

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PROBLEM FORMULATION AND THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

It is generally accepted that an individual's self-concept is influenced by his or her relationships with the self, with others, with things and a supernatural (Vrey 1993; Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1999; Mwamwenda 1995; Le Roux 1999). If, as Rice (1996:190) proposes, the degree of the influence depends on the level of involvement, on the intimacy of these relationships, and on the power and authority of those exerting the influence, then the role that parents play, is vital in shaping their children's self-concepts.

By cuddling and feeding her child, the mother lays the foundation of the child's self-concept. To the child, this translates into: "I am acceptable". When she ignores or abandons her hungry, dirty or crying child, the child experiences this as "I am not acceptable" or "No one loves me". The next significant figure to appear on the scene is usually the father and the things he does or says are generally an extension of the mother's attitude and approach towards the child.

Walz and Bleuer (1992:286) agree with the above notion, because they postulate that strong, nurturing parent-adolescent relationships nullify many of the negative effects of adolescent change, that is, they offer an arena of comfort in the midst of an adolescent sea of discontinuity.

#### **1.2 ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher, in her capacity as guidance teacher, realised that the learners who generally struggle to relate to their teachers and peers, also struggle to relate to their parents. These learners generally underachieve at school, that is, in the academic, social and extramural areas. The results of measuring instruments, such as Rotter's incomplete sentences reveal that these learners also have poor relationships with themselves, that is,

they have very low or negative self-concepts. According to Rogers (in Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1995:385), the direction the child's self-concept takes, depends to a large extent, on how significant others and those who satisfy the child's need for positive regard, relate to him or her. The parents initially fill the role of significant others and provide the foundation for the child's self-concept.

Parent-child relationships can take many forms and depend on different styles of parenting. Developmentalists believe that each parenting style will produce unique child outcomes. Mussen, Conger, Kagan and Huston (1990:600) cite the following three types of parent-child relationships.

- (i) The *authoritative or democratic relationship*, which is said to foster the development of confidence and self-esteem, responsibility, social competence and autonomy.
- (ii) The *authoritarian or autocratic relationship*, which is more dictatorial;
- (iii) The *permissive or laissez faire relationship*, which boasts parents who are generally unconcerned about what happens to their children.

The authoritarian and permissive styles of parenting produce children who are unable to think and act independently, and who lack self-reliance and self-confidence. These children do not believe that their opinions are worthy of consideration.

Perosa and Perosa (1997:134-156) assert that females who perceive a lack of clear boundary maintenance between them and their parents (ie their parents intrude in their lives), and are unable to relate to their parents as adults, are intimidated by their parents. Such females also believe they are unable to uphold their own views when interacting with their parents and struggle to set goals. They are confused about themselves and do not trust their own judgements.

As far as marital violence is concerned and its long-term consequences for children, McNeal and Amato (1998:123-139) postulate that poor parenting, which includes lowered warmth and more coercive discipline, is associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Because children are often physically and emotionally neglected, they feel less

close to their parents. They have an elevated risk of developing a variety of psychological problems, such as depression and low self-esteem.

Parental support is manifested in the behaviour of a parent towards a child. It makes the child feel comfortable in the presence of the parent and confirms in the child's mind that the parent accepts him or her and approves of him or her as a person (Dekovic 1992:24). Studies cited in Rice (1996:190) claim that adolescent girls who feel close to their mothers, see themselves as confident, wise, reasonable and self-controlled. They develop good self-concepts. In contrast, however, those who feel distant from their mothers, see themselves in negative terms, namely, as rebellious, impulsive, touchy and tactless. Negative traits such as these are indicative of a poor self-concept.

Dekovic and Meeus (1997:163-176) postulate that a parent who is affectionate, who positively evaluates his or her child and who supports the child emotionally, conveys a feeling of value to the child that forms the basis of a positive self-esteem. Parental acceptance and support also encourage the child to explore personal limits and to discover competencies, both of which are important for the development of a positive self-concept. A general atmosphere of harmony between parents and children provides a buffer against stress. It also allows the family to negotiate their daily tasks more effectively. Children raised in such an atmosphere display impulse control and more self-regulated behaviour. Because self-regulation includes the ability to set and attain goals, to plan actions, to consider the consequences of actions and to persist in an attempt to achieve goals, it is associated with higher levels of academic achievement and psychosocial competence (Garmezy, in Brody & Flor 1997:1000-1011). These are the characteristics of a high self-concept.

Parental warmth may positively orientate the child towards a self, which is associated with a greater ability and willingness to attend to others' needs (Dekovic 1992:27). Parents who spend quality time with their children, improve the children's perception of their value, their capability to accomplish tasks, the validity of their belief systems and their ability to control their lives. This results in the growth of these children's self-concepts (Landreth & Lobaugh 1998:157-165; Lytton 1980:277). Positive affective relationships with parents result in an increased motivation to engage in social

interactions (Dekovic 1992:27).

It is clear from this preliminary discussion that the relationship between a parent and child impacts meaningfully on the development of the latter's self-concept. Attributes such as accepting or rejecting the child, parenting styles, marital violence, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse by parents, a positive or negative parental rapport with the child, parental interest in the activities of the children, and so on, play a significant role in establishing a positive or negative self-concept in the child. This researcher could not, however, find any information regarding the effect of the parent-child relationship on the development of the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learner. The following question is thus worthy of a thorough investigation:

What is the influence of the parent-child relationship on the development of the Southern Sotho learner's self-concept?

### **1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.3.1 General aim**

The general aim of this study is to determine the effect of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learner.

#### **1.3.2 Specific aims**

To realise the general aim of this investigation, the following specific aims must be executed, namely to:

develop an instrument to measure the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learner

develop an instrument to measure the parent-child relationship of the Southern Sotho learner

determine the nature of the parent-child relationship of the Southern Sotho learner

determine the effect of this relationship on the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learner

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A literature study will form the theoretical basis of this study. It will focus on the self-concept from a psycho-educational point of view, as well as on parent-child relationship, parenting, parenting styles and development of the self-concept.

In conjunction with the theoretical study, an empirical investigation (of a quantitative and nomothetic nature) will be launched to establish the effect of the parent-child relationship on the development of the self-concept of children within the Southern Sotho culture. A more detailed analysis of the empirical investigation will follow in chapter 4.

## **1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH**

This investigation will focus on the Southern Sotho culture. This study will be restricted to middle school and secondary school learners, because of financial and time constraints. The research will, therefore, study learners between the ages of fourteen (14) and nineteen (19).

## **1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.6.1 The self**

The self is that component of a person's consciousness that gives him or her a sense of personal existence. The self is thus the sum total of a person's subjective and intrapersonal worlds, that is, the sum total of a person's inner world (Hamachek 1992:4). According to Hamachek (1992:3), the most basic distinction between humankind and other creatures is humankind's unique capacity for self-consciousness. Hamachek (1992:3) further says the self can be seen from the following two points of view:

- (1) *The self-as-object*. A person has the capacity to stand outside of himself or herself and to evaluate his or her attitudes, feelings and behaviour from a more or less detached point of view. Statements such as, "I am the sort of person who is ..." reflect this point of view.
- (2) *The self-as-process*. The self is a doer in the sense that it includes an active group of processes, such as thinking and remembering. Statements such as, "I am going to study hard for the exam tomorrow" reflect the idea that the self is what it does.

### **1.6.2 The self-concept**

The self-concept is an organised, consistent whole comprising perceptions of the characteristics of the "I" or "me", and how these perceptions relate to each other (Rogers, in Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997:466). According to Hamachek (1992:31), the self-concept is the purely descriptive aspect of a person's self-perceptions and it is, therefore, cognitive.

From the above, it is possible to state that the self-concept is a person's private mental image of himself or herself, that is, a collection of beliefs about the kind of person he or she is. It is the core of the personality which "colours" the person's interpretation of experiences.

### **1.6.3 Self-esteem**

The self-esteem is the evaluative component of a person's self-perception and is, therefore, affective (Hamachek 1992:31). According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:214), self-esteem is the degree of positive or negative feeling a person has when he or she evaluates himself or herself. High self-esteem brings out initiative, risk-taking characteristics and independence, while low self-esteem tends to make a person more dependent and imitative.

#### **1.6.4 Identity**

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:215) assert that self-identity begins when a child is able to dissociate the “I” from the “not I” and the “mine” from the “not mine”. This initial consciousness of the self as unique is accompanied by self-evaluation such as: “I am a boy”. Identity can be described as the value attached by a person to himself or herself (Raath & Jacobs 1993:9).

#### **1.6.5 The parent-child relationship**

The parent-child relationship refers to the bond that the parent forms with his or her child. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:161), a harmonious parent-child relationship is essential during infancy. They state further that it is the single most important factor in alleviating the deficiencies of the socioeconomically disadvantaged and that the way the child develops his or her sense of competence and self-worth, is related to how he or she is treated and evaluated at home.

### **1.7 RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

Chapter 1: Problem formulation and the research programme

This chapter comprises the introduction, the purpose of this study, the problem statement, research methods and the demarcation of the field of study.

Chapter 2: The self-concept - a psycho-educational perspective

This chapter contains a literature review of the term “self-concept” specifically from a psycho-educational perspective. The nature of the self-concept and the role of the self-concept in behaviour and learning will be scrutinised.

Chapter 3: The influence of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the child

This chapter will look at the parent-child relationship, particularly the importance of the

self-concept during development. This chapter will also look at parenting, parenting styles and the development of the self-concept.

#### Chapter 4: The empirical investigation

Hypotheses will be formulated and the selection of the sample will receive attention. The measuring instruments that will be used in the investigation and their keys will be discussed. The procedure to be followed during the empirical investigation and the processing of the results will be explained.

#### Chapter 5: A statistical analysis and interpretation of the results of the empirical investigation

An item analysis of the Self-Concept Questionnaire will be done. Both the reliability and validity of the Self-Concept Questionnaire will be calculated. The norms of the Self-Concept Questionnaire will be determined and the hypotheses tested.

#### Chapter 6: Summary

The findings of the empirical investigation will be compared to those of the literature study. An evaluation of the research as regards the influence of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child and learner will be done. Contributions and problematic aspects of the research will be determined. Recommendations for further research will be made.

## **CHAPTER 2**



## **THE SELF-CONCEPT - A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

There is a lot of confusion about the term “self-concept”. This has resulted from a number of factors. Byrne (1996:2) believes that there is no clear, concise and universally accepted definition of the construct “self-concept”. She also notes that self-concept researchers have a tendency to interchange at random various self-terms. She cites Hughes and Shavelson et al (in Byrne 1996:6) who argue that the terms “self-concept” and “self-esteem” are used interchangeably by some researchers. To complicate matters further, the terms “self”, “self-estimation”, “self-identity”, “self-image”, “self-perception”, “self-consciousness”, “self-imagery” and “self-awareness” are often used interchangeably with self-concept. Other terms that are used interchangeably with “self-esteem” are “self-regard”, “self-reverence”, “self-acceptance”, “self-respect”, “self-worth”, “self-feeling” and “self-evaluation” (Byrne 1996:2). An attempt will be made in this chapter to clarify the term “self-concept” and its related concepts from a psycho-educational point of view.

### **2.2 THE SELF**

The self is the “gestalt” of what a person can call his or her own (Vrey 1993:13). The self constitutes the core of a person’s life, that is, the world in which he or she lives as he or she perceives it and experiences it. It is also the starting point of his or her awareness of the different aspects of the personality (Raath & Jacobs 1993). Charles (1976:72) says the sense of self emerges during the first few months of life and grows rapidly thereafter. On what the self is, he writes:

“Humanists consider the self to be the totality of traits that make each of us unique. It consists of our physical attributes, behaviour, beliefs, values, interests, talents, in short everything about us including what we believe about ourselves. And for each of us, it is the centre of the universe.”

According to Kolesnik (1978:156), a person's friends and relatives, personal possessions and other physical objects form components of the self. The self is the private picture each person has of who he or she thinks he or she is, what he or she thinks he or she can do, and who he or she thinks he or she can be. It is that part of a person's personality of which he or she is conscious (Hamachek 1995:28). Horrockson and Jackson (Raath & Jacobs 1993:8-9) write:

“Self is a process by means of which the organism derives and constructs self-products, which taken together, represent the organism's interpretation and meaning of itself”.

The self is thus described as a process that evaluates the identity of the person and the mental and behavioural activities related to this identity. The self is the core from which the individual becomes aware of the different aspects of his or her humanness. The roles the person plays may simultaneously be “the self as a learner”, “the self as a son or daughter of his or her parents”, “the self as a sportsman or sportswoman”, “the self as friend” and “the self as a religious person”. The self is multifaceted, which is an important aspect for forming the self-concept (Raath & Jacobs 1993:9).

## **2.3 THE SELF-CONCEPT**

### **2.3.1 What is the self-concept**

There is no single definition of the construct “self-concept”. The literature describes the self-concept as the unique image a person has of himself or herself (Raath & Jacobs 1993:2), and the sum total of an individual's mental and physical characteristics and his or her evaluation of them (Felker 1974:2; Lawrence 1996:1). Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997:466) support Felker and Lawrence's claim by stating that the self-concept refers to the picture which a person has of himself or herself and the value the person attaches to himself or herself. Purkey and Novak (1984:29) believe that the self-concept is a complex, continuously active system of subjective beliefs about personal existence. It is the individual's repertoire of self-descriptive behaviours (Muller, in Obiakor 1992:160-167).

Beliefs, evaluations and behavioural tendencies are included in the various definitions of the self-concept (Meyer et al 1997:466). Le Roux (1994:19) defines the self-concept as:

“the complex totality of views on, as well as feelings about, all the dimensions of the self. It includes socially acquired knowledge, views and attitudes with regard to the self and an evaluation of the self according to subjective standards.”

Lawrence (1996:1) believes that the self-concept develops in three areas, namely, the self-image, the ideal self and self-esteem. Lawrence (1996:1) asserts that self-concept, is the umbrella term under which the other three develop. Muller (in Obiakor 1992:160-167) believes that the self-concept comprises self-knowledge, self-esteem and the self-ideal. Self-knowledge or the self-image, according to Lawrence (1996:3), refers to the individual's awareness of his or her mental and physical characteristics. Like the self-concept, the self-image develops out of interaction with the environment and reflects judgements, preferences and shortcomings of the particular familial and social setting (Coopersmith 1967:35). The ideal self refers to the individual's view of that which he or she aspires to be or feels that he or she ought to be. It is the self a person would like to be.

Vrey (in Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1999:193) asserts that an individual's self-concept refers to a configuration of convictions about himself or herself and the attitudes towards him or her that are dynamic and of which he or she is normally aware or may become aware. The self-concept is, therefore, the individual's perception of his or her core being, which determines his or her interaction with himself or herself and with his or her environment.

### **2.3.2 Self-esteem**

Battle (in Bracken 1996:134) believes that, self-esteem is the perception a person has of his or her own worth. It is the composite sum of a person's feelings, hope, fears, thoughts and views of who he or she is, what he or she is, what he or she has been and

what he or she might become. Coopersmith (Caprara & Cervone 2000:360) says self-esteem is a global sense of self-worth. Self-esteem is the value the individual places on the self he or she perceives. Ochilree (1990:48) says that self-esteem can range between positive and negative evaluations. Whereas the self-concept is more the cognitive part of the self, that is, the concepts the individual has about who he or she is, self-esteem is the affective portion of the self, that is, the feelings he or she has about who he or she is. Each person knows that he or she has particular qualities (self-concept), but has more importantly certain feelings about those qualities (self-esteem). Self-esteem is, therefore, a global measure of the self-concept that captures the individual's personal judgement about his or her own self-worth (Mizell 1999:467-490). In Hattie's words (1992:17), the self-concept relates to identity, whereas self-esteem relates more to that which the person wishes that identity to be. In other words, does the person like the kind of person he or she believes himself or herself to be?

When arguing about the need for a healthy self-esteem, Smith (1993:4) argues that self-esteem makes a fundamental difference in the quality of an individual's life. She also says that when the self-esteem is low, the ability to be successful in learning and human relationships is severely reduced. With regard to how the self-esteem affects the ability to be successful, Branden (in Battle 1982:26) believes that the self-esteem entails a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth.

### **2.3.3 Self-efficacy**

"Self-efficacy" is a term used by Bandura (in Rubin, Coplan, Nelson, Cheah & Lagace-Seguin 1999:479), which he defines as, "the degree to which children believe they can successfully perform behaviours that are necessary for achieving desired outcomes". Self-efficacy refers to context-specific assessment of competence to perform a specific task, a judgement of one's ability to carry out courses of action in designated settings (Caprara & Cervone 2000:360; Rubin et al 1999:479). Pajares and Miller (in Byrne 1996:4) feel that the self-concept fails to attain the same level of specificity as self-efficacy. Although self-concept appraisals may be subject specific in an academic sense, they are in reality, more global and less context dependent. A judgement may, for example, be made about Mathematics as a subject: "I am good at Mathematics" (self-

concept judgement). A self-efficacy judgement would, however, be something like: “I can solve this trigonometry problem”. This is an appraisal aimed at a particular problem which the individual is faced.

Self-efficacy beliefs are important to the psychology of motivation for the following three reasons:

- (1) Self-efficacy perceptions contribute directly to decisions, actions and experience. Bandura (in Caprara & Cervone 2000:342) states that people who doubt their ability to perform effectively tend to avoid challenges and abandon activities when faced with setbacks. They also tend to experience debilitating anxiety.
- (2) Self-efficacy beliefs influence cognitive factors which, in turn, influence performance. People with higher efficacy tend to set higher goals and to remain more committed to their goals (Locke & Latham, in Caprara & Cervone 2000:342). People with a higher sense of efficacy develop and test strategies more analytically when faced with complex activities that require the acquisition of task knowledge and the formulation of strategies (Bandura, in Caprara & Cervone 2000:362). McAuley, Duncan and McElroy (in Caprara & Cervone 2000:342) assert that people with a high sense of self-efficacy attribute outcomes to stable and controllable factors.
- (3) Self-efficacy beliefs also influence emotional factors that, in turn, contribute to performance. According to Cutrona and Troutman (in Caprara & Cervone 2000:362), low self-efficacy for accomplishing important life tasks engenders depression.

## **2.4 THE NATURE OF THE SELF-CONCEPT**

The self-concept is dynamic, complex and organised (Raath & Jacobs 1993:16). Although the self-concept is said to be resistant to change, it does not necessarily mean that once formed, perceptions and ideas comprising the self-concept will not change. As the child’s horizon widens, he or she gets to know himself or herself in a range of new relationships. According to Vrey (1993:113), a person’s image of himself or herself will not only develop and expand, but will also change positively and negatively. Self-

concepts are, therefore, not static and unchanging (Hamachek, in Glover & Bruning 1990:219).

Roger's notion of the self (Meyer et al 1997:464) (he uses the terms "self" and "self-concept" interchangeably) is that the self is fluid and constantly evolving as a result of new experiences; it also retains a patterned, gestalt-like quality. This means that although people may change considerably over time, they will always retain the internal sense that they are still the same person at any given moment in time.

Good and Brophy (1990:106) argue that self-concepts are powerful and are, therefore, resistant to change caused by artificial or short-term interventions. They argue further that stimulating real change in an individual's self-concept requires producing gradual changes, not only in self-perceptions, but also in the personal characteristics and behaviour on which these self-perceptions are based. Andrews (in Raath & Jacobs 1993:18) says that the self-concept has dynamic qualities in its influence on a person's behaviour. In other words, although experiences mould and shape the self-concept, the self-concept plays an active and dynamic role in shaping experiences. Raath and Jacobs (1993:24) explain the term "dynamics" as referring to power, strength and drive. The individual observes how others treat him or her, and how others act or react towards him or her and then incorporates these observations into the self-concept.

Rosenberg (1979:18) believes that the self-concept is made up of many components. These components are of unequal centrality to the individual's concerns and are hierarchically organised in his or her system of values. Some elements rank higher in the individual's hierarchy of values and stand at the centre of his or her feelings of worth, whereas others are relegated to the periphery. How significant a particular element is, will depend on its location in the self-concept structure, that is, whether it is central or peripheral, cardinal or secondary, a major or minor part of the self-concept. This may be illustrated by a quotation from James (in Rosenberg 1979:18) and which is also quoted by Hamachek (1995:330):

I am not often confronted by the necessity of standing by one of my empirical selves and relinquishing the rest. Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a bon-vivant, and lady-killer as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, an African explorer, as well as “tone-poet” and saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire’s work would run counter to the saint’s; the bon-vivant and the philanthropist would trip each other; the philosopher and lady-killer could not keep house in the same tenement of clay --- to make any of them actual, the rest must more or less be suppressed so the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully, and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation I, who for the time have staked my all on being a psychologist, am mortified if others know more psychology than I.

In this quotation, James implies that the element which ranks highest in his hierarchy of values and which is at the centre of his feelings of worth, is being a psychologist. He would thus feel bad if others knew more about psychology than him. This would be a blow to his self-concept. He would not, however, feel humiliated if others knew more than him about elements on the periphery. Even though this statement was made as early as the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is still valid in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Anderson (in Raath & Jacobs 1993:16) argues that the self-concept comprises many parts and that each part has both structure and function. Coopersmith (in Raath & Jacobs 1993:17) believes that the self-concept is multidimensional. Vrey (in Raath & Jacobs 1993:17) distinguishes the following six dimensions of the self-concept:

- (1) The physical self: the self in relation to the awareness of the body.
- (2) The personal self: the self in his or her own psychic relationships.
- (3) The family self: the self in relation to the family.
- (4) The social self: the self in social relationships.
- (5) The moral self: the self in relation to norms.
- (6) Self-criticism.

Strang (in Rice 1996:183) is convinced of the multidimensional element of self-concept.

Of the dimensions that Strang mentions the ideal self seems to be of greatest importance. According to Rice (1996:184) adolescents' aspirations may be realistic, too high or too low. Rice argues further that the ideal selves that are too high may lead to frustration and self-depreciation. Realistic self-concepts lead to self-acceptance, mental health and the accomplishment of realistic goals.

## **2.5 IDENTITY**

Identity can be described as the value attached by a person to himself or herself (Raath & Jacobs 1993:9). According to Erikson (in Meyer et al 1997:218; Pappalia, Olds & Feldman 1999:574) adolescents go through identity crises. This is a phase in which individuals feel a need to establish identities in relation to society. The development of identity begins with an awareness of the self as an entity separate from the rest of the environment. A child forms identities on the strength of his or her involvement with people, things and himself or herself.

According to Raath and Jacobs (1993:9), identification refers to the need "to become identical to". Identification thus means that if a boy tries to identify with his father, he wants to be like his father. Identification is an activity through which the child strives to remove the difference between his or her self-image and his or her ideal image. The father in the above example represents the ideal image. Identification is the process by which an individual incorporates into his or her own personality certain admired qualities of another person. He or she adopts certain actions, tests them and selects those that best fit his or her self-image. The person's identity is built on the foundation of his or her earliest and most primary identifications. Identity thus arises out of a gradual integration of these identifications. In order to form an image of himself or herself, the child has to be able to dissociate the "I" from the "non I", and the "mine" from the "not mine" (Vrey 1993:45). Identity formation finally begins where the usefulness of identification ends (Le Roux 1979:10; Vrey 1993:45).

The formation of a self-identity is a lifelong task. When the values, beliefs, goals and practices the individual chooses are no longer appropriate, he or she can engage in a task of redefining and refining his or her identity. Self-identity is as a result not stable. It is an ongoing process of self-reflection and change as the individual moves through life



(Rice 1996:196).

Forming a self-identity helps to answer the question “Who am I?”. This question can give rise to a number of answers with varying attributive values: “I am a boy”, “I am good”, “I can play soccer” or “I am dumb” (Le Roux 1979:8; Vrey 1993:46). In forming identities children begin to make conscious decisions about who they are and what they believe. As defined in Vrey (1993:45), “self-identity is an integrated whole made up of the person’s conceptions of himself, the stability and continuity of the attributes by which he knows himself and the agreement between the person’s conceptions and the conceptions held of him by people he esteems.” Identity as such is the quality of being a specified person, an individual, that is, being the same in substance throughout the years. Self-identities are situation-specific self-concepts; “I as a learner”, “I as an athlete”, “I as a friend” or “I as a family member” (Purkey & Novak 1984:78).

Whereas the self-concept is more contained in a person’s mind, identity is often created by the larger society. Identity is psychosocial, because it involves individual relationships within a cultural context. The child’s acquisition of an identity is pre-eminently a socio-educational matter, since his or her identity is acquired in communication with his or her fellow human being, more specifically with his or her educators, and it is determined by the extent to which he or she is recognised socially by others (Pretorius 1998:21).

The self-concept is based on self-evaluation and is described as good and bad, or beautiful and ugly. The identity concept however, implies scientific thought and entails knowledge arrived at scientifically. Whereas the self-concept is a normative concept, because judgements of the self are made in relation to norms, standards and other people, the person’s identity is determined without regard to norms and standards or the person’s position in relation to others. The self-concept may develop outside the education situation, but it is postulated that the educand cannot arrive at a concept of identity without educational intervention.

Erikson (in Smith 1992:149) asserts that identity serves to maintain the self-concept, because it is the accrued confidence that the individual possesses the ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity. The most important anchorage for the feeling of self-

continuity as time passes, is the individual's own name (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992:249). This helps him or her to realise that despite the many changes in growth and interaction with the world, he or she remains the same person. Identity concept motivates an individual towards realising his or her potential. A person's identity represents the authentic self. And it is the authentic self that can be actualised. A person who has explored his or her identity and understands it, is able to say, "I can" or "I cannot". This person understands his or her abilities, aptitudes and interests. From the above, it is possible to conclude that because the self-concept may often be unrealistic, it may, on occasion, turn out to be a hindrance with regard to self-actualisation.

"To know one's identity permits the comprehension of one's past, of the potentialities of one's future and of one's place in the order of things" (Burns 1979:4).

## **2.6 THE ROLE OF THE SELF-CONCEPT IN BEHAVIOUR AND LEARNING**

The self-concept determines the way an individual should behave. The self-concept serves to guide behaviour and to enable each individual to assume particular roles in life. Although the self-concept does not initiate behaviour, it serves as a perceptual filter and guides the direction of behaviour (Purkey & Novak 1984:29). The self-concept can, therefore, be said to serve as a reference point or anchoring perception for behaviour. Le Roux (1979:10) regards the self-concept as the moderator variable of the personality, that is, the self-concept is the driving factor behind the actions of humankind, the controlling, regulating directional component within the personality of humankind. According to Felker (in Vrey 1993:113), the role of the self-concept is threefold:

- (1) The self-concept is the medium by which a person maintains inner stability.
- (2) The self-concept determines how experiences are interpreted.
- (3) The self-concept determines expectations the individual has of life.

With regard to maintaining inner stability, Rogers (in Lindgren & Suter 1985:247) argues that people's main concern about their self-concepts is embodied in the word

“consistency”. Their striving for consistency is expressed in the following four ways:

- (1) People attempt to make their beliefs about themselves consistent with one another.
- (2) People try to make certain that their behaviour is consistent with their self-concepts.
- (3) They consider as threatening anything relating to themselves that is inconsistent with their self-concepts.
- (4) Self-concepts maintain their consistency by accommodating learning, new experiences and changes that result from maturation.

An example of an inconsistency is when a person who regards himself or herself as honest and responsible (this represents his or her self-concept) finds himself or herself doing something dishonest and irresponsible. This experience is in conflict with this person’s self-concept. It is therefore contrary to the way this person perceives himself or herself. He or she finds this experience to be threatening. This may not necessarily be conscious. He or she becomes tense and feels guilty. According to Lester (1995:65), this individual has become dislodged from his or her core role. Rogers (in Hjelle & Ziegler 1992; Meyer et al 1997) uses the term “incongruence” in his theory when he refers to this inconsistency. Festinger (in Vrey 1993:115) uses the term “dissonance” to refer to this condition.

Incongruence or dissonance is thus a condition where an individual’s ideas, feelings or perceptions are out of harmony or in opposition to one another. This is a psychologically uncomfortable position which may also be equated to psychological maladjustment. The self-concept is the individual’s basic frame of reference, from which all else is observed. It thus constitutes a special framework that influences how information about the social world and information about the self (ie motives, emotional states, self-evaluations and abilities) is processed (Baron & Byrne 1997:153). Although the self-concept is the product of the individual’s experience, it is also the producer of what the person is capable of. It can affect and control perception.

The self-concept serves to provide the individual with a set of expectations. These

expectations direct the individual's behaviour (Felker 1974:10). A learner who regards himself or herself as stupid will expect other people to treat him or her as stupid. The learner may also behave and act in such a way that people will actually treat him or her as stupid. An individual will strive to act in harmony with his or her self-concept. The individual may refuse to accept as valid things which other people tell him or her about himself or herself or about others, so that they fit in with the picture he or she has (Felker 1974:7).

The following researchers make the following claims about the role played by the self-concept in determining behaviour and learning:

Oosthuizen and Petrick (1990:19) write: "The self-concept determines a person's self-actualisation (behaviour); indeed, it is sometimes described as the primary factor controlling human behaviour. A person's behavioural tendencies are an important clue to his self-concept and his interaction with his environment." Raimy (1971:104) argues: "The self-concept defines for the person his status and function in society. It regulates and helps control his behaviour over long periods of time." Lecky (in Raath & Jacobs 1993:2) asserts that the self-concept is the nucleus of the personality, that is, that it is a motivator (Lawrence 1996:1). Le Roux (1979:10) believes that it is the moderator variable of the personality and "the person is unlikely to persist in functioning incompatibly with the self-concept because this would frustrate the need for positive self-regard" (Maddi 1996:107). Kapp (1991:141) says that a negative self-image and a poor self-concept often lead to a learner not fully actualising his or her cognitive and other potentials as a person, and that he or she may even refuse to take on tasks that are within his or her ability. According to Kapp, this kind of learner does not easily reach out to others; he or she feels self-conscious and inadequate and often finds it difficult to establish permanent social relationships and friendships.

It is Shaw's conviction (in Kapp 1991:397) that the learning disabled's poor self-concept has a negative influence on his or her academic progress and that this poor self-concept gives rise to poor social relationships and leads to these children having a lower sense of personal adequacy for social situations. Kapp (1991:396) also cites Lerner as saying the fact that the learning-disabled child fails on the social level gives rise to the

child's poor self-concept.

The self-concept is such that it "colours" the interpretation of an individual's experiences (Felker 1974:8). The implication is that the effect of any experience on an individual does not really lie in any objective properties of that experience, but rather in the individual's interpretation of the experience and the subjective meaning he or she attaches to that experience. This is because every perception that enters the individual, must go through the filter, the self-concept. The meaning that is given to each perception depends largely on the view the individual has of himself or herself. An example illustrating this point is that the same thing can happen to more than one person, but their interpretations of the event will differ dramatically. A well meaning teacher may, for example, approach his or her learners and say, "Congratulations, you did very well in the test today." One learner's reaction might be: "Why has he or she mentioned it?" "He or she must think I cheated." Another learner may think: "He or she is just trying to show the other learners that I am stupid and that he or she never expected me to do well." Still another learner may interpret it as it was intended, that is, a genuine compliment.

Mwamwenda (1995:367) cites results of several research studies that look at the connection between the self-concept and academic achievement. In general, the results show that a person's self-concept can serve as a reliable predictor of that person's academic achievements. This holds true for both good and poor self-concepts. Learners with positive or good self-concepts performed significantly better than learners with negative or poor self-concepts.

Although it is often said that academic performance depends on ability, it has been proved that ability is only one of the predicting factors of academic performance. The attributes, beliefs and feelings associated with the self-concept and self-esteem play an important role in determining whether a child fulfils his or her potential (Coopersmith & Feldman 1974:192-225). Coopersmith and Feldman go on to say that a child who has a poor self-concept or who thinks poorly of himself or herself, is likely to underestimate his or her ability and anticipate failure. He or she may well stop trying when difficulties arise and then be overwhelmed by his or her defeats. A child with a positive self-image

and high self-esteem will, however, anticipate success and will persist in the face of problems; this will increase the likelihood that he or she will be successful. A person who has a poor concept of himself or herself as a learner is much less likely to enjoy his or her learning and will, therefore, spend less time at his or her books. As a result he or she will do poorly which, in turn will confirm his or her self-belief that he or she is a bad learner.

Success and failure have a powerful effect on a learner's self-concept. It will be difficult for an individual to think of himself or herself as a "good student" or as a "hard worker" if he or she has never experienced success in academic settings. Continued failure is likely to lead to a self-concept that includes descriptions such as: "I am no good at school" or "I am lazy". A learner with such a self-concept will, of course, act in ways that are consistent with that self-concept. He or she will avoid academic activities and neglect his or her work. This will, in turn, increase the likelihood of failure. Failure feeds a low self-concept, which results in a vicious circle.

Learners may exhibit positive self-concepts and high self-esteem because they do well in school. Here the implication is that achievement precedes self-concept. Kifer (in Hamachek 1995:34), however, says that success or failure of and by itself is not sufficient to explain changes in the self-concept. He says that it is rather the pattern and consistency of success or failure and the accumulation of those experiences that affects an individual's self-concept.

According to Hamachek (1995:342), it is not possible to be precise about which preceded the other, positive self-concepts or high achievements. Self-concept may cause academic achievement in the sense that personal investment in scholastic tasks depends on the self-concept and also that learners' positive self-concepts increase their motivation to achieve in the classroom. Learners with positive self-concepts may spend more time working on school-related tasks than those with negative self-concepts. They may also improve their self-images by getting things done.

Self-concept and achievement are interactive and reciprocal forces. Each has the potential to affect the other in positive or negative ways. It is thus possible to conclude that each mutually reinforces the other to the extent that a positive or a negative change

in one facilitates a commensurate change in the other (Hamachek 1995:344).

From the perspective of a learner who has a poor self-concept, it is psychologically less demeaning to fail when he or she has not tried than to fail after having given his or her best effort. The learner who does not try has no personal investment in the task and will thus not be disappointed. The learner also allows himself or herself the defense of attributing his or her failure to external factors, such as the teacher who cannot teach. Black (in Mercer 1991:600) notes that the lower the level of achievement, the lower the level of the self-concept. Learners who have low levels of academic achievements suffer repeated academic failure, disappointments and frustrations; they consequently also have low feelings of self-worth.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

The self-concept is defined and a distinction is made between the self, the self-concept, the self-esteem, self-efficacy and identity. The nature of the self-concept receives attention. The role of the self-concept in behaviour and learning is clarified. The interplay between self-concept and behaviour can create a vicious downward cycle. A poor self-concept leads to less productive behaviour which, in turn, leads to fewer successes. Fewer successes perpetuate a poor self-concept.

In the next chapter, the influence of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the learner will be dealt with.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE INFLUENCE OF THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF THE CHILD**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Parents are important determinants of a child's environment when the child is young and continue to be important when the child grows up. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:61) the parent-child relationship affects physical growth, personality development and intellectual development. They state further that the way a child develops a sense of competence and self-worth is related to the way he or she is treated at home. According to Woolfolk (1995:75), the child's developing self-concept is influenced by his or her relationship with his or her parents and other family members in the early years, and by friends, schoolmates and teachers as the child develops.

#### **3.2 THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP**

Parent-child relations are an important element of the child's development and socialisation (Greenfield & Suzuki 1998:1075). Parent-child relationships are characterised by discipline. According to Pappalia, Olds and Feldman (1999:368), discipline can be a powerful tool for socialisation and refers to methods of inculcating character, self-control and acceptable behaviour in children. Discipline may also be looked at in terms of the quality of the interaction between the parent and the child.



In general, those parents who have the best interests of their children at heart want to raise children who enjoy life, who think well of themselves and who are able to meet their goals. These children have to be taught how to live harmoniously with other people and to form and maintain close, constructive relationships. These parents have to accomplish these ends by using discipline and teaching their children self-discipline (Pappalia et al 1999:368).

According to Coopersmith (in Burns 1979:164), discipline involves setting standards by which children should live. Standards, whether set by parents or by teachers, are vitally important for the development of the self-esteem, since they provide a means for measuring self-progress, validate competence and show that others have interest in the individual. A child who is not required to meet standards believes that his or her parents and teachers have no concern for him or her; this child believes that he or she is not worth bothering about.

### **3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-CONCEPT**

It is a generally acknowledged fact that no one is born with a self-concept (Hjelle & Ziegler 1992; Baron & Byrne 1997). The self-concept is a self-schema. Like all schemata, it contains information, such as information relevant to the self which helps us interpret and process information. The self-concept is acquired primarily through social interaction that begins with the immediate family and continues with the other people the individual meets throughout life (Baron & Byrne 1997:153). According to Mwamwenda (1995:363) the self-concept continues to develop through childhood to adulthood.

Over and above the people a person interacts with, his or her environment includes the various tasks and responsibilities he or she is assigned to and the way he or she copes with them. Whether a person develops a positive or negative self-concept depends on how the person is treated and how he or she perceives such treatment. Felker (1974:6) also expresses this feeling when he says that the pressure exerted on an individual from the outside forges the self-concept.

Shavelson and Bolus (in Woolfolk 1995:76) argue that people evaluate their own behaviour in particular situations and compare their performance with that of others and with their own standards. They are constantly trying to answer the question: "How am I doing?" What counts, however, is not their performance, but how they perceive their performance. This means that they may be successful, but if they do not take credit for the success, then these successes will not build positive self-concepts. Likewise, an individual may fail constantly in his or her tasks. However, if he or she attributes his or her failure to some outside source, his or her self-concept does not take such a serious blow.

According to Vrey (1993:47), the self-concept comprises three mutually dependent components: identity, action and self-esteem. It was said earlier on, that identity is situation specific and that the self-esteem is the value the individual places on the self he or she perceives. How is the self-concept formed from these components?

A learner is given a mathematical task, for example. What first comes to the mind is "How am I as a mathematical person?" This is his or her identity. The person tackles the problem and the outcome may be success or failure. The person is evaluated after completing the task. What does the person think about his or her performance of the task? This is the person's self-esteem. If he or she was successful, he or she feels proud of himself or herself. The self-esteem gets a boost and it is healthy. The outcome of the action confirms the identity. However, if after thinking that he or she is good at mathematics, the person fails to achieve success, the person's evaluation of his or her performance is going to be negative, for example: "I am a poor mathematical person". He or she re-evaluates his or her identity. The person's self-esteem is going to be low. The learner's self-concept is formed from the composite of his or her identities in the different areas and how the person perceives his or her performance in these areas.

According to Rosenberg (1979:18), the self-concept may consist primarily of a social exterior or of a psychological interior. A social exterior refers to the overt self, especially behavioural characteristics. This includes abilities, achievement and physical characteristics. These are relatively objective and factual, and most are the visible aspects of the self. A psychological interior, however, refers to an inner world of thought and feeling and an ability for self-reflection. The latter refers to the thoughts and feelings

an individual has about his or her thoughts and feelings, and the ability to consider others' viewpoints. This is more private and invisible and refers to specific interpersonal feelings, private wishes, desires, aspirations and intimate aspects of the self. The self-concept with a social exterior is more characteristic of younger children, whereas the self-concept consisting primarily of a psychological interior is more a characteristic of adolescents.

Rosenberg (1979) illustrates this point in this way: A person asks subjects what they think the person who knows them best, knows about them. A younger learner is likely to answer in terms of a social exterior, for example: He or she knows that I engage in fights, that I am naughty or that I do things I should not be doing. An adolescent may, however, answer in terms of a psychological interior, for example: He or she knows that I am not as brave as I pretend to be. This difference results from the fact that to a younger learner, self is an actor who engages in certain kinds of behaviour, much of which is morally evaluated (Rosenberg 1979:200). Whereas the younger learner thinks in concrete terms, an adolescent has the ability to think in the abstract. An adolescent has also developed the ability for self-reflection, that is the ability to put himself or herself in another person's position and the ability to consider the viewpoints of others.

Rosenberg's notion of a social exterior and a psychological interior is illustrated further by the study of self-concepts in nine to eighteen year olds undertaken by Montemayor and Eisen (in Bee 1998:244). The participants were each asked to supply 20 answers to the question "Who am I?" Here are some of their answers:

9 year old (Bee 1998: 244)

My name is Bruce C. I have brown eyes. I have brown hair. I have brown eyebrows. I am nine years old. I LOVE! sports. I have seven people in my family. I have a great! Eye site. I have lots! of friends. I live on 1923 Pinecrest Dr. I am going on 10 in September. I am a boy. I have a uncle that is almost 7 feet tall. My school is Pinecrest. My teacher is Mrs. V. I play hockey! I am almost the smartest boy in the class. I LOVE! food. I love fresh air. I love school.

11 year old (Bee 1998:244)

My name is A. I am a human being. I am a girl. I am a truthful person. I am not very pretty. I do so-so in my studies. I am a very good cellist. I am a very good pianist. I am a little tall for my age. I like several boys. I like several girls. I am old fashioned. I play tennis. I am a very good swimmer. I try to be helpful. I am always ready to be friends with everybody. Mostly I'm good, but I lose my temper. I'm not well liked by some girls and boys. I don't know if I'm liked by boys or not.

17 years old (Bee 1998:301)

I am a human being. I am a girl. I am an individual. I don't know who I am. I am a Pisces. I am a moody person. I am a very indecisive person. I am an ambitious person. I am a very curious person. I am not an individual. I am a loner. I am an American (God help me). I am a democrat. I am a pseudoliberal. I am an atheist. I am not a classifiable person (ie I don't want to be).

From the above, it seems that the pattern in the development of the self-concept parallels the development in cognitive development. For younger learners, surface qualities are important. They define themselves in terms of a number of observable characteristics, such as size or gender. Early descriptions are highly concrete, often quite situation specific. The nine year old also describes himself on a social level.

Appearance is a highly salient dimension in the preteen and early teen years, but becomes less dominant in late adolescence. Ideology and belief become more salient during adolescence. When learners move through the concrete operations period, their self-descriptions become more complex, more comparative and they gradually become less focused on external qualities such as feelings and ideas. This becomes evident in the answers of the eleven year old. Although she describes her external qualities, she also emphasises her beliefs, the quality of her relationships and her general personality.

Self-definitions become increasingly abstract during adolescence. The seventeen year old's self-concept is less tied to her physical characteristics or her abilities than those of the younger children. She describes abstract traits or ideology (Bee 1998:301). Her answers are of a more psychological interior nature. During the late teenage years, self-concepts become more flexible in the sense that categories are held less rigidly. And by

late adolescence, most teenagers think of themselves in terms of enduring traits, beliefs, personal philosophy and moral standards (Bee 1998:302).

### **3.3.1 Elements important in self-concept development**

#### ***3.3.1.1 A need for positive regard***

According to Rogers (in Meyer et al 1997:469), an individual has a need for positive regard in order for the self-concept to develop adequately. He also says that once the individual receives positive regard from others, he or she develops a need for positive self-regard. The need for positive regard is a desire to be loved and accepted by others who matter to the individual. This need reflects itself in a person's satisfaction when approved of by others and frustration when disapproved of. The need for positive self-regard refers to personal satisfaction at approving and dissatisfaction at disapproving of oneself (Maddi 1996:105). Positive regard is reciprocal in nature in that when a person views himself or herself as satisfying another's need for positive regard, he or she also experiences satisfaction of his or her own need for positive regard.

Rogers (in Meyer et al 1997: 476) further qualifies positive regard by differentiating between unconditional positive regard and conditional positive regard. Rogers uses the term "unconditional positive regard" for respect and acceptance given to another person whether or not that person behaves in accordance with the accepting person's expectations. Positive regard in this instance is not contingent on certain acts or thoughts.

Conditional positive regard on the other hand, has conditions attached to it. Rogers (in Meyer et al 1997: 477) says that people in the individual's social environment tend to give positive regard. This is, however, often coupled with qualifying messages such as: "You are my child and I love you, but only when you behave nicely or when you do as I expect." This condition may be inconsistent with the individual's (eg child's) self-concept. Behaving nicely may not mean the same thing to the child and the person setting the condition, such as the parent. The child thus receives conditional positive regard. However, because he or she has a desperate need to be accepted, the

individual child will do anything to receive positive regard, even if it means having to adopt other people's values (conditions of worth) and incorporating them into the self-concept. A person would rather opt for conditional positive regard than no regard at all.

### ***3.3.1.2 Acceptance***

Acceptance is important for developing positive self-concepts. Unconditional acceptance means accepting learners for what they are without setting conditions for their acceptance. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999: 235) believe that the educators dispense acceptance and rejection on a colossal scale and these have a strong impact during the learner's formative school years.

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999: 8) acceptance is the favourable willing reception of a person as he or she is. If the acceptance is absent or minimal, the educator will be unable to assist the educand on his or her way to adulthood, the educand will thus be hindered or prevented from reaching responsible adulthood. A child who is accepted does not have any reason to doubt himself or herself and he or she therefore develops confidence. Again, acceptance does not mean that educators always have to agree with what learners do or say. It also does not mean that educators may never express views that are contrary to those held by learners. Rather, it means acknowledging others' points of view and ways of behaving, that is, being willing to listen and help.

### ***3.3.1.3 Relationships***

Relationships are also important in the development of self-concept. Hartup (1986:1-2) asserts that relationships are the contexts in which most of a child's socialisation takes place (eg communication skills). He also believes that relationships constitute bases that enable the child to function independently in the wider world (eg a secure attachment between the young child and the mother promotes exploration of the environment away from the mother). Childhood relationships, both those in which the child participates and those that the child observes, serve as important templates or models that can be used in the construction of future relationships. This point needs to be elaborated somewhat. Although relationships do not replicate themselves in endlessly repeated cycles, the

consequences of earlier relationships can frequently be detected in later relationships.

In addition to the parent-child relationship, the child also has to form relationships with the self, peers, teachers, objects ideas and a supernatural (for the Christian, it is the Lord Jesus Christ). This discussion will, however, focus on the relationships with the self, peers and a supernatural Lord. The relationship a child forms with his or her parents is basic to the formation of relationships with others. Knowing one's identity consists of recognising and identifying oneself. In the relationship with the self, the individual compares himself or herself with peers and his or her abilities are judged in relation to norms. This gives rise to the self-concept and either self-acceptance or self-rejection.

The peer group provides the growing child with a milieu within which an identity may be secured since the individual must become less like his or her parents and more like his or her peers (Burns 1979:165). A relationship with peers is a relationship of equals. In this relationship, the individual can venture and evaluate his or her self-identity more realistically (Vrey 1993:104). Within the peer group, the individual develops social skills and learns how to get along in society. He or she learns how to adjust his or her needs and desires to those of others. He or she learns when to yield and when to stand firm. He or she also gains a sense of belonging (Pappalia et al 1999:484). The feeling that he or she belongs to the group adds support to his or her dignity (Vrey 1993:104). Relationships with peers provide a platform where an adolescent becomes emancipated from parental control (Vrey 1993:24; Mwamwenda 1995:71). These relationships also provide company and a sounding board for his or her voice and opinions (Vrey 1993:169). He or she finds affection, sympathy, understanding, moral guidance and a place for experimentation in the peer group (Pappalia et al 1999:599).

A relationship with a supernatural is a relationship of a religious nature (Vrey 1993:119). This is a spiritual relationship between man and a divine power. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1999:204) religion is essentially a personal search, experience, a personal challenge and a commitment which offers security, a sense of belonging and a sense of personal worth. Belief in a divine power offers the individual an authority on which to base his or her behaviour. A spiritual dimension to the individual's

life is associated with good mental health and maturity of personality (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg 1999:202).

### **3.4 PARENTING**

Parents may be either warm or cold in their relationship with the child. With warm parenting, the parent acts lovingly and supportively towards the child. The parent also accepts the child for what he or she is, with all his or her failures and shortcomings. The parent is sensitive to the child's needs, problems, feelings and desires (Pretorius 1998:62). There is an adequate "I-you" relationship between the parent and child. The love and acceptance which the child receives, predispose him or her to form a positive self-concept (Pretorius 1998:63).

With cold parenting, however, the parent is unloving and hostile and may even reject the child. The parent is also insensitive towards the child's needs and feelings. He or she may also set very high demands and expectations for the child (Pretorius 1998:63). Cold parenting results in an extremely inadequate actualisation of the parent-child relationship. Due to the parent's attitude of rejection, the child develops a low self-concept which results in the learner not being able to actualise his or her potential. The learner's psychological and social growth is stunted (Pretorius 1998:64).

Some parents become too involved in the child's life. They would like to control all that he or she is doing and would also like to know the child's every move. Trying to live the child's life for him or her, hampers the child's socialisation. The child usually has little self-confidence, which could lead to a low self-concept (Pretorius 1998:70). In contrast, parents may be uninvolved or indifferent to the child. They may provide food and clothes but it ends there. They make no demands on the child and also fail to set long-term guidelines and goals for him or her. The parents may have little or no interest in the child or could have overwhelming personal problems (Louw 1995:353). Being indifferent to the child means disregarding his or her need for warmth, authority and guidance. The parent-child relationship is extremely inadequately actualised. The child shows disturbances in his or her relationships with other people. He or she is dominant, rude, stubborn and lacking in creativity (Slater & Muir 1999:431); he or she tends to be impulsive and even antisocial which leads to feelings of inferiority and a negative self-



concept (Louw 1995:353; Pretorius 1998:71). The child whose parents are indifferent is nonconforming, maladjusted and selfish (Slater & Muir 1999:433); he or she is also less achievement-orientated in school (Louw 1995:353).

Somewhere on the continuum of being “uninvolved” and being “too involved”, are those parents who show interest and concern for their children’s overall wellbeing. These parents are interested in more than their children’s homework and grades. They make time to talk to their children, to know what their children are doing and to be available for them. According to Pappalia et al (1999:559), high school learners of such parents generally have the highest grades. The above writers also say that adolescents who get along well with their parents and whose parents are reasonably well adjusted, tend to get higher grades and behave better in school.

Another relationship between the parent and child may be that of spoiling the child. The parent does things for the child and he or she also makes decisions on behalf of the child. As a result, the child is not given the opportunity to become someone in his or her own right, with his or her own judgement and independent decision-making competence. As a learner, the child finds it particularly difficult to accept the strictness and punishment of the teacher at school and he or she underachieves because he or she is used to being beyond demands, duties and restrictions. He or she becomes self-centred and thinks the world revolves around him or her (Pretorius 1998:372).

An overprotected child who is not given the opportunity to explore is seriously impeded in his or her psychic actualisation. Such a child stays an infant because the parent-child relation is such that he or she is taught to fear everything and to regard all he or she encounters as very dangerous (Pretorius 1998:374).

A child who is smothered with love becomes self-centred. He or she is unable to cultivate a healthy, realistic attitude regarding his or her place in society. He or she becomes disillusioned later in life by the knocks of a cold business-like world because he or she is inadequately socially oriented.

As said before, some parents may be dominating. They always want to control and improve the child’s actions. These parents force their views on the child. There is little

chance of an adequate parent-child relationship, as the child is made to feel inferior. The learner therefore develops a poor self-concept, as he or she is inhibited from reaching the active self-actualisation and independence on which to base a positive self-concept (Pretorius 1998:65).

In the parent-child relationship characterised by abuse of the child, there is a lack of loving care and personal warmth. The child is deprived of the most important condition of his or her existence, namely, his or her sense of security (Pretorius 1998:364). Child abuse is dehumanising. Humiliation causes a negative self-concept and the child becomes socially disoriented. According to Berk (1998:269), the family circumstances of maltreated children impair the development of emotional self-regulation, self-concept and social skills. According to Briere and Sternberg et al (in Berk 1998:269-270), the parent-child relationship based on demeaning parental messages in which children are ridiculed, humiliated, rejected or terrorised, results in low self-esteem, high anxiety, self-blame and efforts to escape from extreme psychological pain which, at times, may be severe enough to lead to attempted suicide in adolescence.

Berger (2001:235) postulates that virtually every child who experiences serious ongoing maltreatment will bear some lifelong scars, including depression, fear of intimacy, difficulty controlling emotions or low self-esteem. According to Cichetti et al and Eckenrode et al (in Berger 2001:234) chronically abused and neglected children tend to be underweight, slower to talk, less able to concentrate and delayed in academic growth. When tackling the issue of incest in the family, Rice (1996:148) says that the long-term effects of forceful, hurtful exploitative relationships can be severe and the female victim may carry a burden of anger, bitterness, shame, guilt and lower self-esteem for years.

### **3.4.1 Specific parenting styles and self-concept development**

Baumrind (in Ormrod 1998:96; Greenfield & Suzuki 1998:1077) has identified parenting styles that are correlated with children's social behaviours and personalities, and these styles differ from one another in the degree of control that parents exert over their children. Pretorius (1998) uses this model in the discussion of parenting styles.

### ***3.4.1.1 Authoritative parenting***

This is an equivalent of tolerant democratic parenting, which is also warm and flexible (Pretorius 1998:67). Authoritative parenting combines warmth with reasonable demands for maturity (Berk 1998:377). According to Berger (2001:283) the parents set limits in authoritative parenting and provide guidance; they are, however, also willing to listen to the child's ideas and make compromises. The rights of both parents and children are recognised (Berk 1998:266; Louw 1995:352). Authoritative parents seek to promote the child's individuality and sense of responsibility (Caprara & Cervone 2000:224). The child's need for love, security, exposure, recognition, discipline and guidance is adequately actualised in a social context. The parent-child relationship is adequately actualised leading to the formation of a high self-concept in the child (Pretorius 1998:68). According to Berk (1998:266-267), children of authoritative parents are lively, happy, self-confident in the mastery of new tasks and are self-controlled. This style of parenting is associated with task persistence, social maturity, high self-esteem, internalised moral standards and superior academic achievement. Children of these parents develop high self-concepts and a high sense of responsibility.

### ***3.4.1.2 Authoritarian parenting***

This is an intolerant, autocratic style of parenting (Pretorius 1998:68). Authoritarian parents emphasise respect for authority, preservation of order and parent-child distance (Caprara & Cervone 2002:224). They place such a high premium on conformity and obedience that they will even reject their child if he or she does not comply with their wishes (Louw 1995:352; Berk 1998:266). There is very little communication between parent and child (Louw 1995:352; Berk 1998:266; Berger 2001:283). These parents often resort to force and punishment in the case of misconduct. The parent is cold, dominant, repressive, indoctrinative and distant. The parent-child relationship is not adequately actualised. The child becomes hostile, aggressive, bossy and consequently socially maladjusted. The child also has a negative self-concept (Pretorius 1998:68). Louw (1995:352) says that children of authoritarian parents have low self-esteems and are less skilled in their relationships with friends. Some children appear relaxed, while

others show a high level of aggression. They cannot internalise moral standards and tend to do less well at school. Although they may seem conscientious, obedient and quiet, these children are not happy and they have poor self-concepts (Berger 2001:284).

#### **3.4.1.3 *Permissive parenting***

Permissive parents believe parents should be nonintrusive, but available as resources (Lamb, Hwang, Ketterlinus & Fracasso 1999:427). These parents view themselves as available to help children, but not as responsible for shaping how their children turn out. Demands for maturity are, therefore, low (Berger 2001:283). They create a climate in which the child is responsible for regulating his or her own behaviour (Louw 1995:352). The child is allowed to make his or her own decisions at an age when he or she is not yet capable of doing so (Berk 1998:266). There are no restrictions.

Permissive parenting is characterised by a careless attitude. The parents do not seem to care about their teenage children's marks and do not attend school programmes (Pappalia et al 1999:559). According to Pretorius (1998:66) children just float around in life without being given a reliable model of responsible adult behaviour. The child's need for love, guidance and authority is not adequately met. The parent-child relationship is inadequately actualised and the child's self-concept is negatively affected. Children of permissive parents are immature, impulsive, disobedient and rebellious when asked to do something that conflicts with their momentary desires (Berk 1998:266). They do less well at school (Louw 1995:352) and are also unhappy children who also lack self-control (Berger 2001:285).

When doing the literature study, this researcher could, however, not find anything pertaining to the parent-child relationship and the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child in particular.

### **3.5 SUMMARY**

The parent-child relationship was discussed. Focus was placed on the development of the self-concept and those elements that are important in self-concept development. These elements are positive regard, acceptance and the other relationships which the

child forms. Aspects such as the forms which parenting may take and how these forms affect the self-concept of the child received attention. The three forms of parenting styles were discussed. The next chapter deals with the research design and methodology.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature study has revealed the possibility that a child's self-concept may be positively or negatively influenced by the nature of the parent-child relationship. The empirical investigation aims to investigate whether such influence extends to the relationship between Southern Sotho parents and their children. After the formulation of the hypotheses, the method of the empirical investigation will be outlined. The procedure followed during the investigation will then receive attention.

#### **4.2 HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were formulated after studying the relevant literature.

##### **4.2.1 Hypothesis 1**

There will be a significant correlation between the self-concept of the Southern Sotho

learners and their relationship with their parents.

#### Rationale

According to Woolfolk (1995: 75), the child's developing self-concept is influenced by his or her relationship with his or her parents and other family members in the early years, and by friends, peers and teachers as the child develops.

Abell and Gecas (1997: 99-123) found that parental control behaviours differ in their effectiveness as moral socialisation strategies, because of what each parental control behaviour indicates to children about themselves and how they are connected to social relationships and moral norms.

#### **4.2.2 Hypothesis 2**

There is a significant difference between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho learners who live under different home circumstances.

#### Rationale

According to McNeal and Amato (1998:123-139), marital violence in the home places children at risk for long-term negative outcomes. They further say that problems in the family of origin may have long lasting consequences for the children.

It is in this light that this researcher hypothesises that children may go into restructured families with problems from the family of origin.

#### **4.2.3 Hypothesis 3**

There is a significant difference between the self-concepts of grade eight Southern Sotho learners and grade ten Southern Sotho learners.

#### Rationale

Le Roux (1999:222-229) found that grade five Northern Sotho learners had higher self-concepts than grade six and seven Northern Sotho learners.

#### **4.2.4 Hypothesis 4**

There is a significant difference between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho boys and Southern Sotho girls.

#### **Rationale**

Le Roux (1999:222-229) also found that Northern Sotho primary school girls have higher self-concepts than those of Northern Sotho primary school boys.

All the hypotheses were stated for each dimension of the self-concept and for the total self-concept.

### **4.3 SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE**

#### **4.3.1 Defining the population**

According to Tuckman (1999:259), the population for a particular study is the group about which the researcher wants to gain information and draw conclusions. Defining the population refers to a process of establishing boundary conditions that specify who shall be included in or excluded from the research.

This study is aimed at investigating how the parent-child relationship influences the self-concept of the child, with special emphasis on the Southern Sotho learner. Maboloka village, a South Sotho speaking community, was chosen for the study. An intermediate school was selected for grade eight learners and a high school for grade ten learners. Southern Sotho learners were identified so that they could take part in the study.

#### **4.3.2 Composition of the sample**

**Table 4.1: Composition of the sample**

	Grade 8	Grade 10	Total
Boys	43	24	67
Girls	34	55	89
Total	77	79	156

The learners came from families of between one and eight children with the average family consisting of four children. With regard to the position of the child, the majority of respondents were the youngest child in the family. The family circumstances of the respondents were such that 42.31% were children from single parent families, 38.46% were families headed by both biological parents, while the remaining 10.26% and 8.97% were restructured families and foster families respectively. The average age of the respondents was 15.794, with a standard deviation of 1.755.

#### **4.4 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE INVESTIGATION**

The nature of the investigation made it imperative to use questionnaires. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996:288), questionnaires and interviews are being used extensively in educational research to collect information relating to feelings, motivations, attitudes, accomplishments and individuals' experiences. They state further that a wide range of educational problems can be investigated using questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was chosen because, as opposed to an interview more respondents can be reached in the shortest possible period of time (Bailey 1994:135). This means that questionnaires are documents that ask the same questions of all the individuals in the sample (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:289). Questionnaires also provide tools for discovering what experiences have taken place in a person's life and what is occurring at the present time. Questionnaires can be used in group settings, whilst an interview will need a one-on-one approach. For both questionnaires used in the study, each item has both a positive and a negative pole with a scale of 1 to 6 ranging in-between.

##### **4.4.1 The Self-Concept Questionnaire (See appendix A)**

This researcher could not find any studies in the literature that looked at the self-concept



of the Southern Sotho learner. It was thus necessary to design and develop a questionnaire to measure the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child and learner. The literature study revealed that the self-concept is multidimensional (refer to sec 2.4). This was taken into consideration in the development of the Self-Concept Questionnaire for the Southern Sotho learner. The questionnaire was based on existing self-concept questionnaires (Le Roux 1979; Le Roux 1999; Ramalebana 2003) and comprises sixty items. The questionnaire measures six dimensions of the self-concept, with each dimension being represented by 10 items.

#### ***4.4.1.1 The structure of the Self-Concept Questionnaire***

The Self-Concept Questionnaire can be used in both individual and group settings. Use of a scale in marking the questionnaire, facilitates administration and interpretation.

#### ***4.4.1.2 The dimensions of the Self-Concept Questionnaire***

##### ***(a) Dimension 1: The physical self***

The respondent gives an indication of his or her opinion of his or her body and its functions. The person with a positive self-concept will be satisfied with how he or she looks. He or she will identify with a healthy, attractive and important person. The following are examples of items used to measure the physical self:

“I always feel healthy.”

“I am more attractive than my friends.”

##### ***(b) Dimension 2: The academic self***

The respondent need not be the most intelligent in order to have a positive self-concept. He or she will be happy in school and will be satisfied with how he or she fares. He or she does not, therefore, think that the teacher does not like him or her or that his or her

schoolwork is too difficult. The following are examples of items used to measure the academic self:

“I do things at school as required.”

“My teacher is fair to me.”

*(c) Dimension 3: The social self*

A high social self-concept means that a person is able to make and keep friends. The person also regards himself or herself as important to other people. He or she is not, however, self-centred and does not harbour delusions of grandeur. He or she is popular, friendly and cooperative. The following are examples of items used to measure the social self:

“I choose friends easily.”

“I am popular with people of my own sex.”

*(d) Dimension 4: The value self*

Values refer to honesty, respect and religion. A person will regard himself or herself as religious, honest, respectful and worthy of respect if he or she has a positive self-concept. He or she does what he or she thinks is right. The following are examples of items used to measure the value self:

“I regret telling lies.”

“When paying for something, I give back the money if I get more change than expected.”

*(e) Dimension 5: The family self*

A person with a positive self-concept will regard himself or herself as important to his or her family. He or she will also be certain of his or her family's love and trust. He or she will, in turn, care for his or her family members' wellbeing. The following are examples

of items used to measure the family self:

“I am not ashamed of my relatives.”

“My parents’ wishes are very important to me.”

(f) *Dimension 6: The psychic self*

The respondent has to evaluate his or her ability to do things, to solve problems and to overcome problems. A person with a positive self-concept has a good sense of humour and a pleasant personality. He or she stands by his or her convictions. He or she believes in himself or herself. The following are examples of items used to measure the psychic self:

“I know that I can solve my problems.”

“I know I will be successful in life.”

**Table 4.2: Item numbers for each of the self-concept dimensions**

Sub-headings			
Physical self	6	71727373849515359	Social
self491519212936414755		Academic self581618262839404854	Family
self2111323253134434557		Value self3101420243035424656	Psychic
self1122232334450525860			

**4.4.2 The Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire** (See appendix B)

This questionnaire was initially developed by Fourie (2001:178). The questionnaire consists of forty-five items. Three dimensions of the parent-child relationship are measured and each dimension has fifteen items relating to it. The dimensions of the questionnaire and the total questionnaire have the following reliability coefficients.

**Table 4.3: Cronbach coefficient alpha for the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire**

Authority relationship	0.755
Knowing relationship	0.884

Trust relationship	0.916
Total parent-child relationship	0.950

#### ***4.4.2.1 The structure of the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire***

This questionnaire can be used for individuals and for groups. Usage of a scale makes it possible to compute a total score.

#### ***4.4.2.2 The dimensions of the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire***

##### *(a) Dimension 1: The authority relationship*

The person who has a good relationship will think his or her parents are reasonable and fair in exercising authority, for example:

“My parents explain the rules that they set down.”

“I accept the rules that my parents set.”

##### *(b) Dimension 2: The knowing relationship*

Items for this dimension indicate how well parents and children know each other. They also indicate interest in each other and interest in what the other does. The respondent whose relationship with his or her parents is good will think they know what is good for him or her and also care for him or her. Items for this category are:

“My parents always listen when I tell them something that is important to me.”

“My parents know my abilities and my restrictions.”

##### *(c) Dimension 3: The trust relationship*

This dimension refers to how trustworthy a person feels and how much he or she can trust and rely on his or her parents, for example:

“I can discuss my problems with my parents.”

“ My parents are honest and sincere with me.”

**Table 4.4: Item numbers for each of the parent-child relationship dimensions**

**The authority relationship**

1	4	7	10	13	16	19	21
24	27	30	33	36	39	41	

**The knowing relationship**

2	5	8	11	14	17	22	25
28	32	34	37	40	42	44	

**The trust relationship**

3	6	9	12	15	18	20	23
26	29	31	35	38	43	45	

**4.4.3 Key to the measuring instruments**

**4.4.3.1 *The Self-Concept Questionnaire***

Each item consists of two statements. The one is a positive and the other a negative statement. The learner chooses a number between 1 and 6.

For example: I choose friends easily            1 2 3 4 5 6    I have difficulty making friends.

If the learner thinks the statement on the left pertains more to him or her, he or she will choose between 1,2 and 3. However, if he or she agrees with the statement on the right, he or she will choose between 4,5 and 6 depending on the degree of agreement. This makes it impossible for the learners to choose a neutral or middle-of-the road option.

**4.4.3.2 *The Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire***

Each item consists of a statement. The statement may be such that it has positive

connotations. For example: “I accept the rules that my parents set.” When an item has negative connotations the scoring has to be reversed. An example of a reversed item is: “I am not actually worried about my parents’ point of view, I do as I please.”

#### **4.5 PROCEDURE FOLLOWED DURING THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

The Self-Concept Questionnaire and Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire were handed out to the selected learners. The researcher then explained the procedures and the content of the questionnaires to the sample group. The group was then asked to complete the questionnaires at their own pace. The questionnaires were then collected and checked for any irregularities. They were then subjected to a relevant statistical analysis.

#### **4.6 PROCESSING THE RESULTS**

##### **4.6.1 The Self-Concept Questionnaire**

An item analysis was done for all items in each of the six dimensions of the Self-Concept Questionnaire, as well as for the questionnaire as a whole. The reliability of the Self-Concept Questionnaire as a measuring instrument was determined by calculating the Alpha-coefficient for each dimension, as well as for the whole questionnaire.

The norms of the Self-Concept Questionnaire were determined so that future researchers who might want to use the Self-Concept Questionnaire will be able to interpret their results in the light of the present study’s results.

##### **4.6.2 Testing the hypotheses**

The Pearson’s product moment correlation was calculated so as to determine whether hypothesis 1 should be accepted or rejected. An analysis of variance (f-test) was used to determine whether hypothesis 2 should be accepted or rejected and t-tests were applied to determine whether hypotheses 3 and 4 should be accepted or rejected.

## CHAPTER 5

### A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

#### 5.1 ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

An item analysis was done for each of the dimensions of the Self-Concept Questionnaire so as to establish whether each of the items made a contribution to its particular section. Item-total correlations were calculated. In the case where an item-total correlation was low or negative, the item was seen to make no contribution and was thus left out.

An aspect of the item analysis that merits specific mention is the Alpha reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient was calculated for each section of the questionnaire, in the event that all the items would be retained. The reliability coefficient was also calculated in case a specific item was left out. On the basis of the item-total correlation and the reliability coefficient, it was then decided whether a specific item should be retained or left out.

Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 indicate that all items showed a positive correlation with the total. They also indicate that the reliability coefficient of the particular section is not significantly higher if any item is left out.

#### **Table 5.1: Item analysis of the dimension - physical self**

Number of subjects : 156

Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.79  
 Mean : 45.02  
 Standard deviation : 9.55

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
6	0.372	0.792
7	0.526	0.774
17	0.500	0.777
27	0.522	0.775
37	0.468	0.781
38	0.351	0.795
49	0.630	0.763
51	0.262	0.804
53	0.534	0.773
59	0.568	0.769

**Table 5.2: Item analysis of the dimension - social self**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.70  
 Mean : 39.88  
 Standard deviation : 8.67

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
4	0.448	0.667
9	0.282	0.695
15	0.326	0.688
19	0.642	0.635
21	0.497	0.657
29	0.349	0.684
36	0.371	0.681
41	0.318	0.689
47	0.372	0.681
55	0.104	0.731

**Table 5.3: Item analysis of the dimension - academic self**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.81



Mean : 43.23  
 Standard deviation : 10.06

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
6	0.448	0.798
8	0.531	0.790
16	0.622	0.780
18	0.377	0.806
26	0.660	0.777
28	0.612	0.780
39	0.522	0.790
40	0.356	0.813
48	0.545	0.788
54	0.283	0.815

**Table 5.4: Item analysis of the dimension - family self**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.89  
 Mean : 46.89  
 Standard deviation : 11.87

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
2	0.540	0.885
11	0.681	0.875
13	0.604	0.880
23	0.611	0.880
25	0.756	0.870
31	0.413	0.896
34	0.606	0.880
43	0.725	0.873
45	0.708	0.874
57	0.711	0.873

**Table 5.5: Item analysis of the dimension - value self**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.66  
 Mean : 41.71  
 Standard deviation : 8.60

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
------	-----------------------------	---------------------------

3	0.409	0.621
10	0.349	0.631
14	0.381	0.624
20	0.461	0.614
24	0.242	0.654
30	0.430	0.614
35	0.151	0.670
42	0.231	0.655
46	0.096	0.681
56	0.543	0.590

**Table 5.6: Item analysis of the dimension - psychic self**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 10  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.82  
 Mean : 42.57  
 Standard deviation : 9.77

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
1	0.566	0.801
12	0.338	0.824
22	0.466	0.811
32	0.509	0.807
33	0.492	0.808
44	0.420	0.816
50	0.514	0.806
52	0.651	0.793
58	0.644	0.791
60	0.479	0.810

**Table 5.7: Item analysis of the Self-Concept Questionnaire**

Number of subjects : 156  
 Number of items : 60  
 Alpha reliability coefficient : 0.952  
 Mean : 259.32  
 Standard deviation : 50.79

Item	Item correlation with total	Alpha if item was deleted
1	0.591	0.951
2	0.596	0.951
3	0.517	0.951
4	0.460	0.951
5	0.496	0.951

6	0.425	0.952
7	0.594	0.951
8	0.543	0.951
9	0.251	0.952
10	0.389	0.952
11	0.694	0.950
12	0.349	0.952
13	0.552	0.951
14	0.391	0.952
15	0.357	0.952
16	0.605	0.951
17	0.531	0.951
18	0.481	0.951
19	0.469	0.951
20	0.665	0.951
21	0.560	0.951
22	0.491	0.951
23	0.610	0.951
24	0.314	0.952
25	0.727	0.950
26	0.734	0.950
27	0.570	0.951
28	0.664	0.951
29	0.416	0.952
30	0.377	0.952
31	0.402	0.952
32	0.594	0.951
33	0.501	0.951
34	0.629	0.951
35	0.129	0.953
36	0.168	0.953
37	0.515	0.951
38	0.415	0.952
39	0.518	0.951
40	0.382	0.952
41	0.594	0.951
42	0.200	0.953
43	0.645	0.951
44	0.433	0.952
45	0.686	0.951
46	0.160	0.953
47	0.524	0.951
48	0.571	0.951
49	0.630	0.951

50	0.549	0.951
51	0.304	0.952
52	0.705	0.951
53	0.540	0.951
54	0.344	0.952
55	0.076	0.953
56	0.638	0.951
57	0.721	0.950
58	0.678	0.951
59	0.608	0.951
60	0.477	0.951

## 5.2 RELIABILITY OF THE SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

Whenever an instrument is developed, an attempt is made to obtain a reliability coefficient as close to 1 as possible. The closer the reliability of a measuring instrument is to 1, the smaller the difference is between the variance of the actual score and the observed score.

The Self-Concept Questionnaire could only be administered once. The test-retest method of testing reliability was ruled out, as testing a second time would influence the spontaneous responses of the testees. The equivalent form method could also not be used, as there would be transference resulting from the administration of the first questionnaire.

The reliability was, therefore, arrived at by calculating the Alpha coefficient for each of the sections, as well as for the total Self-Concept Questionnaire. It can be seen from table 5.8 that the reliability for the Self-Concept Questionnaire is 0.952. This value is very close to 1; the Self-Concept Questionnaire can, therefore, be considered to be a reliable measuring instrument.

**Table 5.8: Reliability of the Self-Concept Questionnaire**

Section		Alpha coefficient					No of items				
Physical self	Social self	Academic self	Family self	Value self	Psychic self	Total self-concept	10	10	10	10	10
		0.79	0.70	0.81	0.89	0.66	0.82	0.952			

### 5.3 VALIDITY OF THE SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

With regard to the validity of the questionnaire, an attempt was made to focus on both construct and content validity. With regard to content validity the researcher consulted experts in the field of self-concept who established that the questionnaire was content valid.

With regard to construct validity, a correlational approach was followed. The different subsections measure the different constructs which are related to each other and to the total construct (self-concept). Since the constructs (subsections) are related, researchers should expect to find significant positive correlations among them and between each construct (subsection) and the construct measured by the questionnaire in total (self-concept). If such correlations exist, researchers can consider the questionnaire to be construct valid.

Correlation coefficients were calculated in order to determine the construct validity. These correlations were among the six constructs and between each construct and the total construct (self-concept). These correlations are given in table 5.9. The figures indicate that all constructs have high positive correlations with each other and with the total self-concept. The Self-Concept Questionnaire can, therefore, be regarded as construct valid.

**Table 5.9: Pearson correlation coefficients between the different constructs and between each construct and the total construct**

	Physical	Social	Academic	Family	Value	Psychic	
Total self-concept							
Physical	1.00						
Social	0.601	1.00					

Academic	0.781	0.614	1.00				
Family	0.774	0.668	0.769	1.00			
Value	0.725	0.521	0.700	0.623	1.00		
Psychic	0.773	0.617	0.816	0.784	0.650	1.00	
Total self-concept	0.898	0.768	0.905	0.902	0.804		
	0.898	1.00					

In all instances,  $p < 0.01$

#### 5.4 DETERMINING THE NORMS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

A norm is an objective standard used to interpret the scores which a testee receives on a measuring instrument.

Stanines, which are used most frequently, are based on standard scores that have been grouped into nine categories. The nine categories are indicated in table 5.10. To calculate the stanines for the subsections of the Self-Concept Questionnaire and the total Self-Concept Questionnaire, the cumulative percentages for each subsection and the total questionnaire were obtained. The stanines obtained are set out in tables 5.11 to 5.17.

Stanines can be used to determine whether a score is below average, average or above average. According to Mulder (1996:205), stanines (1, 2 & 3) are regarded as below average, stanines (4, 5 & 6) as average and stanines (7, 8 & 9) as above average. The scores of the Self-Concept Questionnaire and its subsections have been classified into categories in table 5.18.

**Table 5.10: Limits and areas of stanines**

Stanine	Limits	% of Area
---------	--------	-----------

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	+	to +1.75	+1.75	to +1.25	+1.25					
to +0.75	+0.75	to +0.25	+0.25	to -0.25	-0.25	to -0.75	-0.75	to -1.25	-	1.25	to -1.75	-1.75	to -					
										4	7	12	17	20	17	12	7	4

(Mulder 1996 :205)

**Table 5.11: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension - physical self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative
Percentage		Stanine	
19	3	3	1.92
21	3	6	3.85
22	2	8	5.13
23	1	9	5.77
25	2	11	7.05
22	1	12	7.69
27	1	13	8.33
28	3	16	10.26
29	1	17	10.90
32	2	19	12.18
33	1	20	12.82
34	2	22	14.10
35	1	23	14.74
36	2	25	16.03
37	3	28	17.95
38	3	31	19.87
39	1	31	20.51
40	5	37	23.72
41	4	41	26.28
42	1	42	26.92
43	7	49	31.41
44	6	55	35.26
45	10	65	41.67
46	8	73	46.79
47	10	83	53.21
48	7	90	57.69
49	6	96	61.54
50	11	107	68.59

51	4	111	71.15	6
52	9	120	76.92	6
53	11	131	83.97	7
54	7	138	88.46	7
55	6	144	92.31	8
56	6	150	96.15	8
57	2	152	97.44	9
58	3	155	99.36	9
59	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.12: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension -  
social self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	percentage	Stanine
18	1	1	0.64	1
19	1	2	1.28	1
21	3	5	3.21	1
22	1	6	3.85	1
23	3	9	5.77	2
25	2	11	7.05	2
26	2	13	8.33	2
27	1	14	8.99	2
28	3	17	10.90	2
29	3	20	12.82	3
30	6	26	16.67	3
31	4	30	19.23	3
32	3	33	21.15	3
33	2	35	22.44	3
34	9	44	28.21	4
35	4	48	30.77	4
36	4	52	33.33	4
37	4	56	35.90	4
38	7	63	40.38	4
39	6	69	44.23	5



40	6	75	48.08	5
41	3	78	50.00	5
42	6	84	53.85	5
43	8	92	58.97	5
44	13	105	67.31	6
45	8	113	72.44	6
46	6	119	76.28	6
47	5	124	79.49	7
48	5	129	82.69	7
49	8	137	87.82	7
50	5	142	91.03	8
51	4	146	93.59	8
52	3	149	95.51	8
53	2	151	96.79	8
54	1	152	97.44	9
55	2	154	98.72	9
56	1	155	99.36	9
57	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.13: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension - academic self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative	
	percentage	Stanine		
16	1	1	0.64	
17	2	3	1.92	
19	1	4	2.56	
22	2	6	3.85	
23	2	8	5.13	
24	3	11	7.05	
25	4	15	9.62	
26	1	16	10.26	
27	3	19	12.18	
28	2	21	13.46	
29	1	22	14.10	
30	2	24	15.38	

32	2	26	16.67	3
33	1	27	17.31	3
34	2	29	18.59	3
35	2	31	19.87	3
36	3	34	21.79	3
37	2	36	23.08	3
38	3	39	25.00	4
39	6	45	28.85	4
40	4	49	31.41	4
41	5	54	34.62	4
42	4	58	37.18	4
43	6	64	41.03	5
44	5	69	44.23	5
45	9	78	50.00	5
46	4	82	52.56	5
47	6	88	56.41	5
48	8	96	61.54	6
49	12	108	69.23	6
50	7	115	73.72	6
51	11	126	80.77	7
52	3	129	82.69	7
53	12	141	90.38	7
54	5	146	93.59	8
56	3	149	95.51	8
57	5	154	98.72	9
58	1	155	99.36	9
59	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.14: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension - family self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative
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percentage Stanine

11	2	2	1.28	1
13	1	3	1.92	1
15	1	4	2.56	1
18	1	5	3.21	1
19	2	7	4.49	1
20	1	8	5.13	2
21	1	9	5.77	2
23	1	10	6.41	2
25	3	13	8.33	2
26	3	16	10,26	2
27	2	18	11.54	2
28	1	19	12,18	3
29	1	20	12.82	3
30	3	23	14.74	3
31	1	24	15.38	3
32	1	25	16.03	3
35	1	26	16.67	3
36	1	27	17.31	3
37	1	28	17.95	3
38	2	30	19.23	3
39	1	31	19.87	3
41	2	33	21.15	3
42	2	35	22.44	3
43	4	39	25.00	4
44	3	42	26.92	4
45	1	43	27.56	4
46	8	51	32.69	4
47	6	57	36.54	4
48	10	67	42.95	5
49	7	74	47.44	5
50	6	80	51.28	5
51	9	89	57.05	5
52	9	98	62.82	6
53	8	106	67.95	6
54	4	110	70.51	6
55	10	120	76.92	6

56	5	125	80.13	7
57	5	130	83.33	7
58	8	138	88.46	7
59	9	147	94.23	8
60	9	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.15: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension - value self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage	Stanine
18	1	1	0.64	1
21	1	2	1.28	1
22	3	5	3.21	1
23	2	7	4.49	1
24	1	8	5.13	2
25	2	10	6.41	2
26	1	11	7.05	2
27	3	14	8.97	2
28	1	15	9.62	2
29	2	17	10.90	2
30	1	18	11.54	2
31	2	20	12.82	3
32	6	26	16.67	3
33	4	30	19.23	3
34	3	33	21.15	3
35	3	36	23.68	3
36	3	39	25.00	4
37	3	42	26.92	4
38	8	50	32.05	4
39	3	53	33.97	4
40	5	58	37.18	4
41	9	67	42.95	5
42	5	72	46.15	5
43	7	79	50.64	5
44	6	85	54.49	5

45	8	93	59.62	5
46	11	104	66.67	6
47	4	108	69.23	6
48	10	118	75.64	6
49	7	125	80.13	7
50	7	132	84.62	7
51	10	142	91.03	8
52	6	148	94.87	8
53	4	152	97.44	9
55	3	155	99.36	9
57	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.16: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the dimension -  
psychic self**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	percentage	Stanine	Cumulative
15	1	1	0.64	1	1
16	1	2	1.28	1	1
17	2	4	2.56	1	1
20	1	5	3.21	1	1
22	3	8	5.13	2	2
23	2	10	6.41	2	2
24	3	13	8.33	2	2
25	2	15	9.62	2	2
28	1	16	10.26	2	2
29	3	19	12.18	3	3
30	2	21	13.46	3	3
31	6	27	17.31	3	3
33	1	28	17.95	3	3
34	1	29	18.59	3	3
36	4	33	21.15	3	3
37	4	37	23.72	3	3
38	2	39	25.00	4	4
39	7	46	29.49	4	4

40	8	54	34.62	4
41	4	58	37.18	4
42	3	61	39.10	4
43	6	67	42.95	5
44	6	73	46.79	5
45	9	82	52.56	5
46	7	89	57.05	5
47	11	100	64.14	6
48	11	111	71.15	6
49	13	124	79.49	7
50	5	129	82.69	7
51	4	133	85.26	7
52	6	139	89.10	7
53	2	141	90.38	7
54	5	146	93.59	8
55	4	150	96.15	8
56	1	151	96.79	8
57	1	152	97.44	9
59	3	155	99.36	9
60	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.17: Transformation of raw scores into stanines for the Total Self-Concept Questionnaire**

Raw score	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	percentage	Stanine	Cumulative
119	1	1	0.64	1	1
121	1	2	1.28	1	1
128	1	3	1.92	1	1
132	1	4	2.56	1	1
137	1	5	3.21	1	1
142	1	6	3.85	1	1
143	2	8	5.13	2	2
154	2	10	6.41	2	2
156	3	13	8.33	2	2
158	1	14	8.97	2	2

166	2	16	10.26	2
172	1	17	10.90	2
174	1	18	11.54	2
176	1	19	12.18	3
202	2	21	13.46	3
203	1	22	14.10	3
205	1	23	14.74	3
206	1	24	15.38	3
207	1	25	16.03	3
210	1	26	16.67	3
211	1	27	17.31	3
217	1	28	17.95	3
218	1	29	18.59	3
221	1	30	19.23	3
222	1	31	19.87	3
223	1	32	20.51	3
226	1	32	21.15	3
227	1	34	21.79	3
229	1	35	22.44	3
230	1	36	23.08	3
231	1	37	23.72	3
234	1	38	24.36	4
235	1	39	25.00	4
237	1	40	25.64	4
239	1	41	26.28	4
245	1	42	26.92	4
246	1	43	27.56	4
247	1	44	28.21	4
248	2	46	29.49	4
250	1	47	30.13	4
251	3	50	32.05	4
252	1	51	32.69	4
254	1	52	33.33	4
255	2	54	34.62	4
256	1	55	35.26	4
257	1	56	35.90	4
258	1	57	36.54	4
259	2	59	37.82	4
260	1	60	38.46	4
261	1	61	39.10	4
262	2	63	40.38	4

263	1	64	41.03	5
265	2	66	42.31	5
266	1	67	42.95	5
267	2	69	44.23	5
269	1	70	44.87	5
270	1	71	45.51	5
271	2	73	46.79	5
272	2	75	48.08	5

273	2	77	49.36	5
274	1	78	50.00	5
275	1	79	50.64	5
276	2	81	51.92	5
277	5	86	55.13	5
278	3	89	57.05	5
279	1	90	57.69	5
281	4	94	60.26	5

282	4	98	62.82	6
283	2	100	64.10	6
284	2	102	65.38	6
285	1	103	66.03	6
286	2	105	67.31	6
288	3	108	69.23	6
289	3	111	71.15	6
290	2	113	72.44	6
291	2	115	73.72	6
292	2	117	75.00	6
294	1	118	75.64	6
296	1	119	76.28	6
297	1	120	76.92	6
300	1	121	77.56	6

301	3	124	79.49	7
302	2	126	80.77	7
303	2	128	82.05	7
304	1	129	82.69	7
305	2	131	83.97	7
306	1	132	84.62	7
307	1	133	85.26	7
308	4	137	87.82	7
309	2	139	89.10	7
310	1	140	89.74	7



311	2	142	91.03	8
313	2	144	92.31	8
315	3	147	94.23	8
316	2	149	95.51	8
322	1	150	96.15	8
324	2	152	97.44	9
326	1	153	98.08	9
327	1	154	98.72	9
328	1	155	99.36	9
334	1	156	100.00	9

**Table 5.18: Classification of the Self-Concept Questionnaire scores into categories**

Dimension	Below average	Average	Above average
Physical self	10 - 33	34 - 46	47 - 60
Social self	10 - 37	38 - 48	49 - 60
Academic self	10 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 60
Family self	10 - 35	36 - 48	49 - 60
Value self	10 - 37	38 - 48	49 - 60
Psychic self	41 - 52	53 - 60	56 - 60
Total	60 - 231	232 - 300	301 - 360
Stanines	1 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9

## 5.5 TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

### 5.5.1 Hypothesis 1

With regard to hypothesis 1, stated in subsection 4.2.1, the following null hypothesis was tested:

There will be no significant correlation between the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learners and their relationship with their parents.

This hypothesis was tested for each dimension of the self-concept and for the total self-concept. It was also tested for each dimension of the parent-child relationship and for the total parent-child relationship. In order to test the hypothesis, the Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated in each instance. All 156 pupils were used. The

results appear in tables 5.19, 5.20, 5.21 and 5.22.

**Table 5.19: Correlation coefficients between the parent-child relation of authority and the dimensions of the self-concept**

Dimensions of the self-concept	Physical	Social	Academic	Family	
Value	Psychic	Total self-	concept		
Relationship with authority	r = 0.09	r = 0.03	= 0.07	r = 0.07	r = -
0.01	= 0.02	r = 0.05			

In all instances,  $p > 0.05$

**Table 5.20: Correlation coefficients between the parent-child relation of knowing and the dimensions of the self-concept**

Dimensions of the self-concept	Physical	Social	Academic	Family	
Value	Psychic	Total self-	Concept		
Relationship with knowing	r = 0.04	r = 0.05	= 0.05	r = 0.06	= -0.02
0.00	r = 0.03				=

In all instances,  $p > 0.05$

**Table 5.21 Correlation coefficients between the parent-child relation of trust and the dimensions of the self-concept**

Dimensions of the self-concept	Physical	Social	Academic	Family	
Value	Psychic	Total self-	concept		
Relationship with trust	r = 0.18	r = 0.04	r = 0.16	= 0.19	r = 0.16
0.14	r = 0.17				r =
	p < 0.05	p > 0.05	p < 0.05	p < 0.01	p < 0.05
					p > 0.05

0.05

**Table 5.22: Correlation coefficients between the total parent-child relationship and the dimensions of the self-concept**

Dimensions of the self-concept	Physical	Social	Academic	Family	
Value	Psychic	Total self-	concept		
Relationship with total parent - child relationship	r = 0.16	r = 0.06	r = 0.14	r =	
0.17	r = 0.08	r = 0.10	r = 0.14		
	p < 0.05	p > 0.05	p > 0.05	p < 0.05	p > 0.05
					p >

0.05

The results for the authority and knowing dimensions of the parent-child relationship appear in tables 5.19 and 5.20 respectively. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected for those dimensions. It seems there is no significant correlation between authority and the

knowing dimensions of the parent-child relationship and the dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept.

The figures in table 5.21 indicate that for the *social self* and the *psychic self*, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. It seems there is no significant correlation between the social and psychic dimensions of the self-concept and the trust dimension of the parent-child relationship. For *family self*, however, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 1% level of significance. For the dimensions *physical self*, *academic self* and *value self* and for the total self-concept, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 5% level of significance. This means that there is a significant correlation between the trust dimension of the parent-child relationship and the family, physical, academic and value dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept.

Table 5.22 indicates that for the *physical self* and the *family self*, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 5% level of significance. That means that there is a significant correlation between the *physical self*, the *family self* and the total parent-child relationship. For all the other dimensions, that is the *social self*, the *academic self*, the *value self* and the *psychic self*, as well as for the total self-concept, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. No significant correlation was found between those dimensions of the self-concept, the total self-concept and the total parent-child relationship.

In the case of the total scores of both the self-concept and parent-child relationship, it seems there is no significant correlation between the self-concept of Southern Sotho learners and their relationships with their parents.

These results contradict studies cited in Rice (1996:188), which show that the affective quality of family relations during adolescence are associated with high levels of self-esteem.

A possible explanation for the present results could be that Southern Sotho parents raise their children communally. The larger community could, therefore, be making up for the lack of affect in the home when it occurs.

### 5.5.2 Hypothesis 2

With regard to hypothesis 2 stated in paragraph 4.2.2, the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant difference between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho learners who live under different home circumstances.

This hypothesis was tested for each dimension of the self-concept and for the total self-concept.

One hundred and forty-two subjects were used and they formed three groups. The groups were as follows:

Group 1: Southern Sotho children who live with both biological parents.

Group 2: Southern Sotho children who live with parents in restructured marriages.

Group 3: Southern Sotho children who live with single parents.

The f-test was used to determine whether there are significant differences between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho children in the different groups. This was done for all six dimensions of the self-concept and for the total self-concept.

The average self was calculated for each of the three groups with regard to the dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept. In order to compare these averages, an analysis of variance was carried out. The results appear in tables 5.23 to 5.29.

**Table 5.23: Results of the analysis of variance for the physical self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
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1	60	45.80	10.34
2	16	42.75	10.22
3	66	44.21	9.06

$F(2.139) = 0.78; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.24: Results of the analysis of variance for the social self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	41.28	8.42
2	16	38.93	8.32
3	66	38.37	8.78

$F(2.139) = 1.86; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.25: Results of the analysis of variance for the academic self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	43.51	10.16
2	16	40.56	9.89
3	66	43.10	10.28

$F(2.139) = 0.54; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.26: Results of the analysis of variance for the family self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	47.83	11.95
2	16	44.31	12.50
3	66	46.21	11.33

$F(2.139) = 0.67; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.27: Results of the analysis of variance for the value self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	42.58	8.42
2	16	42.06	8.67
3	66	40.16	8.60

$F(2.139) = 1.31; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.28: Results of the analysis of variance for the psychic self**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	42.50	9.76
2	16	42.93	8.51
3	66	41.84	10.09

$F(2,139) = 0.11; p > 0.05$

**Table 5.29: Results of the analysis of variance for the total self-concept**

Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation
1	60	263.51	50.90
2	16	251.56	52.50
3	66	253.92	50.88

$F(2,139) = 0.69; p > 0.05$

The null hypothesis cannot be rejected in any of these cases. No significant difference exists between the average self of the three groups. The same results were obtained for all the dimensions of the self-concept and for the total self-concept.

The results differ from the findings of Garnefski and Diekstra (1997:201-208) who found that adolescents from one parent and step-parent families report more emotional problems, have lower self-esteem, increased depression and more suicidal thoughts than children from intact families.

A possible explanation for the present results could be that Southern Sotho parents and children do not place much emphasis on the status of parents, whether they be biological, step or foster parents. Their communal way of raising their children makes it possible for children to see any adult providing for their welfare as a parent.

### 5.5.3 Hypothesis 3

With regard to hypothesis 3 stated in paragraph 4.2.3, the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant difference between the self-concepts of grade eight Southern Sotho learners and grade ten Southern Sotho learners.

In testing this hypothesis, 77 grade eight learners and 79 grade ten learners were tested. To determine whether the self-concept of grade eight learners differ from the self-concepts of grade ten learners, the mean of each group was calculated for each dimension of the self-concept and for the total self-concept. The t-test was used to determine whether the means differed significantly or not. The results appear in table 5.30.

Table 5.30: Comparison of the self-concepts of grade eight and grade ten learners							
Variable	Grade	N	M	SD	T	DF	
Physical self	8 10	77 79	42.16	47.81	11.19	6.59	3.85
	154	p > 0.05					
Social self	8 10	77 79	38.53	41.20	8.89	8.28	1.94
	154	p > 0.05					
Academic self	8 10	77 79	41.84	44.59	11.56	8.20	1.72
	154	p > 0.05					
Family self	8 10	77 79	43.84	49.86	13.99	8.44	3.26
	154	p < 0.01					
Value self	8 10	77 79	39.61	43.77	9.67	6.86	3.10
	154	P < 0.01					
Psychic self	8 10	77 79	41.31	44.77	10.87	8.04	2.92
	154	P < 0.01					
Total self - concept	8 10	77 79	246.31	272.01	60.39		
	35.25 3.26	154	P < 0.01				

According to the figures in table 5.30, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected for the dimensions *physical self*, *social self* or the *academic self*. That means there is no significant difference between the self-concepts of grade eight and grade ten Southern Sotho learners with regard to the *physical self*, the *social self* and the *academic self*. The null hypothesis can, however, be rejected at the 1% level of significance for the dimensions *family self*, *value self* and *psychic self*. The null hypothesis can also be rejected at the 1% level of significance for the total self-concept. It seems that there is a significant difference between the self-concepts of grade eight Southern Sotho learners and grade ten Southern Sotho learners with regard to the dimensions *family self*, *value self* and *psychic self*, as well as for the total self-concept. The results indicate that grade

ten Southern Sotho learners have higher self-concepts than grade eight Southern Sotho learners.

The results are in accordance with a study by Fenzel, Mullis, Mullis and Normadin (in Rice 1996:196) who report that a move from the elementary school to junior high school or middle school seems to negatively affect the self-concept. Grade eight learners have just moved from primary school and this could be the reason for their low self-concepts.

#### 5.5.4 Hypothesis 4

With regard to hypothesis 4 stated in paragraph 4.2.4, the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no significant difference between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho boys and Southern Sotho girls.

To test this hypothesis 67 boys and 89 girls were tested. To determine whether the self-concepts of boys differ from the self-concepts of girls, the mean of each group was calculated for each dimension of the self-concept and for the total self-concept. The t-test was used to determine whether the means differ significantly or not. The results appear in table 5.31.

Table 5.31 : Comparison of the self-concepts of boys and girls							
Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	DF	
Physical Self	Boys	67	11.39	4.12	41.56	47.62	p < 0.01
	Girls	89	6.88	154			
Social Self	Boys	67	7.57	2.16	154	38.17	41.16
	Girls	89	9.74				
p < 0.05							
Academic self	Boys	67	11.72	2.04	154	41.35	44.65
	Girls	89	8.39				
p < 0.05							
Family self	Boys	67	14.01	4.27	154	42.44	50.23
	Girls	89	8.64				
p < 0.01							
Value self		Boys	67	39.46	89		



43.41	9.47	7.49	2.91	154	p < 0.01		
Psychic Self	Boys	Girls		67	89	40.34	44.24
	11.44	7.97		2.51	154	p < 0.05	
Total self - concept	Boys	Girls		67	89	243.36	
271.35	61.30	37.22		3.53	154	p < 0.01	

According to the figures in table 5.31, the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 5% level of significance for the *social self*, the *academic self* and the *psychic self*. For the *physical self*, the *family self* and the *value self*, as well as for the total self-concept, the null hypothesis can be rejected at 1% level of significance. It seems there is a significant difference between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho boys and Southern Sotho girls. In all instances, Southern Sotho girls were found to have higher self-concepts than Southern Sotho boys. These findings are in accordance with the views of Le Roux (1999:222-229), who found that Northern Sotho girls (primary school) have higher self-concepts than Northern Sotho boys (primary school).

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

An item analysis was carried out for each section and for the total Self-Concept Questionnaire. No items were excluded from the final questionnaire.

The reliability of the Self-Concept Questionnaire was measured by calculating the Alpha coefficient. This was found to be 0.952 for the total Self-Concept Questionnaire; this questionnaire can, therefore, be considered to be a reliable measuring instrument. Norms for the Self-Concept Questionnaire were established by converting the raw scores to stanines.

The following five conclusions were reached after testing the hypotheses:

- (1) There is a significant correlation between the trust dimension of the parent-child relationship and the physical, academic and value dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept. There is also a significant correlation between the physical and family dimensions of the self-concept and the total parent-child relationship.

- (2) No significant correlation could be found between the total scores of the Self-Concept Questionnaire and the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire.
- (3) There is no significant difference between the self-concept of Southern Sotho children who live in different home circumstances. This applies to all the dimensions of the self-concept and to the total self-concept.
- (4) Grade ten Southern Sotho learners have higher self-concepts than grade eight Southern Sotho learners.
- (5) Southern Sotho girls have higher self-concepts than Southern Sotho boys.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

As it has already been stated, the individual's self-concept is implicated in the choices the individual makes and the success or failure that the individual makes of his or her life. It has also been said that the individual's self-concept can be influenced by factors such

as the parent-child relationship.

The purpose of this study was to construct an instrument which would measure the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child and learner. The study further intended to measure the parent-child relationship of the Southern Sotho learner and to see how the parent-child relationship influences the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child.

The literature study revealed that the self-concept is referred to as the individual's perception of his or her core being which determines the person's interaction with himself or herself and with his or her environment. Self-concept relates to self-actualisation (the process of becoming what a person is capable of, making full use of all the abilities, talents and potentials), because the goals a person wants to achieve depend on his or her positive self-concept. The person must actualise his or her abilities and talents through a positive self-concept. The term "self-concept" was defined and differentiation was made between the different self-terms. The common factor in the different definitions of the self-concept was found to be beliefs, evaluations and behavioural tendencies.

Whereas the self-concept refers to particular qualities that a person possesses, self-esteem is a global measure of the self-concept that captures the individual's personal judgement about his or her own self-worth. Entailed in the self-esteem is a sense of personal efficacy. Self-efficacy perceptions were found to contribute directly to decisions, actions and experience. They also influence cognitive factors that contribute to performance.

The self-concept is dynamic, complex and organised. The self-concept retains a patterned, gestalt-like quality which gives continuity to the person; the person is thus able to feel that he or she is still the same person at any given moment in time. The self-concept was found to be multidimensional and six dimensions are distinguished. The six dimensions are the physical self, the social self, the academic self, the family self, the moral or value self and self-criticism or psychic self.

Identity was found to be the value the person attaches to himself or herself and this is built on the foundation of his or her earliest and most primary identifications. It is said

that identity formation finally begins when the usefulness of identification ends (Le Roux 1979; Vrey 1993). Identity is psychosocial, because it involves individual relationships within a cultural context. This means that the child's identity is acquired during communication with his or her fellow man and it is determined by the extent to which he or she is recognised socially by others (Pretorius 1998). According to Smith (1992:149), identity is the accrued confidence that the individual possesses; the ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity. Identity thus serves to maintain the self-concept.

The roles played by the self-concept in behaviour and learning were found to be

- serving as a perceptual filter and guiding the direction of behaviour
- maintaining inner stability
- determining how experiences are interpreted
- determining expectation the individual has of life

## **6.2 THE FINDINGS OF THE LITERATURE STUDY REGARDING THE INFLUENCE OF THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF THE CHILD**

Greenfield and Suzuki (1998:1075) assert that parent-child relationships are an important aspect of child development and socialisation, as they are characterised by discipline. Discipline involve setting standards by which children should live. Standards are vitally important for the development of self-esteem, since they provide the means to measure self-progress, validate competence and show that others have interest in the individual.

No one is born with a self-concept. The self-concept is acquired through social interaction from childhood through to adulthood. For a younger child, the self-concept is characterised by visible, overt characteristics such as size, appearance and gender. As the person develops the self-concept is characterised more by feelings, private wishes, ideology and beliefs.

Some elements have been found to be of importance to self-concept development. The need for positive regard is a desire to be loved and accepted by others who matter to the individual, and it refers to personal satisfaction at approving and dissatisfaction at disapproving of oneself (Maddi 1996:105). Positive regard can be either unconditional or conditional. Conditional positive regard has conditions of worth attached to it and it is not good for the development of the self-concept. People also need to be accepted for who they are in order to develop positive self-concepts. The relationships that an individual forms are important for the development of the self-concept.

Parenting can take many forms and these forms influence how the self-concept develops. Three different parenting styles have been identified. The parenting styles are authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting. Each of these styles has its own types of self-concept outcomes.

### **6.3 THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

An empirical investigation was carried out with the following goals in mind:

To develop a measuring instrument (the Self-Concept Questionnaire) with which to measure the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child and learner.

To measure the parent-child relationship of the Southern Sotho child.

To determine whether the parent-child relationship influences the self-concept of the child in any way (with regard to the Southern Sotho learner).

#### **6.3.1 The findings of the empirical investigation**

Different hypotheses were formulated to guide the empirical investigation. The following results were obtained:

- (1) There is no significant correlation between the authority and knowing

dimensions of the parent-child relationship and all the dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept; the trust dimension of the parent-child relationship and the social and psychic dimensions of the self-concept; and the total parent-child relationship and the social, academic, value and psychic dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept.

- (2) A significant correlation exists between the trust dimension of the parent-child relationship and the physical, academic, family and value dimensions of the self-concept and the total self-concept; and the total parent-child relationship and the physical and family dimensions of the self-concept.
- (3) There is no significant difference between the average self-concept of Southern Sotho children who live in different home circumstances. This was the case for all the dimensions of the self-concept as well as for the total self-concept; and the self-concepts of grade eight and grade ten Southern Sotho learners with regard to the physical, social and academic dimensions.
- (4) A significant difference exists between the self-concepts of grade eight and grade ten Southern Sotho learners with regard to family, value and psychic dimensions, and the total self-concept; and the self-concepts of Southern Sotho boys and girls. Southern Sotho girls have higher self-concepts than boys.

## **6.4 EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH**

The principal aim of this study was to provide an answer to the question “What is the influence of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the Southern Sotho learner?”

This paragraph considers whether this question was in fact answered and whether anything else of importance was achieved, the problematic aspects of the study will also be discussed.

### **6.4.1 What is the influence of the parent-child relationship on the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child?**

Although no significant correlations could be found between total self-concept scores and family-child relationship scores (ie the relationship between the Southern Sotho child and his or her parents appears to have no bearing on the development of the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child), the following four findings contribute significantly to a better understanding of the Southern Sotho family:

- (1) A measuring instrument was developed specifically to measure the self-concept of the Southern Sotho child. The measuring instrument was found to be reliable (0.952) and simple to administer and score.
- (2) A parent-child relation of trust will have a bearing on academic, family and value self-conceptions and the total self-concept. Trust is thus very important between the parent and child.
- (3) Good parent-child relations are important for good physical and family self-conceptions.
- (4) Grade ten Southern Sotho learners have significantly higher family, value, psychic and total self-concepts, which could mean they have reached an age where their identities have crystallised.

#### **6.4.2 Problematic aspects of the research**

It is very difficult to assess the level of honesty with which learners answered the Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire and the Self-Concept Questionnaire. Huysamen (1984:98) attests to this when he says that all self-report inventories have inherent limitations.

It is also difficult to assess whether all the learners interpreted all the items correctly.

Some learners who have problems with their parents may have experienced anxiety when they answered the questionnaire and this may have influenced the results.

#### **6.4.3 Recommendations for further research**

For practical reasons, the investigation was conducted using only learners from the

Maboloka village. A repetition of the investigation could be done using a combination of pupils from both rural and urban areas, in order to establish whether or not environment or socioeconomic status play a role in the development of the self-concept and parent-child relationships.

Some of the findings of the research contradict other findings. No significant difference was, for example, found between the self-concepts of Southern Sotho children who live in different home circumstances, whereas McNeal and Amato (1998: 123-139) found that parents' marital violence place children at risk for long term negative outcomes. Further research should verify these contradictions.