

THE EFFECTS OF A SUMMER RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE  
SELF-CONCEPT OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming  
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The study was undertaken to determine the effect of a six week summer recreational program on the self-concept of disadvantaged children.

#1

The experimental and control groups were composed of 20 males and 20 females of the age range 10-12 in each group. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to each group prior to the start of the program. Subjects in the experimental group took part in a recreational program which emphasized a games approach to both physical activities and reading skills. In addition, arts and crafts were included as a third component because of the effect they are known to have upon self-concept. The control group did not participate in any form of treatment. At the conclusion of the six week summer program, control and experimental groups again completed the Piers-Harris Scale.

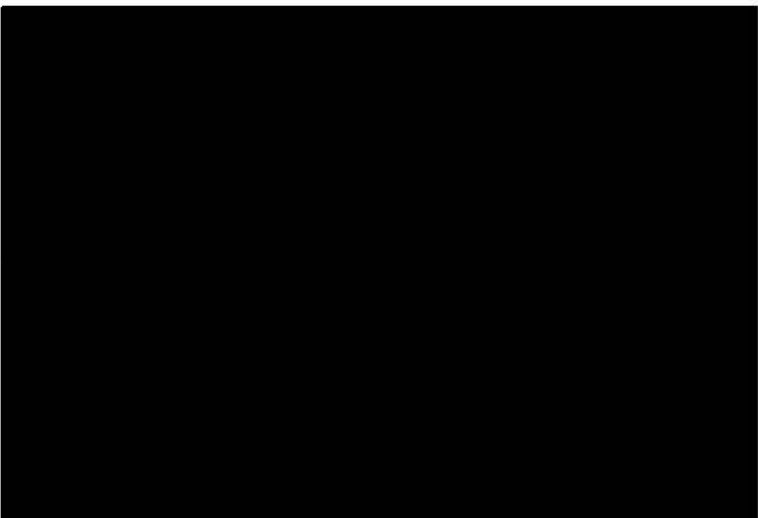
The statistical analysis of the data was conducted by a two factor multivariate analysis of variance concerned with the differences between males and females as well as between experimental and control groups. The criteria used were the difference scores obtained from the six pre-test scores which are obtained from the Piers-Harris Scale.

#2

The major finding of the study was that the children in the experimental group displayed a significant improvement in self-concept ( $p = .036$ ). This improvement was attributed mainly to the recreational approach

employed in the program which emphasized games, to the fact that there was a 15 minute daily social interaction period between the teacher and his own group of children, and also that the materials which were used were presented in such a manner so as to allow the children to experience success. The data also indicated that there was no significant interaction effect between the two sexes and the experimental condition, nor were there significant differences in mean responses to the Piers-Harris between male and female groups over the control and experimental conditions.

Possible biases and limitations to the study were pointed out, as well as suggestions for continuing research in this area.



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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

The present research is concerned with the effects of a summer recreational program upon the self-concept of disadvantaged children. Self-concept is defined here as all the perceptions that an individual has of himself which emphasizes his perceptions of his own worth and ability. In addition to this global self-concept, it is possible to consider smaller categories of self-concept (Brookhover, Sailor, & Paterson, 1964). For example, those perceptions which are related to reading can be termed "reading self-concept," and those related to physical activities termed "physical self-concepts" (Quandt, 1971). In this research, North American middle-class cultural values and their effects upon the self-concept of any member of this society are accepted as the norm.

The disadvantaged sector of this society develops an abnormal self-concept because it has been deprived of the same opportunity for healthy growth and development that is available to the vast majority of the other members of the large society in which they live (Marans & Lourie, 1967). Disadvantaged children are considered to be those children who need special educational and/or psychological assistance to perform at the grade and maturity levels

for their ages. The term also includes children with special educational and psychological needs resulting from poverty, neglect, delinquency, handicaps, and cultural, economic, or linguistic isolation from the general community (ESEA, Title 3, 1967).

As a result of such deprivation the disadvantaged form a special population in the North American Society. Many researchers have recognized this fact, and have studied various aspects of the disadvantaged child (Deutsch, 1960; Reisman, 1962; Ausubel, 1963; Eriksen, 1963; Passow, 1968; and Murphy, 1973). The term disadvantaged is one of a number of labels given to a population suffering from cultural and economic deprivation that does not "attune them to the demands and opportunities of modern life (Passow, 1968). Other terms that have been used include educationally deficient, inner-city child, socially disadvantaged, and culturally deprived (Hiram, 1972; Passow, 1968).

### Theories of Self-Concept

Many psychologists and self-theorists are in agreement that the central nucleus around which the personality develops is the self-concept (Allport, 1961; Hiram, 1972; Levine, 1973). The literature referring to the self-concept is extensive with reference to such terms as self, ego, the subjective self, and the phenomenal self. Differences do exist among these concepts of self, yet all share in common the complex and "elusive phenomena" which

include our perceptions of our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

In 1890 William James wrote the Principles of Psychology, which included virtually every aspect of man's perception of himself. From this early book, other theorists have chosen to elaborate on one or another of James' writings. Some of the theorists who have contributed various concepts of self include Lecky (1945), Hilgard (1949), Rogers (1951), Allport (1955), Hiram (1972), and Stagner (1974). Three of these which have fairly unique contributions to this study will be considered in more detail.

An elaboration of his view of the self is presented by Rogers (1951) in his book, Client-Centered Therapy. The self is discussed in terms of development of the individual's interactions with his environment. This includes striving for self-consistency, self-actualization, growth, and accessibility to verbalization and symbolization. Although Rogers concept of self is not static in development, little elaboration exists as to the cultural, genetic, or social class determinants of personality.

While Rogers represents a theorist who accepts the self as a process, Allport (1955) reflects this point of view only minimally, stressing more the concept of self as object. Allport feels that the term self means different things to different people, and therefore he formulated a construct called the proprium (1961). The proprium consists

of seven aspects of self including: bodily-self, self-identity, self-esteem, self-extension, self-image, self-as-rational-contender, and propriate striving.

Allport and other self-theorists agree that culture and an individual's environment affect the development of the individual's self-concept. George Hiram's theory of self (1972) was found to be of special value due to its relationship to the personality development of disadvantaged children. This theory places the self-concept as the single most important sub-area in the development of an individual's personality. ✓

Hiram bases his theory upon the construct that the disadvantaged child is a personality victim of a syndrome of poverty in which many of the social and cultural variables necessary for "proper human development" are absent. Since the individual's self-concept is a product of environmental experience, Hiram, also developed a personality model based upon the various evaluative attitudes, values, aspirations, motives, and obligations associated with this environment. Through the theory and the model, Hiram explained that if a child is to develop positive feelings about himself, he must be regarded positively by those who matter to him. In this role, Hiram places the school, teacher, and its programs as extremely important in the development of the disadvantaged child's self-concept. A practical solution to the problem of how to engender a better self-concept for the disadvantaged child ✓

may lie in the offering of relevant experiences at the school, or special programs designed to cater for the needs of disadvantaged children.

### Experiences Affecting Self-Concept.

The self-theories relevant to this paper suggest that culture and environment have a direct effect upon the development of any individual's self-concept (Hiram, 1972). Certainly much of the literature suggests that the experiences that affect the development of the disadvantaged child's self-concept are often due to his economic disadvantage and its inherent conditions (Plant, 1937; Carothers, 1966; Symonds, 1968; Miskimins & Baker, 1973).

Evidence is also increasing that a major force affecting the development of an individual's self-concept is the reflection of what the individual believes are the perceptions and evaluations others have of him (Koocher, 1971; Byrne, 1974). Within their own setting some disadvantaged children may receive positive feedback about themselves and as a result acquire the same or higher self-concepts than their advantaged counterparts (Greenburg et al, 1965; Carter, 1968; Soares & Soares, 1969; Trowbridge, 1970, 1972; Rosenburg, 1965; Coopersmith, 1967; Getsinger et al, 1972). Further studies by Soares and Soares (1970) using their own bi-polar test compared 229 disadvantaged and 285 advantaged children in grades 4 to 8. Results of the six week program found that both groups exhibited an initially positive self-concept.

Upon leaving their environment, however, the disadvantaged group developed a negative self-concept. This self-concept change according to Soares and Soares (1970) and Passow (1968) is a result of a different set of values determined by the socioeconomic level of the new environment. Other disadvantaged children may develop negative self-concepts right from their own homes as a result of a poor physical environment or from continual negative feedback about their opportunities and worth as individuals (Densley, 1967; Deutsch, 1967; Long & Henderson, 1968; Healey, 1969, and Ziller et al, 1969). According to Witty (1967) much of the research indicates the disadvantaged child mirrors the negative attitudes of others and reflects the discrimination in his own negative self-concept.

Although there is some disagreement in the literature, all seem to agree that the environment affects the self-concept and personality, especially during the child's early years (Bloom, 1964). Children should, therefore, be provided with early positive experiences at home and in school if they are to develop positive feelings about themselves (Scott, 1968; Pervin, 1970).

Experiences in school have been found to have a marked effect upon the self-concept of all children and especially the disadvantaged (Hiram, 1972; Daniels, 1967). Passow (1968) draws attention to the psychological effect of the school upon the disadvantaged child. He describes the schools in poorer areas of town as often older, outmoded, and offering programs based upon middle-class values

that are not relevant to the disadvantaged population. Passow (1968) feels that program content should not only be relevant but also considered as material that could possibly alter the disadvantaged child's "self-image and view of self as learner." Inadequate experiences through the school, compounded with a lack of prerequisite learning and general acculturation from the home, prevent disadvantaged children from developing feelings of self-worth. Consequently, many observations have been made that the school environment can act as a negative force upon the disadvantaged child's self-concept including Deutsch (1960), Edwards (1967), Rioux (1967), Hunt (1968) and Hiram (1972).

It is difficult to change the home environment and often difficult and time consuming to elicit changes within schools. As a result, a variety of short-term, special programs have been offered to disadvantaged children in an attempt to afford positive experiences normally denied them. In particular, various types of recreational programs have had a positive effect upon the child's developing self-concept (Coopersmith, 1967; Abbott & Haynes, 1973). Programs as short as six weeks have even been reported to positively aid the self-concept of disadvantaged children (Van Krevalen, 1972). With particular reference to the disadvantaged, the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (1966), Vel Moore (1970), and James F. Murphy (1972), have all referred to recreational programs as especially needed as the environment of the

disadvantaged is so socially and economically deprived that a "safety valve" is required.

Several programs have emphasized the importance that an individual's physical activities have upon personality structure and, in particular, self-concept. Slavson (1946) found that physical activities helped develop a feeling of self-worth, and Zion (1965) related self-concept and body awareness in motion. Her conclusions based on significant correlations between self-concept and body-concept scales, were that the security one has in one's body and its functional abilities is related to the security with which one faces one's self and the world. Similar results were obtained by Bower (1952) and Coopersmith (1967). Kane (1972) offered the explanation that the environment in which physical abilities are displayed (games and sports) constitutes an ideal setting for the development of desirable personality characteristics such as confidence, sociability, self-reliance, co-operativeness, and general personal adjustment. Active participation in physically oriented recreational programs tend also to be associated with an integration of social and emotional development in children (Slavson, 1946). At the Children's Physical Developmental Clinic at the University of Maryland, Johnson (1966) found improvement in various aspects of emotional health in children could be associated with an improvement in fitness. These social and emotional

characteristics have been found to overlap and affect the development of children's self-concepts (McKinney, 1937; Blanchard, 1946; Cowell, 1949). This suggests that physically oriented recreational programs may have far reaching psychological effects. Positive effects on the self-concept have also been obtained through programs stressing games. For example Redl (1959) worked with children of all types at the National Institute of Health (U.S.A.) and found games help children gain self-control and aid in personal adjustments which affect the developing self-concept.

Arts and crafts also offer appropriate experiences for children to develop positive feelings about themselves. This observation was first made by such psychologists as Combs and Snyggs (1959) and Rogers (1961). According to Kaufmann (1966), art in its many forms provides numerous opportunities for the expression of the self-concept as well as the feelings it engenders. Studies by Abbott and Haynes (1973) and Weidenheimer et al (1972) suggest the positive effects possible from crafts, drawing, and painting on children's self-concept. In particular, Weidenheimer et al (1972) presented a 10 week program of art and art related experiences to 541 disadvantaged children in grades 1 to 6. Data revealed not only improved self-concepts but also suggested a transferrable effect from the art upon other school experiences for these children. This effect is especially known in academics, specifically reading skills. Evidence is found in an ESEA Title 1 program (1973).

A six month comprehensive art and reading enrichment program was given to 100 socially and economically deprived inner city children. Children's attitudes towards academic subjects were enhanced, self-concepts improved, and reading skills raised through the use of art experiences.

Other programs have emphasized language arts games, specifically pertaining to reading, and examined their effect upon the development of children's self-concepts (Sampson, 1969; Gordon, 1972). Games, as used in the classroom and in the recreational program, have been found to serve a variety of functions for children including the building of desirable attitudes towards reading, providing for individual differences, and providing pleasant and successful practice sessions (Johnson, 1975; Gordon, 1972). Experiences through educational games in summer recreational programs have provided new opportunities for children with poor reading self-concepts (Cohen, 1969). Similar results to Cohen (1969) were obtained by Devries (1975) using a Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGI) program. The 54 third grade children were randomly assigned and then exposed to a 6 week unit of language arts skills. The TGI games approach to learning resulted in improved language arts skills (reading) and improved self-concepts. With the current emphasis society places upon reading ability, most children grow up in an environment in which inability to read is socially unacceptable. Quandt (1972) noted how poor reading ability gave children a poor self-concept.

The possible differences of effect upon self-concept development in males and females resulting from various recreational programs should also be considered. At the same time, however, the majority of studies and theories pertinent to this paper do not consider sex differences. The studies by Devries (1975), Redl (1959), Cohen (1969), and Abbott and Haynes (1973) consider mainly self-concept changes in groups of children resulting from an individual activity. These activities were related either to art, reading or physical activities. Self-theorists including Allport (1961) and Hiram (1972) also make no distinction between self-concept development differences in males and females, preferring to discuss sexes as a single group.

On further analysis, the studies of Piers-Harris (1969, 1964) and Soares and Soares (1970) have considered sex differences. Both suggest the non-existence of significant sex differences. Another example is Lytle's study (1970) which used the California Test of Personality for measurement. A 5 week summer recreational program was presented to 178 children in grades 3 to 6. Using a pre-test-post-test design, no significant sex differences were found. Piers-Harris (1969) suggest "it is probably better to assume that no consistent sex differences have been demonstrated on the Piers-Harris Scale."

As this program used the Piers-Harris Scale, their suggestions were considered carefully before proceeding. Still, the writer felt some differences in the present program warranted the consideration of sex differences.

These differences included the integration of art, reading, and physical activities into a single program; and the need to determine if program content or teacher emphasis leaned more towards a male or female approach.

### Hypotheses

This study was undertaken to determine whether a summer recreational program had any effect upon the self-concept of a group of disadvantaged children. The self-concept levels of disadvantaged children have been well documented as negative by some (Densley, 1967; Witty, 1967) and positive by others (Soares & Soares, 1969; Trowbridge, 1970, 1972). Murphy (1972), Van Krevalen (1972) and Kane (1972) have all indicated that a short summer recreation program can have lasting effects upon the self-concept of disadvantaged children.

Presentation of arts and crafts, language arts games, and physical activities were found related to self-concept development, but only on an individual basis. The combined effects of all three components have not been studied previously. The hypotheses are stated in the null form which is the form by which they are actually tested, e.g. there will be no difference between pre and post-test scores at the .05 level of significance.

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be no difference between the sexes on the Piers-Harris measures of self-concept between control and experimental groups; ( e.g., if males increase by 2 points then females are expected to increase by a similar amount. )

H<sub>2</sub>: The means of the responses for male and female groups will be the same over the experimental and control conditions, on all six variables measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

H<sub>3</sub>: The means of the responses for experimental and control groups will be the same on all six variables of the Piers-Harris Scale.

## CHAPTER II

## METHOD

Subjects

Forty boys and 40 girls were selected from 230 children who applied to participate in a six week summer recreational program. The children applying for the program ranged in age from 7 to 12 years. Ninety children were admitted to the program on a first-come-first-serve basis with 60 of the children being between 10 and 12 years of age. From these 60 children, 20 boys and 20 girls were randomly selected to form the experimental group.

The control group was randomly selected from the remaining 10, 11, and 12 year old late applicants who were unable to attend the program due to enrollment restrictions. The control group also consisted of 20 boys and 20 girls.

Ethnically, the greatest number of subjects were of anglo-Canadian descent with the ratio of anglo-Canadians remaining constant between groups (see Appendix A).

The Program

The 20 boys and 20 girls in the experimental group took part in the summer recreational program. The program

incorporated the strengths of previous recreational programs by offering physical games (Kane, 1972; Zion, 1965), arts and crafts (Weidenheimer et al, 1972; Abbott & Haynes, 1973), and language arts games (Gordon, 1972; Devries, 1975).

Physical activities were included in the majority of classes and a variety of low organization games including floor hockey and dodge ball were employed. Some individual skills were also presented, mainly through the breakdown of a larger team game, such as soccer or basketball. These games were presented usually to the children within their own individual groups (further details p. 17). On occasion, however, they would be teamed with other groups. Swimming and field trips were also part of the physical program. Swimming occurred each Tuesday and Thursday and field trips once per week, on Fridays.

Art concentrated on a crafts approach, whereby each child was able to complete a new project every 2 or 3 days. Some of the projects would include macrame, paper mache, masks, bottle animals, and plaster of paris molds. Many of these materials were supplied by the children.

Language arts used a games approach that focused upon reading skills. The purpose of the games was to motivate the children to read, to improve or maintain each child's reading level, and to provide opportunities

for successful reading experiences. Audio-visual materials were also used to help stimulate the program and motivate the children.

### Schedule

All children in the program received an equal amount of time in each of the activities, during a 9:00 am to 12 noon daily six week program. A weekly breakdown of each activity for each group included;

Arts and Crafts	2 hours
Language Arts Games	3 hours
Physical Activities	4 hours
Swimming	2 hours
Field Trips	3 hours
Free Time (Recess)	1 hour

The beginning of each day began by all the children meeting in their assigned groups with their assigned teachers. Four of the staff were professional teachers in the public school system of Greater Victoria. The remaining two staff members had school and classroom-related experience. This daily meeting was for purposes of social interaction and attendance. After attendance was taken, each group moved to its regular first class.

The children's program typically consisted of four activities each morning, each of 40 minutes duration. On a swim day, however, only two periods of the regular program were offered. Children in all groups had a daily recess period from 10:20 to 10:35. Following the break, they proceeded to their next activity.

### Apparatus and Setting

The program was conducted in George Jay Elementary School, Victoria, using three classrooms and the school gymnasium. Classrooms had standard tables and chairs, and the gymnasium was equipped with a trampoline, gymnastics equipment, floor mats, playground balls and traditional equipment for games.

Arts and crafts were performed in one of the classrooms. Various craft materials were used including, jute, clay, plaster of paris, paints, paper and other traditional craft items.

The remaining two classrooms were for language arts games. Equipment included laminated reading games (levels 1 to 7), for phonics, printing, spelling and writing as well as some commercial games such as Spill and Spell, Scrabble, and Probe. Audio-visual equipment consisted of records, films, cassettes, tape recorders, and a listening center.

### Procedure and Experimental Design

The summer program was designed so that the ninety children were divided into six groups, each group having 15 children of approximately the same ages. Following selection of the experimental and control groups, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (see Appendix B) was administered in mid-June, 1975. All subjects wrote the scale as a single group. Administration of the test was by the program director.

The post-test was administered by the program director to the control and experimental groups during the second week back at school.

An integrated recreational program was designed to enhance the self-concept of children from an inner-city school. This objective was to be accomplished by enhancing social skills and adult relationships through social interaction with peers, and development of co-operative obedience to rules and discipline. Emotional development would be enhanced through continued development of fine and gross motor skills, and retention of the past year's learned social, cultural, and academic skills.

To help evaluate the program's objective, a measuring instrument called the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was employed. The Piers-Harris Scale provides a measure of self-concept based upon the weighted scores of six sub-categories of self-concept. The sub-categories of self-concept include the children's perception of their own behaviour, their intellectual capacities, their physical attributes, their level's of anxiety, their popularity amongst peers, and their overall happiness and satisfaction.

The Piers-Harris consists of 80 first-person declarative statements of the type "I am a happy person"; the child responds simply "yes" or "no". Half are worded to indicate a negative self-concept. Negative terms such as "don't" are avoided because they can be confusing to young children. The remaining half reflect a positive self-concept.

The scale was standardized on 1,183 children in grades 4 to 12 of one Pennsylvania school district (see Appendices D & E). There appear to be no consistent sex or grade differences in the means. The internal consistency of the scale ranges from .78 to .93 and retest reliability from .71 to .77. Correlation with similar instruments is in the mid-sixties, and the scale possesses teacher and peer validity coefficients of .40. According to Bentler (1970), the scale possesses sufficient reliability and validity for research purposes.

Prior to completing the Piers-Harris, the program director stressed that the items should be answered as "the children think they are, not would like to be, that the scale is not a test and the results would not affect their school grades. During the test session, the program director read each question aloud twice to all the subjects.

#### Statistical Analysis

The data on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was collected on a pre-test and post-test basis. A Two Factor Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), was conducted between males, females, experimental, and control groups using the difference scores based on six post-test minus six pre-test scores as the criterion.

## CHAPTER III

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evidence of Pre-Treatment Equivalence of Groups

Considering the initial means first, some observable differences can be seen (see Table 1 & p.21, Figure 1).

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre and Post Test Totals

<u>Treatment Group</u>	Pretest		Posttest	
	X	SD	X	SD
<u>Males</u>				
Control	59.25	11.52	58.60	15.04
Experimental	56.30	13.61	60.75	13.59
<u>Females</u>				
Control	58.99	10.77	58.15	12.76
Experimental	56.80	13.23	62.84	10.88

These results allowed the researcher to test for experiment vs control groups, pooling over males and females. Upon completion, the multivariate test of the experimental effect (Test of E) showed no significant difference between experimental and control groups on the pre-test scores alone (see p. 22, Table 2).

FIGURE 1

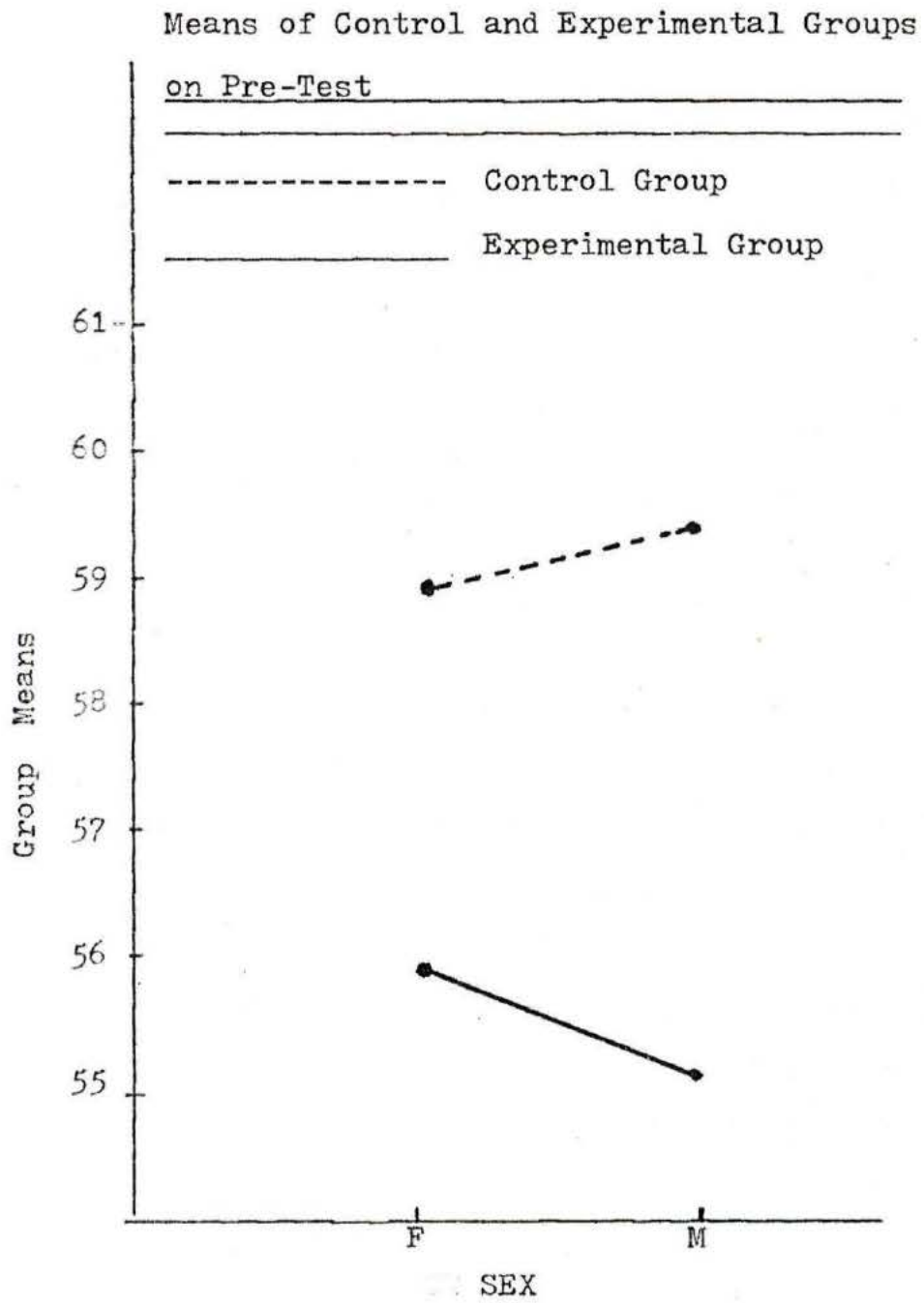


TABLE 2

Multivariate Test of Significance for the Test of E  
using Wilks Lambda Criterion- Pre-Test

Variable	MS	F	p less than
1	18.050	2.044	0.157
2	20.000	1.363	0.247
3	1.513	0.175	0.677
4	3.200	0.475	0.493
5	3.200	0.354	0.554
6	0.800	0.289	0.592

The difference observed in the Test of E, described in more detail later, is related to the subjects in the experimental group changing more on the average than subjects in the control group, based on all six variables. The variables affecting this change are also discussed later.

Upon further study of the means of the variables, an observable pattern exists whereby the average difference between pre and post means is larger on every variable for the experimental group, except variable 3 for males. Considering only the post-test scores, a similar trend exists (see p. 23, Tables 3 & 4). The reversal is true, however, on the pre-test results when the larger mean is in the control condition, except variable 5 for females (see Table 3). Following observation of the means, the three stated hypotheses were analyzed.

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Test on Scores of Six Variables

FACTOR	VARIABLE					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Exp. $\bar{X}$	14.55	11.00	6.10	8.10	8.25	7.30
Female SD	3.43	4.41	3.06	2.25	2.40	1.72
Cont. $\bar{X}$	15.85	12.00	6.55	8.15	8.20	7.55
Female SD	1.98	2.97	2.60	2.54	2.89	1.87
Exp. $\bar{X}$	13.85	12.10	7.40	8.80	7.10	7.30
Male SD	3.40	3.99	3.23	3.07	3.64	1.72
Cont. $\bar{X}$	14.45	13.10	7.50	9.55	7.95	7.45
Male SD	2.83	3.79	2.82	2.46	2.96	1.27

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Post-Test on Scores of Six Variables

Exp. $\bar{X}$	15.60	13.05	7.90	9.15	9.45	7.90
Female SD	2.89	3.36	2.44	2.34	2.30	1.11
Cont. $\bar{X}$	15.25	10.95	6.30	8.85	8.10	7.50
Female SD	3.41	3.91	2.86	2.36	3.02	1.50
Exp. $\bar{X}$	14.60	13.35	7.50	9.50	8.40	7.60
Male SD	3.57	3.36	3.23	2.89	2.60	1.60
Cont. $\bar{X}$	14.05	12.75	8.00	9.10	8.15	7.55
Male SD	3.91	4.48	3.47	2.59	2.60	1.70

Test of Sex X Experimental Effect (Interaction)

A multivariate test of significance using "Wilks Lambda Criterion" revealed that the pattern of responses for male and female groups were not significant over the experimental and control conditions ( $F(1, 76) = 2.036, p = .072$ ). If a significant interaction had occurred in this test, male and female groups would have been analyzed separately over experimental and control groups.

TABLE 5

Multivariate Test of Significance for the Test of S X E using Wilks Lambda Criterion

Variable	MS	F	p less than
1	1.250	0.242	0.624
2	11.250	1.287	0.260
3	30.012	7.609	0.007
4	3.200	0.849	0.360
5	0.200	0.051	0.822
6	1.012	0.464	0.498

Test of S ( $\bar{X}$  of Males versus  $\bar{X}$  of Females)

No significant difference was found between males and females pooled over the experimental and control groups ( $p = .554$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) was accepted and male and female subjects under each condition were considered homogeneous (see p. 25, Table 6).

TABLE 6

Multivariate Test of Significance for the Test of S  
using Wilks Lambda Criterion

Variable	MS	F	p less than
1	0.050	0.010	0.922
2	0.050	0.006	0.940
3	4.513	1.144	0.288
4	11.250	2.986	0.088
5	0.800	0.204	0.653
6	0.113	0.052	0.821

Test of Experimental Effect (Test of E)

The multivariate test for significance of the experimental effect, was significant beyond the .05 level ( $p = .036$ ). This indicated that the experimental group rated themselves more highly than the control group, as can be seen in Figure 2, p. 26 of the Mean Difference. Variables 1, 2, and 5, contributed significantly as seen by their higher discriminant function coefficients. Using a univariate analysis, these variables were also found to be significant at the .01 level (see p. 27, Table 7). A lesser positive effect is noted from variables 3 and 4,  $p$  less than .10.

FIGURE 2

Table of Mean Difference

	Experimental	Control
MALES	↓	↓
MINUS		
FEMALES		
	$\bar{X}$ Exp.	$\bar{X}$ Cont.

VARIABLE

1	1	.9	-.5
	2	11.51	-.7
	3	.9	-.5
	4	.87	.12
	5	1.25	-.15
	6	.45	.25

TABLE 7

Multivariate Test of Significance for the Test of E  
using Wilks Lambda Criterion

F		p less than		R
2.408		0.036		0.411
Variable	MS	F	p less than	Discriminant Functions
1	29.200	7.594	0.007**	0.367
2	110.450	12.638	0.001**	0.682
3	13.612	3.451	0.067	-0.155
4	11.250	2.986	0.088	0.100
5	28.800	7.335	0.008**	0.183
6	3.612	1.656	0.202	0.090

\*\* p less than .01

Results of the Test of E ( $F(1, 76) = 2.408$ , p less than .05), indicates the summer program significantly affected the self-concept of the experimental group for both males and females, as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Previous studies of the effect of summer recreational programs upon self-concept reported similar results (Abbott & Haynes, 1973; Cohen, 1969).

The variables contributing most to the overall multivariate test of significance, were behaviour (variable 1), intellectual and school status (variable 2), and popularity (variable 5), as evidenced by the discriminant weights in Table 7, above. Positive changes evidenced by behaviour and popularity were probably influenced by

staff members who placed emphasis on positive social interaction, and took time to praise the children for their achievements. Thornton and Lane (1968) reported a similar finding, and Layman (1972) in turn reported how recreational programs help children gain acceptance and popularity in their social group. Program objectives were always kept within the limits of the children so they could be successful at any given task and therefore be willing to try new tasks. Certainly the value of success has been well documented by many researchers including Whyte (1943) and Read (1969) as success to the child indicates how competently he is able to handle his environment, which has a positive effect upon the child's self-concept (Koocher, 1971).

Intellectual and school status (variable 2) was probably influenced mainly by the low key games approach to reading and comprehension skills. Games according to Johnson (1971) and Gordon (1972) help the child build desirable attitudes toward reading, which have a positive effect upon the child's self-concept. Athletic games are another approach known to have similar effects upon children's self-concept and intellectual development (Redl, 1959; Giles, 1969). Due to the positive intellectual response developed by the game approach, the researcher also suggests this influenced school status. This is interesting, as the program itself operated in a school building of similar stature to Passow's description of the typical school in the disadvantaged child's neighborhood (Passow, 1968).

Physical appearance (variable 3), anxiety (variable 4), and happiness and satisfaction (variable 6) discriminated in a weak, but positive direction. Although not as useful in discriminating between experimental and control groups, these variables are part of the total measurable self-concept, of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

Hiram (1972) and others (Passow, 1968) have continually examined the need for relevant programs for disadvantaged children in order to improve children's self-concepts. It would appear a program, such as the one used in the present study, is capable of providing the relevant experiences to elicit positive changes in the self-concept of disadvantaged children.

At this point, the difficulty of interpreting this experimental data when statistical analysis is confined to the calculation of (F) probability values should be discussed. As Friedman (1968) explains, the basic problem is that a probability value by itself provides little information concerning the magnitude of the observed effect. In simplest terms, the F value of the MANOVA program gives only the R value which when squared ( $R^2$ ) determines the practical significance of the results. This MANOVA program consisted of two groups, which formed a Multiple Regression Analysis when the six variables became independent and the group became the dependent variable.

The R value of Table 7 (only the Test of E is discussed as it had the only significant F) is squared to give a multiple  $R^2$  which indicates the % of variance accounted for by the linear regression. In this case, 16% of variance is accountable. This indicates prediction of group membership based on the six variables will have considerable error. However, it is still possible to predict group membership better than by chance.

This result should not dampen the F significant result for any future programs and research. But, any future replication of this study should consider a tighter control of some of the variables. Such variables should include the language arts games, art, and physical components of the program. As all three components have a known effect upon self-concept, each component should be tested individually, using a pre-test-post-test design. In this manner, it will be possible to determine if any single component has any greater effect on the self-concept than another component. An indication of disadvantage should also be considered, through the use of a known and valid index of deprivation. This would hopefully give some indication to possible economic differences between the control and experimental groups. In effect, those families which responded sooner and were able to get their children into the program due to the first-come-first-serve criteria may be different to those who formed the control group.

### Alternative Procedure

An alternative procedure to running multivariate tests on the six variables was also used to analyze the data. The six variables were summed with equal weights to obtain a total score for both the pre-test and post-test conditions.

Difference scores, defined here as post-test-total scores minus pre-test-total scores, were then obtained and run as Sex X Experiment Univariate ANOVA. These results were consistent with the multivariate results; i.e., no significant interaction effect; no significant male and female effect; and a significant experimental effect of  $p$  less than .01 (see Table 8 below).

TABLE 8

Multivariate Analysis of Variance, Univariate ANOVA  
Alternative Procedure

Source	SS	MS	F	p less than
Within Cells	4103.246	53.990		
S	10.512	10.512	0.195	0.660
E	702.10	702.10	13.004	0.001**
S X E	13.612	13.612	0.252	0.617

\*\* p less than .01

## CHAPTER IV

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of a summer recreational program on the self-concept of a group of disadvantaged children. The differences of effect upon males and females were also examined. It was hypothesized that males and females would increase or decrease similarly between the control and experimental groups, and based on the six variables both male and female mean responses would also be the same.


In order to evaluate the hypotheses experimentally, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered to an experimental and control group on a pre-test and post-test basis.

Statistical examination of the data allows the researcher the following conclusions;

- 1) From the results on the test of sex X experimental effect (interaction), males and females responded similarly for both control and experimental conditions. Since  $p$  was found to be .072, all six variables in any future research should be monitored more closely for a possible differential response pattern between males and females.

2) Many of the schools of Greater Victoria, have a heterogeneous population. Previous research, however, supports the view that disadvantaged children are a homogeneous population, and attend elementary school as a homogeneous population (Soares & Soares, 1970; Passow, 1968; Hyram, 1972). The mean responses of the males versus the females (Test of S) in this case are consistent with the previous research, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and male and female subjects for both conditions can be considered homogeneous.

3) As a result of the summer recreational program, the self-concept of the disadvantaged children was significantly improved. Such evidence is consistent with the findings of Cohen (1969) and Weidenheimer et al (1972). Moreover, the results were obtained in a short session of six weeks, three hours daily. This is a reported short period of time to effect change of self-concept in children (Piers-Harris, 1969). Recent reports, however, suggest programs as short as one week can affect the self-concept of children (Van Krevalen, 1972). The studies found in this paper suggest self-concept changes were a result of programs mainly 5 to 10 weeks in length. These programs also emphasized only one or two components, such as reading, art, physical activities or a combination of two to elicit such changes. The major difference of this program( see p. 48, Appendix C), is the implementation



of an integrated approach of language arts games, physical activities and arts and crafts.

Accompanying this integrated approach, was a known Hawthorne Effect. The effect was considered a necessity to the program, if the children were to be given every possible opportunity, and to give the integrated approach every chance to be effective. Biases mainly evident in the program structure and considered a necessity included a 15 minute daily social interaction period between the teacher and his own group of children; the materials being presented to allow the children success experiences, as emphasized by Gordon (1972), Kane (1972), and Devries (1975); a low staff to children ratio of 1 to 15; and the recreational approach emphasizing games, which helped create a relaxed atmosphere and flexible planning (Murphy, 1972; Gordon, 1972).

A further rationalization for incorporation of certain biases is the observed irrelevance of present school programs for disadvantaged children (Passow, 1968; Hiram, 1972). It seemed relevant to the researcher, therefore, that program content and a sympathetic staff be provided in order to provide these disadvantaged children with every possible opportunity. If this encouraged the changes in the self-concept, then more programs might consider these same criteria in future.

Improvements can still be made on this study for any future research. For example, the long term effects of this summer recreational program still require assessing. In this regard, continuing study should be made when the children have returned to school, and throughout the school year to determine how long the summer program affects the self-concept change. Type of families (e.g. single-parent) and their index of deprivation should also be considered. This may indicate a pattern that could be applied to specific educational needs for a specific type of family and its specific economic level. Lastly, a measured middle-class self-concept should be used as a comparison to the disadvantaged population. In this way, further information as to any self-concept differences between the two populations may be better assessed.

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## APPENDIX A

## Ethnic Groupings of Experimental and Control Groups

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<u>EXPERIMENT</u>	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>
Anglo-Canadian	14	14
Chinese	3	4
East Indian	1	1
Portuguese	1	1
Yugoslavian	1	
 <u>CONTROL</u>		
Anglo-Canadian	15	14
Brazilian	1	
Chinese	2	1
East Indian		1
Italian	1	
Native Indian		2
Phillipino		1
Portuguese	1	
Yugoslavian		1

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

## PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

Project Opportunity is so named as it is a practical approach to enhance a disadvantaged child's opportunities in life either academically, culturally, physically, or socially during the school summer holidays. This is presently the only program of its kind available in British Columbia.

The program is a support service, as it aims to develop self-confidence and a positive self-concept for disadvantaged children. In order to help the child improve his self-concept the following objectives have been set;

- 1) Development of social skills through social interaction with his peers. Helps the child develop both his intraindividual and inter-group skills.
- 2) Retention of past years skills over the summer holidays. These skills include social, cultural, and academic experiences. Importance of these skills lies in the child's adjustment in September to a new school year. Through the continued development of these skills, the child will be more self-confident and positive towards the coming year's work. A pupil teacher ratio of 1 to 15 is also helpful in meeting these objectives plus a staff hired for their interest in disadvantaged children.
- 3) Emotional development resulting in ability to accept self and others in everyday life situations and the ability to face deterring limitations.

- 4) Development of adult relationships towards cooperative obedience to rules and discipline.
- 5) Continued development of fine and gross motor skills plus verbal skills and comprehension.

Parents are encouraged to participate with their children. In any case, they do have input via a five member parent advisory board. The boards functions include public relations, aid in design of program activities, and participant help when needed. The program activities included;

Physical activities of swimming, field trips, gymnastics, and various low organization games.

#### Arts and Crafts

Academic support in reading and writing through a games approach.

The project is success oriented, with all activities being given in a recreational and motivating manner so as to help the child gain more self-confidence. This is also necessary because it is the children's summer holidays and only highly motivating activities will retain their interest for a six week period. The reading activities use a games approach so the child is receiving and learning information in an enjoyable, interesting, and motivated setting. This is necessary so that the disadvantaged child's desire to learn can be strengthened.

School Age Norms (Grades 4 through 12)  
(N=1138)

Piers-Harris Raw Score	Percentile	Stanine	Piers-Harris Raw Score	Percentile	Stanine
80			44	27	4
79			43	24	4
78			42	23	3
77			41	21	3
76	99		40	20	3
75	98		39	18	3
74	97	9	38	17	3
73	96	8	37	15	3
72	95	8	36	14	3
71	94	8	35	13	3
70	93	8	34	12	3
69	91	8	33	11	3
68	89	7	32	10	3
67	87	7	31	9	3
66	85	7	30	8	2
65	82	7	29	7	2
64	79	7	28	6	2
63	77	6	27	6	2
62	74	6	26	5	2
61	71	6	25	5	2
60	69	6	24	4	1
59	66	6	23	3	
58	63	6	22	3	
57	60	5	21	2	
56	57	5	20	2	
55	55	5	19	2	
54	52	5	18	1	
53	49	5	17		
52	46	5	16		
51	44	5	15		
50	41	5	14		
49	38	4	13		
48	36	4	12		
47	33	4	11		
46	31	4	10		
45	29	4			

Means and Standard Deviations for the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale

Sample	Age or Grade	N	Mean	SD
Small town Pennsylvania Public School Children (Millen, 1966)	grade 4	275	47.79	15.19
	" 6	265	55.36	13.93
	" 8	231	52.04	13.52
	" 10	221	49.67	12.36
	" 12	191	54.56	12.05
<u>Normative Group</u>	<u>Total</u>	1183	51.84	13.87
Rural and Urban Oregon Public Schools (Wing, 1966)	grade 5	510	59 (median)	10.5 (quartile deviation)
Small town Pennsylvania Public Schools (Piers, 1965)	grade 4	111	60.40	11.40
	" 6	113	54.09	12.71
Spokane Public Schools (Eastman, 1965)	grades 5, 6	36	55.94	-----
Denver Public Schools (Guardo, 1966)	grade 6	114	58.35	13.58
East Pennsylvania School (Farls, 1966)	grade 4	221	54.3	-----
	" 5	211	56.2	-----
	" 6	207	52.7	-----
Suburban New York State Special Education Classes (Mayer, 1965)	12-13 yrs.	34	55.97	11.5
	14 "	25	51.08	15.19
	15 "	22	54.64	11.89
	16 "	17	55	12.78
Pennsylvania Public School Stutterers (Morley, 1967)	8-10.3 yrs.	40	56.48	9.15
	10.3-12 "	39	55.36	12.40
North Carolina School for Emotionally Disturbed (Borstelman, 1964)	Younger boys	7	50.4	-----
	Older "	7	60	-----
Economically Deprived Schools, Pontiac, Mich.	grades 4, 5, 6		56.42	12.06
	" 4, 5, 6		55.69	11.07

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THE SELF-CONCEPT OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

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