1978). And finally the Attitude of Academic Achievement Inventory developed by Chang also proves to be a valid instrument. These instruments tested what they were designed to test.

#### Limitations of the Study

As with all studies, this one had some limitations. For one, the subjects in the study were limited to 85

students drawn from a small size high school; also subjects were not randomly selected to participate in the study. Rather, all subjects were assigned to participate in the study by the school director. Finally, some of the subjects did not present their GPA and had to be excluded from the data analysis thereby reducing the sample size.

#### Recommendations for Future Directions

It would be worthwhile to conduct the same study with a large sample to assess generalizability, also to conduct the study with students from 9th through 12th grade to look at similarities and difference in their self-esteem, achievement motivation and their gender role orientation.

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