

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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STUDENTS IN A PRESCHOOL-TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

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The relationship between self-concept and teacher competency was examined among 29 female college students enrolled in a beginning-level practicum of a preschool-teacher training program. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) and the Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (PTCRS) were used to assess the subjects' self-concepts and teacher competencies at the end of their training practicums. Results obtained did not support the theoretical proposition derived from self theory that self-concept and teacher competency among the subjects would be positively related. They also failed to provide data in support of the construct validity of the PTCRS. Only 4 of the 90 correlation coefficients expressing the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency calculated reached statistical significance ($p < .05$). However, they were negative in direction. In addition, further analyses of data revealed no significant differences between the teacher competency scores of subjects in high and low self-concept groups. Discussion of results focused on explaining why such results may have been obtained, limitations encountered in this study, and suggestions for future research.

Self-Concept and Teacher Competency Among
Female College Students in a
Preschool-Teacher Training Program

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Self-Concept and Teacher Competency Among Female College Students in a Preschool-Teacher Training Program

I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-concept is an important aspect of personality development. Whether individuals are competent in dealing with experiences encountered in life has much to do with their self-concepts. During the process of teacher training, teachers acquire skills and information that may lead them to develop more effective and competent teaching styles. A competent teacher has been described as an individual who effectively performs behaviors which support and guide young children's development in an educational setting (Sugawara & Cramer, 1980). Self theorists have hypothesized that whether an individual will be a competent teacher depends upon the individual's perception of the self (Combs, Blume, Newman & Wass, 1974; Fitts, 1972; Hamachek, 1978). While a great deal of theoretical literature is available on this subject, empirical research related to such a proposition is sparse. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to empirically examine the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among female college students in a preschool-teacher training program.

Self Theory

Within the last few decades, the self has been given serious attention as a basic tool for understanding behavior (Combs et al., 1974). Although the term "self" has been used in numerous ways, two

distinct meanings have emerged: the self as object and the self as process. The self as object is defined as the attitudes and feelings individuals have about themselves, and the self as process is regarded as a process which regulates behavior and adjustment (Hall & Lindzey, 1961; Wylie, 1961). While some theorists postulate that these two meanings of the self are separate and distinct, self theorists emphasize that the self is both object and process at the same time (Snygg & Combs, 1949). According to Combs (1965), the self is composed of both the perceptions individuals have about themselves and the organization of these perceptions by each individual. As further emphasized by Rogers (1951), this organized configuration of perceptions forms the basis of an individual's self-concept and serves to regulate behavior and to account for uniformities in an individual's personality. Therefore, an individual's self-perceptions are the determinants of one's actions, influencing how an individual will behave or function within any given situation (Combs, Richards & Richards, 1976; Hall & Lindzey, 1970).

Self theorists maintain that in order for one to understand behavior one must perceive the individual's phenomenal world as the person does. Since it is impossible to totally perceive another's phenomenal world, the best way of understanding an individual's behavior is through the self-concept (Fitts, 1972). The self-concept of an individual is the stable and prominent aspect of an individual's phenomenal world. It provides a screen through which everything is seen, heard, evaluated, and understood. Moreover, the self-concept is said to be the center of all existence, the

frame of reference from which the individual interacts with the world (Combs, Avila & Purkey, 1971; Fitts, 1972). Therefore, in addition to providing a basis in reality, it also exerts its influence upon what people do and how they behave.

Individuals tend to perceive the world and their experiences in a manner that is congruent with their already existing self-concepts. Consequently, an individual's behavior is consistent with that individual's concept of self. This selective effect of the self-concept exemplifies the circular nature of the relationship between self-concept and behavior. The concept of the self corroborates and supports already existing behaviors and beliefs about the self and so tends to maintain and reinforce its own existence (Combs et al., 1971). Hence, individuals who feel they are inadequate as persons are more likely to behave inadequately. Likewise, this circular effect operates equally well in a positive direction. Persons with positive self-concepts are likely to behave in ways congruent with adequacy.

Drawing further from the writings of Combs and Snygg (1959), Kelley (1947), Maslow (1954), and Rogers (1961), whole, expanded, fully functioning, or self-actualized persons are individuals who are truly achieving the utmost of their potentialities, effectively contributing to the welfare of others. They are persons who think well of themselves, have positive self-concepts, and like themselves. Liking and accepting themselves, they also like and accept others. As Maslow (1968) postulated, individuals who are self-actualizing are more likely to realize their true qualities and, thus, function more creatively and effectively. They make more effective use of

their total organism in all aspects of their world (Rogers, 1951, 1961, 1969).

In summary, self theorists maintain that in order to understand a person's behavior, one must be able to understand an individual's phenomenal world. Part of a person's phenomenal world consists of an organized configuration of perceptions an individual has about itself, known as a person's self-concept. This self-concept is said to regulate behavior, thus influence how an individual will behave or function within any given situation. In order to understand a person's behavior, therefore, it is necessary for one to understand that person's self-concept.

Self-Concept and Teacher Competency

Over the past 50 years researchers have attempted to define behaviorally the characteristics associated with a "competent" teacher. However, after reviewing the research literature available in the field, Combs et al. (1974) concluded that results obtained were disappointing and inconsistent. For example, in attempting to assess teacher competency, a group of researchers have primarily centered their attention upon evaluating a teacher's knowledge of a subject-matter area (Combs & Soper, 1963). In addition, other researchers have been primarily concerned with a variety of teaching methods employed by teachers in the classroom (Flanders, 1960; Hughes, 1959). Still also, another group of researchers have looked at "common" traits found among individuals rated as "good" teachers of children (Ellena, Stevenson & Webb, 1961). However, after

reviewing these studies, Combs et al. (1974) concluded that no consistent set of traits, methods, or knowledge could be said to be associated with "good" teaching. In fact, it was found that "good" teaching was not a direct function of a teacher's general traits, methods of teaching, or knowledge of subject matter. Thus, a large portion of the problems encountered in this area of research has been related to definitions researchers use in describing what competent teaching is. As summarized by Combs et al. (1974), in the past teacher-education programs have operated under the notion that "good" teaching was primarily derived from a mechanistic view of behavior. This approach focused upon exposing teacher trainees to a variety of teaching methods and subject matter in order to develop their competencies as teachers. According to Combs et al. (1974), if behavior is a function of an individual's perceptions, then an understanding of competent teacher behaviors must shift from a mechanistic approach to a more humanistic one. Teacher-education programs, therefore, must focus their attention upon allowing teacher trainees to explore the feelings and perceptions they encounter in their teaching. To Combs et al. (1974), the essence of successful professional teaching is related to an individual's use of the self. The "personness" of an individual is the vehicle through which that individual teacher accomplishes whatever that individual does as a teacher.

Hamachek (1975) viewed the competent teacher as possessing self-perceptions that were positive and optimistic. Competent teachers were described as having a healthy self-acceptance. They were more apt to be productive, happier, and effective if they were able to

see themselves as basically adequate. As Fitts (1972) suggested, an individual who possesses a positive self-concept will be more likely to behave confidently, securely, and competently. They are less threatened by others, have less to prove of themselves, and can relate to others more comfortably and effectively. According to self theorists, these teachers are individuals who can make the most significant contributions to the development of children (Combs et al., 1974; Hamachek, 1978).

Although theoretical propositions about the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency exist, empirical research supporting these propositions are sparse. Investigations have been conducted on the relationship between a teacher's self-concept and children's academic achievement (Aspey & Buhler, 1975; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971). On the basis of these studies, numerous suggestions for a teacher's self-concept have been made. Often these suggestions emphasized the need to structure teacher-education programs to enhance the development of positive self-concepts among teachers. For example, Loree (1971), in describing a number of model program developed to help teachers improve their competencies, identified four programs in which the awareness of self, accurate perception of self, and development of the self were major goals of teachers in training. Likewise, the Bicentennial Commission on Education for the Profession of Teaching emphasized, in their teacher-preparation report, the importance of developing a teacher trainee's self as a tool for effective teaching (Houston & Howsam, 1972). Furthermore, Scofield (1978) in attempting to outline recommendations for defining an effective teacher, suggested that

help be given to beginning teachers in developing an adequate sense of self. However, these ideas are primarily recommendations and describe programs which foster positive self-concepts among teachers. They presently continue to remain essentially untested.

One noticeable exception is a monumental study conducted by Ryans (1964) on elementary-teacher characteristics. Teachers were assessed by Ryans' Teacher Characteristics Schedule, a self-report inventory based upon 25 originally separate instruments. Within this self-report instrument, teachers were rated as high or low in emotional stability, based on 300 multiple-choice and checklist items. In this study, it was found that there were differences between the self-related expressions of high emotionally stable teachers and low emotionally stable teachers. For example, more emotionally stable teachers: (1) identified self-confidence and cheerfulness as dominant traits in themselves, (2) said they liked active contact with other people, (3) expressed interest in a variety of hobbies and handicrafts, and (4) reported their childhoods to be happy ones. On the other hand, low emotionally stable teachers: (1) expressed less confidence in themselves, (2) seemed not to prefer contact with others, (3) were more directive and authoritarian, and (4) reported more unhappy childhood memories. On the basis of these findings, Ryans (1964) concluded that stable teachers were more likely to see themselves as "good" people. Their perceptions were generally positive, optimistic, and accepting.

In another related study by Gooding (1969), the perceptual organizations of effective and ineffective teachers were investigated. Twenty hypotheses were developed for this study and categorized into

four general dimensions. The dimensions included: (1) perception of other people, (2) perception of self, (3) perception of the teaching task, and (4) general frame of reference. Two groups of 32 teachers were identified as effective and ineffective, respectively, on the basis of independent ratings by principals and curriculum coordinators from several elementary schools. Trained observers visited each teacher in the classroom for three observation sessions and one interview. On the basis of these observations and the interview, trained observers rated the teacher in each of the groups on statements related to the 20 hypotheses and 4 perceptual organization dimensions employed in this study. Results revealed that there were significant differences between the perceptual organizations of effective and ineffective teachers. Findings associated with the "perception of self" dimension indicated that unlike ineffective teachers, effective teachers tended to perceive themselves as: (1) identified rather than apart from others, (2) basically able rather than inadequate or untrustworthy, (4) worthy rather than unworthy, overlooked, or discounted, and (5) wanted rather than unwanted, ignored, or rejected. As a result of these findings, Gooding (1969) concluded that a significant positive relationship does exist between self-perceptions and teacher effectiveness.

In a third study by Garvey (1970), using college students as subjects, the relationship between self-concept and success in an elementary student-teaching experience was investigated. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale was used to assess the student teachers' self-concepts approximately four months prior to their

student teaching experience, and success in student teaching was assessed by letter grades given to the student teachers by their supervisors. Results indicated that success in student teaching was positively related to the students' self-concepts. Students who perceived themselves positively were also found to receive higher grades in student teaching.

Finally, in a fourth study, Dematteis (1975) examined the relationship between self-concept and teacher performance among college students enrolled in a preschool-teacher training program. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) was used to assess students' self-concepts, and an Instructor's Evaluation Rating Scale (IERS) was used to assess their teaching performances. Results revealed no significant positive relationships between students' self-concept scores and their performances, although all correlations obtained were in the positive direction.

In summary, while theoretical propositions regarding the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency exist, and recommendations for implementing teacher-education programs which enhance the positive development of self-concept among teachers are prevalent, little empirical research has been conducted to test these propositions and recommendations. Of the limited research that has been done, all appear to have provided some support for the proposition that self-concept and teacher competency are positively related among individuals. However, all of these studies displayed a number of limitations in their efforts. As evident in the studies reviewed, all differed in their definitions and/or assessments of self-concept and teacher competency. Comparability of results, therefore, is a

major problem with these studies. In addition, observations and/or interview sessions used to assess self-concept and teacher competency were limited and did not provide adequate reliability and validity data. Furthermore, the use of a letter grade to assess teacher competency in one study appears to be far from adequate. Of the self-concept measures employed in these studies, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) appeared the most adequate. It is a self-report measure and has generated a number of reliability and validity studies over the years.

Finally, it should be noted that subjects used in most of the studies reviewed consisted of teachers at the elementary-school level. Competencies expected of elementary-school teachers are quite different from those of preschool teachers. Only one study was found relating self-concept and teacher performance among preschool student teachers (Dematteis, 1975). Part of this lack has been due to the relative absence of adequate measurement devices to assess competency among teachers of preschool children. For example, in the abovementioned study, an Instructor's Evaluation Rating Scale (IERS) was used to assess students' teaching performances. Items found in such a scale were drawn from a larger pool of items developed by a group of teacher trainers on the basis of what they felt was important in assessing a student teacher's performance. Therefore, no reliability and validity studies were conducted for the scale. The usefulness of the scale in assessing the competency of preschool teachers, therefore, can be easily questioned. Fortunately, with the recent publication of the Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (PTCRS): (Sugawara & Cramer,

1980), more systematic research in this area can be conducted. While some reliability and construct-validity estimates for the PTCRS are presently available, use of this scale in future studies can provide further important construct-validity estimates for the scale.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among female college students in a preschool-teacher training program. Based on theoretical propositions derived from self theory, it is predicted that individuals with more positive self-concepts will display more competent teacher behaviors. The availability of a self-report measure called the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) and a new Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (Sugawara & Cramer, 1980) will provide the avenue through which this proposition can be more systematically tested among teachers of preschool children. Findings obtained from this study related to the proposition derived from self theory can provide additional construct validity for the Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale.

II. METHOD

Subjects

Subjects included 29 female college students enrolled in a beginning level practicum of a preschool-teacher training program at a northwestern university. These students were sophomores and juniors who worked approximately 4 hours a week for 10 weeks in a university child-development laboratory facility. All students had prior course work in early childhood development, including observation experiences. Major practicum requirements for the students included: (1) participation in a preschool program with 15-20 three- to five-year-old children, (2) application of knowledge and observation skills in understanding children's behavior, (3) development of guidance skills, (4) limited experiences in curriculum development, (5) establishment of effective relationships with children and staff, and (6) self-evaluation.

Instruments

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS: Fitts, 1965) was used to assess the subjects' self-concepts. Self-concept is defined as the perceptions individuals have about themselves, the frame of reference through which they interact with the world. The Counseling Form of the TSCS will be used in this study. This form is comprised of 100 statements describing the self to which subjects are asked to rate themselves on a 5-point scale from 1 (completely false) to 5 (completely true). The TSCS is made up of a Total Positive

Score (P) and a Self-Criticism Score (SC). The Total Positive Score (P) can be broken down into three "internal frame of reference" subscales, with 30 statements each, including: (1) Identity (what I am), (2) Self-satisfaction (how I feel about myself), and (3) Behavior (what I do). The Total Positive Score (P) can also be divided into five "external frame of reference" subscales, with 18 statements each, including: (1) the Physical Self, (2) the Moral-Ethical Self, (3) the Personal Self, (4) the Family Self, and (5) the Social Self. High scores on the Total Positive Score (P) and its subscales indicate a more positive view of the self.

In addition to the scales and subscales mentioned above, additional scales are present in the TSCS. On the basis of subjects' scores on the "internal frame of reference" subscales, A Variability (V) score can be calculated. The Variability Score (V) provides the researcher with a simple measure of the amount of inconsistency present between different areas of a person's internal frame of reference. Moderately high scores tend to reflect a lack of unity or integration of self-concept, while moderately low scores indicate the opposite.

Furthermore, on the basis of the subjects' scores on the "external frame of reference" subscales, a Distribution (D) score can also be calculated. The Distribution Score (D) provides the researcher with a measure of the way a subject distributes answers across the "external frame of reference" subscales. Moderately high distribution scores indicate that subjects are certain or definite

in what they say about themselves, while moderately low scores indicate the opposite.

Finally, the Self-Criticism Score (SC) previously mentioned consists of 10 statements taken from the L-Scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. It provides the researcher with information regarding the degree to which subjects are distorting their answers on the TSCS. Moderately high scores generally indicate "normal and healthy openness" for self criticism, while moderately low scores characterized individuals who are defensive about themselves.

Extremely high (99th percentile) and low (1st percentile) Variability (V), Distribution (D), and Self-Criticism (SC) scores are often found among persons with disturbed personalities (Fitts, 1965). Subjects obtaining extremely high or low scores on the TSCS, therefore, were excluded in this study.

A test-retest reliability coefficient of .92 for the Total Positive Score was obtained in a study of 60 college students over a two-week period. Reliability coefficients for the Total Positive Score (P) and its subscales ranged from a low of .60 to a high of .92 (Fitts, 1965). Similarly, in a study with psychiatric patients, using a shortened version of the TSCS, Congdon (1958) obtained a reliability coefficient of .88 for the Total Positive Score (P).

Two major types of validity studies have been conducted for the TSCS. These include: (1) content validity and (2) construct validity, including (a) discrimination between groups, (b) correlation with other personality measures, and (c) personality changes under varying experimental manipulations.

Content validity was established through the use of seven psychologists who evaluated a large pool of items developed for inclusion in the TSCS. Only those items agreed upon by all psychologists as assessing dimensions of self-concept were included in the TSCS.

Construct validity was obtained through use of the TSCS in discriminating between groups of individuals expected to differ in their self-concepts on the basis of their psychological status. For example, the TSCS significantly discriminated between a large group (369) of psychiatric patients and a norm group (626) of nonpatients on the entire TSCS and its subscales. Similar findings were obtained in a number of related studies (Congdon, 1958; Havener, 1961; Piety, 1958; Wayne, 1963). In addition, the TSCS was found to discriminate between delinquents and nondelinquents (Atchison, 1958), alcoholics and nonalcoholics (Wells & Bueno, 1957), unwed and wed mothers (Boston & Kew, 1964), and soldiers who could withstand the stresses of paratrooper training and those who could not (Gividen, 1959). Individuals identified as psychiatric patients, delinquents, alcoholics, unwed mothers, and soldiers unable to withstand paratrooper training had lower self-concept scores than did their respective counterparts.

Additional construct validity was obtained by investigating the relationship between subjects' TSCS scores and selected personality dimensions expected to be related to self-concept. McGee (cited in Fitts, 1965) found that the TSCS scores of psychiatric patients were significantly related to their scores on selected subscales in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory in predicted directions.

A study by Sundby (1962) indicated that the TSCS scores of high-school students were also significantly related to their scores on selected subscales in the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule in predicted directions. A whole host of other studies are available indicating significant relationships between subjects' scores on a variety of personality measures and their self-concepts (Quinn, 1957; Runyan, 1958; Wayne, 1963).

Finally, the TSCS has provided researchers with information regarding the ability of the TSCS to record changes in subjects' self-concepts under varying experimental manipulations. Gividen (1959) found that army paratrooper trainees who failed to withstand the stresses of paratrooper training showed a significantly greater decrease in their scores on the physical-self subscale of the TSCS than did those trainees who passed their training. Furthermore, Ashcraft & Fitts (1964) found that psychiatric patients who underwent therapy during a period of approximately six months showed significant increases in their self-concept scores (i.e., became more positive) when compared with patients in a control group who did not experience therapy.

The Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (PTCRS: Sugawara & Cramer, 1980) was used to assess the subjects' competency as preschool teachers. Teacher competency is generally defined as an individual's ability to perform effectively behaviors which support and guide young children's development in an educational setting. The PTCRS consists of 65 items known as teacher-behavior performance statements. These statements describe teacher behaviors in relatively objective terms so that they can be easily observed in a

preschool setting. Teacher trainees are asked to evaluate the subjects on each of these statements, using a 6-point rating scale from 0 (the student has not worked on this) to 5 (the student does this easily).

The PTCRS consists of one major scale and nine subscales covering the four competency areas: I. Understanding and Evaluating Children's Behavior (4 items); II. Following and Interpreting Guidance Guidelines (14 items); III. Relationships, consisting of four subscales--Relating to Children (9 items), Relating to the Program (11 items), Relating to the Staff (4 items), and Relating to Parents (8 items); and IV. Evaluation, consisting of three subscales--Program Evaluation (4 items), Staff Evaluation (5 items), and Self-Evaluation (6 items). High scores on the total PTCRS and its subscales reflect more competent teacher behaviors among the subjects.

Interrater-reliability coefficients for the PTCRS, using two independent observers, have been relatively high. A reliability coefficient of .90 was obtained for the total PTCRS. However, coefficients obtained for the different subscales varied. High-level reliability coefficients ranging from .84 to .96 were obtained for the Guidance, Program Evaluation, Staff Evaluation, and Self-Evaluation subscales. Medium-level coefficients ranging from .65 to .67 were obtained for the Understanding Children's Behavior and Relating to the Program subscales. However, lower-level coefficients ranging from .41 to .59 were obtained for the relating to children, staff, and parents subscales. Except for the Relating to Staff subscale, all coefficients obtained were significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Additional reliability information for the PTCRS was collected using two independent observers in rating the teacher competency of seven subjects from this study. Percent-agreement scores were calculated between the ratings of the two observers for each item and all scales found in the PTCRS. In calculating the percent-agreement scores, the 6-point rating scale for each of the PTCRS items was collapsed into three categories. These categories included 0-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Table 1 presents the percent-agreement scores between the teacher-competency ratings of the two independent observers using the PTCRS with the seven subjects by items and scales. Results revealed that when examining the total PTCRS and its nine subscales, the percent-agreement scores ranged from 79-96%, with a majority of them in the high 80's and 90's. This indicated a relatively high agreement between the ratings of the observers for the total PTCRS and its nine subscales. However, when the percent-agreement scores between the observers on each of the PTCRS items were examined, a little more variability in scores was found. The two independent observers agreed in their ratings 100% of the time on 41 of 65 PTCRS items, between 86 and 96% of the time on 13 of 65 items, and 71% of the time on 4 of 65 items. However, on 7 of 65 items, observers agreed in their ratings only between 43 and 57% of the time. Three of these items were found in Relating to Parents Subscale, two in the Staff Evaluation Subscale, and one each in the Understanding Behavior and Self-Evaluation subscales.

Construct-validity studies for the PTCRS have also been conducted (Sugawara & Cramer, 1980). The PTCRS has been shown to distinguish

Table 1

Percent Agreement Between Two Independent Observers
Using the PTCRS with Seven Subjects by Items and Scales

Item	Agree	Percent
I. Understanding Behavior		
1. Accept a child as s/he is	7	100%
2. Use knowledge of child-development principles and sequences to understand children	7	100%
3. Use information regarding home, family, and sociocultural background experiences to understand children's behavior	3	43%
4. Identify significant observations of child behavior	7	100%
Subscale Total	24	86%
II. Guidance Guidelines		
1. Forestall situations	6	86%
2. Use positive suggestions	7	100%
3. Recognize when and where s/he is needed	7	100%
4. Give choices to children when choices are available	7	100%
5. Help interpret and verbalize children's feelings	6	86%
6. Use prescribed limits and follow through	7	100%
7. Set reasonable limits and follow through	6	86%
8. Redirect children when the need arises	6	86%
9. Encourage self-help skills among children	7	100%
10. Display flexibility in guiding children's learning	7	100%
11. Make effective use of non-verbal communication skills in guiding children's behavior	6	86%
12. Avoid expressions of threat	7	100%
13. Help children find ways of settling their own quarrels	7	100%
14. Express positive social reinforcement when appropriate	7	100%
Subscale Total	93	95%

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Agree	Percent
III. Relationships		
A. Relating to Children		
1. Express feelings about him/herself	6	86%
2. Sense children's feelings so as to maintain interaction with them	6	86%
3. Communicate with children while still recognizing that s/he is an adult	7	100%
4. Display effective communication with all children	7	100%
5. Maintain relationships with all children in a variety of settings	6	86%
6. Relate with individual children	7	100%
7. Relate with children in small groups	7	100%
8. Relate with children in large groups	6	86%
9. Display honesty in interacting with children	7	100%
Subscale Total	59	94%
B. Relating to the Program		
1. Flexibility in performance within the preschool program		
a. Permit children to explore materials in a variety of ways	7	100%
b. Recognize and use spontaneous happenings within the environment to facilitate children's learnings	5	71%
c. Display adaptability in curriculum implementation within the classroom	7	100%
d. Make effective use of limited resources to achieve educational goals	7	100%
2. Functioning within the preschool program		
a. Display familiarity with the preschool facility	7	100%
b. Display knowledge of the preschool program routines	7	100%
c. Preplan programs and activities	7	100%

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Agree	Percent
d. Function independently when appropriate	7	100%
e. Use names of individual children and staff	7	100%
f. Maintain confidentiality in all matters concerning the preschool program	7	100%
g. Recognize and use policies and procedures of the preschool program	5	71%
Subscale Total	73	95%
C. Relating to Staff		
1. Show positive attitudes towards other staff members	7	100%
2. Give directions to other staff members	6	86%
3. Receive directions from other staff members	7	100%
4. Participate as a team member	7	100%
Subscale Total	27	96%
D. Relating to Parents		
1. Recognize parents by name	4	57%
2. Converse with parents	4	57%
3. Incorporate the cultural background of families	7	100%
4. Facilitate a free flow of information between teachers and parents about their children's needs and behaviors	4	57%
5. Communicate in both written and verbal forms concerns about the program, children, and families	6	86%
6. Use parents as resources in developing the preschool program	7	100%
7. Recognize and appreciate parental values and priorities for their children	5	71%
8. Maintain confidentiality regarding matters concerning parents	7	100%
Subscale Total	44	79%

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Agree	Percent
IV. Evaluation		
A. Program Evaluation		
1. Understand the major objectives of the program	5	71%
2. Evaluate the adequacy of the program	6	86%
3. Evaluate the parent education/involvement-component of the program	7	100%
4. Evaluate the staff-development component of the program	7	100%
Subscale Total	25	89%
B. Staff Evaluation		
1. Communicate perceptions of staff performance in an honest and clear manner	3	43%
2. Direct staff in areas where their teaching skills may be enhanced	7	100%
3. Use objective observations to clarify perceptions of staff performance	4	57%
4. Communicate openly observations and perceptions of staff-teaching performance with concrete suggestions for improving teaching skills	7	100%
5. Maintain confidentiality in all matters concerning staff evaluations	7	100%
Subscale Total	28	80%
C. Self-Evaluation		
1. Communicate perceptions of his/her teaching performance in an honest and clear manner	7	100%
2. Recognize his/her teaching strengths and weaknesses	7	100%
3. Identify and undertake ways of improving his/her teaching skills	7	100%
4. Seek evaluation of his/her teaching performance from other staff members	7	100%

Table 1 (continued)

Item	Agree	Percent
5. Listen and hear staff feedback about his/her teaching performance and act upon suggestions made	7	100%
6. Discuss openly discrepancies between staff evaluations and his/her own evaluations of teaching performance	4	57%
Subscale Total	39	93%
Total PTCRS	412	91%

between students at various levels of a teacher-training program in predicted directions. Furthermore, the PTCRS ratings of students appear to accurately reflect the impact of various teacher-training experiences of students, based on their practicum and course work requirements.

Procedures

All subjects were asked to complete the TSCS at the end of their 10-week preschool-teacher training practicums. At approximately the same time, each subject was individually rated, using the PTCRS by the teacher trainers. All subjects had prior knowledge of the contents of the PTCRS before being evaluated with the scale. More detailed procedures for administering the TSCS (Fitts, 1965) and PTCRS (Sugawara & Cramer, 1980) to the subjects are specified in manuals associated with each measurement device.

III. RESULTS

The Pearson product-moment correlation method was applied to the data to test the proposition derived from self theory regarding the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among subjects in this study. Correlation coefficients were calculated to provide information regarding this relationship for the entire TSCS and PTCRS, and their subscales. Table 2 summarizes the correlation coefficients obtained. Only 4 of the 90 correlation coefficients obtained were significant at the $p < .05$ level. These significant coefficients were associated with the relationship between the PTCRS Program Evaluation Subscale and the TSCS subscales Self-Satisfaction, Moral-Ethical Self, and Family Self, and the Total Positive Score. They were all negative in direction.

To shed further light on the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among subjects in this study, additional analyses of data were undertaken. Subjects were divided into two self-concept groups based on their Total Positive and TSCS subscale scores. The high self-concept group included eight subjects with the highest Total Positive and TSCS subscale scores, while the low self-concept group included eight subjects with the lowest Total Positive and TSCS subscale scores. Two sample t tests were then applied to the data to determine whether significant differences existed between the teacher-competency scores (total and subscale PTCRS scores) of these self-concept groups. Table 3 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and t values associated with the teacher-competency scores of subjects in the high and low

self-concept groups. None of the t values obtained were significant at the $p < .05$ level, indicating no significant difference between the total and subscale PTCRS scores of subjects in the two self-concept groups.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients Expressing the Relationship Between
Subjects' Self-Concept (TSCS) and Teacher-Competency (PTCRS) Scores

Variable	TSCS								Total Positive Score
	Identity	Self- Satisfaction	Behavior	Physical Self	Moral-Ethical Self	Personal Self	Family Self	Social Self	
PTCRS									
Understanding Behavior	.16	-.03	-.10	-.11	-.05	.04	-.03	-.04	-.02
Guidance Guidelines	.22	-.02	.11	.07	-.01	.15	.10	-.03	.10
Relationships Children	.21	.07	.12	.16	.09	.15	.07	-.00	.15
Program	.17	-.10	.01	.06	-.06	-.02	-.11	-.05	-.00
Staff	.19	-.00	.07	.16	.01	-.03	-.06	.13	.08
Parents	-.09	-.14	-.10	-.12	-.15	-.11	-.20	.04	-.14
Evaluation Program	-.27	-.32*	-.24	-.19	-.35*	-.29	-.42*	-.22	-.35*
Staff	.22	.22	.08	.09	.22	.15	.28	.09	.21
Self	.21	.05	-.01	-.03	.18	.09	.13	-.05	.08
Total	.20	-.03	.02	.04	-.00	.06	-.00	-.03	.05

*
p < .05

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and *t* Values
for High and Low Self-Concept Groups

Variable	Group 1 High Self-Concept		Group 2 Low Self-Concept		<i>t</i> Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
TSCS Identify Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	17.11	2.47	13.88	4.14	2.01
Guidance Guidelines	60.45	4.88	53.22	12.02	1.67
Relationships					
Children	39.56	3.91	36.33	6.65	1.25
Program	47.22	4.12	43.11	10.47	1.10
Staff	18.89	1.76	16.78	4.79	1.24
Parents	19.22	4.55	18.56	2.96	.37
Evaluation					
Program	5.56	3.09	6.44	3.13	-.61
Staff	1.78	3.50	.78	2.33	.71
Self	25.00	4.09	20.89	5.18	1.87
Total	234.78	20.35	210.00	41.75	1.60
TSCS Self-Satisfaction Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	16.25	2.66	16.00	2.27	.20
Guidance Guidelines	59.63	9.26	60.88	5.64	-.33
Relationships					
Children	39.50	5.68	38.63	4.27	.35
Program	44.63	10.14	47.88	4.23	-.84
Staff	18.38	3.42	18.88	1.25	-.39
Parents	17.50	2.88	19.38	2.20	-1.46
Evaluation					
Program	4.13	4.02	6.75	2.29	-1.50
Staff	4.75	4.20	2.25	4.20	1.19
Self	26.00	4.07	24.38	3.85	.82
Total	230.75	34.89	235.00	19.40	-.30

Note: **p* < .05

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	Group 1 High Self-Concept		Group 2 Low Self-Concept		t Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
TSCS Moral-Ethical Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	15.67	2.18	16.50	2.37	-.79
Guidance Guidelines	58.67	8.60	61.10	6.44	-.70
Relationships					
Children	38.67	5.57	38.80	4.69	-.06
Program	44.67	9.45	47.40	5.06	-.80
Staff	18.33	3.28	18.90	1.66	-.48
Parents	17.33	3.67	19.60	2.68	-1.55
Evaluation					
Program	4.89	3.76	6.60	2.72	-1.15
Staff	3.33	3.94	1.90	4.01	.78
Self	26.00	4.03	23.90	4.68	1.04
Total	227.56	31.71	234.70	23.33	-.56
TSCS Personal Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	14.50	3.07	14.40	4.03	.06
Guidance Guidelines	56.63	10.14	55.80	10.08	.17
Relationships					
Children	37.13	6.75	36.80	5.45	.11
Program	42.50	10.47	45.00	5.29	-.66
Staff	17.25	3.45	17.80	3.91	-.31
Parents	19.13	4.39	20.00	2.83	-.51
Evaluation					
Program	3.50	3.12	6.40	2.84	-2.06
Staff	2.88	4.16	1.70	3.59	.64
Self	22.88	5.22	22.50	6.40	.13
Total	216.38	37.35	220.40	34.91	-.24

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	Group 1 High Self-Concept		Group 2 Low Self-Concept		t Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
TSCS Behavior Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	14.75	2.92	15.13	2.48	-.28
Guidance Guidelines	58.63	5.85	56.63	7.84	.58
Relationships					
Children	39.00	5.04	37.88	4.52	.47
Program	45.00	4.57	46.00	4.72	-.43
Staff	18.50	1.93	19.00	1.07	-.64
Parents	18.50	4.84	19.13	3.68	-.29
Evaluation					
Program	5.50	3.46	5.38	2.88	.08
Staff	1.50	2.51	3.13	4.39	-.91
Self	23.63	5.01	24.13	5.57	-.19
Total	225.00	23.29	226.38	23.67	-.12
TSCS Physical-Self Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	14.50	2.98	15.50	2.33	-.75
Guidance Guidelines	57.38	5.85	56.88	2.33	.13
Relationships					
Children	38.88	4.97	36.62	5.80	.83
Program	45.13	4.64	43.88	10.26	.31
Staff	18.50	1.93	17.63	3.92	.65
Parents	18.50	4.84	19.63	2.00	-.61
Evaluation					
Program	5.13	3.80	5.88	2.48	-.47
Staff	2.25	3.15	2.25	4.20	0
Self	23.13	4.70	23.63	4.41	-.22
Total	223.38	23.18	221.88	34.33	.10

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	Group 1 High Self-Concept		Group 2 Low Self-Concept		t Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
TSCS Family Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	15.38	4.66	15.88	2.64	-.26
Guidance Guidelines	59.00	10.13	58.87	8.90	.03
Relationships					
Children	39.50	5.68	39.13	4.19	.15
Program	46.13	4.85	48.13	4.85	-.82
Staff	18.13	4.52	19.00	1.07	-.52
Parents	17.13	3.18	18.50	3.25	-.85
Evaluation					
Program	4.50	3.70	6.75	3.20	-1.30
Staff	3.75	3.99	2.13	4.02	.82
Self	25.13	6.22	23.50	3.96	.62
Total	228.63	36.97	231.88	24.32	-.21
TSCS Social Subscale					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	16.13	2.30	16.00	2.50	.11
Guidance Guidelines	59.13	7.75	58.00	9.45	.27
Relationships					
Children	39.38	4.00	38.33	5.43	.45
Program	46.88	4.05	45.56	10.13	.34
Staff	19.13	1.13	18.11	3.18	.85
Parents	18.25	3.88	18.00	2.65	.16
Evaluation					
Program	4.75	3.41	6.44	3.13	-1.07
Staff	3.00	4.07	1.89	3.82	.58
Self	24.63	4.57	24.44	3.58	.09
Total	231.25	21.26	226.78	33.94	.32

Table 3 (continued)

Variable	Group 1 High Self-Concept		Group 2 Low Self-Concept		t Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
TSCS Total					
PTCRS					
Understanding Behavior	16.13	2.30	15.75	3.28	.26
Guidance Guidelines	61.13	5.49	60.50	6.26	.26
Relationships					
Children	39.13	4.02	40.00	4.31	-.42
Program	48.13	4.22	47.25	4.20	.42
Staff	19.13	.99	19.13	1.36	0
Parents	19.13	2.10	17.63	4.41	.87
Evaluation					
Program	6.75	2.92	4.13	3.48	1.63
Staff	2.25	4.20	3.00	4.07	-.36
Self	24.25	3.88	25.13	3.91	-.45
Total	236.00	19.01	232.50	21.60	.34

IV. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among 29 female college students enrolled in a preschool-teacher training program. Based on theoretical propositions derived from self theory, it was predicted that self-concept and teacher competency would be positively related. However, results obtained failed to provide data in support of this proposition. Of the 90 correlation coefficients calculated between subjects' TSCS and PTCRS scores, 4 reached statistical significance. However, their significance was in a negative direction. Additional analyses of data revealed no significant differences between the PTCRS scores of high and low self-concept groups. The results of this study, therefore, also failed to provide data in support of the construct validity of the PTCRS.

The significant negative correlation coefficients obtained for the relationship between the PTCRS Program Evaluation Subscale, and the TSCS subscales Self-Satisfaction, Moral-Ethical Self, and Family Self, and Total Positive Score at first glance were very surprising. They provided data contrary to what was expected on the basis of previous theory and research. However, upon examining certain limitations encountered in this study, such results appear plausible. As indicated previously, the significant negative correlation coefficients obtained for the relationship between the PTCRS Program Evaluation Subscale consisted of rating a subject's teacher competency in the areas of organizing, administrating, and evaluating the overall educational program for young children. The development of teacher

competency in these areas was not the focus of the subjects' teacher-training experiences; it comes later, at a more advanced level. Consequently, subjects in this study were rated very low (toward the zero end of the scale for each item) in their competency on the PTCRS Program Evaluation Subscale. This, in turn, may have led to the occurrence of significant negative correlation coefficients when the subjects' PTCRS Program Evaluation Subscale scores were related to their self-concept scores on various TSCS subscales.

With respect to the remaining 86 correlation coefficients obtained for the relationship between subjects' TSCS and PTCRS subscale scores, and the tests of significant differences between the PTCRS scores of subjects in the high and low self-concept groups, none reached statistical significance. As previously indicated, these findings failed to provide support for the positive relationship between self-concept and teacher competency expected on the basis of previous theory and research. They also failed to provide data in support of the construct validity of the PTCRS. A number of explanations, though conjectural, can be offered for these findings, based on limitations encountered in this study. These limitations are summarized below.

Variability of TSCS and PTCRS Scores

An examination of the subjects' TSCS and PTCRS scores indicated that they were in the upper range of the total number of possible points that could be obtained on these scales. No subject was found with very low self-concept or teacher competency scores. The

subjects, therefore, appeared quite homogeneous in terms of their self-concept and teacher-competency scores. The absence of a great deal of variability in the scores of subjects may not have allowed for a true test of the proposition regarding the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency, as a more heterogeneous sample would have.

Sample Size

Due to the limited number of students enrolled in the preschool-training programs from which the subjects in this study came, the sample size used in this investigation was relatively small ($n = 29$). A larger sample size may have allowed for a more heterogeneous group of subjects to be studied and, thus, provided a more accurate estimate of the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency. The present sample may have been too small to permit the detection of significant results; whereas, a larger sample might have.

Assessment of Self-Concept and Teacher Competency

In further reviewing the literature regarding the relationship between self-concept and other behaviors, findings suggest that a more adequate means of understanding the role self-concept plays in determining other behaviors may be to assess the subjects' self-concepts prior to their teacher-training experiences. Fitts (1965) proposes this idea for studies in attempting to predict other behaviors from self-concept. An individual's self-concept is

developed through experiences within the environment and is influenced by environmental reinforcements and significant others (Shavelson, 1976). This circumstance is evident among individuals in teacher-training situations. Through participation in situations focused on teacher training, individuals may experience adverse or positive events (Walberg, 1966) that may influence their self-perceptions. Therefore, in order to reduce the possible influences of the teacher-training experience on a person's self-concept, it might be better to assess such a person's self-concept prior to the teacher-training experience. In this case, assessment of the self-concept prior to the teacher-training experience would control for the influences of the training experiences on an individual's self-concept.

In reality, however, the relationship between self-concept and other behaviors, including teacher competency, is reciprocal in nature. A person's self-concept may influence the way an individual performs or learns a variety of tasks and behaviors associated with the teaching of young children. Likewise, the competency of a teacher may influence the way individuals feel about themselves. In such a situation, therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that in order for one to understand the complex nature of the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency within a teacher-training situation, a researcher might assess the subjects' self-concepts and teacher competencies prior to and after the teacher-training experiences.

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS)

While a variety of validity and reliability studies have been conducted for the TSCS, the use of a self-report measure to assess a person's self-concept does point to major limitations. While the self-report approach is the most widely used and acceptable approach to measuring self-concept, whether such an approach does measure the "real" self-concept can be questioned. Self-report measures only assess what individuals say they are and how they see themselves. In addition, self-descriptive reports of the self have been shown to be influenced by a number of factors, including: (1) an individual's intent to select only what is wished to be revealed to the outsider (Cronbach, 1970; Wylie, 1976); (2) an individual's intent to reveal only socially desirable attitudes and behaviors (Edwards, 1957; Wylie, 1968); and (3) an individual's capacity to respond (Wylie, 1968). Still also, self-report measures such as the TSCS consist of statements about personality traits subjects are asked to rate in evaluating themselves on a 5-point, Likert-type scale from completely true to completely false. This method yields an objective score obtained by summing the ratings assigned to each item. Strong and Feder (1961) argue that this process of summation assumes that each of the items in the scale contains information about the self that is of equal importance. They tend to leave out the uniqueness of the individual items, obscuring crucial clues to certain selected self-perceptions. One can also question whether certain personality traits used in the scale to assess a person's self-concept really do so or not.

Finally, the use of a Likert-type scale in self-report questionnaires may at times produce spurious results, due to the tendency of subjects to rate each item in the scale consistently in the direction of the middle or the extremes. This occurrence would provide the researcher with inaccurate information about the self. Presently, no test has been devised to accurately assess an individual's private phenomenal world. Some indicate that such a world is not totally accessible to the outsider and can only be inferred from self-report and other behavioral measures (Combs & Soper, 1957). Thus, the self-report approach continues to be used in the study of self-concept since it is a simple and straightforward procedure which lends itself easily to research design and statistical techniques. Due to its limitations, however, it would have been wiser if the present researcher had used a variety of approaches, including both self-report and observational methods, to assess subjects' self-concepts. This approach would have provided the researcher with a more broad and accurate estimate of a person's self-concept.

Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (PTCRS)

Although the interrater-reliability coefficients calculated for the total PTCRS and a majority of its subscales were relatively high, reliability coefficients for some subscales were low. Furthermore, although there was a high degree of agreement between two independent observers in their ratings of subjects on a majority of PTCRS items, on other items agreement between them was relatively

low. Use of these low reliability subscales and items, therefore, did indicate problems with respect to the consistency of results obtained on them.

Moreover, since subjects in this study came from several teacher-training programs, use of three different teacher trainers to rate the subjects' competency as teachers pointed to several serious problems. Although a manual for the use of the PTCRS in teacher training is available, and important descriptions of teacher-competency behaviors described, teacher trainers in this study received no special training in the use of the scale. As a result, several significant difficulties were encountered by the teacher trainers in using the scale. These included: (1) unfamiliarity with the rating criteria, (2) lack of clear operational definitions for some of the teacher-competency behaviors, (3) use of a variety of procedures in the rating (e.g., anecdotal records, notes from individual conferences, and recall data), and (4) use of personal interpretations in ratings. These difficulties all raise questions regarding the reliability and validity of the data obtained with the PTCRS in this study.

Control of Variables

A review of the literature in the area of self-concept development indicates that in general, "other things being equal, the more optimal an individual's self concept, the more competently that person will function" (Fitts, 1965, p. 4). However, whether "other things were equal" in this research study can be easily

questioned. While no field study of this type conducted can be expected to control for all variables that might influence the results obtained, several pertinent variables can be said to have been left uncontrolled. One of the more important of these variables has to do with the subjects' prior course work and experience related to child development and early childhood education. Attempts were made to control for the subjects' course work and experiences prior to their student-teaching experiences. However, additional course work and experiential variables, as well as how well they did in them, may have influenced the result obtained.

Suggestions for Future Research

A study of the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among students in a preschool-teacher training program is a very complex area of investigation. Information from research of this kind can aid us in developing more effective training programs for the development of competent preschool teachers. As a result of the limitations encountered in this study, several suggestions for future research can be made.

In future studies, use of a larger, more heterogeneous sample of subjects would seem worthwhile. The small sample size and homogeneous nature of the self-concept and teacher-competency scores in this study did not allow for an adequate test of the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency.

Since the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency appears to be a reciprocal one, a more fruitful research design for use in future research might be to assess subjects' self-concepts and teacher competencies prior to and after their teacher-training experiences. Such a research design might provide the researcher with a more realistic picture of the complex relationship between self-concept and teacher competency among subjects in a preschool-teacher training program. For example, such a research design might provide information about how self-concept and teacher competency change over time among students in a teacher-training program.

Due to the limitations encountered in the use of a self-report measure in assessing subjects' self-concepts, future studies might employ a variety of approaches, including both self-report and observational methods, to assess a subject's self-concept. In addition, as suggested by self theorists (Combs, 1965; Combs et al., 1974), the self does not only include a generalized view of the self but also may have very specific self-referents. For example, the self can view and evaluate itself as a teacher, a parent, and a student. Future studies might consider these more specific self-referents as well as the more general self-concept in research.

Problems encountered in the use of the Preschool Teacher Competency Rating Scale (PTCRS) in this study suggest that several major considerations must be dealt with before this scale is again used in future research. To obtain more consistent results,

low reliability scales and items need to be remedied. Furthermore, procedures in using the PTCRS in teacher training need to be clarified. For example, training of observers in the use of the scale, clearer descriptions of teacher behaviors to be rated, and systematic data collection procedures for use in ratings can all improve the reliability and validity of the rating scale. Since students are also aware of their own competencies as teachers, an added area of future investigation might be to obtain students' as well as trainers' perceptions of students' teacher competencies.

Finally, control of additional variables deemed pertinent on the basis of previous theory and research would be worthwhile. These variables might include the past experiences of subjects in relating to children and parents, academic training, and how well they did in them. Such variables might prove crucial in understanding the relationship between self-concept and teacher competency.

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