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Self-Esteem and Socioeconomic Background:  
The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Work

presented by

Mohammed Al-Bakr

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Sociology

*William A. Faunce*

Major professor

Date June 12, 1990



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SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND WORK

By

Mohammed Al-Bakr

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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ABSTRACT

SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND:  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND WORK

By

Mohammed Al-Bakr

This study addressed the question of how working conditions and experiences influence employee self-esteem, proceeding from the assumption that employees' occupational experiences and work conditions tend to affect rather than reflect their psychological functioning. The study built upon the perspective which rejects the common assumption that work necessarily affects self-esteem and examined variables that may affect the relationship between work and self-esteem. Thus, this study aimed to explore the causal relationship of job conditions and experience--specifically, self-direction, occupational achievement level, and perceived upward mobility--to self-esteem, and to determine how these conditions moderate the effect of socioeconomic status of family-of-origin and educational attainment on self-esteem.







The study's population was drawn randomly from two census tracts representing stable upper-middle and working-class residential areas in Lansing, Michigan. Forty-five persons were selected from each tract. The head of each household was interviewed.

The causal relationships between the independent, moderating, and dependent variables were statistically analyzed using path analysis. Also, regression analysis was used to test the effect of career stage (number of years in the labor force and age) on the relationship between self-esteem and educational attainment, occupational achievement level, self-direction, and perceived upward mobility.

The statistical analysis indicated that significant causal relationships existed among the following variables: socioeconomic background, educational attainment, occupational achievement level, self-direction, and self-esteem, in the following order:  
 $\uparrow \text{SES} \rightarrow \uparrow \text{educational attainment} \rightarrow \uparrow \text{occupational achievement level} \rightarrow \uparrow \text{self-direction} \rightarrow \uparrow \text{self-esteem}.$   
Accordingly, the research proposition that socioeconomic background affects self-esteem only indirectly through mediating variables was sustained. The results did not show a significant direct causal relationship between socioeconomic background and occupational achievement level, occupational self-direction, or self-esteem. There was also no significant direct causal relationship







between educational attainment and the following variables: occupational **self-direction**, perceived upward mobility, and **self-esteem**. The hypothesized effect of career stage on the relationship of occupational achievement and experience with self-esteem was not found.







DEDICATION

To the memory of my late mother







and Abdulaziz Al-Sebail. When my scholarship was unjustly terminated, they came forward to encourage me to remain in the United States and finish my education, and generously offered to help me in any way I might need.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people by their support, interest, and guidance have provided the opportunity for me to realize this moment. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude to them here.

A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to Professor William Faunce, my academic advisor and chairman of my doctoral committee, for his endless support and guidance, for his ability to patiently listen and actively engage in the generation of new ideas on work and self-esteem. I also wish to express my appreciation for the sincerity, encouragement, and intellectual criticism of my dissertation committee members: Professor Chris Vanderpool, Professor Tom Conner, and Professor Jack Bain.

I sincerely thank Professors Frederick Waisanen and Chris Vanderpool for their friendship and for being sources of ideas and insight during my graduate education in the Sociology Department. Thanks are also extended to Professor Stan Kaplowitz, who provided assistance in statistical analysis and interpretation.

A very special and deeply felt thanks is given to my friends, Abdulaziz Al-Sebail, Mohammad Al-Gowaifli,



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A number of people by their support, interest, and guidance have provided the opportunity for me to realize

this moment. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness and

gratitude to them here.

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friend, for his endless patience, for his endless  
encouragement, for his ability to patiently  
listen to my ramblings, for his patience of new  
ideas, for his patience of my questions, for his  
patience of my mistakes, for his patience of my  
progress, for his patience of my setbacks, for his  
patience of my triumphs.

I wish to thank

my family for

their love and support

throughout my life

and for their

faith in me

and for their

love.



and Abdulaziz Al-Dhebaiban. *If happened to me too!* When my scholarship was unjustly terminated, they came forward to encourage me to remain in the United States and finish my education, and generously offered financial assistance that I might do so.

Last, but not least, appreciation is given to Mr. Gene Purdum for the tedious job of typing this dissertation, which he did with the utmost patience and professionalism.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Rationale for the Study

This research is designed to advance research which challenges the common assumption that work is necessarily a major determinant of employees' self-esteem, as proposed by scholars such as Crites, who indicates that work is centered in the life of the individual; it is the major source of self-esteem, career satisfaction, and success. Alternatively, based on the work of, among others, Tharenou and Harker (1982), Tharenou (1979), Kohn and Schooler (1983), and Faunce (1989), we propose that it is not work per se but more particularly work conditions and experiences such as occupational achievement level, upward mobility, and self-direction, which are some of the most salient variables that may influence self-esteem. For example, Kohn and Schooler (1983:141) provide evidence that job conditions affect facets of personality such as self-conception and social orientation. Moreover, Tharenou (1979) indicated that jobs providing autonomy, challenge, and skill are positively associated with global and work-specific self-esteem and competence. Based upon the fact that job conditions and experiences vary and are



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Rationale for the Study

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subjected to alteration, we assume that these conditions and experiences will highly influence self-esteem. They may not, however affect self-concept. This is because self-esteem fluctuates and depends on the individual's endless experiences and social contacts, whereas self-concept tends to be more stable and structured in early childhood. Because occupational conditions and experiences such as self-direction give one freedom at work and more independence in making decisions, it will lead to self-acceptance, self-respect, and positive feeling at work, which implies a high self-esteem. On the other hand, there are occupations where self-direction is restrained or totally eliminated by performing very routinized work. Such work may induce a negative feeling toward one's self. The authors of Work in America indicate that blue-collar workers experience an overwhelming sense of inferiority (1973:35). Because of this, we assume that occupational self-direction will correlate with self-esteem.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem which this study addressed was the puzzling question of how working conditions and experiences influence one of the employee's major psychological functions, namely, self-esteem. In this research, we proceed from the assumption that employees' occupational experiences and work conditions tend to







affect rather than reflect their psychological functioning. Moreover, in contrast to Crites (1976) and others who assume that work necessarily affects self-esteem, the primary objective of this research is to build upon the perspectives which require a rejection of such an assumption, and examine variables that may affect the relationship between work and self-esteem as evidenced in Faunce's (1989) work on occupational status-assignment systems. Accordingly, we aim to assess the actual causal impact of job conditions and experiences on personality. We argue that the relationship between socioeconomic status of family of origin and self-esteem is moderated by occupational conditions and experiences. Therefore, we hypothesize that socioeconomic status does not directly affect the employees' self-esteem; rather, it is proposed that socioeconomic status is indirectly related to self-esteem by the effect it has on the individual's opportunities for attaining a high level of education and a higher level of occupational achievement, and the effect of these on the individual's opportunities to exercise self-direction at work and having higher possibility for upward mobility. Career stage can be expected to moderate most of these relationships.

#### Significance of the Study

Over the past two decades, research findings about the relationships between work conditions, experiences,



affect rather than reflect their psychological functioning. Moreover, in contrast to Crites (1976) and others who assume that work necessarily affects self-esteem, the primary objective of this research is to build upon the perspectives which require a rejection of such an assumption, and examine variables that may affect the relationship between work and self-esteem as evidenced

in Farnsworth's (1979) work on occupational status-assignment and the relationship of work to self-esteem and the actual causal relationship between work and self-esteem.



social class, educational attainment, and self-esteem are fraught with contradictions. While some research findings indicate positive, negative, or conditioning relationships, others reveal no relationships at all between the previous variables and self-esteem. These contradictory findings in the relationships between social class and self-esteem, and the conflicting results between work and self-esteem, will be elaborated upon in Chapter II, the review of related literature. Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the areas of social psychology, and occupational and organizational sociology by providing more knowledge and explanation with regard to the previous problematic findings. Furthermore, it has been conventionally assumed that work is central in the life of the individual and plays a crucial role in the formation of self-esteem, as it appears in the work of Kohn and Schooler (1983), Crites (1976), Harvey (1975), and the authors of Work in America (1973). Hence this study will highlight the conditions by which work has an impact on self-esteem.

#### Hypotheses to Be Tested

The harsh reality is that our lives are highly stratified. There are those who are at the bottom, top, or in-between levels on the stratification ladder. A corollary is that the three dimensions of status systems--wealth, power, and prestige--are unequally



social class, educational attainment, and self-esteem are fraught with contradictions. While some research findings indicate positive, negative, or conditioning relationships, others reveal no relationships at all between the previous variables and self-esteem. These contradictory findings in the relationships between social class and self-esteem, and the conflicting results between

work and self-esteem, will be elaborated upon in Chapter II, the review of related literature. Accordingly, this

chapter will focus on the relationship between social

class and self-esteem.

The chapter is organized as follows:

1. A review of the literature on social class and self-esteem.

2. A review of the literature on work and self-esteem.

3. A review of the literature on the relationship between social class, work, and self-esteem.

4. A review of the literature on the relationship between social class, work, and self-esteem.

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15. A review of the literature on the relationship between social class, work, and self-esteem.



distributed among social units such as persons or families. For those who are in more advantaged segments of society, their social class position makes a significant contribution to their achievement and, consequently, to their children's achievement. Thus differences in occupational, educational achievement, and type of work or conditions one would anticipate to have at work, can be ascribed to some extent to class origin.

Social class plays a major role in the formation of educational attainment. To a large extent it determines who goes to college and who will graduate from college and pursue higher education. A lawyer's sons are more likely to be attorneys, physicians, or executives. The same expectations would not be held for the son of a carpenter because opportunities and resources are not distributed equally. Blau and Duncan (1967) indicated that social origin relates to subsequent attainment. Also, Sewell and Hauser (1975) wrote that, "The process of socioeconomic achievement is reflected in the differentially persistent effects of parents' educational, occupational status, and income on corresponding achievements of sons" (p. 183).

Moreover, socioeconomic status is expected to have a direct effect on self-direction at work. This expectation is conceivable for two reasons. First, taking into account the conditions, responsibility, and requirements which are assumed by a self-directed job, such a job would require highly educated or trained personnel. Second, work has



distributed among social units such as persons or families. For those who are in more advantaged segments of society, their social class position makes a significant contribution to their achievement and, consequently, to their children's achievement. Thus differences in occupational, educational achievement, and type of work or conditions one would anticipate to have at work, can be

ascribed to some extent to class origin.

Social class plays a role in the formation of

the individual's personality and his or her

attitudes and values. The individual's

social class also influences his or her

educational attainment and occupational

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greater salience at high socioeconomic levels; thus, self-direction at work tends to be a central value for men in this class level.

According to the discussion above, we hypothesize:

H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.

H1b: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H1c: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

In modern industrial society, it is commonly believed that educational attainment is the mechanism by which an individual can obtain a higher status and prestigious job. Education is considered, in most cases, a prerequisite and main qualification for getting a job. Thus occupational choices are very limited and constrained by this prerequisite and qualification. Accordingly, lack of education is a major deficiency that will prevent the individual from being recruited into responsible jobs where he/she can exercise self-direction and perform substantively complex work. Kohn and Schooler (1983) argued that "Education provides the intellectual flexibility and breadth of perspective that are essential for self-directed values and orientations. Lack of education must seriously interfere with men's ability to be self-directed" (p. 30).



greater salience at high socioeconomic levels; thus, self-direction at work tends to be a central value for men in this class level.

According to the discussion above, we hypothesize:

H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.

H1b: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H2: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her self-direction at work.

H3: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her self-direction at work.

H4: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her self-direction at work.

H5: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her self-direction at work.



Educational attainment plays an important role in the occupational stratification system. It determines what kind of job one is supposed to do, and who is better prepared for upward mobility. In addition, education may affect self-esteem directly. Therefore, it is expected that those who have higher educational levels will score higher on the self-esteem scale than those at lower education levels.

Accordingly, we hypothesize that:

- H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.
- H2b: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.
- H2c: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater the perceived possibility of his/her upward mobility.
- H2d: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

Nowadays, achievement is very important in our society. Many people judge and evaluate us according to our achievement level. At the work setting, achievement is greatly emphasized because it is the way to compare our achievements relative to others. Most, if not all, organizations and corporations have what is called "employee of the month" or "honored employee," where the employee's name is listed along with their achievement. Thus a high achievement level indicates success at work







and mastery of one's job; therefore, it is assumed to have a greater impact on self-esteem. It is also likely that in higher status occupations there will be more opportunity for self-direction and higher possibility for upward mobility. Hence, we hypothesize that:

- H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.
- H3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibilities for his/her upward mobility.
- H3c: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

In work environments characterized by a rigid hierarchical authority structure, routinization of activities will preclude the employee from practicing self-direction at work, and limit his/her opportunities for upward mobility. Therefore one would argue that such conditions at work will have a pronounced negative effect on the employee's self-esteem. On the other hand, work conditions which facilitate the exercise of occupational self-direction and have more possibility for upward mobility and promotion will foster self-esteem because self-direction will provide opportunities for perceiving one's self as responsible, competent, and capable of dealing with challenging circumstances. Likewise, since upward mobility is often a central life goal and sometimes very salient, it is assumed that upward mobility will







associate with success and downward mobility will associate with failure. Thus it is also expected that perceived possibility for promotion and upward mobility will nurture self-esteem. Thus we hypothesize:

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4b: The higher the employee's perceived opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

In our previous discussion, we proposed that there are four variables which may influence self-esteem: education, occupational self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and occupational achievement. Moreover, we argue that career stage will moderate the effect of the above-mentioned variables on self-esteem. At later career stages, non-work related variables may become increasingly important as bases for self-esteem. Thus, we assume that career stage (number of years in the labor force, and age) might incline the employee to believe that there is no hope to reach a higher status position at work or that he/she might have already reached the ultimate career goal. In such cases, education and occupational conditions and experience would be less likely to affect self-esteem. Therefore, we can hypothesize that:

H5a: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of education on self-esteem.

H5b: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational achievement level on self-esteem.



associate with success and downward mobility will  
associate with failure. Thus it is also expected that  
perceived possibility for promotion and upward mobility  
will nurture self-esteem. Thus we hypothesize:

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at  
work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4b: The higher the employee's perceived  
opportunities for upward mobility, the higher  
will be his/her self-esteem.

It is expected that the relationship between self-esteem and perceived possibility for promotion and upward mobility will be positive and significant.

H5: The higher the employee's self-esteem, the higher will be his/her perceived possibility for promotion and upward mobility.



H5c: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of the perceived possibility for upward mobility on self-esteem.

H5d: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem.

The relationships posited in the preceding hypotheses may not be linear. We might expect a sharp drop in the effect of occupational achievement on self-esteem when a person approaches retirement. This possibility will be explored. These hypotheses are illustrated in Figure 1, which summarizes the hypothetical causal structure.

#### Theoretical Propositions

According to our model (Figure 1), and the previously mentioned hypotheses which were based on previous research and theory,<sup>1</sup> it seems reasonable to expect that:

1 - There is a relationship between the socioeconomic status of family of origin and the subsequent educational attainment, occupational achievement level, and the opportunities of having self-directed occupation.

---

<sup>1</sup>These works, among others, are: Blau and Duncan (1967); Tharenou and Harker (1982); Mortimer and Lorence (1979a, 1979b); Tharenou (1979); Hall (1971); Luck and Heiss (1972); authors of Work in America (1973); Bachman and O'Malley (1977); Kohn and Schooler (1969, 1973, 1978, 1983); Schwalbe (1985); Rosenberg (1979); Faunce (1989); Kasl and French (1962); and Harvey (1975).







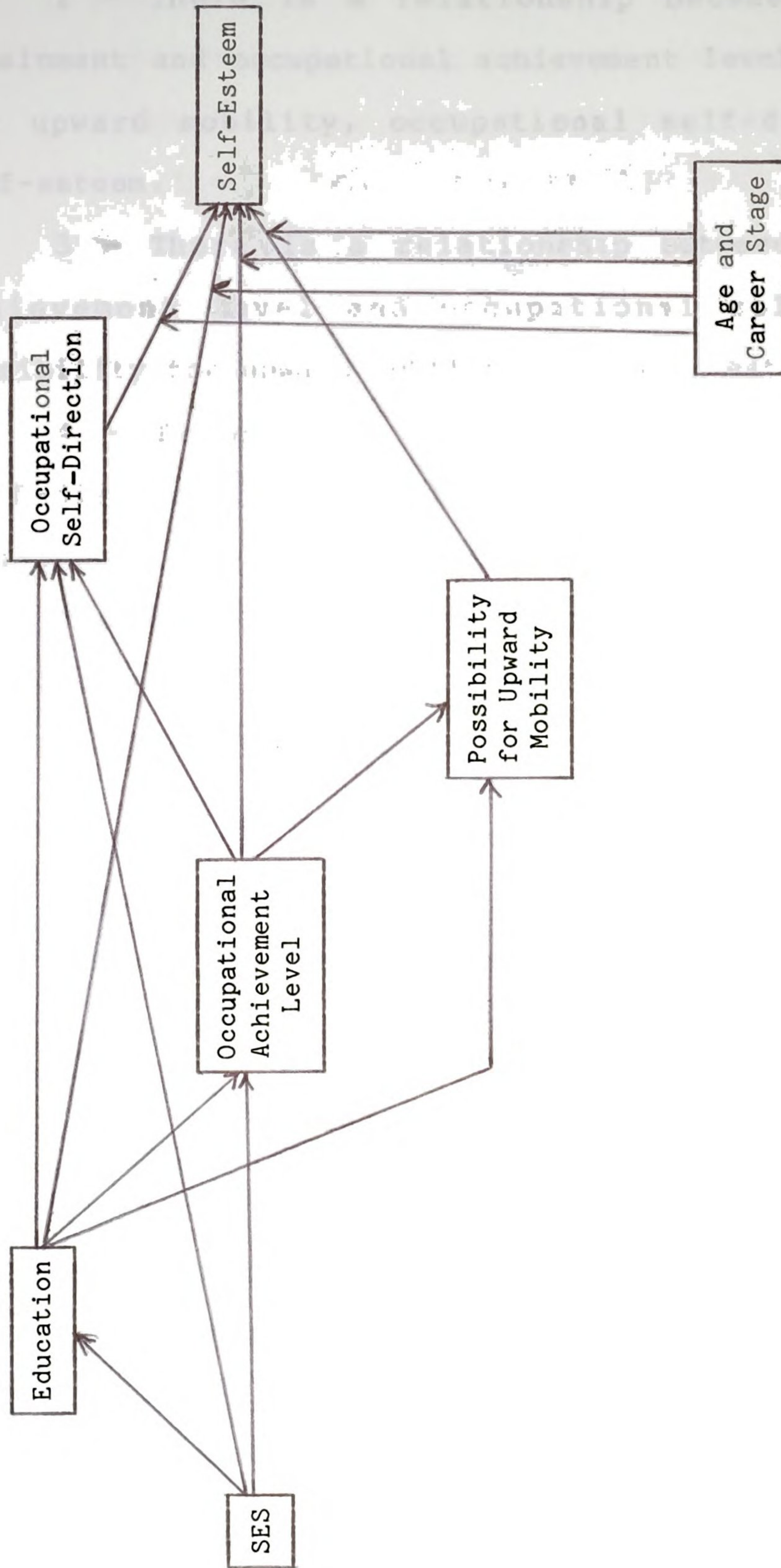
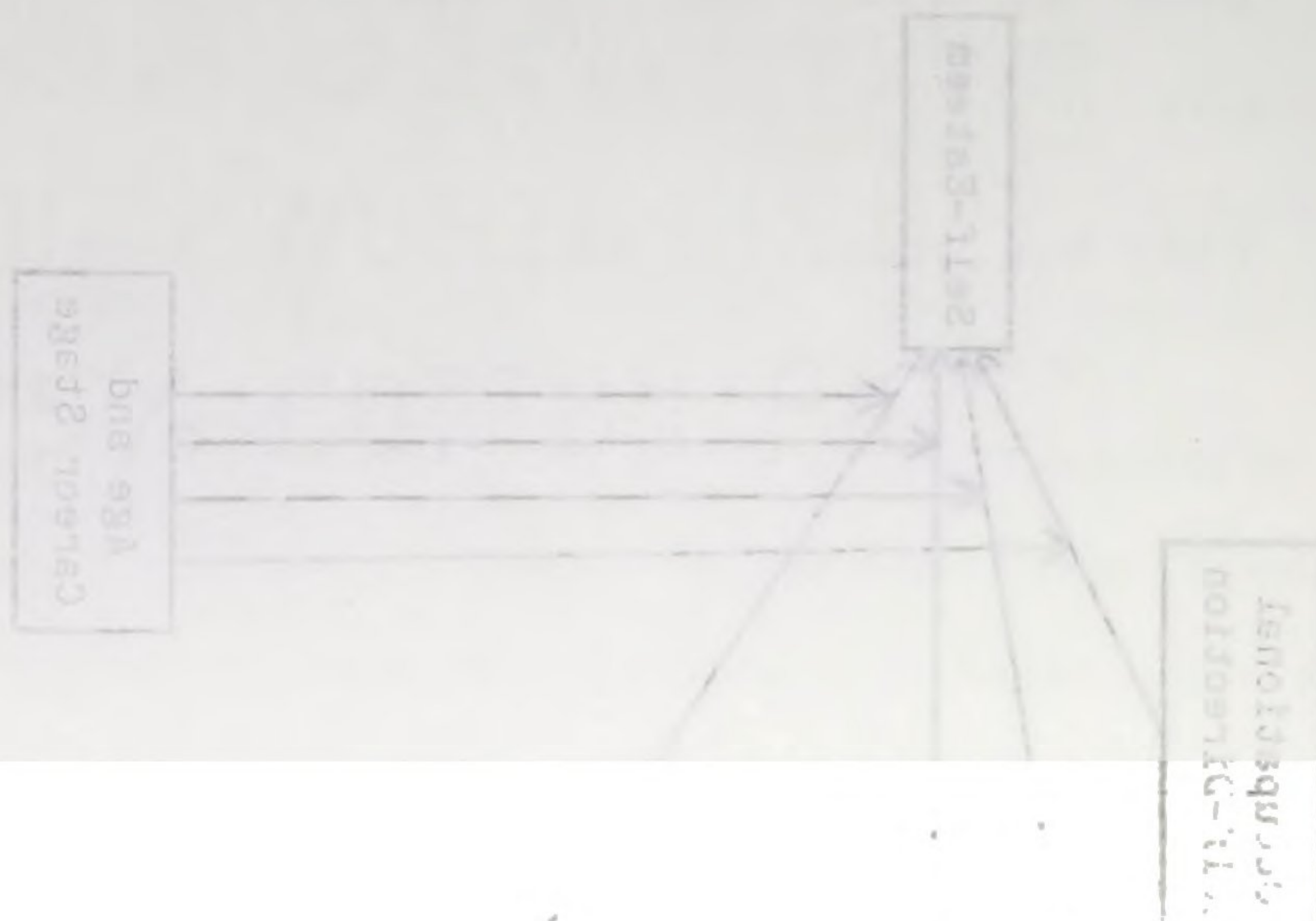


Figure 1--Structure of the Theoretical Causal Model.





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2 - There is a relationship between educational attainment and occupational achievement level, possibility for upward mobility, occupational self-direction, and self-esteem. These three job conditions were characterized

3 - There is a relationship between occupational achievement level and occupational self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and self-esteem.

4 - There is a relationship between occupational self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and self-esteem.

The findings of this study will highlight these expectations and may either sustain or negate them.

#### Definitions

The following definitions will be used in this study:

1. Socioeconomic status of origin: the respondent's family socioeconomic background.
2. Occupational achievement level: the respondent's present occupational attainment.
3. Possibility for upward mobility: respondent's perception of the chance to achieve a higher position than his/her present position in the occupational hierarchy.
4. Self-direction: A self-directed occupation is a job which enhances and facilitates the employee's opportunities to exercise freedom of movement and autonomy in decision-making at the work setting.



2 - There is a relationship between educational attainment and occupational achievement level, possibility for upward mobility, occupational self-direction, and self-esteem.

3 - There is a relationship between occupational achievement level and occupational self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and self-esteem.

4 - There is a relationship between occupational self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and



Such a job is necessarily conditioned by doing substantively complex, non-routinized work and being free from close supervisory attention.

These three job conditions were characterized by Kohn and Schooler (1983:53) as determinative of occupational self-direction. Kohn and Schooler (1983) define the substantive complexity of work as "the degree to which performance of the work requires thought and independent judgment. Substantively complex work by its very nature requires making many decisions that must take into account ill-defined or apparently conflicting contingencies" (p. 127).

Moreover, Kohn and Schooler (1983) distinguish the substantively complex job from non-substantively complex ones by indicating that, in the former, work units are composed from complex entities whereas in the latter work units are nearly identical. A job that has complex work entities will permit a variety of approaches in the work setting, which will embrace initiative thought and independent judgment. These two aspects of job conditions (initiative thought and independent judgment), as they appeared in Kohn and Schooler's works, are the cornerstone for a self-directed job.







5. Self-esteem: a concept which refers to an individual's self-acceptance, self-respect, and feelings of self-worth, as defined by Rosenberg (1979).







## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The aim of this review of literature is to furnish the previous related research as a background for this study. This related research may go along with the findings of this study or may contradict it. Moreover, this chapter is designed to broaden our understanding of self-concept and self-esteem, and to clarify some of the confusion between the two concepts as they are related to this study. This chapter will be presented in the following order:

1. Literature related to the historical background of self-phenomena.

2. Literature related to a critique of Cooley's looking-glass self and Mead's reflected appraisal theories.

3. Literature related to the terms self-concept and self-esteem.

4. Literature related to factors and theories contributing to the formation of self-concept and self-esteem.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The aim of this review of literature is to furnish  
the reader with a background for this  
study. It is hoped that the reader will find  
this review helpful in understanding the  
background of the study. The review is  
divided into two parts. The first part  
is a general review of the literature  
on the subject. The second part is a  
review of the literature on the specific  
aspects of the study.



5. Literature related to work and self-esteem.
6. Literature related to social class and self-esteem.
7. Literature related to the moderating variables between social class and self-esteem.

#### Literature Related to the Historical Background of Self-Phenomena

The self has been analyzed and examined by a plethora of studies conducted by psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers. Calhoun and Morse (1977) have succinctly documented the long line of scholars who have been concerned with the self-phenomenon:

The 'self' is a phenomenon that has intrigued man for centuries. Baldwin (1889) claims that St. Augustine (354-430) was among the first to investigate the 'self.' During the early part of the century, pioneers on self theory included James (1890), Cooley (1902), Freud (1920), and Mead (1934), whom many have credited with coining the term 'self-concept'; Maslow (1954), known for his contribution on 'self-esteem'; Lecky (1945), for his contribution on 'self-consistency'; Jersild (1952); and Coopersmith (1959), for his 'self-esteem inventory.' (p. 319)

Although study of the self is a major focus of sociological scholars in social psychology, the works of the field's most towering figures, such as Charles H. Cooley (1902) and George H. Mead (1934), drew their basic principles from psychology itself. Nearly a century ago, psychologist William James (1896) delineated two ways in which man experiences self: one is the material aspect of



5. Literature related to work and self-esteem.
6. Literature related to social class and self-esteem.
7. Literature related to the moderating variables between social class and self-esteem.

#### Literature Related to the Historical Background of Self-Phenomena

The self has been analyzed and examined by a number of authors and is conducted by psychologists, sociologists, and others (Goffman and others (1977)).

The self is a social construct.

The self is a social construct that is created and maintained through social interaction. It is a process that is constantly changing and evolving. The self is not a fixed entity, but rather a dynamic and fluid one. It is shaped by the social context in which it exists, and it in turn shapes that context. The self is a product of socialization, and it is through socialization that the self is created and maintained. The self is a social construct that is created and maintained through social interaction.



the self, and the other is the **social** aspect of the self.

As James (1896) concretely summarized,

In its widest possible sense, a man's self is the sum total of all he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and work, his land and horses, and yacht and bank account. All these things give him the same emotion. If they wax and prosper, he feels triumphant; if they dwindle and die away, he feels cast down.  
(p. 291)

Since James, one of the most prominent contributions concerned with the self has come from Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which introduced concepts such as Id, Ego, and Superego. The Id represents that aspect of the self which is biologically derived, while the Superego represents the social or internalized cultural aspect. According to Freud, these two aspects of the self are always antagonistic, in contrast to Mead's "I" and "Me," which have a cooperative relationship.

One axiom of social psychology is that the self is social and develops through ongoing social interaction. Individuals do not simply respond to stimuli that exist independently of their ongoing activities; instead stimuli exist within and develop through the social interaction process, wherein individuals engage in ongoing activity.

As Stryker puts it,

We come to know who and what we are through interaction with others. We become objects to ourselves by attaching to ourselves symbols that emerge from our interaction with others, symbols having meanings growing out of that interaction. As any other symbols, self symbols have action



the self, and the other is the social aspect of the self.

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to the study of the self has come from Freud's

theory of the unconscious. Freud's theory has been an

important part of the study of the self.

Freud's theory of the unconscious has been an

important part of the study of the self.



implications: they tell us (as well as others) how we can be expected to behave in our ongoing activity. (Stryker & Serpe, 1982:202)

To understand the development of the self within the social context, which has occupied a central place in the work of symbolic interactionism, it is essential to examine the seminal contributions of Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934).

#### Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1920)

Cooley (1902) refers to the self as the "looking-glass self," the conception of self that is the most widely used and accepted by the symbolic interactionist school. Calhoun and Morse (1977) note that this suggests "that we perceive ourselves as reflected in a mirror; therefore, we tend to be interested in our appearances because they are ours, pleasing or otherwise" (p. 318). Attendant to this conception of self, Cooley strongly emphasized the relationship between self and social environment. Since the self is social, its development and emergence is based upon social interaction. The basis for this social interaction, according to Cooley (1973), is "face-to-face groups" which contain

groups of the family, the playground, and the neighborhood. In the essential similarity of these is to be found the basis, in experience, for similar ideas and sentiments in the human mind. In these, everywhere, human nature comes into existence. Man does not have it at birth; he cannot acquire it except through fellowship, and it decays in isolation. (pp. 159-160)







Cooley's metaphor of the looking-glass self plays an essential role as mediator between the real self image and the ideal self. By interacting with others, the individual learns about himself and gains the ability to see himself through the reactions of others in the dominant reference group. The reactions of others are the mirror wherein the individual views himself and his behavior. What he sees there will lead the individual to applaud or to deplore his self-image. In Cooley's (1967) summary of this process, he emphasizes the individual's judgment of the perceived looking-glass self:

A self-idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self feeling, such as pride or mortification. The comparison with a looking-glass hardly suggests the second element, the imagined judgment, which is quite essential. The thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this imagination upon another's mind. . . . We always imagine, and in imagining share the judgments of other minds. (p. 184).

#### George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)

Mead's insights and guidelines for the study of the self remain some of the most cogent contributions in the field of social psychology. According to Mead (1934), the self cannot exist out of or apart from society, and it is through communication with others that the individual learns about herself or himself.

Social psychology studies the activity or behavior of the individual as it lies within the



Cooler's metaphor of the looking-glass self plays an essential role as mediator between the real self image and the ideal self. By interacting with others, the individual learns about himself and gains the ability to see himself through the reactions of others in the dominant reference group. The reactions of others are the mirror wherein the individual views himself and his

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applied or to depend his behavior. In Cooler's (1967)

study of the self-concept of the individual's

self-concept, the following results were obtained:



social process; the behavior of an individual can be understood only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group of which he is a member, since his individual acts are involved in larger, social acts which go beyond himself and which implicate the other members of that group. (Mead, 1934: 6-7)

For Mead, the individual is an active organism in any social interaction process with others around him; by virtue of this interaction s/he becomes a compatible and integrated member of a social group.

Like Cooley, Mead conceived the "self" as a social product that is shaped like an object, just as other objects surrounding the individual are shaped. Consequently, according to Mead, by possessing a self the individual is capable of communicating with and reacting toward himself, just as s/he is able to respond and communicate with other objects around him or her.

#### A Critique of Cooley's Looking-Glass Self and Mead's Reflected Appraisal Theories

According to the brief review of the literature on self-phenomena, especially that of Cooley, one may conclude that the individual's attitude toward the self is highly influenced by his/her social world. This view of perceiving the self or developing the self as constructed by Cooley and Mead has been challenged and criticized by scholars of social psychology, including Felson (1985) and Gecas (1983). In viewing the self-conception as being developed out of the autonomous and efficacious action of the individual, Gecas (1983) criticized the widely held







perspective which viewed the development of self-conception through the "looking-glass self." According to Gecas, this perspective of self-conception led to an overly passive and oversocialized view of human beings: "Taken alone, the looking-glass self-orientation leaves us with an essentially passive and conformist view of human beings, one which emphasizes an external source, e.g., the opinions of others, imagined or real, as the locus of the content or substance from which we construct our self-concepts" (p. 78).

Meadian traditions of the role of reflected appraisal assume that the self is largely shaped by imagination of the responses of others. This role has always been evidenced in the work of social psychologists, especially those who follow Mead's legacy such as Rosenberg and others. For example, Rosenberg (1979) cites impressive evidence for the importance of the reflected appraisal principle in the formation of self-conceptions. (This finding will be explained in the following section.) Such a finding, which is attested in the work of, among others, Videbeck (1960), Haas and Maehr (1965), Manis (1955), Kinch (1963, 1973), and Mannheim (1966), has been challenged by Felson (1981a, 1981b, 1985), who indicates that "the importance of the reflected-appraisal process has been exaggerated by the symbolic interactionists" (1985:71). In his studies of fourth-through eighth-grade children and their peers, and college



perspective which viewed the development of self-conception through the "looking-glass self." According to Gecas, this perspective of self-conception led to an overly passive and oversocialized view of human beings. Taken alone, the looking-glass self-orientation leaves us with an essentially passive and conformist view of human

beings, one which emphasizes an external source, e.g., the opinions of others, imagined or real, as the locus of the control of self and from which we construct our

self-concept.

Self-concept is the result of the interaction of the self and the social environment. The self is not a static entity, but a dynamic one, which is constantly being redefined by the social environment.



football players and their coaches, Felson found that the relationship between others' appraisal and self-appraisal was not supported. The cause of the ambiguity in these relationships, as it occurs in his research, is attributed to communication barriers, which prevent us from knowing the actual opinions of others toward ourselves. In an evaluation of reflected appraisal, Felson (1985) indicates that

Studies of fourth- through eighth-grade children and their peers, and college football players and their coaches, suggest that the effects of the actual appraisals of others on reflected and self-appraisals are not very strong. This was attributed to communication barriers that prevent persons from finding out what others think. These barriers result in inaccurate reflected appraisals and idiosyncratic, idealized self-concepts. (p.76)

#### Literature Related to the Terms Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

The literature review on self-phenomena indicates that the individual's attitude toward the self is highly influenced by his/her social world. Thus, the individual's conception of himself is based on his perception of the way others are responding to him. This perception consists of two categories: one has a descriptive aspect, another has a valuative aspect. The former we call self-concept and the latter self-esteem.

#### Self-Concept

The long history of research about self-phenomena has created confusion and manifold interpretations. In



chat



the literature of social psychology, researchers in the area of self-perception have used the two aspects of self-perception interchangeably (Beane & Lipka, 1980). Gecas (1982) indicates that the two aspects of the self are closely interrelated. Coopersmith (1959) also indicates that self-esteem needs a clarification, because the term itself is vague and subject to manifold interpretation. As Wylie (1961) aptly concludes, "The theories are in many ways ambiguous, incomplete, and overlapping" (p. 3).

Thus, researchers draw attention to the importance of distinguishing between the two aspects of self, due to their different implications and meanings. Calhoun and Morse (1977), two scholars who express concern about the necessity of clarifying the two concepts, elaborate:

The importance of clarifying these distinctions becomes clear when we consider the relative stability of self-concept and self-esteem. The self-concept can be altered only gradually, employing intensive stimulation from people with whom the child has already established strong relationships (significant others). On the other hand, self-esteem can and does change from day to day. Using self-esteem as an indicator of the child's self-concept could lead to incorrect assessment in the form of both false positives and false negatives. (pp. 321-22).

An attendant problem for those dealing with self phenomena is the lack of differentiation between the self and self-concept. The literature of social psychology reveals that some researchers tend to look at them as equivalent to each other. Yet, in fact, they are not



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It is clear that the two aspects of self-perception

are



equal, for the self-concept is an aspect of the self.

Chad Gordon (1968) has sketched the difference between the two:

The self is a complex process of continuing interpretation--simultaneously the person's located subjective stream of consciousness (both reflexive and nonreflexive, including perceiving, thinking, planning, evaluating, choosing, etc.) and the resultant accruing structure of self-conceptions (the special system of self-referential meanings available to this active consciousness). (p. 116)

Gordon proposed that self is a learning process that occurs through the individual's lifetime of social experience with himself and with others. This process results in the development of a structural aspect of the self that is self-conception.

Many other scholars have advanced definitions of self-concept. Similar to Gordon's view of how the self-concept is developed, is the view of Gergen (1971):

The notion of self can be defined first as process and then as structure. On the former level we shall be concerned with that process by which the person conceptualizes (or categorizes) his behavior--both his external conduct and his internal states. On a structural level, our concern is with the system of concepts available to the person in attempting to define himself. (pp. 22-23)

Gecas (1982) defined self-concept as "the concept the individual has of himself as a physical, social, and spiritual or moral being" (p. 3). Kinch (1963) noted that "The self-concept is that organization of qualities that the individual attributes to himself" (p. 481). For Beane and Lipka (1980), self-concept was "The perception(s) one



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The self is a complex process of continuing  
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occurs in the self is a learning process that

occurs in the self is a learning process that

occurs in the self is a learning process that



has of oneself in terms of personal attributes and the various roles which are played or fulfilled by the individual" (p. 2). Videbeck (1960) wrote that self-conception is "a set of interrelated self-ratings, usually upon bipolar scales using some personal or behavioral quality as the referent of the scale" (p. 351).

Rosenberg (1979) has defined self-concept as "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" (p. 7). Rosenberg's definition indicates that self-concept is not Freud's "ego," Horney's "real self," Maslow's "self-actualized person," Turner's "impulsive self" nor Mead's "I" because these definitions do not distinguish between self and self-concept. On the contrary, Rosenberg's definition treats self-concept as a picture of the self, and not the "real" self.

In order to clarify the meaning of self-concept, Rosenberg poses the following question: "What does the individual see when he looks at himself?" In answering this question, Rosenberg specifies four areas of self-concept:

1. The parts (content of the self) is the first area. This area of self-concept is composed of three elements. (A) Social identity is the individual's identification by some particular characteristics, such as race (black, white, Hispanic); sex (male or female); nationality (Arab, European); religion (Protestant,







Catholic, Moslem). (B) Disposition, as explained by Rosenberg, is a characteristic of self-concept which the individual develops out of social experience. This characteristic may refer to attitudes (liberalism, conservatism), traits (bravery, generosity, morality), abilities (musical skill, athletic prowess, intelligence), values (belief in democracy, equality), or personality traits (compulsiveness, extroversion). (C) Physical characteristics refers to such items as height, appearance, hair color, health status.

2. The relationships among the parts (structure) is the second area of self-concept. Three points in the structural area of self-concept are identified by Rosenberg. (A) Psychological centrality emphasizes that "the differential importance of self-concept components is thus critically significant for self-esteem. Some disposition or social identity elements rank high in our hierarchy of values--stand at the center of our feelings of worth--whereas others are relegated to the periphery. One person stakes himself on his intelligence but cares little about his savoir faire; for another the reverse is the case. One takes great pride in his social class position, a second in his ethnic background, a third in his race, a fourth in his religious affiliation. . . . A professor may consider himself both intelligent and well-mannered--both dispositions, in other words, are elements of his self-concept--but he may stake himself far



Catholic, Moslem). (B) Disposition, as explained by Rosenberg, is a characteristic of self-concept which the individual develops out of social experience. This characteristic may refer to attitudes (liberalism, conservatism), traits (bravery, generosity, morality), abilities (musical skill, athletic prowess, intelligence),

values (belief in democracy, equality), or personality traits (compulsiveness, extroversion). (C) Physical characteristics refers to such items as height,

appearance, etc., which are inherited.

2. Psychological characteristics (which are learned) is

a. Attitudes (which are learned)

b. Values (which are learned)

c. Personality (which are learned)

d. Abilities (which are learned)

e. Interests (which are learned)

f. Emotions (which are learned)

g. Thoughts (which are learned)

h. Behaviors (which are learned)

i. Skills (which are learned)

j. Characteristics (which are learned)

k. Other (which are learned)

l. None of the above

m. Other

n. Other

o. Other

p. Other

q. Other

r. Other

s. Other

t. Other



more heavily on the former characteristic than on the latter" (Rosenberg, 1979:18-19).

(B) The relationship between the parts and the whole of self-concept is the second point in the self-concept structure. Rosenberg argues that there is no agreement among researchers about whether one should just focus attention on the parts of self-concept (dispositions, social identity, or physical characteristics) or on the whole global self-attitudes. Therefore, he advances the idea that "parts and whole are both important, but they are neither transferable, interchangeable, nor equivalent, nor can information on the one form the basis for conclusions about the other" (Rosenberg, 1979:22).

(C) Considering the structure of self-concept, there are two aspects of the self: one is overt (social exterior), the other is covert (psychological interior). The overt aspect of the self represents physical, demographic, or behavioral characteristics; in short, it encompasses all social identity and concrete behavior. In contrast to the overt aspect of the self-concept is the covert, which is concerned with the private world of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and wishes. This aspect of self-concept remains within the individual's boundary, thus the world outside is not supposed to have access to it. Rosenberg argues that the individual does not acquire the psychological traits at birth, but instead attains them through the social learning process, which takes



more heavily on the former characteristic than on the latter" (Rosenberg, 1979:18-19).

(B) The relationship between the parts and the whole of self-concept is the second point in the self-concept structure. Rosenberg argues that there is no agreement among researchers about whether one should focus

attention on the parts of self-concept (dispositional, social identity, or physical characteristics) or on the whole global self-identity. Therefore, he advances the

idea of a "self-concept structure" which is a hierarchy of self-concept components. The components are

dispositional, social identity, and physical characteristics. The components are arranged in a hierarchy with

dispositional at the top, social identity in the middle, and physical characteristics at the bottom.

The components are related in a hierarchical fashion. The components are related in a hierarchical fashion

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place through communication. Through this process of social development, the self gets more personal and sophisticated. It changes gradually from having overt aspects to covert aspects.

The propensity to think of the self in terms of a trait psychology is not there at birth but is, rather, the product of social development. The self perceived by the young child is largely a concrete, material reality. With maturation and learning, however, the individual comes to conceptualize the self in terms of more abstract response tendencies or potentials, consisting largely of dispositions or traits. In short, the self becomes less and less a pure perceptual object, and more and more a conceptual trait system. (Rosenberg, 1979:208-209)

3. The third area of self-concept is the ways of describing both parts and whole (dimensions). When one considers self-concept as an attitude, this attitude varies toward the self in several dimensions, such as content, direction, intensity, salience, consistency, stability, clarity, accuracy, and verifiability of self-attitudes.

We can learn what the individual sees when he looks at himself (chiefly social identity elements, dispositions, and physical characteristics); whether he has a favorable or unfavorable opinion of himself (direction); how strongly favorable or unfavorable these feelings are (intensity); whether the individual is constantly conscious of what he is saying or doing or whether he is more involved in tasks or other objects (salience); whether the elements of his self-picture are consistent or contradictory (consistency); whether his self attitude varies from day to day or moment to moment, or whether, on the contrary, it is a firm, stable, rocklike structure (stability). (Rosenberg, 1979:24)



place through communication. Through this process of social development, the self gets more personal and sophisticated. It changes gradually from having overt aspects to covert aspects.

The propensity to think of the self in terms of a trait psychology is not there at birth but is, rather, the product of social development. The self perceived by the young child is largely a concrete, material reality. With maturation and learning, however, the individual comes to conceptualize the self in terms of more abstract resources, tendencies or potentials, consisting largely of disposition or traits. In short, the self perceived by the young child is a concrete psychological entity, while the self perceived by the mature individual is a more abstract psychological entity.

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4. The last area of the extant self-concept is ego-extension, which was previously referred to in James' definition of the self. The individual's ego-extension may shrink or stretch, depending on how much importance the objects have for the individual, and whether the objects are considered as a part of the self or not. Rosenberg demarcates three characteristics of self ego-extension.

(A) The first is the subjective experience of "me" or "mine." This indicates that the way the individual incorporates external objects into the self is merely a matter of subjective experience. (B) The second characteristic of ego-extension is the presence of the emotions of pride or shame. (C) The third defining characteristic is the phenomenon of introjection. Introjection is defined by Webster as "the adoption of external (persons or objects) into the self, so as to have a sense of oneness with them and to feel personally affected by what happens to them" (Rosenberg, 1979:36).

In conclusion, Rosenberg emphasizes that the individual's self-concept is constituted of all components as a totality: "The extant self-concept [is] content, structure, dimensions, and ego-extensions. Together they constitute most of what the individual sees and feels when he reflects upon himself at a given point in time" (Rosenberg, 1979:38).



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### Self-Esteem (which is determined by the judgment of

As noted before, self-concept and self-esteem are often used synonymously and interchangeably. Proshansky and Newton indicate that "various terms have been bandied about--self, self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, proprium, ego, ego-identity, identity, and so on. Sometimes these terms are used precisely, sometimes indiscriminately, synonymously, or interchangeably" (Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971:9).

A good way of clarifying the term self-esteem is to consider the picture that Rosenberg and Simmons (1971) draw of a person who suffers from low self-esteem: "Low self-esteem means that the individual lacks respect for himself, considers himself unworthy, inadequate, or otherwise seriously deficient as a person" (p. 9). A similar definition is given by Coopersmith (1967) when he writes that self-esteem is:

The evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior. (p. 5)

Calhoun and Morse (1977) defined self-esteem as "the individual's satisfaction with the self-concept" (p. 321). This means that one's self-esteem is a product of the comparison of one's real self-concept and one's ideal



Self-Esteem

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A good deal of clarity in the term self-esteem is to be found in the work of Grossberg and Simmons (1971). They define self-esteem as "the evaluation of one's self as a person, as a social being, and as a member of a group." They further state that self-esteem is "the evaluation of one's self as a person, as a social being, and as a member of a group." They also note that self-esteem is "the evaluation of one's self as a person, as a social being, and as a member of a group."

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self-concept (which is determined by the judgment of others and how one compares oneself to others). If this process leads to a high discrepancy between the real and the ideal self-conception, one would expect damaged self-esteem.

Wells and Marwell (1976) identified three aspects of self-esteem: (1) self-esteem as an attitude which "refers to a more or less phenomenal process in which the person perceives characteristics of him/herself and reacts to those characteristics emotionally or behaviorally" (p. 64); (2) self-esteem as psychological responses, which refers to how the individual feels about him/herself, so that a "high self-esteem individual simply feels that he is a person of worth, he respects himself for what he is. . . . Low self-esteem, on the other hand, implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, self-contempt" (p. 67); (3) self-esteem as personality function, which indicates that self-esteem is that component of the self-system which regulates the extent to which the self-system is maintained under conditions of strain, such as during the processing of new information concerning the self (p. 68).

Brissett (1972) argued that self-esteem encompasses two very basic social-psychological processes: self-evaluation and self-worth. Self-evaluation refers "to the process of making a conscious judgment regarding the social importance or significance of one's self"



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Wells and Newell (1976) identified three aspects of

**self-esteem: (1) self-esteem as an attitude which "refers**

**to a more or less phenomenal process in which the person**

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**show a positive attitude toward himself as personally"**

**(2) self-esteem as a feeling of self-worth or self-respect**

**(3) self-esteem as a feeling of self-worth or self-respect**



(p. 255). In other words, self-esteem in terms of self-evaluation refers to a set of attitudes toward the self, how the individual perceives him/herself with respect to some quality or ability. Thus, the individual's self-esteem is the fit between the individual's perceptions of his ability of doing a given task and his real accomplishments. Self-esteem, in this sense, is summarized by James' famous equation:

$$\text{self-esteem} = \frac{\text{success}}{\text{pretensions}}$$

Brissett's (1972) discussion of self-esteem as self-worth refers to "The feeling of self. This self feeling does not involve rendering a judgment as to the social acceptability of one's identities or one's performance in an identity; nor does it involve an evaluation of how well one is doing with respect to his ideals and aspirations. It is literally a matter of feeling oneself" (p. 259).

Gecas (1982) distinguishes between two types of self-esteem: (a) self-esteem based on a sense of competency, power, or efficacy, and thus related to effective performance; and (b) self-esteem based on a sense of virtue or moral worth, and thus concerned with how adequately the individual measures up to norms and values in personal and interpersonal conduct (p. 5). Moreover, Beane and Lipka (1980) stated that self-esteem is "the valuative assessment one makes regarding personal satisfaction with role(s) and/or the quality of



(p. 252). In other words, self-esteem in terms of self-evaluation refers to a set of attitudes toward the self, how the individual perceives himself with respect to some quality or ability. Thus, the individual's self-esteem is the fit between the individual's perceptions of his ability of doing a given task and his real accomplishments. Self-esteem, in this

sense, is summarized by Jacob's famous equation:

Self-esteem =

Actual achievement

Perceived ability



performance" (p. 2). Lastly, Rosenberg (1979) indicated that self-esteem implies self-acceptance, self-respect, and feelings of self-worth (p. 31).

From this review, one would conclude that self-concept is the conscious perception one has of oneself, and self-esteem is the evaluation of such perception. Thus, self-esteem is related to one's performance and achievements, aspirations, sociability, confidence, attribution, and general well-being. Since we are assessing the impact of work environment on self-esteem, we will measure self-esteem in its global dimension as a concept which refers to an individual's self-evaluation or judgment of his/her own worth.

#### Literature Related to Factors and Theories Contributing to the Formation of Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Rosenberg's research in the sphere of self-concept and self-esteem enhances our knowledge and understanding of these complex phenomena by advancing additional empirical and theoretical reasoning in the field of social psychology, which commands most of the research on self-perception. Rosenberg's extensive research on self-concept and self-esteem has been based primarily upon two sets of empirical data: one set represents data from a Chicago urbanized area (adult subjects), the other set represents data from public school children (grades 3-12) in Baltimore City (Rosenberg, 1979:xii). One of several



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From this review, one would conclude that self-concept is the conscious perception one has of oneself, and self-esteem is the evaluation of such perception. Thus, self-esteem is related to one's

performance and achievements, aspirations, sociability,

and general well-being. Since the concept of self-esteem is so broad, it is not surprising that it has been the subject of much research. In fact, there is a vast literature on this topic, and it is not possible to review it all in this paper. However, a few key studies will be discussed to illustrate the importance of self-esteem in human behavior.

### Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

One of the most well-known studies on self-esteem and academic achievement was conducted by Rosenberg (1979). He found that students with high self-esteem tended to perform better in school than those with low self-esteem. This relationship was particularly strong for students who were in the middle of the achievement range. For example, a student who was in the middle of the achievement range and had high self-esteem would tend to perform better than a student who was in the middle of the achievement range and had low self-esteem. This finding is important because it suggests that self-esteem can be a factor in academic success. If a student has low self-esteem, they may not put as much effort into their schoolwork, or they may not believe in their ability to succeed. On the other hand, if a student has high self-esteem, they may be more motivated to learn and more confident in their abilities. This can lead to better academic performance. Therefore, it is important for educators to pay attention to their students' self-esteem and to provide them with opportunities to build it. This can be done through a variety of methods, such as providing positive feedback, setting realistic goals, and encouraging students to take ownership of their learning.



outcomes of this research is Rosenberg's consolidation of four principles of self-concept formation: reflected appraisals, social comparisons, self-attribution, and psychological centrality. Although these principles (or some of them) are assumed to be in the theoretical legacy of sociological and psychological theorists such as James (1896), Cooley (1902), Mead (1934), and Festinger (1954), Rosenberg advanced our understanding of these theoretical perspectives through his research. The following is a review of these four principles and two other theories--identity theory and self-investment theory--which also contribute to our understanding of the formation process of self-esteem and self-concept.

#### I. Reflected Appraisals

This principle goes back to Cooley's theory of the "looking-glass self," where one's ideas of self are a reflection of the imagined appraisals of others. It is also found in Mead's "significant others," which was put forth as an alternative to Cooley's "imagined appraisals of others." Reflected appraisals imply that an individual develops a self-concept on the basis of the perceived attitudes of others, and not necessarily their actual attitudes. Communication among individuals is essential for the individual to experience the reflected appraisals principle, according to Mead (1934): "The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only



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(1896), Cooley (1902), Mead (1934), and Festinger (1954), Rosenberg advanced our understanding of these theoretical perspectives through his research. The following is a review of these perspectives and two other theories--  
 identity theory and commitment theory--which also  
 are related to the formation of the self-concept.



indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs" (p. 138).

Mead's theorem of self-concept as a reflection of others' opinions toward the self stimulated considerable experimental research. Richard Videbeck (1960) was one of those who experimentally demonstrated that one's view of self-concept is functionally dependent upon the response of others. Videbeck (1960) initiated a direct attack on two postulates, by examining attitudes toward the self among 30 college students in a speech class. Before the experiment took place, students were asked to assess their adequacy in oral communication. Each student was then asked to read aloud six poems in the presence of an expert, whom they assumed would appraise their performance. Subjects were assigned arbitrarily by the expert to two groups, one being praised (approved), the other being criticized (disapproved). Immediately after the subjects received the expert evaluation, self-ratings scales were administered again to the students. Significant differences in self-ratings before and after the experiment were documented. Subjects who were praised by the expert showed a general increment in their feeling of self-adequacy. On the other hand, subjects who received a negative evaluation revised their self-estimates in a negative direction if they had rated



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those who experimentally demonstrated that one's view of

self-concept is functionally dependent upon the response

of others. He found that when a child's response to a

task was praised by others, his self-concept improved.

Conversely, when a child's response was criticized, his

self-concept deteriorated. These findings support Head's

theory that self-concept is a reflection of others' opinions.

Further research is needed to determine the extent to which

self-concept is determined by others' opinions and to what

extent it is a function of one's own self-evaluation.

These findings have important implications for the development

of self-concept in children and for the role of others in

the socialization process. They suggest that children's

self-concept is highly sensitive to the reactions of others

and that the social environment plays a crucial role in

the formation of self-concept. These findings also suggest

that the social environment can be manipulated to promote

positive self-concept in children. This has important

implications for the development of self-concept in children

and for the role of others in the socialization process.

These findings also suggest that the social environment can



themselves high before the experiment. Videbeck (1960) stated his finding:

This study tends to support the general view that self-conceptions are learned, and that the evaluative reactions of others play a significant part in the learning process. Observed differential effects of approval and disapproval treatments were interpreted to be a function of an interaction between the subject's initially anchored self-rating and the objective scale value of the approval or disapproval implied in the other's reaction. (p. 359)

Another experiment based on Cooley's (1902) and Mead's (1934) proposition on the modification of self-concept was conducted by Haas and Maehr (1965). This study is complementary to Videbeck's research. It advanced the notion that we come to value and view ourselves, as others have taught us to view and value ourselves, by raising two questions: First, whether the "phenomenon of change in self-concept as reflected in self-ratings is a real and stable one;" second, "whether the phenomenon is subject to dosage" (whether a greater amount of approval or disapproval produces greater or more durable changes in the self-ratings)(Haas & Maehr, 1965:101). Haas and Maehr designed two experiments to determine: (1) the durability of experimentally induced change in self-rating, and (2) the effect of dosage on such change in self-rating.

As the subjects for these experiments, eighth grade male students rated themselves on a physical self-test along a 9-point scale ranging from "extremely adequate" to







"extremely inadequate." This self-test was obtained before and after the administration of approval and disapproval treatment by an expert (pretests).

In Experiment I, designed to test the first hypothesis (changes in self-rating in response to the reactions of others are durable over time), subjects were divided into two matched groups based on the total score of the physical self-test rating. One group consisting of 19 students was given approval treatment; the second group consisting of 18 students was given disapproval treatment. Post-treatment measures were obtained at selected intervals of time--1 day, 6 days, and 6 weeks--after the first treatment (approval and disapproval treatment). The result of Experiment I supported the hypothesis and showed that the experimental treatment had not just an immediate but also a permanent effect on self-rating. In Experiment II, designed to test the second hypothesis (changes in self-rating in response to the reactions of others are subject to dosage), 30 subjects were given approval treatment twice for performing simple physical tasks, with the second treatment given within 48 hours of the first one. Subjects' self-ratings were made immediately, within 1 hour after first and second treatments, 6 days later, and 6 weeks later. This experiment supported the second hypothesis, that self-ratings are subject to dosage (Haas & Maehr, 1965:104).



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divided into two matched groups based on the total score of the physical self-test rating. One group consisting of 19 subjects was assigned to the approval group and the other group consisting of 19 subjects was assigned to the disapproval group.

The subjects in the approval group received a letter from the experimenter stating that they had been selected for the approval group and that they were to be treated as such.



Manis (1955) conducted another empirical study based upon Cooley and Mead's conception of self as a cognitive structure of qualities (traits and attitudes) which evolve through interaction between individuals (social person) and other social persons in the surrounding environment. Manis posited six hypotheses to test the assumption that the individual's self-ratings are significantly correlated with the ratings made of the individual by friends. The subjects of this study were 101 male freshman students in a dormitory. Subjects' self-concepts were measured twice, at different times nearly six weeks apart, by asking them to describe themselves on 24 bipolar rating scales. The outcome of this study, indicating that the individual's self-concept was actuated by others' opinions of him, was in accord with symbolic interactionist postulation, according to Manis (1955): "Generally speaking, the results of this study support the theories of Cooley and Mead. The S's self-concepts were significantly influenced by their friends' opinion of them, particularly when they were perceived by these friends in a relatively favorable light" (p. 369).

In one succinct sentence, Kinch (1963) has delineated the interactionist position on how the individual forms a self-conception: "The individual's conception of himself emerges from social interaction and, in turn, guides or influences the behavior of that individual" (p. 481). In more detail, Kinch's formalized



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subjects of the study were 101 male freshmen students in

the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The study was conducted during the fall semester of 1951.

The subjects were given a self-rating scale and a rating scale

to be completed by their friends.

The results of the study are presented in the following

tables.

The first table shows the correlation between the self-ratings

and the ratings of the friends.

The second table shows the correlation between the self-ratings

and the ratings of the friends for each of the six

hypotheses.

The third table shows the correlation between the self-ratings

and the ratings of the friends for each of the six

hypotheses.

The fourth table shows the correlation between the self-ratings

and the ratings of the friends for each of the six

hypotheses.

The fifth table shows the correlation between the self-ratings

and the ratings of the friends for each of the six

hypotheses.



theory of self-concept explains the social mechanism (relationship between self and other) by which the self emerges and behavior is guided.

This mechanism operates through the following circular process: first, an individual's self-concept is based on how others respond to him/her (S); second, in turn the self-concept operates to guide the individual's behavior (B); third, the person's behavior determines others' responses to him (R)(which are assumed to be perceived by the individual); and the corollary, the responses of others in turn influences the individual's perception of himself (P)(this perception will influence self-concept). Figure 2 refers to self-concept formation as constructed by Kinch (1973:81):

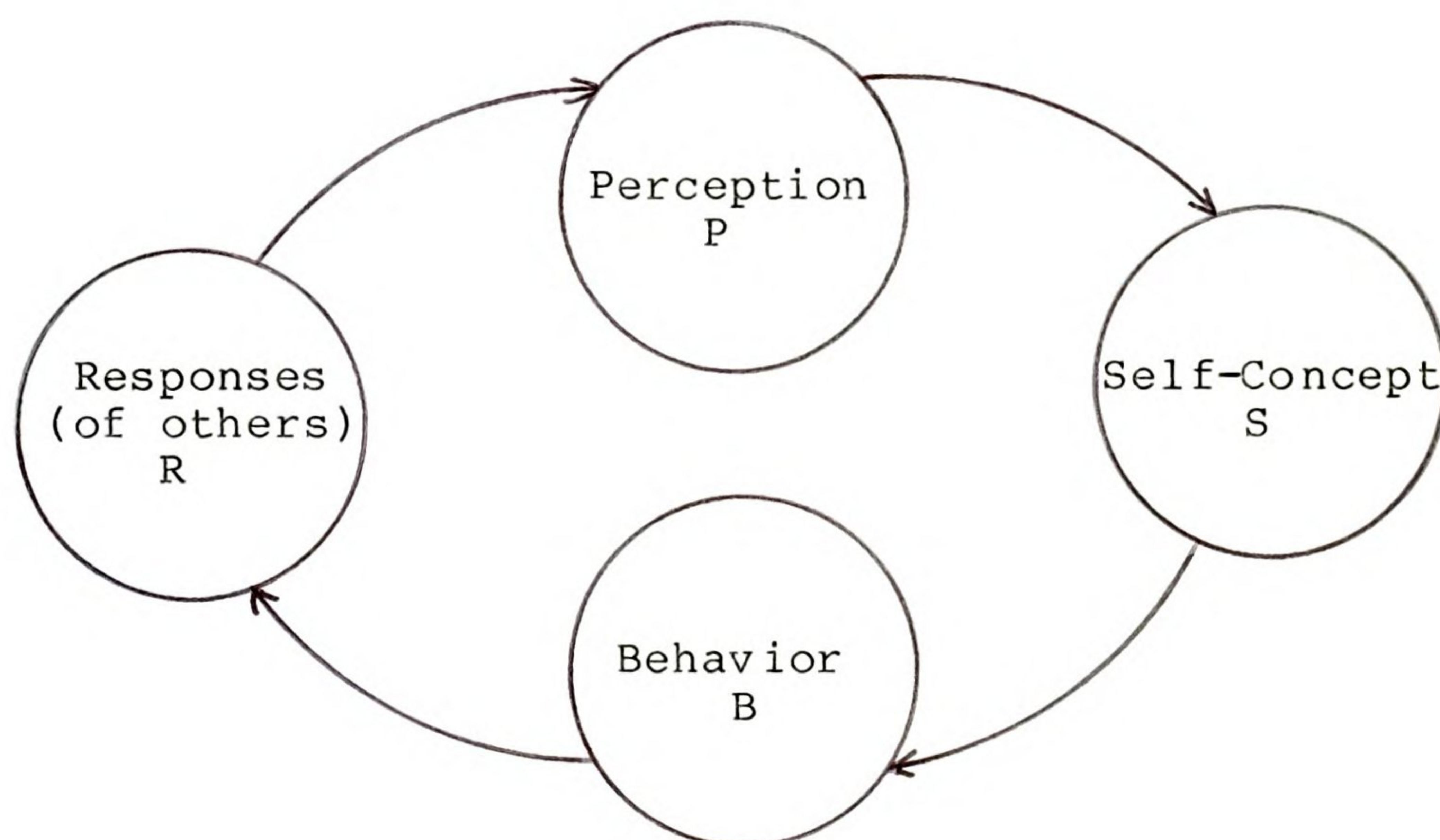


Figure 2--Condensed Process of Self-Conception Theory.



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The process is circular because the individual's self-concept is based on how others respond to him/her (S); second, in turn the self-concept operates to guide the individual's behavior (B); third, the person's behavior determines

others' response to him (O) which are assumed to be perceived by the individual as feedback.



Mannheim's (1966) study attempted to concatenate the symbolic interactionist theory of the individual's self-concept as a reflection of the view held by others toward him/her, and the reference group notion that the individual's self-image is affected by the major identification reference group. One outcome of this study that was related to reflected appraisals is that "individuals tended to change their self-image over time in the direction represented by their reference group self" (Mannheim, 1966:279).

## II. Social Comparison

The second principle enunciated by Rosenberg (1979), Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978), and Rosenberg and Kaplan (1982), is social comparison, which is counted as one of the basic generators of self-conception. Originating with Leon Festinger (1954), this theory started with the premise that we learn who we are by comparing ourselves (in terms of traits, abilities, opinions, ego-extensions, etc.) to others. This tendency toward comparison is a unique characteristic of the social person, as explained by Festinger (1954): "There exists, in the human organism, a drive to evaluate his opinions and his abilities. . . . To the extent that objective, nonsocial means are not available, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison respectively with the opinions and abilities of others" (pp. 117-118).



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group.



It is an axiom of social comparison theory that people tend to have an enduring need to evaluate themselves, by comparing what they have and what they are able to do with others. The comparison process is fundamental for the individual to form a sense of self-worth. Since few standard yardsticks exist for these comparisons, people tend to harness many objects in their environment to serve the purpose. However, not all social objects and components are on an equal footing; some stand out, whereas others remain in the background.

Inasmuch as the social comparison principle is an indispensable variable in many psychological and sociological theories, it has commanded a great deal of research attention and evoked substantial empirical study to establish its validity and generality in various disciplines of social science. While social comparison was the anchor principle for early interactionists, like Cooley and Mead, and their descendants, Rosenberg's work might be considered one of the most seminal pieces of research that utilized this principle to present valuable insights into the self-perception phenomenon.

Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) conducted empirical research to study "Social Class and Self-esteem Among Children and Adults." The data on children came from 2,625 public school children in Baltimore City. The adult sample consisted of 2,300 people, aged 18-65, who represented an urbanized area of Chicago. Interviews were



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environment to serve the purpose. However, not all social objects are comparable and are of equal footing; some stand out more than others in the social hierarchy.

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the method used to gather information about the subjects. The findings indicated that no association exists between social class and self-esteem among preadolescents, a modest relationship among adolescents, and a moderate relationship among adults. One way to explain the differences in the results between adults and children is that social comparison based on status is not a matter of concern among children, because they perceive their socioeconomic environments as homogeneous. On the other hand, the opposite case is demonstrated by adults, whose socioeconomic environments tend to be sharply heterogeneous. Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) explain how social comparison differs among adults and children:

The general principle of social comparison, of course, applies equally to children and adults. The self-esteem of both groups is influenced by comparing themselves with those around them. But, given their social roles, the interpersonal environments of children and adults differ radically. Schooling is, after all, the main business of the child's life; working, the main business of adults. In school, children (especially younger ones), whatever their own SES levels, tend to be more or less equal to most of those around them; there is nothing in this to raise or lower their self-esteem. In the world of work, on the other hand, the social comparisons adults make place them above or below others and may understandably affect their feelings of self-worth. Both children and adults make social comparisons, but the differing structures of interpersonal relations in school and work place make SES irrelevant to the child's self-esteem, relevant to the adult's. (pp. 62-63)

Besides the social class and self-esteem study, the social comparison principle has been used as a variable to assess the relationship between academic achievement and



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concern among children, because they perceive their socioeconomic environment as the norm. On the other hand, the opposite is true for adults, whose social status is often a source of comparison. This is not to say that children are not concerned with status, but that the concern is not as strong as it is in adults.



self-concept. Rogers, Smith, and Coleman (1982) based their study on social comparison theory's assumption that the importance of academic achievement for self-concept is not determined by only the academic achievement itself, but by the way that one compares one's achievement to that of others. It is this comparison which will influence (either negatively or positively) self-worth, and not the academic achievement. The study concluded that "the most meaningful way to understand the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept is within the context of social comparison group or classroom" (Rogers et al., 1982:334).

These two studies show how the social comparison process has an implication for the development of self-conception, by defining self-concept in relation to others. Another study worth mentioning which documented the effects of comparison on self-conception was carried out by Morse and Gergen (1970). The subjects of this study were 78 undergraduate male students at the University of Michigan who answered an advertisement for part-time jobs in the research institute. An experiment collaborator was presented to each subject as another applicant applying for the same job. For half of the subjects the new applicant appeared as Mr. Clean (possessing socially desirable characteristics); to the other half of the subjects he appeared as Mr. Dirty (possessing socially undesirable characteristics). Morse



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(either negatively or positively) self-worth, and not the academic achievement itself. The study concluded that "the most important finding of this study is that the relationship between self-worth and academic achievement is not direct, but is mediated by the way that one compares one's achievement to that of others." This finding has important implications for the development of self-concept and academic achievement.



and Gergen (1970) describe the experimental procedure as follows:

Half of the subjects found themselves confronted with a person whose personal appearance was highly desirable. He wore a dark suit and appeared well-groomed and self-confident. After he had been seated, he immediately opened an attache case, pulled out several sharpened pencils, and began to work on his forms diligently. For descriptive purposes, this stimulus person will be called Mr. Clean. . . . The other half of the subjects were exposed to Mr. Dirty, an individual whose appearance was in sharp contrast to Mr. Clean's. He wore a smelly sweatshirt, ripped trousers, no socks, and seemed somewhat dazed by the whole procedure. He placed his worn paperback edition of "The Carpetbaggers" on the table in front of him, and after staring aimlessly around the office for a few seconds, began searching for a pencil, which he finally found on the table. (p. 150)

The primary goal of the experiment was to determine whether exposing the subjects to varying conditions would have an effect on their self-esteem by assessing the difference between subject's self-rating before and after they were exposed to the experiment collaborator. The results of the experiment indicated that

Casual exposure to another person is sufficient to produce a marked impact on a person's momentary concept of self. The presence of someone with highly desirable characteristics appears to produce a generalized decrease in level of self-esteem. Exposure to a socially undesirable person produces the opposite effect. These findings are not only consistent with the proposition that a person may use others to gauge his own self-worth, but extend the range of phenomena to which social comparison theory has been applied. As a result of others' characteristics appearing more desirable or less desirable than his own, a person's generalized self-estimate is displaced downward or upward. (Morse & Gergen, 1970:154).



The other half of the subjects were exposed to Mr. Dirty, an individual whose appearance was in sharp contrast to Mr. Clean's. He wore a smelly, sweaty shirt, ripped trousers, no socks, and carried some rot and in the whole procedure. He placed his worn backpack edition of "The Corporation" on the table and said, "I'm a little bit of a mess, but I'm a real one."



Congruous with Rosenberg and Pearlin's explanation of the different effect of social class on the self-esteem of children and adults is Faunce's (1989) assertion of the importance of having a heterogeneous experience environment for the utilization of the social comparison process. A heterogeneous environment demands that we associate with people who are higher or lower than us in hierarchical status which will in turn provoke us to think of our position (status) in comparison to the positions of others. Accordingly, this comparison will influence our self-conception. Faunce (1989) refers to this process of social comparison when he indicates that: "The ways in which we differ from others are especially likely to induce social comparison and self-evaluation when the difference involves a status characteristic relevant to frequently occurring and continuing interaction" (p. 383). The point that Faunce advanced in regard to social comparison is that the individual's self-conception is not affected as much by his knowledge of the status or position that he holds among others, as by continually being reminded about his status or position in the hierarchical system, through a continuing interaction with other people who differ from him. According to Faunce (1984), "Knowing one's location in a status hierarchy is less consequential than being reminded of that location, especially when the reminders come from persons with whom one regularly associates" (p. 3).



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of our position (status) in comparison to the positions of others. As a result, we will influence our

self-esteem.



### III. Self-Attribution

The third principle of self-concept formation, according to Rosenberg (1979, 1982), is "self-attribution," the premise of which is that people make judgments about themselves by observing their own behavior and its outcomes. For example, we tend to view ourselves as academically successful if the outcome of our school work is highly accepted or praised, and feel flawed if the case is the reverse. Thus observing our own behavior and evaluating its outcomes will influence our perception of self-worth. "A person who ranks high in the status hierarchy would be expected to have high self-esteem not only because he compares favorably with those around him or because he commands their admiration and respect, but because he himself interprets his success--whether based on the accumulation of money, prestige, or power--as evidence of how good he is" (Rosenberg, 1979:139). Using this principle to elucidate the discrepancy in the results of the Chicago and Baltimore study, one might contend that the children perceived their socioeconomic status, whatsoever, whether high or low, as an ascribed one, while the adults consciously acknowledge that their status is achieved, rather than ascribed. Rosenberg (1979) refers to this as follows:

One reason social class has so little bearing on the self-esteem of the child, then, is that the societal stratification system does not represent an arena of personal accomplishment. What the child himself has wrought appears to bear on his self-esteem; his father's achievements, on the



### III. Self-Attribution

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other hand, are not his own. The identical principle applies to adults. What the adult has achieved may affect his feeling of self-worth but what his father has achieved is largely irrelevant. (p. 140)

#### IV. Psychological Centrality

The fourth principle of self-concept formation is psychological centrality. The implication of this principle is that the best vantage for understanding how four areas of the self-concept extant influence one's self-conception, is by viewing self-concept as an hierarchical organization of parts, pieces, and components. Not all dispositions and attributes of self-concept are perceived at the same level of importance; some of them are salient while others remain in the background or are a trivial matter. Rosenberg (1979) refers to the mechanism of this principle as follows:

Psychological centrality holds that the self-concept is not a collection but an organization of parts, pieces, and components and that these are hierarchically organized and interrelated in complex ways. Not only are certain dispositions--intelligence, morality, honesty, courtesy--differentially central to our concerns, but so are certain social identity elements (such as black, Protestant, father, machinist) and ego-extensions. (p. 73)

Knowing that psychological centrality plays a major role in self-concept formation would explain why social class has an effect on adult's self-esteem rather than on that of children.

The impact of social class or status on global self-esteem, then, depends in part on its







psychological centrality for the individual. The relevance of this point in the present context is that social status affects adults' more than children's self-esteem simply because social status is more psychologically central to the adult than to the child. Adults are more aware of, attuned to, concerned with social status than children. (Rosenberg, 1979:144)

#### V. Identity Theory

Similar to the psychological centrality principle is Stryker's (1968, 1973, 1980, 1982, 1989) identity salience concept. According to Stryker's identity theory, the self consists of a collection of identities--one may view one's self as doctor, father, musician, black or white, a member of a certain club, tennis player, liberal, brave, friendly, woman, democrat or republican, etc., because all these dispositions and social identities make up the self. Hence, Stryker (1989) defined identities as "internalized sets of role expectations, with the person having as many identities as she or he plays roles in distinct sets of social relationships" (p. 46). Nevertheless, the concept of identity salience, as advanced by Stryker and Serpe (1982), proposed that these dispositions and social identities do not compose the self arbitrarily, but rather take place within the self in a hierarchical manner. As noted by Stryker and Serpe (1982):

Identity salience represents one of the ways, and a theoretically most important way, that the identities making up the self can be organized. Identities, that is, are conceived as being organized into a salience hierarchy. This hierarchical organization of identities is



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## V. Identity Theory

Similar to the psychological centrality principle is Stryker's (1968, 1973, 1980, 1982, 1989) identity salience concept. According to Stryker's identity theory, the self could be defined as a set of roles and statuses that one's self is aware of, and which are socially defined and relevant.

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defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities, with it being brought into play in a given situation. (p. 206)

Thus, according to the identity theory, the self consists of organized identities which have different effects on the self-conception, depending upon the salience of the identity in the self's hierarchical structure. Stryker (1989) indicates that the central proposition of the identity theory argues that commitment affects identity salience (p. 46). Thus the higher the commitment to the identity, the more the salience of this identity in the person's hierarchical structure, and the more the effect of that identity on the self-conception, because this identity(ies) will be evoked several times, and in several situations. "The greater the commitment premised on an identity, the more salient will be that identity, and the more general self-esteem will be based on that identity" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982:207).

Identity theory is developed as a response to the dispute over the nature of the self. The literature of social psychology is fraught with two totally different views of the self. One advocates the multiplicity of types of self, as may be found in the work of many interactionists. For example, Kinch (1973) indicates that:

. . . to think exclusively of a single self-concept is misleading. Although it is true that when an individual moves into a new group he brings with him a conception of himself based on earlier encounters and some dimensions of the old self are reinforced, at the same time many



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One of the main contributions of the identity theory is

the concept of identity salience.

Identity salience is defined as the degree to which an

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dimensions of the self may not be relevant in the new setting. As you move from your work to school, to a date, the image you have of your self naturally changes because the same type of expectations do not carry over to the new settings. (pp. 89-90)

An opposite view of Kinch's notion of self is held by those who view self in singular dimensions, as demonstrated in Cohen's (1989) definition of self-concept. Cohen argues that "the self-concept is regarded as an enduring feature of a person's personality that operates in all situations to affect that person's behavior" (1989:321). Unlike these two perspectives, identity theory is constructed to offer a conceptualization of self that incorporates both multiplicity and singularity dimensions. Stryker (1989) refers to this process in the following:

This conceptualization incorporates the idea of a multiplicity of selves through the postulate that self comprises as many identities as positions occupied and roles played by the person in organized networks of social relationships. It incorporates the idea of the singularity of self via the postulate that these identities are organized in a salience hierarchy. (p. 47)

## VI. Self-Investment Theory

The psychological centrality principle proposed by Rosenberg (1979) and the identity theory as advanced by Stryker and Serpe (1982) and Stryker (1989) indicate that, since the self is constituted by dispositions, attributes, and identities, the effect of these characteristics on one's self-conception depends on how central or salient



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An opposite view of Kinch's notion of self is held by those who view self in singular dimensions, as demonstrated in Cohen's (1989) definition of self-concept.

Cohen argues that "the self-concept is regarded as an enduring feature of a person's personality that is based in a relatively stable set of beliefs and attitudes about the self" (p. 21). This view of self is singular in that it is based on a single set of beliefs and attitudes about the self, rather than being a collection of different self-concepts that change over time and across settings.



one or all of these characteristics is (are) to the individual. Similar to these two perspectives of self-conception formation is self-investment theory, as developed by Faunce (1975, 1982, 1984, 1989). Faunce (1989) defined self-investment as:

a commitment to achievement with regard to an activity or attribute based on the relevance of that activity or attribute for self-esteem. High self-investment in work, for example, means that occupational achievement in some form is necessary to maintain self-esteem; those with low self-investment can fail in this area with impunity. (pp. 381-382)

Self-investment theory is distinguished from the two related previous theories by two central concepts, knowledge and reminders. Unlike the psychological centrality principle and identity theory, self-investment proposes that knowing one's location in a status hierarchy (as central characteristics, attributes, or identities) would not have an important effect on one's self-conception unless social experience reminds him/her of that location. This reminding concept entails a frequency of evaluation process because "the greater the frequency of evaluation by others of an attribute or activity, the higher will be the self-investment in that activity or attribute" (Faunce, 1989:383).

#### Literature Related to Work and Self-Esteem

Although we adopt the theoretical perspective which considers work conditions as prior variables to self-esteem, the fact is that the literature in work and



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(1989) defined self-investment as:

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self-esteem is conflicting. Researchers provide us with a voluminous literature to attest to the effects of work conditions on self-esteem, and vice-versa.

Regarding the assumption that self-esteem influences work, some scholars have emphasized the role of self-esteem in work outcomes and occupational achievement (Korman, 1970); in high occupational aspirations (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Bedeian, 1977); in expectations of success in attaining one's goals (Rosenberg, 1965); in educational and occupational attainment (Bachman & O'Malley, 1977); and in seeing oneself as competent in dealing with the world (Fitch, 1970). Bachman and O'Malley (1977), however, indicate that "the fairly strong correlations between self-esteem during high school and later educational and occupational attainment reflect very little direct impact of self-esteem on later success" (p. 377). Reporting additional qualifications of this relationship, Greenhaus and Badin (1974), in their study of the relationship between three sources of self-esteem and task performance for 144 undergraduate students, conclude that "task-specific self-esteem predicted performance for total sample; socially influenced self-esteem predicted performance for high authoritarian subjects" (p. 722).

#### Literature Related to Social Class and Self-Esteem

With regard to the alternative assumption, i.e., that work influences self-esteem, most research has dealt



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Regarding the assumption that self-esteem influences work, some scholars have emphasized the role of

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(Korman, 1970); in high occupational aspirations (Duvall &

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and a significant factor in the choice of a career (Korman, 1970).



broadly with effects of social class generally rather than specific aspects of work. Literature on the relationship between social class and self-esteem, however, is fraught with contradictions. Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) refer to this problematic situation as "after decades of research on both social class and self-esteem, it is somewhat surprising to find so little knowledge about their relationship" (p. 53). In a prior work, Rosenberg (1965) reported a weak relationship between indices of self-esteem and social class. Luck and Heiss (1972) investigated the social influence upon adult males' self-esteem, and found that "self-esteem was not positively related to socioeconomic status; the proportion of cases with high self-esteem is greater among those with low-status fathers (63 percent) than it is among those with high-status fathers (35 percent)" (pp. 69, 76). Kaplan (1971) failed to observe a relationship between social class and self-degradation. Moreover, Mortimer and Lorence (1979b), in their examination of the socialization affect of work experience on self-concept during the early work career, indicate that there is no direct relationship between the measures of socioeconomic background and the 1976 self-concept data. Coopersmith's (1967) study indicated that "there is no clear and definite pattern of relationship between social class and positive and negative attitudes toward the self" (p. 83).



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somewhat surprising to find so little knowledge about their relationship" (p. 23). In a prior work, Rosenberg

(1965) reported a weak relationship between indices of

self-esteem and social class (Hollis and Hollis (1972)

in contrast to the strong relationship found by

other researchers (e.g., Rosenberg and Lin (1964),

and Rosenberg (1965)). The discrepancy between these

findings may be due to differences in the way

self-esteem was measured or to differences in the

social class measures used. The present study

examines the relationship between social class and

self-esteem using a different method of measurement

and a different sample of subjects. The results

are discussed in relation to the existing literature

on the relationship between social class and self-esteem.

The study is organized as follows. First, a review

of the literature on the relationship between social class

and self-esteem is presented. Then, the methodology

of the study is described. Finally, the results are



Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978), as noted above, conducted empirical research to study social class and self-esteem among children and adults. The findings indicated that no association exists between social class and self-esteem among preadolescents, a modest relationship among adolescents, and a moderate relationship among adults. One way they explained the differences in the results between adults and children is that social comparison based on status is not a matter of concern among children because they perceive their socioeconomic environments as homogeneous. On the other hand, the opposite case is demonstrated by adults, whose socioeconomic environments tend to be sharply heterogeneous.

Although Rosenberg (1965) and Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) are considered cornerstone studies on social class and self-esteem, their researches do not provide us with complete knowledge of how social class influences adult self-esteem, especially in a work setting, which will be explained in this research.

#### Literature Review on Studies of the Mediating Variables between SES and Self-Esteem

##### Educational Attainment

We propose that the occupational experience of being self-directed, having the possibility for upward mobility, and occupational achievement are limited by educational



Rosenberg and Pearlman (1978), as noted above, conducted empirical research to study social class and self-esteem among children and adults. The findings indicated that no association exists between social class and self-esteem among preadolescents, a moderate relationship among adolescents, and a moderate relationship among adults. One way they explained the difference is that social class is more salient for children than for adults and children's self-esteem is more dependent on social class than adults'. That social comparison based on status is not a major

factor in the development of self-esteem in adults.

It is possible that the relationship between social class and self-esteem in children is more direct than in adults.



qualifications which are greatly affected by family socioeconomic background. Blau and Duncan (1967) and Duncan, Featherman and Duncan (1972) used 1962 OCG (Occupational Change in a Generation) data and a 1966 DAS (Detroit Area Study), respectively, for their research. The 1962 data resulted from a national survey of males, 35 to 44 years old; the 1966 study dealt with males 21 to 64 years old. The results of these two studies attested to the effect of socioeconomic origins on educational attainment and occupational achievement. For example, the model they used tested the effect of three family background factors, father's education, father's occupation, and number of siblings, on the subsequent educational attainment using OCG data. The causal diagram for the OCG data set indicated that the path coefficients from father's occupations to son's education (PUX) was 0.28, which was the highest among the three family background factors, as indicated in the following statements:

Each of the three family background factors directly influences education in an appreciable degree. Results for all four cohorts suggest that father's occupation is a slightly more weighty factor in educational attainment than either father's education or number of siblings when all three variables are considered simultaneously. The effect of number of siblings is negative, implying that an increase in family size lowers the number of grades of school completed. (Duncan et al., 1972:41)

Moreover, Sewell and Hauser (1975), in their study of the effect of socioeconomic origins on educational



qualifications which are greatly affected by family socioeconomic background. Blau and Duncan (1967) and Duncan, Featherman and Duncan (1972) used 1962 OCS (Occupational Change in a Generation) data and a 1966 DAS (Detroit Area Study), respectively, for their research. The 1962 data resulted from a national survey of males, 35 to 44 years old; the 1966 study dealt with males 21 to 34

years old. The results of these two studies attested to

the effect of socioeconomic status on educational

attainment and occupational level. The results of

both studies indicated that the higher the socioeconomic

status, the higher the educational attainment and occupational



attainment, indicate that "for each sex, socioeconomic status is an important determinant at each level of attainment in the process of higher education--even when intelligence is controlled" (p. 9). They also argue that:

Those with higher status origins, as indicated by numerous studies, on the average score higher on ability and achievement tests, earn better grades in school, have higher educational and occupational aspirations, are more likely to obtain the education that will qualify them for the more demanding and high prestige occupations and consequently tend to earn more money. (p. 2)

Educational attainment has an increasingly important role in one's occupational attainment, which subsequently results in differences in wealth, power, and prestige. Nachmias (1977) indicated that "there is ample evidence that in the United States, higher education increases the chances for higher income and more power and prestige" (p. 589). The aims in including this variable are two-fold: one is to determine the effects of educational attainment on self-esteem independently; second, to determine the effects of educational attainment on self-esteem in combination with variables related to occupational experience, such as self-direction, possibility for upward mobility, and occupational achievement at work.

Research on the effects of education on self-esteem are conflicting. The studies range from showing no relation at all, negative relation, positive relation, or a relation through a mediating variable, which is the case



attainment, indicate that "for each sex, socioeconomic status is an important determinant at each level of attainment in the process of higher education--even when intelligence is controlled" (p. 9). They also argue that:

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These findings are not only interestingly important in themselves but also have important implications for the study of social mobility. The fact that individuals from higher status origins tend to achieve higher educational and occupational attainment, and consequently tend to earn more money, suggests that social mobility is not a random process but is influenced by a variety of factors, including family background, intelligence, and individual ability. This finding also suggests that social mobility is not a simple process of moving from one status to another, but is a complex process that involves a variety of factors and influences.



we propose for this study. Mortimer and Lorence (1979b), in a longitudinal study of occupational experience and self-concept, examined 435 males who were 1966-67 college graduates. They were the subjects for the research during their undergraduate years and during a follow-up study 10 years later. The finding of the study was that there was no significant direct effect of educational attainment on the 1976 self-concept. The study showed that graduate educational attainment exerts its psychological influence more indirectly through work autonomy and income. This finding is congruent with a previous study by Bachman and O'Malley (1977), who found no direct impact of higher educational attainment on self-esteem. They found that the only impact is through occupational achievement: "educational attainment contributes to job status which, in turn, has a modest impact on self-esteem" (p. 337). Similar results were reported by Kohn and Schooler (1983): "The psychological effects of education are in varying degree attributable to occupational self-direction" (p. 169).

There are some studies which show a general relationship between educational attainment and individual self-esteem. For instance, Jacques and Chason (1977), in their study of self-esteem and status using 972 subjects, "observed significant differences in the samples of service-oriented professionals, married black residents, prisoners, and white university students. In general,



we propose for this study. Westman and Lawrence (1973b) in a longitudinal study of occupational experience and self-concept, examined 432 males who were 1966-67 college graduates. They were the subjects for the research during their undergraduate years and during a follow-up study 10 years later. The finding of the study was that there was no significant direct effect of educational attainment on

the 1976 self-concept. The study showed that graduates' educational attainment had a significant effect on their self-concept. This finding is consistent with the findings of Westman and Lawrence (1973b) who found that educational attainment had a significant effect on self-concept. This finding is also consistent with the findings of Westman and Lawrence (1973a) who found that educational attainment had a significant effect on self-concept.



persons with fewer years of education scored significantly lower on Rosenberg's self-esteem scale than did more educated persons" (p. 410). Likewise, in studying the influence of educational attainment on self-evaluations of competence, Weidman, Phelan and Sullivan (1972) found that educational attainment has a strong, positive association with self-evaluations of competence.

(1979) The basic themes of this study are the reverse of that proposed by Korman (1970), who assumed that a positive self-image will promote occupational achievement. We have emphasized the theoretical trend which asserts that occupational conditions and experiences tend to affect adult self-esteem, as is revealed in the works of Tharenou and Harker (1982); Tharenou, 1979); authors of Work in America (1973); Mortimer and Lorence (1979a, 1979b); Bachman and O'Malley (1977); Luck and Heiss (1972); Hall (1971); Kohn and Schooler (1969, 1973, 1978, 1983); Schwalbe (1985); Rosenberg (1979); Faunce (1989); Kasl and French (1962); and Harvey (1975). For example, the authors of Work in America (1973) indicate that "work plays a crucial and perhaps unparalleled psychological role in the formation of self-esteem, identity, and a sense of order" (p. 4). Moreover, Harvey (1975) wrote that "a man's whole self-worth, feeling of self-esteem and self-approval appear to have become largely embodied in his occupation" (p. 221). While this may overstate the case in terms of the extent of effect,



persons with fewer years of education scored significantly lower on Rosenberg's self-esteem scale than did more educated persons" (p. 410). Likewise, in studying the influence of educational attainment on self-evaluations of competence, Weidman, Pheasant and Sullivan (1972) found that educational attainment has a strong, positive association with self-evaluations of competence.

The basic themes of this study are the reverse of that proposed by Kotman (1970), who assumed that a positive self-estimate will be associated with educational attainment. The study was designed to test the hypothesis that educational attainment is related to self-esteem. The study was designed to test the hypothesis that educational attainment is related to self-esteem. The study was designed to test the hypothesis that educational attainment is related to self-esteem.



the causal direction is the one we are proposing. Tharenou (1979), reviewing the literature on employee self-esteem, concluded that "intrinsic characteristics of the job (skill, variety, challenge, interest, autonomy) affect the employee's global self-esteem level more than self-esteem level affects job characteristics" (p. 339). A similar conclusion was reported by Mortimer and Lorence (1979b), who indicated that "several recent studies provide that work experiences do influence the personality" (p. 307). Kohn and Schooler (1983) found that the relationship between occupational experience and self-concept is based primarily on the effect of the former on the latter. The following is a literature review of the two main occupational condition variables.

### Self-Direction

In the path diagram (Figure 1), which describes the assumptions and hypotheses guiding our theoretical work, we postulated that since socioeconomic background produces differences in occupational values and experiences, employees from higher socioeconomic statuses are more likely to be concerned about having a job where they can exercise self-direction at work. This proposition has its foundation in the work of Kohn and Schooler (1969, 1973, 1978, 1983). They argue that:

The higher their social-stratification positions, the more value men place on self-direction and the more confident they are that self-direction is both possible and efficacious. The lower their social-stratification positions, the more value



the causal direction is the one we are proposing. Tharion (1979), reviewing the literature on employee self-esteem, concluded that "intrinsic characteristics of the job (skill, variety, challenge, interest, autonomy) affect the employee's global self-esteem level more than self-esteem level affects job characteristics" (p. 339). A similar conclusion was reported by Mottimer and Lorenz

(1979b), who indicated that "several recent studies provide support for the hypothesis that intrinsic job characteristics influence self-esteem" (p. 339). Tharion (1979) also



men place on conformity to external authority and the more certain they are that conformity is all that their own capacities and the exigencies of the world allow" (1983:32).

Furthermore, Mortimer and Lorence's (1979b) research on "Occupational Experience and the Self-Concept" demonstrates a direct path from family income to 1976 work autonomy.

Kohn and Schooler (1973:103) examined the relationship between three variables indicative of self-direction: closeness of supervision; routinization of work; and substantive complexity. Their results showed that self-direction is significantly related to self-esteem. Also, they indicate that:

Occupational self-direction leads to self-directed orientations to self and society: Men who are self-directed in their work are consistently more likely to become nonauthoritarian, to develop personally more responsible standards of morality, to become more trustful, more self-confident, less self-deprecatory, less fatalistic, less anxious, and less conformist in their ideals. (1983:142)

In addition to the findings of Kohn and Schooler, research has consistently documented the importance of self-direction at work for self-esteem. Such research has been conducted by Hall (1971), Mortimer and Lorence (1979a, 1979b), and Tharenou (1979).

### Upward Mobility

Two other variables related to occupational experiences and conditions, which we assume influence self-esteem, are perceived possibility for promotion and



men place on conformity to external authority and the more certain they are that conformity is all that their own capacities and the exigencies of the world allow" (1983:32).

Furthermore, Mortimer and Lawrence's (1979) research on "Occupational Experience and the Self-Concept" demonstrates a direct path from family income to 1976 work

### Autonomy.

Kohn and Schooler (1973:103) examined the relationship between three variables indicative of self-direction: freedom of supervisor; routinization of work; and the degree to which the worker is allowed to make decisions. They found that the more freedom of supervisor and the less routinization of work, the more autonomy the worker has. They also found that the more autonomy the worker has, the more self-direction he has.



upward mobility at work. Upward mobility is very salient in many people's lives; it is a central theme in our socialization process. It is pivotal in the education system, in job training, and in the mass media. While upward mobility is a very pervasive goal, it is not possible for everyone. Luckmann and Berger refer to this: "While practically everybody feels committed to upward mobility as a central life-goal, a majority fail to achieve it" (1964:340). For this reason and many others, one would assume that mobility has crucial consequences for the psychological functioning of the individual. Many researchers have emphasized the importance of upward mobility for self-esteem. Luck and Heiss write that "upward mobility is more likely than stability to be associated with self-esteem for those with a college education" (1972:71). Luck and Heiss indicated that upward mobility is more conspicuous and highly related to self-esteem among those with college degrees than those with high school diplomas. Faunce's (1989) recent contribution to the literature on work and self-esteem challenges the commonly assumed idea that work necessarily affects self-esteem. He argued that attention should be directed to variables which influence this relationship. He, for example, indicated that opportunity for upward mobility (one characteristic of occupational status assignment systems) would influence the salience of occupational achievement, which, in turn, would influence



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mobility as a central life-goal, a majority fail to

achieve it" (p. 100). For this reason, many people

and would like to see a more realistic goal

set for upward mobility. This goal should be

based on the individual's own abilities and



the relationship between work and self-esteem. Likewise, we propose in our causal diagram (Figure 1) that occupational achievement will influence self-esteem indirectly through occupational conditions (self-direction and upward mobility).

#### Occupational Achievement Level

Another variable which may mediate between socioeconomic status and self-esteem is occupational achievement level. By depicting a direct path from socioeconomic background to occupational achievement, we assume that, to some extent at least, the latter is a consequence of the former. The theoretical background of this assumption is based on the work, among others, of Blau and Duncan (1967) and Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972), who argue the importance of father's occupation and education with regard to both respondents' educational attainment and occupational attainment. Direct effects of SES on occupational achievement have been reported by Eckland (1965) and Nachmias (1977). Eckland concluded that "apparently, social class makes a significant contribution to occupational achievement independent of its effect on the student's college career" (p. 742). Also, Nachmias notes that "social class has significant direct and indirect effect on the formation of educational and occupational goals and on occupational attainment" (p. 589).



the relationship between work and self-esteem. Likewise, we propose in our causal diagram (Figure 1) that occupational achievement will influence self-esteem indirectly through occupational conditions (self-direction and upward mobility).

#### Occupational Achievement Level

Another variable which may mediate between socioeconomic status and occupational achievement is the level of occupational achievement. It is suggested that the level of occupational achievement is a function of the level of socioeconomic status. The level of occupational achievement is a function of the level of socioeconomic status. The level of occupational achievement is a function of the level of socioeconomic status.



Research on the relationship between occupational achievement and self-esteem is conflicting. Some studies show a positive relationship even while controlling for education as an antecedent variable to occupational achievement. Others show no relationship, or some relationship as a result of the influence of variables such as education or occupational conditions. Kohn and Schooler's (1973) study demonstrates two points: when pay was controlled (indicator of occupational achievement), the relationship between self-esteem and a composite index of 12 occupational conditions was not reduced. There were no independent effects of job level on global self-esteem after removing intrinsic job conditions. On the other hand, a relationship has been found between occupational achievement or job level (as indicator of occupational achievement) and self-esteem. This relationship surfaced in the research of Kasl and French (1962), Jacques and Chason (1977), Luck and Heiss (1972), Bachman and O'Malley (1977), and Tharenou and Harker (1982). Tharenou and Harker found that "global self-esteem and sense of competence are significantly and positively related to the employee's job level, complexity, performance, and satisfaction. Job level has the highest beta weight for global self-esteem" (p. 800). Based on the assumption that success has a positive effect on self-esteem, Bachman and O'Malley (1977) found a direct positive impact of the subjects' 1974 occupational status on 1974 self-esteem.



Research on the relationship between occupational achievement and self-esteem is conflicting. Some studies show a positive relationship even while controlling for education as an antecedent variable to occupational achievement. Others show no relationship, or some relationship as a result of the influence of variables such as education or occupational conditions. Kohn and

Scholer's (1977) study illustrates two points: when day was controlled (indicated by occupational achievement),

the relationship between day and occupational achievement

was not significant. However, when day was controlled

for occupational achievement, the relationship between day

and occupational achievement was significant. This suggests

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Since research on the effect of occupational conditions and experiences on self-esteem are contradictory, the aim of this study is not to test only one possibility; our path analysis will initially cover all possible paths. Still, the basic premise of this study is that the higher one's socioeconomic origin, the higher will be educational attainment; the higher the educational attainment, the higher will be occupational achievement and the more likely one is to be self-directed and upwardly mobile at work which, in turn, will result in high self-esteem.



Since research on the effect of occupational conditions and experiences on self-esteem are contradictory, the aim of this study is not to test only one possibility; our path analysis will initially cover all possible paths. Still, the basic premise of this study is that the higher one's socioeconomic origin, the higher will be educational attainment; the higher the educational attainment, the higher will be occupational achievement and the more likely one is to be self-directed and upwardly mobile in one's life, in turn, with occupational attainment.



were selected randomly from each census tract. Two procedures were applied in selecting the households from each block for interview purposes:

1. The interview with the third house

from the corner on the east side. If any obstacles occurred in interviewing the household, the house on

### RESEARCH METHODS, INSTRUMENTATION, AND PROCEDURES

~~either~~ The primary purpose of this research was to explore causal relationships between self-esteem and job conditions and experiences; specifically, self-direction, occupational achievement level, and upward mobility, and to determine how these conditions moderate the effect of socioeconomic status of family of origin and educational attainment on self-esteem. It represents one segment of a long line of research on work and self-esteem. Furthermore, this research particularly aims to highlight the effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem. This chapter will focus on descriptions of the population, the instruments used, and the methods used for collecting and analyzing the data.

#### Description of the Population

The population of this study was drawn randomly from two census tracts in Lansing, Michigan. Forty-five persons were selected from each tract. One represents a stable upper-middle class residential area, the other represents a stable working-class residential area. The head of each household was interviewed. Forty-five blocks



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODS, INSTRUMENTATION, AND PROCEDURES

The primary purpose of this research was to explore

causal relationships between self-esteem and job

conditions and experiences; specifically, self-direction,

occupational achievement level, and upward mobility and

to determine the causal conditions that are related to

socialization in the workplace.

The research design was a longitudinal design.

The sample consisted of 100 employees of a large

company in the manufacturing industry.

The data were collected over a period of six months.

The results of the study are presented in the following

tables and figures.

The first table shows the distribution of self-esteem

levels among the sample.

The second table shows the distribution of job

conditions among the sample.

The third table shows the distribution of occupational

achievement levels among the sample.

The fourth table shows the distribution of upward

mobility among the sample.



were selected randomly from each census tract. Two procedures were applied in selecting the households from each block for interview purposes:

1. The interviewer started with the third house from the corner on the east side. If any obstacles occurred in interviewing the household, the house on either side was selected.

2. After finishing with the first interviewee, the interviewer was instructed to move to the third house from the northwest corner on the west side in the next randomly selected block. Again, if any problem occurs in making the interview, the house on either side was selected.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the number of males and females represented in the research data.

Table 1--Distribution of Total Population by Gender.

Total Females	Total Males	Total Population
28	62	90

Table 2 gives a frequency distribution of the socioeconomic status of family of the research population. The value rank for this socioeconomic status is given according to Duncan's socioeconomic index. The rating is based on occupation of head of household in the respondent's family of origin.







Table 2--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Family Socioeconomic Status.

Value	Frequency	Percent	Value	Frequency	Percent
3	1	1.1	39	2	2.2
6	2	2.2	40	3	3.3
7	1	1.1	43	1	1.1
8	1	1.1	49	1	1.1
9	2	2.2	50	5	5.6
10	4	4.4	51	1	1.1
11	1	1.1	52	2	2.2
13	1	1.1	53	1	1.1
14	4	4.4	54	1	1.1
15	3	3.3	56	1	1.1
16	2	2.2	59	2	2.2
17	3	3.3	61	3	3.3
18	1	1.1	62	2	2.2
19	2	2.2	65	2	2.2
21	1	1.1	66	2	2.2
22	2	2.2	67	1	1.1
23	1	1.1	70	1	1.1
24	6	6.7	71	1	1.1
25	2	2.2	72	1	1.1
27	3	3.3	82	1	1.1
31	2	2.2	84	2	2.2
32	1	1.1	85	1	1.1
33	3	3.3	93	1	1.1
36	1	1.1	96	1	1.1
37	1	1.1			
			Total	90	100.0

Table 3 shows a frequency distribution of the target population's educational attainment.

Table 4 presents a frequency distribution of the occupational achievement level of the research population. The value for this status attainment is ranked according to Duncan's socioeconomic index.



Table 2--Frequency Distribution of the Target  
Population's Family Socioeconomic Status.

Value	Frequency	Percent	Value	Frequency	Percent
3	1	1.1	39	2	2.2
6	2	2.2	40	3	3.3
7	1	1.1	43	1	1.1
8	1	1.1	49	1	1.1
9	2	2.2	50	2	2.2
10	4	4.4	51	1	1.1
11	1	1.1	52	2	2.2
13	1	1.1	53	1	1.1
14	4	4.4	54	1	1.1
15	3	3.3	55	1	1.1
16	2	2.2	56	1	1.1
17	2	2.2	57	1	1.1
18	1	1.1	58	1	1.1
19	1	1.1	59	1	1.1
20	1	1.1	60	1	1.1
21	1	1.1	61	1	1.1
22	1	1.1	62	1	1.1
23	1	1.1	63	1	1.1
24	1	1.1	64	1	1.1
25	1	1.1	65	1	1.1
26	1	1.1	66	1	1.1
27	1	1.1	67	1	1.1
28	1	1.1	68	1	1.1
29	1	1.1	69	1	1.1
30	1	1.1	70	1	1.1
31	1	1.1	71	1	1.1
32	1	1.1	72	1	1.1
33	1	1.1	73	1	1.1
34	1	1.1	74	1	1.1
35	1	1.1	75	1	1.1
36	1	1.1	76	1	1.1
37	1	1.1	77	1	1.1
38	1	1.1	78	1	1.1
39	1	1.1	79	1	1.1
40	1	1.1	80	1	1.1
41	1	1.1	81	1	1.1
42	1	1.1	82	1	1.1
43	1	1.1	83	1	1.1
44	1	1.1	84	1	1.1
45	1	1.1	85	1	1.1
46	1	1.1	86	1	1.1
47	1	1.1	87	1	1.1
48	1	1.1	88	1	1.1
49	1	1.1	89	1	1.1
50	1	1.1	90	1	1.1
51	1	1.1	91	1	1.1
52	1	1.1	92	1	1.1
53	1	1.1	93	1	1.1
54	1	1.1	94	1	1.1
55	1	1.1	95	1	1.1
56	1	1.1	96	1	1.1
57	1	1.1	97	1	1.1
58	1	1.1	98	1	1.1
59	1	1.1	99	1	1.1
60	1	1.1	100	1	1.1



Table 3--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Educational Attainment.

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent
6	years of schooling	1	1.1
9	years of schooling	2	2.2
10	years of schooling	5	5.6
11	years of schooling	4	4.4
12	years of schooling	22	24.4
13	1 year of college	6	6.7
14	2 years of college	9	10.0
15	3 years of college	4	4.4
16	4 years of college	21	23.3
17	M.A./M.S. degree	10	11.1
18	Ph.D. degree	6	6.7
Total		90	100.0

Table 4--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Occupational Achievement Level.

Value	Frequency	Percent	Value	Frequency	Percent
6	1	1.1	50	3	3.3
9	2	2.2	51	3	3.3
11	1	1.1	53	2	2.2
13	2	2.2	54	1	1.1
15	3	3.3	61	5	5.6
16	1	1.1	62	3	3.3
21	7	7.8	65	3	3.3
23	1	1.1	66	9	10.0
26	2	2.2	68	1	1.1
27	2	2.2	69	1	1.1
32	2	2.2	70	1	1.1
33	1	1.1	72	4	4.4
38	2	2.2	78	3	3.3
39	1	1.1	80	1	1.1
41	1	2.2	84	5	5.6
44	7	7.8	85	1	1.1
46	3	3.3	86	2	2.2
49	1	1.1	93	1	1.1
25	2	2.2	72	1	1.1
27	3	3.3	82	1	1.1
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32	1	1.1	85	1	1.1
33	3	3.3	93	1	1.1
36	1	1.1	96	1	1.1
37	1	1.1			
			Total	90	100.0



Table 3--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Educational Attainment.

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent
6	years of schooling	1	1.1
9	years of schooling	2	2.2
10	years of schooling	2	2.2
11	years of schooling	4	4.4
12	years of schooling	22	24.4
13	1 year of college	6	6.7
14	2 years of college	9	10.0
15	3 years of college	4	4.4
16	4 years of college	31	33.3
17	M.A. or Ph.D.	10	11.1
18	Postgraduate	2	2.2



### Instrumentation

#### Socioeconomic Status of Family of Origin and Occupational Achievement Level of Target Population

These two variables were measured by using Duncan's (1961) socioeconomic index. The socioeconomic index is used as a measure to stratify the individuals in our target population as well as to rank and classify their occupation (see Appendix B). Duncan indicates that "The greatest interest in the index will be in its potential use for stratifying a population of individuals. No less important, however, are its possibilities as a research instrument in investigations of occupation structure" (1961:140). The virtue of Duncan's socioeconomic index compared to other occupational scales, such as the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) Scale of Occupational Prestige and Edwards' Measurement of Occupational Status, is that "The socioeconomic index . . . is one that combines the available information on educational and income levels of persons engaged in several occupations" (Duncan, 1961:117). In contrast to the Edwards scale, it contains information about specific occupations and it is not limited to the 90 occupations included in the original NORC scale.

After explaining the limitation in Edwards' measurement scale, Pavalko (1988) writes:

The desire for more refined scales for measuring occupational status has led to the creation of 'indexes' that order occupations on the basis of the average educational attainment and income of people in those occupations, as reported in the







national decennial censuses. The best known and most widely used scale of this kind was developed by Otis Dudley Duncan\* using 1950 census data. . . . It is commonly referred to as the Duncan socioeconomic index (SEI). The scale includes nearly 500 occupations. (p. 127)

Duncan (1961) describes the objectives of the SEI as follows:

. . . obtaining a socioeconomic index for each of the occupations in the detailed classification of the 1950 census of population. This index is to have both face validity, in terms of its constituent variables, and sufficient predictive efficiency with respect to the NORC occupational prestige ratings that it can serve as an acceptable substitute for them in any research where it is necessary to grade or rank occupations in the way that the NORC score does but where some of the occupations are not on the NORC list. (p. 115)

#### Occupational Self-Direction

A four-item scale was used as an indicator of self-direction (adopted from Kohn & Schooler, 1983). The scale assesses freedom from close supervision and engaging in non-routinized and complex tasks. Indicators for the self-direction scale are:

The frequency of talking to the immediate supervisor.

The frequency of talking to the supervisor, who is above the immediate supervisor.

The number of times the employee is evaluated by his supervisor.

Job complexity.

The reliability measure used for the self-direction scale was Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure

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\*Highlighted by the author.



national decennial censuses. The best known and most widely used scale of this kind was developed by Otis Dudley Duncan\* using 1950 census data. . . . It is commonly referred to as the Duncan socioeconomic index (SEI). The scale includes nearly 500 occupations. (p. 127)

Duncan (1961) describes the objectives of the SEI as

follows:

. . . obtaining a socioeconomic index for each of the occupations in the detailed classification of the 1950 census of population. This index is to have both face validity, in terms of its constituent variables, and sufficient predictive validity, with respect to 1950 occupational prestige, to be used in statistical analysis. (p. 127)



of internal consistency (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The overall alpha for the self-direction scale was 0.7004. Table 5 shows a frequently distribution of the target population's occupational self-direction scores.

#### Upward Mobility

Upward mobility was measured as the perceived possibility for upward mobility. The respondents were asked, "How certain do you feel about your chances of moving up?", using a five-point response format. The five response categories are: (5) very certain; (4) certain; (3) somewhat certain; (2) uncertain; and (1) very uncertain. Table 6 shows a frequency distribution of the target population's perceived upward mobility.

#### Self-Esteem

The 10-item scale developed by Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure the target population's self-esteem. This self-esteem measure deals generally with favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward the self. The scale is balanced, with five positive items and five negative items (see Appendix A, Item 34 1-10). Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point, Likert scale how strongly they disagree or agree that each item was true of them. The five response categories are: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) disagree; and (5) strongly disagree. The higher the value on the scale, the higher the self-esteem.



of internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , 1979). The overall alpha for the self-direction scale was 0.7004. Table 2 shows a frequency distribution of the target population's occupational self-direction scores.

#### Upward Mobility

Upward mobility was measured as the perceived

possibility for upward mobility. The respondents were

asked, "How likely is it that you will move up in

your career?" The response options were "Very likely,"

"Somewhat likely," "Not likely," and "Very unlikely."



Table 5--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Occupational Self-Direction Scores.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Low Self-Directed occupation	4	1	1.1
	5	2	2.2
	6	3	3.3
	7	3	3.3
	8	8	8.9
	9	6	6.7
	10	9	10.0
	11	10	11.1
	12	12	13.3
	13	13	14.4
High Self-Directed occupation	14	17	18.9
	15	4	4.4
	17	2	2.2
Total		90	100.0

Table 6--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Perceived Upward Mobility.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Very uncertain	1	18	20.0
Uncertain	2	16	17.8
Somewhat uncertain	3	24	26.7
Certain	4	14	15.6
Very certain	5	18	20.0
Total		90	100.0



Table 5--Frequency Distribution of the Target  
Population's Occupational Self-Direction  
Scores.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Low Self-Direction Occupation	4	1	1.1
	5	2	2.2
	6	3	3.3
	7	3	3.3
	8	8	8.9
	9	6	6.7
High Self-Direction Occupation	10	9	10.0
	11	10	11.1
	12	12	13.3
	13	13	14.4
	14	14	15.6
	15	15	16.7
Total			
100			



A number of studies suggest the reliability and construct validity of this scale. For instance, Crandell (1973) evaluated Rosenberg's (1965) scale as one of the best scales to measure self-esteem. Furthermore, Hensley and Roberts (1976) indicated that Rosenberg's scale is one of the most well-known scales for measuring self-esteem. The reliability measure used in this study for the self-esteem scale was Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure of internal consistency (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). The alpha for the self-esteem scale as used in this study was .8355. Table 7 shows a frequency distribution of the target population's self-esteem scores.

#### Career Stage

A two-item scale was used as an indicator of career stage. This scale was a composite of two variables: (1) number of years in the labor force; and (2) age. Since these two variables have different distributions, the original raw scores of the two variables were converted to standardized ones. Career stage was used to measure the influence that number of years in the labor force and age had on the effect of educational attainment, occupational achievement level, occupational self-direction, and upward mobility on self-esteem. The reliability measure used for the career stage scale was Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The overall alpha for the career stage scale was 0.76.



A number of studies suggest the reliability and construct validity of this scale. For instance, Crandall (1973) evaluated Rosenberg's (1965) scale as one of the best scales to measure self-esteem. Furthermore, Rosenberg and Roberts (1976) indicated that Rosenberg's scale is one of the most well-known scales for measuring self-esteem. The reliability measure used in this study for the

**self-esteem scale was Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which**

**is a measure of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951).**

**(1973). The alpha coefficient for the self-esteem scale**

**was .81.**

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**was .81.**



Table 7--Frequency Distribution of the Target Population's Self-Esteem Scores.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Low Self-Esteem score	10	4	4.4
	11	4	4.4
	12	1	1.1
	13	7	7.8
	14	5	5.6
	15	5	5.6
	16	4	4.4
	17	3	3.3
	18	10	11.1
	19	8	8.9
	20	10	11.1
	21	8	8.9
	22	7	7.8
	23	4	4.4
	24	5	5.6
High Self-Esteem score	25	1	1.1
	29	2	2.2
	32	1	1.1
	38	1	1.1
Total		90	100.0

#### Research Questionnaire

The research questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed by Professor William Faunce (Michigan State University, Department of Sociology). The original objective of the questionnaire as designed by Professor Faunce was to test a detailed theory of "self-investment," which attempts "to explain why level of occupational achievement is an important determinant of the self-esteem of some persons and has very little effect upon the self-esteem of others" (Faunce, 1980:ii).



Table 7--Frequency Distribution of the Target  
Population's Self-Esteem Scores.

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Low Self-Esteem score	10	4	4.4
	11	4	4.4
	12	1	1.1
	13	7	7.8
	14	5	5.6
	15	5	5.6
	16	4	4.4
	17	3	3.3
	18	10	11.1
	19	8	8.9
	20	10	11.1
	21	7	7.8
	22	4	4.4
	23	4	4.4
	24	4	4.4
	25	4	4.4
	26	4	4.4
	27	4	4.4
	28	4	4.4
	29	4	4.4
	30	4	4.4
	31	4	4.4
	32	4	4.4
	33	4	4.4
	34	4	4.4
	35	4	4.4
	36	4	4.4
	37	4	4.4
	38	4	4.4
	39	4	4.4
	40	4	4.4
	41	4	4.4
	42	4	4.4
	43	4	4.4
	44	4	4.4
	45	4	4.4
	46	4	4.4
	47	4	4.4
	48	4	4.4
	49	4	4.4
	50	4	4.4
	51	4	4.4
	52	4	4.4
	53	4	4.4
	54	4	4.4
	55	4	4.4
	56	4	4.4
	57	4	4.4
	58	4	4.4
	59	4	4.4
	60	4	4.4
	61	4	4.4
	62	4	4.4
	63	4	4.4
	64	4	4.4
	65	4	4.4
	66	4	4.4
	67	4	4.4
	68	4	4.4
	69	4	4.4
	70	4	4.4
	71	4	4.4
	72	4	4.4
	73	4	4.4
	74	4	4.4
	75	4	4.4
	76	4	4.4
	77	4	4.4
	78	4	4.4
	79	4	4.4
	80	4	4.4
	81	4	4.4
	82	4	4.4
	83	4	4.4
	84	4	4.4
	85	4	4.4
	86	4	4.4
	87	4	4.4
	88	4	4.4
	89	4	4.4
	90	4	4.4
	91	4	4.4
	92	4	4.4
	93	4	4.4
	94	4	4.4
	95	4	4.4
	96	4	4.4
	97	4	4.4
	98	4	4.4
	99	4	4.4
	100	4	4.4



The method used to gather the research information from the target population was a face-to-face interview. The questionnaire contains: a detailed work history; personal experience of occupational status differences both at work and off the job; an indication of self-investment in work at the present time; how often the interviewee communicates with his/her immediate supervisor and the person above the immediate supervisor; the interviewee's perception of the possibility for upward mobility; and Rosenberg's ten-item self-esteem scale. Moreover, the questionnaire sought demographic information such as gender, age, race, level of education, individual gross income, total family income, and occupation and education of parents.

#### Analysis of Data

Data collected from the research questionnaire were entered into a computer file. The computer program used for statistical applications was Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-PC+).

The statistical technique used to examine the hypothetical causal structure, which is summarized in Figure 1, is path analysis. This statistical technique is not constructed to prove the validity of the causal assumptions as depicted in any given model. It is simply designed to estimate the strengths of the different causal connections in the model. Blau and Duncan (1967) explain



The method used to gather the research information from the target population was a face-to-face interview. The questionnaire contains a detailed work history; personal experience of occupational status differences both at work and off the job; an indication of self-investment in work at the present time; how often the interviewee communicates with his/her immediate supervisor

and the person above him/her in the organization.

Interviewees' responses to the questionnaire are

analyzed in terms of the following variables:

1. Occupational status differences

2. Self-investment in work

3. Frequency of communication with supervisor



the purpose of using path analysis by indicating that, "Path analysis is not a method for discovering causal laws but a procedure for giving a quantitative interpretation to the manifestations of a known or assumed causal system as it operates in a particular population" (p. 172).

Based on the previous review of literature on self-esteem and family socioeconomic background, as well as on the literature review on educational and occupational attainment, we selected four variables for data analysis which are treated as prior causes of self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). These variables, stated in causal order, are: 1. educational attainment ( $X_2$ ); 2. occupational achievement level ( $X_3$ ); 3. occupational self-direction ( $X_4$ ); and 4. possibility for upward mobility ( $X_5$ ). We also consider the first three variables as mediating variables between socioeconomic status of origin ( $X_1$ ) and self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). In order to acquire the general information of how these previous variables are related, a zero-order correlation matrix and some descriptive statistics for all variables in the causal model are presented in Table 8 in the next chapter. The level of rejection for the hypotheses, as stated, was set at 0.05.

The standardized regression coefficient (beta weight) for the variables in the model were estimated by the previously mentioned computer program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-PC+). Since this computer program converts the variables in the equation



the purpose of using path analysis by indicating that, "Path analysis is not a method for discovering causal laws but a procedure for giving a quantitative interpretation to the manifestations of a known or assumed causal system as it operates in a particular population" (p. 172).

Based on the previous review of literature on self-esteem and family socioeconomic background, as well

as on the literature review of educational and

occupational status, the following hypotheses were

formulated:

1. Self-esteem is positively related to family socioeconomic background.

2. Self-esteem is positively related to educational attainment.

3. Self-esteem is positively related to occupational status.



into standardized form, the path coefficients are simply equal to the beta weights (Bohrnstedt & Knoke, 1982:420). Thus the finding of path coefficients from the computer program mentioned above will be used as a tool to show how strong the causal relationship is among variables in the causal model. These strengths of the causal relationships between the variables as revealed in the path coefficients will also be used to test the following twelve hypotheses, so as to sustain or negate them within the limits of this study:

- H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.
- H1b: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her occupational achievement level.
- H1c: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.
- H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.
- H2b: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.
- H2c: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater the perceived possibility for his/her upward mobility.
- H2d: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.
- H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.



into standardized form, the path coefficients are simply equal to the beta weights (Bohrnstedt & Knoke, 1982:430). Thus the finding of path coefficients from the computer program mentioned above will be used as a tool to show how strong the causal relationship is among variables in the causal model. These strengths of the causal relationships between the variables as revealed in the path coefficients

**will also be used to test the following hypotheses:**  
**so as to analyze**  
**study:**



H3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibilities for his/her upward mobility.

H3c: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4b: The higher the employee's opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

Based upon the assumption that nonwork-related variables, such as age and career stage, may influence the relationship hypothesized above, the interaction of age and career stage with the independent variables above was analyzed using multiple regression.

Multiple regressions were used to test the following four hypotheses within the limits of this study:

H5a: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of educational attainment on self-esteem.

H5b: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational achievement level on self-esteem.

H5c: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of the perceived possibility for upward mobility on self-esteem.

H5d: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem.



H3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibilities for his/her upward mobility.

H3c: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4b: The higher the employee's opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

Based upon the above hypotheses, the following research questions were formulated:

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between occupational achievement and self-esteem?

Research Question 2:

What is the relationship between self-directed work and self-esteem?



## Statistical Analysis and Procedures for Testing the Hypotheses

Path analysis was used to test the strength of the causal relationship among variables, as proposed in the following twelve hypotheses:

### CHAPTER IV

#### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter will provide an overview of the statistical procedures used to analyze the data. In addition, this chapter will summarize the study results from the survey questionnaire.

The main premise of this quantitative research was that socioeconomic status of family of origin does not directly affect employees' self-esteem; rather, it is proposed that socioeconomic status is [indirectly] related to self-esteem by the effect it has on the individual's opportunities for attaining a high level of education, the effect of these on the individual's occupational achievement level, the effect of these on exercising self-direction at work, and the perceived possibility for upward mobility. This premise is expected to demonstrate the following order of relationships: the higher one's socioeconomic status of family of origin, the higher the educational attainment; the higher the educational attainment, the higher the occupational achievement, then the more likely one is self-directed and to perceive opportunity for upward mobility at work, which, in turn, will result in higher self-esteem.



## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter will provide an overview of the

statistical procedures used to analyze the data.

In addition, it will provide a summary of the

findings.



Statistical Analysis and Procedures  
for Testing the Hypotheses

Path analysis was used to test the strength of the causal relationship among variables, as proposed in the following twelve hypotheses:

H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.

H1b: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H1c: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H2b: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

H2c: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater the perceived possibility of his/her upward mobility.

H2d: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

H3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibilities for his/her upward mobility.

H3c: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.



Statistical Analysis and Procedures  
for Testing the Hypotheses

Path analysis was used to test the strength of the causal relationship among variables, as proposed in the

following twelve hypotheses:

H1: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.

H2: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.

H3: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.



H4b: The higher the employee's perceived opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

Path coefficients were used to test the strength of the causal relationship in these hypotheses, so as to sustain or negate them. The standardized regression coefficients (beta weights) for the variables in the model, estimated using SPSSPC+ (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer software, were used to estimate the path coefficients. Walsh (1990) indicates that "The path coefficients are the standardized betas (Bs) obtained from multiple regression equations" (p. 319).

Furthermore, we used regression analysis to test the interaction effect on self-esteem of each of the independent variables (educational attainment, occupational achievement, self-direction, and perceived chances for upward mobility) with a career stage variable composed of age and number of years in the labor force. For the purposes of determining interaction, we created a new variable that is a composite of two variables using each independent variable. For example, we created an interaction term (variable) by multiplying educational attainment by career stage. In the regression analysis, the interaction term was entered into the regression equation in addition to its composite variables.

With regard to the interaction analysis, our goal was to test the interaction effect as proposed in the







following four hypotheses. For each of these hypotheses, a t-test was used to test the null hypothesis that the interaction effects were not significant, so that the null hypothesis could be accepted or rejected within the limits of the study. These four hypotheses were:

X<sub>4</sub> H5a: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of education on self-esteem.

X<sub>5</sub> H5b: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational achievement level on self-esteem.

H5c: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of the perceived possibility for upward mobility on self-esteem.

H5d: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem.

### Results of Path Analysis

An examination of the path coefficients in Figure 3 reveals that the direct impact of SES upon educational attainment ( $p_{21}$ ) was .410, the same as the product-moment correlation, .410, in Table 8. The direct path between SES and occupational achievement ( $p_{31}$ ) was very small, only .079. The much larger product-moment correlation between these two variables (.346), shown in Table 8, suggests that SES influenced occupational achievement indirectly via educational attainment. We can estimate the amount of indirect causal impact of SES on occupational achievement by multiplying the two causal



following four hypotheses. For each of these hypotheses, a t-test was used to test the null hypothesis that the interaction effects were not significant, so that the null hypothesis could be accepted or rejected within the limits of the study. These four hypotheses were:

H2a: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of education on self-esteem.

H2b: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the more the effect of education on self-esteem.

H2c: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of education on self-esteem.

H2d: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the more the effect of education on self-esteem.



Table 8--Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for All Variables in the Causal Model.

	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>
X <sub>1</sub>	1.00					
X <sub>2</sub>	.410 **	1.00				
X <sub>3</sub>	.346 **	.684 **	1.00			
X <sub>4</sub>	.015	.126	.210	1.00		
X <sub>5</sub>	.016	-.056	.020	.005	1.00	
X <sub>6</sub>	-.20	-.075	-.033	.488 **	.002	1.00
Mean	37.00	14.00	50.10	11.29	2.98	18.51
Std Dev.	23.56	2.59	22.93	2.79	1.40	4.95
Max	96	18	93	17	5	38
Min	3	6	6	4	1	10
Range	93	12	87	13	4	28

\*p < .05      \*\*p < .001

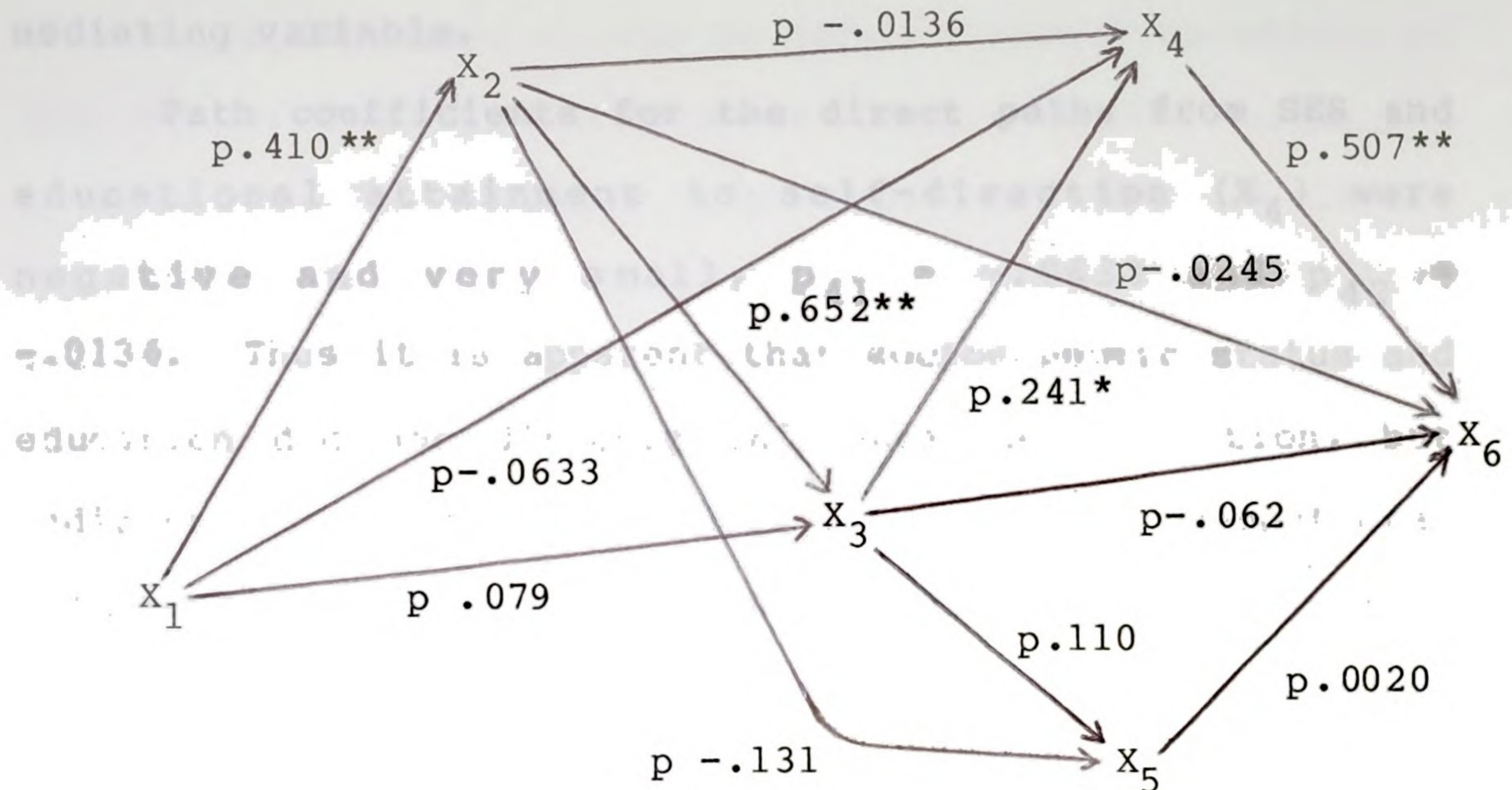
paths:  $p_{21} \times p_{32} = .410 \times .652 = .267$ , which is much larger than the direct effect. These positive effects of SES on educational attainment, and of educational attainment on occupational achievement, were anticipated on the basis of previous related research (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Sewell & Shah, 1967; Haller & Portes, 1973; Eckland, 1965; Nachmias, 1977; Bachman & O'Malley, 1977; Mortimer & Lorence, 1979b). Our path model indicates, as did most of these prior researches, that the direct effects of SES on occupational achievement were much smaller than the indirect effects, which were mediated by educational attainment. This would explain



Table 8--Zero-Order Correlation Matrix for All Variables in the Causal Model.

	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	X <sub>4</sub>	X <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>
X <sub>1</sub>	1.00					
X <sub>2</sub>	.410**	1.00				
X <sub>3</sub>	.346**	.684**	1.00			
X <sub>4</sub>	.015	.150	.210	1.00		
X <sub>5</sub>	.016	-.026	.050	.005	1.00	
X <sub>6</sub>	-.20	-.075	-.033	.488**	.005	1.00
Mean	37.00	1.00	50.10	11.30	3.00	18.50
Std. Dev.	20.00	1.00	15.10	2.70	1.00	4.00
Max						
Min						
Range						



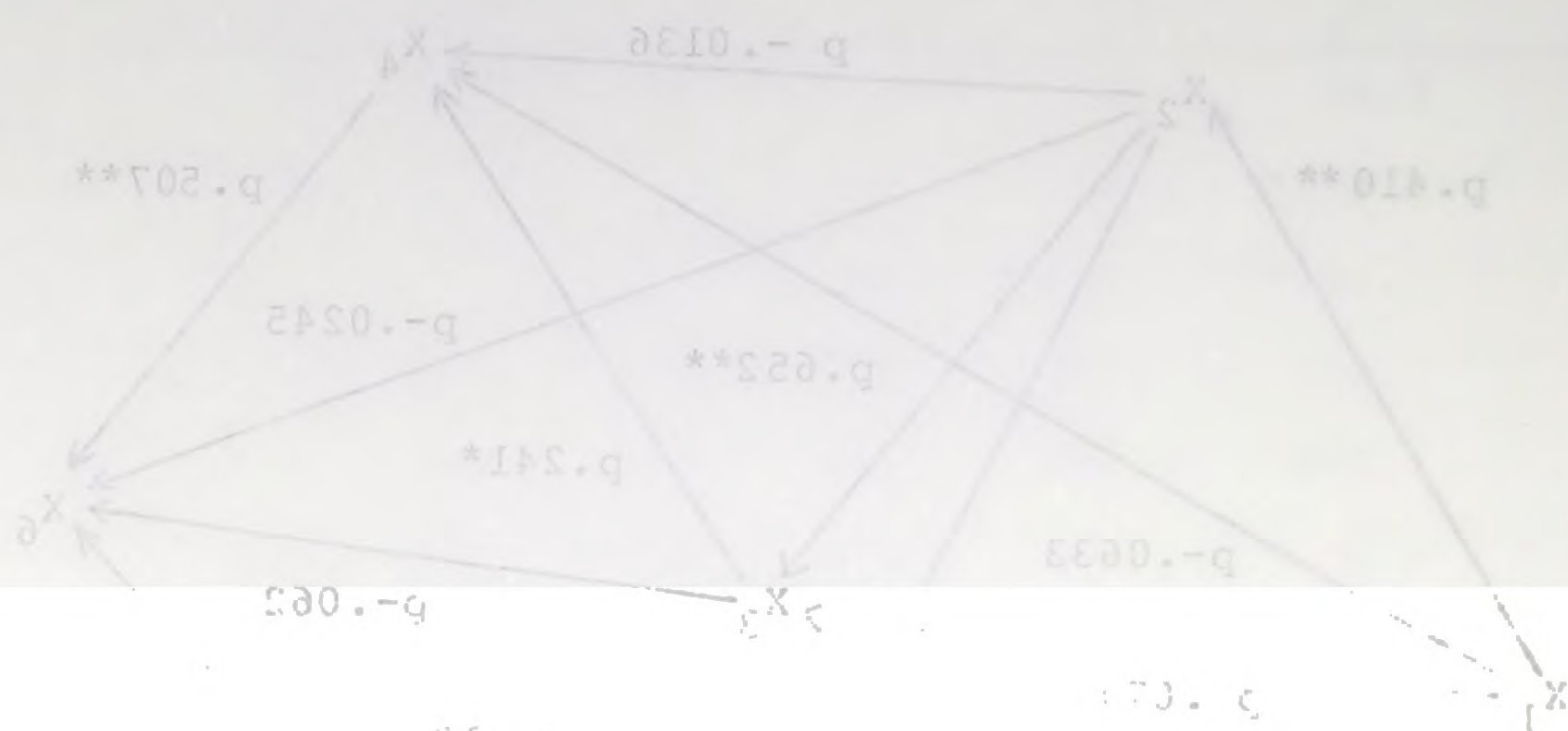


\*statistically significant at  $< .05$   
 \*\*statistically significant at  $< .001$

X<sub>1</sub> = socioeconomic status of family of origin  
 X<sub>2</sub> = educational attainment  
 X<sub>3</sub> = occupational achievement level  
 X<sub>4</sub> = occupational self-direction  
 X<sub>5</sub> = possibility for upward mobility  
 X<sub>6</sub> = self-esteem

Figure 3--Path model.





$b-.010$   
 $b-.0033$

$b-.0241^*$   
 $b-.0342$

$b-.0063$   
 $b-.0033$



the product-moment correlation of .346 between SES and occupational achievement level, as being caused by this mediating variable.

Path coefficients for the direct paths from SES and educational attainment to self-direction ( $X_4$ ) were negative and very small,  $p_{41} = -.0633$  and  $p_{42} = -.0136$ . Thus it is apparent that socioeconomic status and education did not directly influence self-direction, but indirectly influenced self-direction through occupational achievement level, which had a direct path to self-direction ( $p_{43} = .241$ ). This indirect relation would also explain the product-moment correlation of .126 between educational attainment and self-direction as:

↑ education → ↑ occupational achievement → ↑ self-direction.

It is also quite obvious that the direct path from educational attainment to self-esteem was very small and negative,  $p_{62} = -.0245$ , and statistically insignificant ( $t = -.484$ ). The only effect that educational attainment may exert upon self-esteem was indirectly through occupational achievement which contributed to self-direction, which in turn influenced self-esteem. To estimate the amount of indirect causal impact of education attainment on self-esteem, we multiply the three causal paths,  $p_{32} \times p_{43} \times p_{64} = .652 \times .241 \times .507 = .08$ . This indirect effect was indeed very small but positive. Our finding goes along with previous findings by Bachman



the product-moment correlation of .746 between SES and occupational achievement level, as being caused by this mediating variable.

Path coefficients for the direct paths from SES and educational attainment to self-direction ( $X_4$ ) were negative and very small,  $\beta_{41} = -.0633$  and  $\beta_{42} = -.0136$ . Thus it is apparent that socioeconomic status and

education did not directly influence self-direction, but indirectly influenced it. The indirect effect of SES on self-direction was  $\beta_{41} \times \beta_{14} = -.0633 \times .746 = -.0472$ , and the indirect effect of education on self-direction was  $\beta_{42} \times \beta_{24} = -.0136 \times .746 = -.0101$ . These indirect effects are small, but they are significant at the .05 level of significance.



and O'Malley (1977:373), Mortimer and Lorence (1979b:318), Kohn and Schooler (1983:169). It is quite noteworthy that when we regress self-esteem on SES, it shows the effect of SES on self-esteem was weak ( $p_{61} = -.174$ ) and the t-value (-1.71) was not significant at the .05 level. This result supports our previously proposed theoretical expectation, that SES influences self-esteem indirectly through mediating variables. The absence of direct significant effects between SES and self-esteem was consistent with prior research. For example, Kohn and Schooler (1983:186) indicated that social-class position affects men's psychological functioning indirectly, through their opportunities to exercise occupational self-direction. Moreover, our finding supports research by Bachman and O'Malley (1977) and Luck and Heiss (1972) in which a negative relationship between socioeconomic status and self-esteem was found.

Our path diagram indicates a negative effect of educational attainment on possibility for upward mobility ( $p_{52} = -.131$ ). The absence of a relationship between these two variables may be due to the subjective nature of our measurement of upward mobility, or it could be that the impact of educational attainment on upward mobility was indirect, through the opportunities that it allowed for someone to have a job where the occupational hierarchy was not limited or restricted. While occupational achievement level as a causal variable for self-esteem



and O'Malley (1977:373), Wortimer and Lorenze (1979:318), Kohn and Schooler (1983:169). It is quite noteworthy that when we regress self-esteem on SES, it shows the effect of SES on self-esteem was weak ( $\beta = -.174$ ) and the  $t$ -value ( $-1.71$ ) was not significant at the .05 level. This result supports our previously proposed theoretical expectation, that SES influences self-esteem indirectly

through mediating variables. The absence of direct

significant effects of SES on self-esteem is

consistent with the theoretical expectation that

SES

influences



showed a very small, negative coefficient ( $p = -.062$ ) in our case, some previous researchers have substantiated, to the contrary, a positive relationship between occupational level and self-esteem (Luck & Heiss, 1972; Bachman & O'Malley, 1977; Tharenou & Harker, 1982; Kasl & French, 1962; Jacques & Chason, 1977). Also the path from perceived upward mobility to self-esteem was insignificant ( $p_{65} = .002$ ).

It is important to consider Faunce's (1982) critique that "it is often assumed the differences in occupational status are necessarily associated with differences in self-esteem without any specification of the mechanisms which condition the extent of this association" (p. 166). Thus, in contrast to the above researchers, who concluded that there is a positive relationship between occupational achievement and self-esteem, without any specification about the nature of this relationship, our research shows that occupational achievement level affects self-esteem indirectly via a self-direction mechanism. This finding supports Kohn and Schooler's (1983) view that "The psychological impact of social-stratification position (and its components, education and occupational position) is attributable, in very substantial degree, to occupational self-direction" (p. 187). Thus, Figure 3 reveals a strong path coefficient from self-direction to self-esteem ( $p_{64} = .510$ ), which is consistent with previous research conducted by Kohn and Schooler.



showed a very small, negative coefficient ( $p = .062$ ) in our case, some previous researchers have substantiated, to the contrary, a positive relationship between occupational level and self-esteem (Luck & Heiss, 1972; Bachman & O'Malley, 1977; Tharenou & Barker, 1982; Kasl & French, 1982; Jacques & Chasson, 1977). Also the path from perceived upward mobility to self-esteem was insignificant

( $p = .002$ ).

If it is important to consider Fama's (1982) criticism that "if a person is in a position of low self-esteem, he will not be able to achieve a high level of occupational mobility" (p. 100), it is important to consider that the relationship between self-esteem and occupational mobility is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is not clear whether it is a causal relationship or a reciprocal one. It is possible that a person with a high level of self-esteem will be able to achieve a high level of occupational mobility, but it is also possible that a person with a low level of self-esteem will be able to achieve a high level of occupational mobility. It is important to consider that the relationship between self-esteem and occupational mobility is not a simple one. It is a complex one, and it is not clear whether it is a causal relationship or a reciprocal one.



Since the path in Figure 3 did not evidence a direct effect of occupational achievement level on self-esteem, we calculated the indirect effect through occupational self-direction by multiplying the two causal paths,  $p_{43} \times p_{64} = .241 \times .510 = .123$ . This showed that the indirect effect of occupational attainment level on self-esteem was much larger than the direct effect. Moreover, the results of the regression analysis, which have been mentioned previously, indicate a small and negative direct relationship between socioeconomic status of family of origin and self-esteem ( $p_{61} = -.174$ ). This result sustained the basic premise of this research, namely, that socioeconomic status of family of origin did not directly affect the employees' self-esteem but did affect self-esteem through indirect effects. The path coefficients in Figure 3 indicate that the direction of the effect was as follows: SES  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  educational attainment  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  occupational achievement level  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  higher opportunities for having a self-directed job  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  the higher the self-esteem.

Considering the size of the path coefficient as an indicator for sustaining or negating the previously mentioned hypotheses, path coefficients  $p_{21}$ ,  $p_{32}$ ,  $p_{43}$ , and  $p_{64}$  in Figure 3 would sustain only the following hypotheses:

H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic status, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.



Since the path in Figure 3 did not evidence a direct effect of occupational achievement level on self-esteem, we calculated the indirect effect through occupational self-direction by multiplying the two causal paths,  $p_{43} \times p_{44} = .241 \times .510 = .123$ . This showed that the indirect effect of occupational attainment level on self-esteem was much larger than the direct effect.

Moreover, the results of the regression analysis, which have been mentioned previously, indicated a small and negative effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem.

Of course, the results of the regression analysis are

not the same as the results of the path analysis.

Therefore, the results of the path analysis are

more reliable than the results of the regression analysis.

Consequently, the results of the path analysis are

more reliable than the results of the regression analysis.

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H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

The final model is represented in Figure 4.

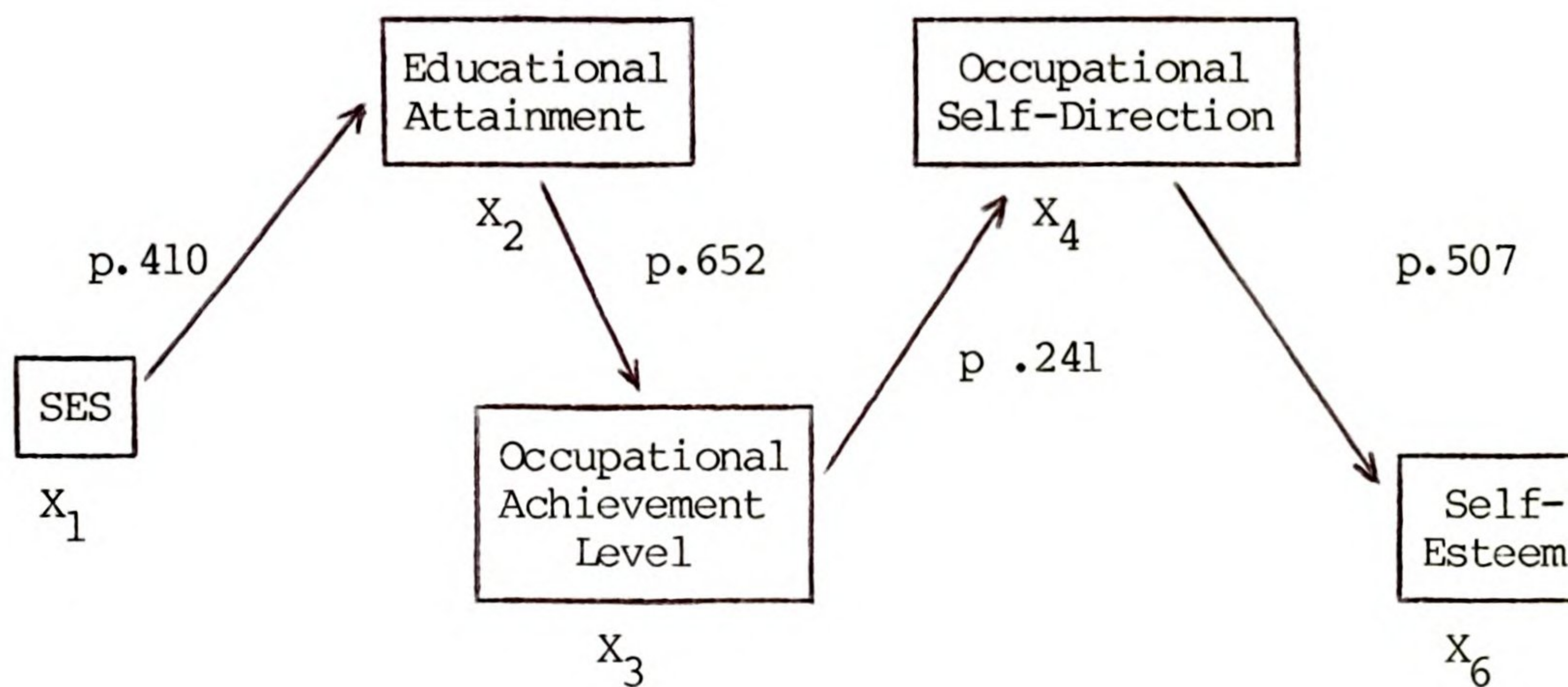


Figure 4--Final model.

#### Findings of the Interaction Effect Model

Figure 5 portrays an interaction effect between career stage and variables in the model. Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12 report findings regarding interaction of the four variables with career stage in their effect on self-esteem. T-tests for the four interaction variables in Tables 9-12 were found to be as follows: interaction between educational attainment and career stage (INTRX2CS)(-.848); interaction between occupational



H3a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

The final model is presented in Figure 4.





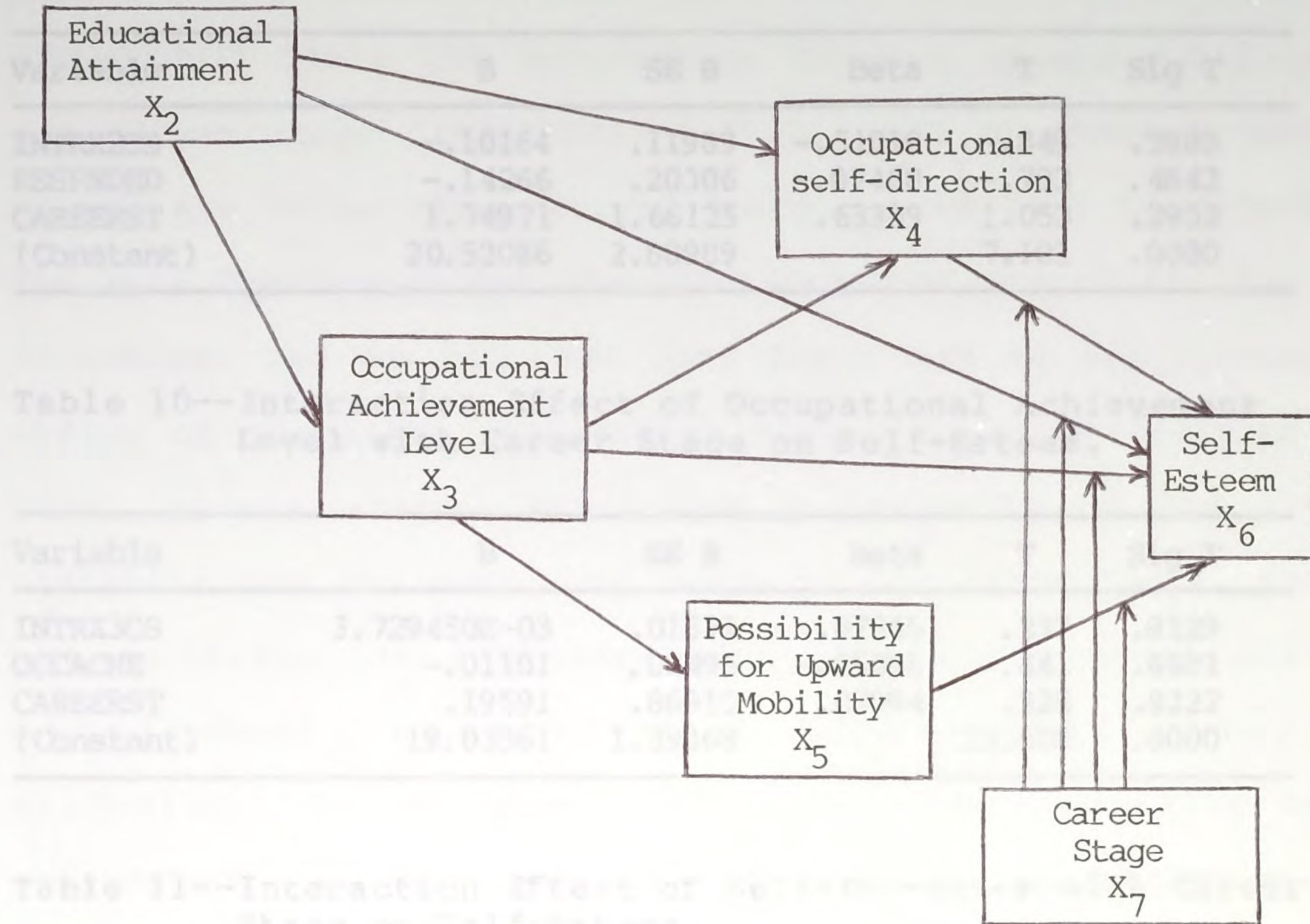


Figure 5--The Interaction Effect Model.\*

\*Although the model in Figure 5 shows all of the relevant variables in the same model, because of the small sample size, the interaction of career stage and each of the other independent variables was assessed separately. These are the analyses shown in Tables 9-12.







Table 9--Interaction Effect of Educational Attainment with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTRX2CS	-.10164	.11989	-.51010	-.848	.3989
RESPNDED	-.14266	.20306	-.07468	-.703	.4842
CAREERST	1.74971	1.66125	.63359	1.053	.2952
(Constant)	20.52086	2.88989		7.101	.0000

variables, and we found that the interaction effect was significant.

Table 10--Interaction Effect of Occupational Achievement Level with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTRX3CS	3.729450E-03	.01571	.07345	.237	.8129
OCCACHE	-.01101	.02495	-.05098	-.441	.6601
CAREERST	.19591	.86915	.07094	.225	.8222
(Constant)	19.03361	1.39868		13.608	.0000

Table 11--Interaction Effect of Self-Direction with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTRX4CS	4.047640E-03	.11663	.01783	.035	.9724
SELFDIR	.85352	.17700	.48147	4.822	.0000
CAREERST	.06151	1.43186	.02227	.043	.9658
(Constant)	8.87212	2.08359		4.258	.0001

Table 12--Interaction Effect of Upward Mobility with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTRX5CS	-.23928	.20150	-.26317	-1.187	.2383
MOVINGUP	.11164	.38185	.03152	.292	.7707
CAREERST	1.01071	.61636	.36599	1.640	.1047
(Constant)	18.07575	1.25827		14.366	.0000



Table 9--Interaction Effect of Educational Attainment with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTERACT	-.10164	.11989	-.51010	-.848	.3989
RESPOND	-.14266	.20705	-.07468	-.703	.4842
CAREERST	1.74971	1.66125	.63339	1.053	.2952
(Constant)	20.52086	2.88889		7.101	.0000

Table 10--Interaction Effect of Educational Attainment with Level with Career Stage on Self-Esteem.

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	T	Sig T
INTERACT	-.10164	.11989	-.51010	-.848	.3989
RESPOND	-.14266	.20705	-.07468	-.703	.4842
CAREERST	1.74971	1.66125	.63339	1.053	.2952
(Constant)	20.52086	2.88889		7.101	.0000



achievement level and career stage (INTRX3CS)(.237); interaction between self-direction and career stage (INTRX4CS)(.035); and interaction between upward mobility and career stage (INTRX5CS)(-1.187). All of these t-test values are below the critical value, so we fail to reject the null hypotheses for the interaction effect of the four variables, and we conclude that there was no significant effect of composite interaction variables on self-esteem. Thus, career stage, which was a composite of the two variables age and number of years in the labor force, did not moderate or influence the effect of educational attainment, occupational achievement level, self-direction, or possibility for upward mobility on self-esteem, as was proposed in the following hypotheses, all of which are rejected:

- H5a: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of education on self-esteem.
- H5b: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of the occupational achievement level on self-esteem.
- H5c: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of the possibility for upward mobility on self-esteem.
- H5d: The older the employee and the later his/her career stage, the less the effect of occupational self-direction on self-esteem.

Education, occupational achievement, and perceived possibility for upward mobility were not directly related to self-esteem in any case and taking career stage into



achievement level and career stage (INTRX3G2)(.237); interaction between self-direction and career stage (INTRX4G2)(.032); and interaction between upward mobility and career stage (INTRX5G2)(-1.187). All of these t-test values are below the critical value, so we fail to reject the null hypotheses for the interaction effect of the four variables, and we conclude that there was no significant

effect of composite interaction variables on self-esteem.

Thus, career stage, which was a composite of the two

variables, was not significant in the labor force, and

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account did not affect this relationship. Occupational self-direction appears to be strongly related to self-esteem independent of career stage.

#### CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The primary purpose of this research was to determine if a significant causal relationship existed between self-esteem and job conditions and experience; specifically, occupational achievement level, self-direction, and perceived opportunity for upward mobility, and how these conditions moderated the effect of socioeconomic status of family of origin and educational attainment on self-esteem. Based on the assumption that career stage (age and number of years in the labor force) may incline the employee to believe that there is no hope to reach a higher status position at work or that he/she might have already reached the ultimate career goal, where education and occupational conditions and experiences would be less likely to affect self-esteem, we were also interested in testing if career stage variables influenced or moderated the effect of educational attainment, occupational achievement level, occupational self-direction, or upward mobility on self-esteem.







These hypothetical propositions were tested using a random sample from a population in two census tracts in Lansing, Michigan. Forty-five persons were selected from each tract. One tract represented a stable upper-middle class residential area, the other represented a stable working-class residential area. The head of each household was interviewed. In the interview, each subject in the target population was asked to answer questions in the questionnaire which elicited information about the following: a detailed work history; personal experience of occupational status differences, both at work and off the job; an indication of self-investment in work; how often the interviewee communicated with his/her immediate supervisor and the person above the immediate supervisor; and the interviewee's perception of the possibility for upward mobility. Rosenberg's ten-item self-esteem scale was also used to establish the interviewee's level of self-esteem.

Data gathered from the research questionnaire were analyzed statistically using the computer program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-PC+).

Based on the review of literature on self-esteem and family socioeconomic background, as well as on the literature review on educational and occupational attainment, which were both presented in Chapter II, we selected seven variables for the hypothetical causal



These hypothetical propositions were tested using a random sample from a population in two census tracts in Lansing, Michigan. Forty-five persons were selected from each tract. One tract represented a stable upper-middle class residential area, the other represented a stable working-class residential area. The head of each household was interviewed. In the interview, each subject in the

**target population** was asked to answer questions in the

**questionnaire** which related to the question about the

**following** items: (1) the respondent's age, sex, race,

**education**, (2) the respondent's occupation, (3) the

**respondent's** income, (4) the respondent's marital

**status**, (5) the respondent's number of children,

**and** (6) the respondent's place of birth.

The questionnaire was administered by a trained



structure (see Figures 3 and 5). To examine the hypothetical causal structure, we considered variables to be treated as prior causes of self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). These variables, stated in causal order, are: educational attainment ( $X_2$ ); occupational achievement level ( $X_3$ ); occupational self-direction ( $X_4$ ); and possibility for upward mobility ( $X_5$ ). We also considered the first three variables as mediating variables between socioeconomic status of origin ( $X_1$ ) and self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). In addition, we hypothesized that career stage ( $X_7$ ) (see Figure 5) might influence and moderate the effect that educational attainment, occupational achievement level, self-direction, and upward mobility had on self-esteem.

The path analysis technique was used to estimate the strength of the different causal connections in the model, and to sustain or negate the following hypotheses:

- H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.
- H1b: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her occupational achievement level.
- H1c: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.
- H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.
- H2b: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.



structure (see Figures 3 and 5). To examine the hypothetical causal structure, we considered variables to be treated as prior causes of self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). These variables, stated in causal order, are: educational attainment ( $X_2$ ); occupational achievement level ( $X_3$ ); occupational self-direction ( $X_4$ ); and possibility for upward mobility ( $X_5$ ). We also considered the first

three variables as mediating variables between socioeconomic status of origin ( $X_1$ ) and self-esteem ( $X_6$ ). In addition, we hypothesized that career stage ( $X_7$ ) (see Figure 1) might influence and moderate the relationship between the first three variables and upward mobility in

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H2c: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater the perceived possibility of his/her upward mobility.

H2d: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

H3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibilities for his/her upward mobility.

H3c: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

H4b: The higher the employee's perceived opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

The regression equation used to estimate the path coefficient was simply an additive one, as indicated by the following equation:

$$y' = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 \dots$$

Because we were interested in testing the interaction of career stage (number of years in labor force and age) with educational attainment, occupational achievement level, self-direction, and perceived possibility for upward mobility as a causal effect on self-esteem, a different equation was required. The equation testing for interaction effects in the multiple regression analysis assumed the following form:



M2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater the perceived possibility of his/her upward mobility.

M2b: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

M3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more he/she will be self-directed at work.

M3b: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher the perceived possibility of his/her upward mobility.



$$y' = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_1X_2$$

where  $b_3X_1X_2$  refers to the interaction term.

Twelve path coefficients were calculated to ascertain the causal influence of the independent (exogenous) variables on the dependent (endogenous) variables in the model. The endogenous variable could be an exogenous variable at the same time for one or more other variables, as can be seen in Figure 3. For example, educational attainment was an endogenous variable to socioeconomic status, and also an exogenous variable for occupational achievement level, self-direction, upward mobility, and self-esteem. The ten path coefficients in the model are:  $P_{21}$ ,  $P_{31}$ ,  $P_{41}$ ,  $P_{52}$ ,  $P_{62}$ ,  $P_{43}$ ,  $P_{53}$ ,  $P_{63}$ ,  $P_{64}$ , and  $P_{65}$ . "P" is the symbol for the path coefficient, and the two subscripts refer to the effect (or the independent variable) in the first one and to the cause (or the dependent variable) in the second. The only paths with a strong additive path coefficient at the 0.05 level of significance were  $P_{21}$ ,  $P_{32}$ ,  $P_{43}$ , and  $P_{64}$ . The other path coefficients were too small to be statistically significant. The above mentioned four path coefficients sustained the following hypotheses, and indicated a direct effect among the variables in each of them:

H1a: The higher the employee's socioeconomic background, the higher will be his/her educational attainment.



$$y' = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_1X_2$$

where  $b_3X_1X_2$  refers to the interaction term.

Twelve path coefficients were calculated to ascertain the causal influence of the independent (exogenous) variables on the dependent (endogenous) variables in the model. The endogenous variable could be an exogenous variable at the same time for one or more

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an endogenous variable to educational attainment.

Figure 3 shows the causal model for the study.



H2a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.

H4a: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

2. The relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The finding for these four hypotheses indicated that the socioeconomic status of origin of the family had a very small indirect effect on self-esteem through the following order: socioeconomic status  $\rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  educational attainment  $\rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  occupational achievement level  $\rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  occupational self-direction  $\rightarrow$   $\uparrow$  self-esteem.

The total indirect causal influence of socioeconomic status on self-esteem was estimated by multiplying the four causal paths:  $P_{21} \times P_{32} \times P_{43} \times P_{64} = .410 \times .652 \times .241 \times .516 = 0.033$ .

In regard to the interaction effect, the result of regression analysis, as shown in Tables 5-8, indicated no significant effect of any interaction term on the dependent variable, self-esteem. Since regression analysis identified no significant interaction effect, one would conclude that the relationships between variables in the model were not affected by career stage. Although the four hypotheses (H5a - H5d) that presumably tested the interaction effect were constructed on a theoretical argument and background, the statistical analysis did not show a significant interaction among the variables in



H3a: The higher the level of an employee's educational attainment, the greater will be his/her occupational achievement level.

H3a: The higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the more likely he/she will be self-directed at work.

H3b: The more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem.

The finding for these four hypotheses indicated that

socioeconomic status of the family had a very

small indirect effect on self-esteem through the following

order: self-esteem → self-directed at work → occupational achievement

→ self-esteem.

As shown in Figure 1, the indirect effect of socioeconomic status on self-esteem through the following



Figure 5 and we failed to reject the null hypotheses. We assume that the reason for such results is attributed to one or all of the following:

1. There is no relationship between the variables that were created as an interaction term;

2. The relationship between the interaction term and the dependent variable (self-esteem) was too weak to be detected in a study sample of this size;

3. Although the reliability of the two-item career stage scale was relatively high (0.76), it may not have contained enough items to be an accurate measure of career stage.

It is reasonable to expect a somewhat different result with a larger sample and more precise measurement.

### Conclusion

This research considered the relationship of socioeconomic status of family of origin, educational attainment, and occupational conditions and experiences, such as occupational achievement level, self-direction, and possibility for upward mobility, and how these variables influenced self-esteem.

Based on the statistical findings reported in this research, it has been determined that there was no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and self-esteem. The beta weight for socioeconomic status and self-esteem was  $-.174$ , which is not significant at the



Figure 5 and we failed to reject the null hypotheses. We assume that the reason for such results is attributed to one or all of the following:

1. There is no relationship between the variables that were created as an interaction term;

2. The relationship between the interaction term and the dependent variable (self-esteem) was too weak to be

detected in a study sample of this size;

3. Although the relationship of the two items created stage scale was significant ( $p < .05$ ), it may not have been strong enough to detect in a study of this size.

4. The relationship between the two items created stage scale was not significant ( $p > .05$ ), but it may have been significant in a larger sample.

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0.05 level. This result was consistent with the research proposition that socioeconomic status only indirectly influenced self-esteem through mediating variables, as depicted in the hypothesized causal model.

Moreover, the results of the statistical findings presented in Figure 3 indicate that the path coefficient between socioeconomic background and the subsequent educational attainment was 0.410, with a probability of 0.0000, which is highly significant. Thus, the researcher concluded that there was a significant relationship between socioeconomic status of origin of family and subsequent educational attainment. This finding is a replication of findings by Blau and Duncan (1967); Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972); and Sewell and Hauser (1975), who confirmed the determinant effect of socioeconomic background on educational attainment.

The most interesting finding concerning socioeconomic status, as demonstrated in Figure 3, was that socioeconomic status was only related to its subsequent variables through educational attainment. The direct path coefficients between socioeconomic status and occupational achievement level, and self-direction, are too small, with values of 0.079 and -0.063, respectively, which are not significant at the 0.05 level. Accordingly, the researcher concluded that there was no significant direct relationship between socioeconomic status and occupational achievement level, and occupational



0.05 level. This result was consistent with the research proposition that socioeconomic status only indirectly influenced self-esteem through mediating variables, as depicted in the hypothesized causal model.

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concluded that there is a significant relationship

between socioeconomic background and educational attainment.

The results of the statistical analysis are summarized in Table 1.

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self-direction. This finding did not support the research hypotheses, where we expected a direct path from socioeconomic background to occupational achievement because the latter was assumed to be a consequence of the former, and another direct path from socioeconomic background to occupational self-direction, assuming that socioeconomic background would produce differences in occupational values and experiences. These two theoretical propositions had their foundation on previous research; for example, in the work of Blau and Duncan (1967); Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan (1972); Eckland (1965); and Nachmias (1977), who showed the importance of socioeconomic background for occupational attainment level. Moreover, the research of Kohn and Schooler (1983) and Mortimer and Lorence (1979b) demonstrated the effect of socioeconomic background on occupational self-direction and work autonomy.

These unexpected findings draw our attention to the need for further investigation in another research project, where we would have a larger sample and a more precise and objective measure of self-direction.

Likewise, the fourth hypothesis (4b), which indicated that "the higher the employee's perceived opportunities for upward mobility, the higher will be his/her self-esteem," we reject, based on the statistical findings, because the path coefficient from perceived upward mobility to self-esteem was only 0.002, which is



self-direction. This finding did not support the research hypotheses, where we expected a direct path from socioeconomic background to occupational achievement because the latter was assumed to be a consequence of the former, and another direct path from socioeconomic background to occupational self-direction, assuming that socioeconomic background would produce differences in occupational values and experiences. These two

**Theoretical** research has shown that the relationship between socioeconomic background and occupational self-direction is mediated by occupational values and experiences.

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not significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the researcher concluded that there was no direct relationship between self-esteem and perceived possibility for upward mobility.

One of the most important findings of this study was that Hypothesis 4a, where we proposed that "the more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem," was sustained. The statistical findings (see Figure 3) indicated that the path coefficient related to this hypothesis was 0.510, with a probability of 0.0000, which is highly significant.

In addition, we failed to sustain Hypothesis 3c, where we posited that "the higher the level of an employee's occupational achievement, the higher will be his/her self-esteem." The path coefficient was -0.062, which is not significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the researcher concluded that there was no direct relationship between self-esteem and the target population's occupational achievement level. This finding, which shows that occupational achievement level affects self-esteem only indirectly through self-direction, confirmed Faunce's (1982) propositions, which suggested that research attention should be shifted from looking at the direct association between occupational status and self-esteem to specifying the mechanisms (indirect relationships) which contributed to this association. It also confirmed Kohn and Schooler's (1983) finding that the impact of



not significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the researcher concluded that there was no direct relationship between self-esteem and perceived possibility for upward mobility.

One of the most important findings of this study was that Hypothesis 4a, where we proposed that "the more the employee is self-directed at work, the higher will be his/her self-esteem," was sustained. The statistical

**findings (see Figure 3) indicated that the path**

**coefficient related to Hypothesis 4a (0.10) was**

**probable.**



occupational position on men's psychological functioning was attributable to occupational self-direction.

As a corollary, the findings of this study and their theoretical base contribute to the literatures of social psychology, and occupational and organizational sociology, which advocate that work conditions and experiences tend to affect rather than reflect employees' self-esteem by attesting the importance of the effect of work conditions on the employees' psychological functioning.

Moreover, in contrast to the authors of Work in America, and research by Harvey (1975) and Crites (1976), who assumed without any specification, that work is necessarily a major determinant of employees' self-esteem, the findings of this study specify how work influences self-esteem by emphasizing the importance of work conditions (not work per se), such as occupational self-direction, which condition the effect of work on self-esteem. This finding supports Faunce's (1989) proposition which challenged the common assumption that work necessarily affects self-esteem.

There are two distinct points of difference between this study and Kohn and Schooler's (1983) research. One is that the sample used for this study was much smaller than the national sample used by Kohn and Schooler (1983), who interviewed 3,100 men. The other difference is that Kohn and Schooler (1983) used the two components of self-conception (self-confidence and self-deprecation)



occupational position on men's psychological functioning was attributable to occupational self-direction. As a corollary, the findings of this study and their theoretical base contribute to the literatures of social psychology, and occupational and organizational sociology, which advocate that work conditions and experiences tend to affect rather than reflect employees' self-esteem by attesting the importance of the effect of work conditions on the employees' psychological functioning.

Moreover, in contrast to the authors of Work in America, who have argued that the work environment is a major determinant of self-esteem, the findings of this study suggest that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. For example, in a study of the relationship between self-esteem and occupational position, the findings showed that self-esteem was a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment.

The findings of this study have several implications for research and practice. First, the findings suggest that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. Second, the findings suggest that the work environment is a less important determinant of occupational position than self-esteem. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown that the work environment is a less important determinant of occupational position than self-esteem.

Finally, the findings of this study have several implications for research and practice. First, the findings suggest that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies which have shown that self-esteem is a more important determinant of occupational position than the work environment.



separately to measure self-esteem, whereas in this study the measure was applied as a whole without separating the two components. Despite these two differences, the findings of this study replicate the major findings of Kohn and Schooler (1983), which emphasized the importance of occupational self-direction for employees' self-esteem.

evidence a significant effect of career stage on relations

### Discussion

Before we discuss the findings, it is important to

refer to some of the limitations of this study. First, the measure we used to consider the perceived possibility of upward mobility was clearly subjective in nature. A measure of actual upward mobility may reveal a different result in terms of its effects on self-esteem, and the effect of educational attainment and occupational achievement level on upward mobility.

Second, the constructed measure for self-direction is also subjective in nature. An objective measure of self-direction, such as assessing the nature of the target population's job, is necessary for further research to ensure that the same pattern of results between self-direction and self-esteem is obtained. A point worthy of mention is the consistency between our findings and those of Kohn and Schooler (1983), who used an objective measure for self-direction, adding to the credibility of our construct.



separately to measure self-esteem, whereas in this study the measure was applied as a whole without separating the two components. Despite these two differences, the findings of this study replicate the major findings of Kohn and Schooler (1983), which emphasized the importance of occupational self-direction for employees' self-esteem.

### Discussion

Before we discuss the findings, it is important to refer to the limitations of the study. First, the sample was composed of male employees of a single organization, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study was cross-sectional, which prevents us from making causal inferences. Finally, the study was self-reported, which may lead to common method variance.



Third, although the study sample represents a sufficiently broad range of socioeconomic status of origin and present occupational achievement level (see Tables 2 and 4), it is recommended that further research efforts include a larger sample.

Fourth, although the regression analysis did not evidence a significant effect of career stage on relations between our independent and dependent variables, a more precise measurement of career stage and a larger sample may lead to a significant interaction effect between the interaction term and self-esteem.

The finding that occupational self-direction was the only variable highly associated with self-esteem indicates the importance of self-direction at work. The large path coefficient,  $P_{64} = 0.510$ , indicates the importance of work conditions which facilitate the exercise of occupational self-direction on fostering self-esteem. Self-direction may have this effect because it provides opportunities for perceiving one's self as responsible, competent, and capable of dealing with challenging circumstances. This finding provides strong support for Mortimer and Lorence's (1979b) finding which suggested the importance of work autonomy for adult psychological development; for Kohn and Schooler's (1983) finding that occupational self-direction had a substantial impact upon adult psychological functioning; and for the research of Tharenou (1979), who found that jobs providing autonomy,



Third, although the study sample represents a sufficiently broad range of socioeconomic status of origin and present occupational achievement level (see Tables 2 and 4), it is recommended that further research efforts include a larger sample.

Fourth, although the regression analysis did not evidence a significant effect of career stage on relations between our independent and dependent variables, a more

precise measurement of the independent variables may be required to detect a significant effect.

Finally, the study was limited by the use of a cross-sectional design.

In conclusion, the study suggests that the career stage of individuals is related to their occupational achievement level.

The study also suggests that the career stage of individuals is related to their socioeconomic status of origin.

These findings have important implications for the study of career development.

First, the study suggests that the career stage of individuals is related to their occupational achievement level.

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challenge, and skill were positively associated with global and work-specific self-esteem and competence.

However, the path from socioeconomic background ( $X_1$ ) to occupational self-direction (see Figure 3,  $P_{41}$ ) did not support Kohn and Schooler's (1983) finding that social-class position affected a person's opportunities to exercise occupational self-direction (p. 186). Nor did this path support the work of Mortimer and Lorence (1979b), who found a direct path from family income to work autonomy.

There are two reasons why socioeconomic background may have had less effect on self-direction than the findings reported by Kohn and Schooler (1983). One reason is that two different socioeconomic background measures were used; i.e., Kohn and Schooler employed Hollingshead's (1958) "Index of Social Position," whereas this study used Duncan's "Socioeconomic Index." The second reason is that the theoretical model employed in this study mainly represents the status attainment model with addition of self-esteem as the outcome variable and self-direction as an intervening variable. This differs from Kohn and Schooler's (1983) study, which used non-status attainment related variables such as social orientation and parents' values. One or both of these reasons may have caused the conflicting results between the two studies.

Likewise, the negative and insignificant path from educational attainment ( $X_2$ ) to occupational



challenge, and skill) were positively associated with global and work-specific self-esteem and competence.

However, the results of the regression analysis

showed that the effect of challenge on self-esteem and competence was mediated by skill.



self-direction ( $P_{42}$ ) was incongruent with findings of Kohn and Schooler (1983), who argued that "education provides the intellectual flexibility and breadth of perspective that are essential for self-directed values and orientations" (p. 30). Also, our finding did not support Mortimer and Lorence's (1979b) finding that there was a positive path from educational attainment to work autonomy. It is possible that lack of congruency in these results occurred because of the fact that, in some jobs, employees with a higher level of education may perform a job which by its nature requires high supervision and close instructions. This might have been the case for subjects in the target population of this study who had a higher level of education, although our data do not permit a test of this explanation.

Although the statistical results did not support our initial theory of the positive effect of socioeconomic background and educational attainment on occupational self-direction, as stated in Hypotheses H1c and H2b, this result does not imply that there was not any kind of relationship, only that there was no direct effect or relationship. On the other hand, our finding indicated that socioeconomic background and educational attainment influenced self-direction indirectly, in the following way:

$\uparrow$  socioeconomic status  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  educational attainment  
 $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  occupational achievement level  $\longrightarrow$   $\uparrow$  occupational self-direction.



self-direction ( $P_{12}$ ) was incongruent with findings of Kohn and Schooler (1983), who argued that "education provides the intellectual flexibility and breadth of perspective that are essential for self-directed values and orientations" (p. 30). Also, our finding did not support Mortimer and Lorenz's (1979) finding that there was a positive path from educational attainment to work autonomy. It is possible that lack of congruency in these

results occurred due to the fact that the sample

was composed of high school seniors

and not a more diverse group of individuals



### Recommendations

As a result of the literature review and the conclusions reached in this research, the following recommendations are offered.

Recommendations Resulting from the Literature Review

1. Since upward mobility is assumed to be a very salient goal in the work setting, additional research exploring how upward mobility affects employees' self-esteem should be conducted.

2. Since researchers in the area of social psychology have used two aspects of self-perception (self-concept and self-esteem) interchangeably, and since the two aspects are interrelated, researchers should differentiate between the use of the terms "self-concept" and "self-esteem." Self-concept of ability in the occupational role (such as seeing oneself as a good sociologist or psychologist) is, for example, a different variable from self-esteem and might have a different relationship with variables in the model used in this study. Global self-esteem is a general assessment of self, self-concept of ability is an assessment of performance in a specific role, and general self-concept is purely descriptive. Self-concept of ability in a specific role may influence global self-esteem but we also, then, need to examine the determinants of self-concept of role-specific ability. Research



Recommendations

As a result of the literature review and the conclusions reached in this research, the following recommendations are offered.

Recommendations Resulting from the Literature Review

1. Since upward mobility is assumed to be a very

salient goal in the work setting, additional research exploring how job mobility affects employees'

self-esteem is needed.

2. The relationship between job mobility and self-esteem

needs to be explored in more detail.

3. The



concerning the differences in the sources of "self-esteem" and "self-concept" should be conducted.

3. In addition to measuring global self-esteem, researchers should also consider measuring specific task self-esteem. Such a measure would assess specific experiences and feelings of competence pertaining to the work setting.

#### Recommendations Resulting from the Findings and Conclusions of This Study

1. Although our sample represented a sufficiently broad range of socioeconomic status of origin and present occupational achievement level, it is recommended that this study be replicated with a larger sample.

2. This study should be duplicated with a more objective and precise measure of upward mobility.

3. Since this study showed that the socioeconomic background had less effect on self-direction than reported by Kohn and Schooler (1983), who used Hollingshead's "Index of Social Position" to measure socioeconomic background, it is recommended that this study be replicated comparing various socioeconomic background measures and various measures of self-direction. This may reveal a different result in the effect of socioeconomic background on self-direction.

4. It is recommended that this study be replicated using a self-investment measure as a component of an interaction term with each of the independent variables



concerning the differences in the sources of "self-esteem" and "self-concept" should be conducted.

3. In addition to measuring global self-esteem, researchers should also consider measuring specific self-esteem. Such a measure would assess specific experiences and feelings of competence pertaining to the work setting.

Recommendations for Further Research  
Findings and Conclusions



educational attainment, occupational achievement level,  
and perceived possibility for upward mobility).



educational attainment, occupational achievement level,  
and perceived possibility for upward mobility).



## APPENDIX







U.S. Government Form

Title, or name is \_\_\_\_\_  
on a survey being done by the Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
The survey is part of a study of \_\_\_\_\_  
United States will be interviewed. \_\_\_\_\_

who have been \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX A  
Questionnaire







M.S.U. Occupational Survey

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am working on a survey being done by the Department of Sociology at Michigan State. The survey is part of a study of occupations in which people all over the United States will be interviewed. You are one of the people here in Lansing who have been selected to be interviewed. The procedure for selecting people is a scientific one designed to produce a representative sample so we really need your cooperation. It will not take much of your time. Your answers will be strictly confidential and, in fact, your name won't even be put on the answer sheet.

1. First of all, we would like some information about your job and work experience. What is your present job? (GET SPECIFIC JOB TITLE)

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

- b. What do you do on that job? What are some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. How long have you been in that job? (GET YEAR AT WHICH CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT ON THIS JOB BEGAN)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Year)

2. Now beginning with the job you had just before your present one, we would like to know what jobs you have had since leaving school. We would like to know about changes in employers as well as changes in jobs for the same employer. What was the full-time job you had just before the one you have now?

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)



U.S.U. Occupational Survey

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am working  
 on a survey being done by the Department of Sociology at Michigan State.  
 The survey is part of a study of occupations in which people all over the  
 United States will be interviewed. You are one of the people here in Lansing  
 who have been selected to be interviewed. The procedure for selecting people



b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)  
 d. During what years were you on that job?

d. During what years were you in that job?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Years)

3. What jobs did you have before that one?

(CONTINUE WITH OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY UNTIL FIRST FULL-TIME JOB AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL IS REACHED. NOTE ANY PERIODS OF ONE YEAR OR LONGER OUT OF THE LABOR FORCE AS A RESULT OF UNEMPLOYMENT, ILLNESS, RETURN TO SCHOOL, MILITARY SERVICE, ETC.)

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Job Title)

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_

d. During what years were you on that job?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Years)

\* \* \* \* \*

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Job Title)

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(MENTIONMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_

d. Did you have any other jobs? What were some of your duties?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

---

d. During what years were you on that job?

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

(Years)

---

\* \* \* \* \*

a.

(Job Title)

---

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

---



---

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

---

d. During what years were you on that job?

(Years)

---

\* \* \* \* \*

a.

(Job Title)

---

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

---



---

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

---

d. During what years were you on that job?

(Years)

---







a. \_\_\_\_\_ (Job Title)

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

d. During what years were you on that job?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Years)

\* \* \* \* \*

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

b. What did you do on that job? What were some of your duties?

c. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

d. During what years were you on that job?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Years)

4. Now we would like to find out a little about the jobs of members of your family. What was your father's occupation at the time you left high school?

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

b. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)







c. Was that the kind of job he had most of his life? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Yes (Go to Question 5)

(2) No

IF NO:

What kind of job did he have most of the time?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

(ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Was your mother employed at the time you left high school? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Yes

(2) No

IF YES:

a. What kind of job did she have? \_\_\_\_\_

(Job Title)

b. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_

IF NO:

Was she ever employed full-time?

(1) Yes

a. What kind of job did she have most of the time she was employed?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

b. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(2) No (GO TO QUESTION 6)



Q. Was that the first time you had met him? (Circled one)

(1) Yes or Question 2

(2) No

(3) Yes

That kind of job did he have most of the time?

(4) Yes

(5) No



6. Are you:

\_\_\_\_\_ married? (GO TO 6A)

\_\_\_\_\_ single? (GO TO 7)

\_\_\_\_\_ divorced? (GO TO 6B)

\_\_\_\_\_ Widowed? (GO TO 6B)

6A - MARRIED

MALE INTERVIEWEES

a. Is your wife employed?

(1) Yes

(1) What kind of job does she have?

\_\_\_\_\_ (Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

(3) Is that the kind of job she has most of the time?

Yes (GO TO b.)

No What kind of job does she have most of the time?

(2) No (GO TO b.)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Job Title)

b. What kind of job did your father-in-law have most of his life?

(1)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

FEMALE INTERVIEWEES

a. What kind of job does your husband have?

(1)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)



6. Are you:

Married (GO TO 6A) \_\_\_\_\_

Single (GO TO 7) \_\_\_\_\_

Divorced (GO TO 6B) \_\_\_\_\_

Widowed (GO TO 6B) \_\_\_\_\_

6A - MARRIED

NAME INTERVIEWED

2. Name of wife

1.



(3) Is that the kind of job he has most of the time?

Yes (GO TO b.)

No What kind of job does he have most of the time?

(Job Title)

b. What kind of job did your father-in-law have most of his life?

(1)

(Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

#### 6B - DIVORCED OR WIDOWED

#### MALE INTERVIEWEES

a. Was your wife employed?

(1) Yes

(1) What kind of job did she have?

(Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

(3) Is that the kind of job she had most of the time?

Yes (GO TO b.)

No What kind of job did she have most of the time?

(2) No (GO TO b.)

(Job Title)

b. What kind of job did your father-in-law have most of his life?

(1)

(Job Title)

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)



(C) Is that the kind of job he has most of the time?

Yes (GO TO 2.)

No (GO TO 1.)

(JOB TYPE)

D. What kind of job did your father-in-law have most of his life?

(1)

(JOB TYPE)

(2) (FATHER'S WORK TYPE)



## FEMALE INTERVIEWEES

a. What kind of job did your husband have?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) (Job Title) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

(3) Is that the kind of job he had most of the time?

Yes (GO TO b.)

No What kind of job did he have most of the time?

(Job Title) \_\_\_\_\_

b. What kind of job did your father-in-law have most of his life?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) (Job Title) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

7. How about the other members of your family? Do you have any (ASK ABOUT EACH RELATIVE BELOW) who are employed full time?

(IF YES)

a. What kind of job does he (she) work at most of the time?

(Job Title) \_\_\_\_\_

b. (ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL PROBE)

A. Brothers who are employed?

(1) Yes

(2) No (Go TO B.)

Job Title

Probe

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_



## FEMALE INTERVIEWEES

2. What kind of job did your husband have?

(1)

(Job title)



B. Sisters who are employed?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO C.)

	<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Probe</u>
(1)			
(2)			
(3)			
(4)			
(5)			

C. Brothers-in-law who are employed?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO D.)

(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	

D. Sisters-in-law who are employed?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO QUESTION 8)

(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	



B. Sisters who are employed:

(1) for

(2) for (up to c.)

Brother

Job Title

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)



8. Now I would like to have you think about the five people with whom you talk most often while you are at work. I don't want to know their names, but I would like to know their occupations. What jobs do they have?

Job Title

Probe

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_

9. During a typical day on the job how often do you talk to your immediate supervisor? (READ AND CIRCLE ANSWER)

- (1) 5 or 6 times a day or more.
- (2) around 3 or 4 times a day.
- (3) once or twice a day.
- (4) less than once a day.

10. During a typical week on the job how often do you talk to persons above your immediate supervisor? (READ AND CIRCLE ANSWER)

- (1) 5 or 6 times a week or more.
- (2) around 3 or 4 times a week.
- (3) once or twice a week.
- (4) less than once a week.

11. Now please think about the five people outside your family with whom you most often get together socially during evenings or weekends.

- a. What are their jobs? If any are not employed, I would like to know that, too.



2. Now I want title to have you tell about the five people who were  
you talk most often while you are at work. I don't want to know their  
names, but I would like to know their occupations. What jobs do they

hold?

Job Title

Trade

(7)

(7)

(7)

(7)



12. Are there any (other) neighbors you talk to very often?

(1) Yes

(IF ANY ARE NOT EMPLOYED, WRITE IN "NE")

(2) No (GO TO 12.)

Job Title

Probe

(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	

b. Do you work with any of these five people?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO C.)

(IF YES)

Which ones?

(WRITE IN NUMBERS FROM 11a)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Numbers)

c. Are any of these five people your neighbors?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO 12.)

(IF YES)

Which ones?

(WRITE IN NUMBERS FROM 11a)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Numbers)



(IF ANY ARE NOT EMPLOYED, WRITE IN "NE")

Probe

Job Title

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

P. Do you know any other persons who are or have been employed by the same employer as the persons listed above?

(If so, list them below.)

(If not, write "None")



12. Are there any (other) neighbors you talk to very often?

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO 13.)

(IF YES)

(2) What are their jobs?

(3) Job Title

Probe

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

13. How many years have you lived in this house (apartment)?

(WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS)

14. How many years all together have you lived in the Lansing area?

(WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS)

15. We were talking before about the jobs of various members of your family. Aside from your wife (husband) and children, do any of those relatives we were talking about live in the Lansing area? (ASK ABOUT BROTHERS, SISTERS, BROTHERS-IN-LAW, SISTERS-IN-LAW AND FATHERS-IN-LAW)

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO 16.)

(IF YES)

a. Which ones?

(WRITE IN RELATIONSHIP AND OCCUPATION ON NEXT PAGE.)



201

201



- (1) 5 or 6 times a month or more
- (2) around 3 or 4 times a month
- (3) once or twice a month
- (4) less than once a month

(WRITE IN CODE NUMBER INDICATING FREQUENCY BELOW)

we feel about ourselves. It is not a measure of how we feel about our  
selves. It is, instead, a measure of how much our self affects how we  
feel about ourselves. For some people, success at work is the only  
thing that counts, while for others it doesn't make any difference at all.  
A person for whom work is the most important thing in life and who would  
have to be successful at work in order to feel good or happy would  
be at the extreme left end of this scale. At the other end, a person  
of the scale would represent a person who would rather work as being  
more important than work and who does not need to succeed at work in  
order to feel that he is a success. If the number of the scale were  
100, 100 to 1, it would mean that the person would

(READ RESPONSE CODE AND CIRCLE ANSWER)

- (1) 5 or 6 times a month or more
- (2) around 3 or 4 times a month
- (3) once or twice a month
- (4) less than once a month







17. How often do you talk to people whose occupational status is any different from yours - either higher or lower? Would you say it was:

(READ RESPONSE CODE AND CIRCLE ANSWER)

(1) 5 or 6 times a month or more

(2) around 3 or 4 times a month

(3) once or twice a month

(4) less than once a month

18. Here is a card with a scale from 1 to 10 on it. The scale represents the range in the extent to which success or failure at work affect how we feel about ourselves. It is not a measure of how we feel about ourselves. It is, instead, a measure of how much our work affects how we feel about ourselves. For some people, success at work is the only thing that counts, while for others it doesn't make any difference at all. A person for whom work is the most important thing in life and who would have to be successful at work in order to think well of himself would be at the extreme left end of this scale. (POINT) The other end (POINT) of the scale would represent a person who regards other things as being more important than work and who does not need to succeed at work in order to feel that he is a success. Is the meaning of the scale clear? (IF YES, GO TO a. IF NO, REPEAT INSTRUCTIONS)
- \_\_\_\_\_ a. What point on this scale (MOVE FINGER BACK AND FORTH ALONG SCALE) shows the importance of work to how you feel about yourself?
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. At what point would you say you were five years ago?
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. How do you think you will feel five years from now?
- (NOTE: IF INTERVIEWEE WAS NOT EMPLOYED FIVE YEARS AGO, WRITE "NA" IN b. IF INTERVIEWEE DOES NOT INTEND TO BE EMPLOYED FIVE YEARS FROM NOW, WRITE "NA" IN c.)

19. Now we would like to know where you think some of your friends would fall on this scale. You may not know exactly, of course, but we would like to know how you think they might answer. You gave me the occupations of five people outside your family with whom you most often get together



13. How often do you talk to people whose occupational status is any different from yours - either higher or lower? Would you say it was

(READ RESPONSE CARD AND CIRCLE ANSWER)

(1) 2 or 3 times a month or more

(2) around 1 or 2 times a month

(3) once or twice a month



socially during evenings or weekends. (TURN BACK TO QUESTION 11.)  
 What point on the scale do you think shows the importance of work  
 for how your friend who is a (READ OCCUPATION OF PERSONS LISTED FIRST  
 IN QUESTION 11.) would feel about himself or herself? (WRITE IN  
 OCCUPATION AND SCALE NUMBER. REPEAT FOR EACH OF THE FIVE PERSONS  
 LISTED) How about your friend who is a ...

	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Job Title</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Scale Number</u>
(1)				
(2)				
(3)				
(4)				
(5)				

20. We would also like to know how you think some of your relatives might answer this question.

(IF EVER MARRIED, ASK a. IF SINGLE, GO TO b.)

a. How about your wife (husband)? What point on the scale do you think shows the importance of work for how she (he) feels (felt) about herself (himself)?

(NOTE: IF SPOUSE IS OR WAS NOT EMPLOYED, SAY "IF SHE [HE] WERE EMPLOYED, HOW DO YOU GUESS SHE [HE] WOULD ANSWER [WOULD HAVE ANSWERED]?")

(WRITE IN SCALE SCORE)

\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Scale Score

(IF INTERVIEWEE HAS RELATIVES OUTSIDE IMMEDIATE FAMILY LIVING IN LANSING AREA - SEE QUESTION 15 - ASK b. IF NOT, GO TO c.)

b. You said you had some relatives living in the Lansing area. (TURN BACK TO QUESTION 15.) What point on the scale do you think shows the importance of work for how your (READ RELATIONSHIP AND, IF NECESSARY, OCCUPATION) would feel about himself (herself)?







(WRITE IN RELATIONSHIP, OCCUPATION AND SCALE SCORE FOR RELATIVE LISTED FIRST IN QUESTION 15. REPEAT FOR EACH RELATIVE LISTED.)

How about your...

Relationship

Occupation

Scale Score


- c. How do you think your father would have answered this question around the time you were leaving high school? What point on the scale would you guess shows the importance of work for how he felt about himself?

(WRITE IN SCALE SCORE)

Father's Scale Score \_\_\_\_\_

21. If two people were more or less alike in most ways but were at opposite ends of that scale, which one do you think you would like best? (READ AND CIRCLE)

- (1) a person for whom work is most important for feelings about themselves.
- (2) a person for whom other things are most important for feelings about themselves







22. How much difference do you think their views about work would make in your liking of these two people? Would you say they would be: (READ AND CIRCLE)
- (1) very important
  - (2) somewhat important
  - (3) not very important
  - (4) not at all important

Now we have a few more questions about your experiences at work.

23. Are there others where you work who have more or less the same job as yours?
- (1) Yes
  - (2) No (GO TO b.)

(IF YES)

- a. Is it easy to tell whether or not you are doing a better or worse job than they do? That is, is it easy or hard to compare your work and the work of others? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)
- (1) Easy
  - (2) Hard

- b. Are there differences in how well people do your job or is everyone's performance about the same? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)
- (1) Differences
  - (2) About the same

24. How often are evaluations of how well you do your job made by the person who supervises your work? Would you say that happens: (READ AND CIRCLE)
- (1) Very often
  - (2) Often
  - (3) Sometimes
  - (4) Seldom
  - (5) Very seldom







27. How about the people you work with? Do they use the right criteria or the right basis when they evaluate your work? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

25. How about the people you work with? How often do you compare or evaluate each other's work? Would **you say** that happens: (READ AND CIRCLE) ~~No~~

(IF NO) (1) Very often

a. (2) Often with the criteria or basis they use?

(3) Sometimes

(4) Seldom

(5) Very seldom

26. Do you think your supervisor uses the right criteria or the right basis when he evaluates your work? That is, does he evaluate you on the right things? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

(1) Yes (GO TO 27)

(2) No

(IF NO)

a. What criteria or basis should he use?

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b. What criteria or basis does he use?

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c. How hard would it be to get him to use the right criteria? Would you say it would be: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very hard to do

(2) Hard to do

(3) Somewhat hard to do







27. How about the people you work with? Do they use the right criteria or the right basis when they evaluate your work? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

(1) Yes (GO TO 28)

(2) No (GO TO 31)

(IF NO)

a. What is wrong with the criteria or basis they use?

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b. How hard would it be to get them to use the right criteria? Would you say it would be: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very hard to do

(2) Hard to do

(3) Somewhat hard to do

28. Would you describe your job as a competitive one? That is, would you say it was: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very competitive

(2) Somewhat competitive

(3) Not very competitive

(4) Not at all competitive

29. Do you plan to stay in the job you have now until you retire? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

(1) Yes (GO TO 30)

(2) No

(IF NO)

a. What job do you plan to change to? \_\_\_\_\_  
(job title)

b. Why do you want to make this change?



27. How about the people you work with? Do they use the right criteria on the right basis when they evaluate your work? (CIRCLE RESPONSE)

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Don't Know

28. How

(1) Yes

What is wrong with the criteria they use?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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30. Would you say the job you have now is the best job you ever had?

(CIRCLE RESPONSE)

(1) Yes (GO TO 31)

(2) No *Somewhat certain*

(IF NO)

What job was better?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

What made it better?

31. What would have to happen for you to feel that you were more successful at work? PROBE: Anything else?

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32. How hard would you say it would be for you to get promoted or to move up in the organization where you work? Would you say it would be: (READ AND CIRCLE)

a. 1. Very hard to do

2. Hard to do

3. Somewhat hard to do

b. What would the next step up be?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Job Title)

(NOTE: FOR PERSONS ALREADY AT TOP OF ORGANIZATION, ASK, "IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WOULD REPRESENT A STEP UP TO YOU?")



100  
100



c. How certain do you feel about your chances of moving up? Would you say you were: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very certain

(2) Certain

(3) Somewhat certain

(4) Uncertain

(5) Very uncertain

d. How important is it to you to move up? Would you say it was: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very important

(2) Somewhat important

(3) Slightly important

(4) Not at all important

33. In general would you say you have already achieved most of the goals you set for yourself in your work life or are there still things you feel it is important for you to accomplish? How satisfied are you with what you have accomplished? Would you say you were: (READ AND CIRCLE)

(1) Very satisfied

(2) Satisfied

(3) Dissatisfied

(4) Very dissatisfied

34. Now we would like to know how much you agree or disagree with some statements about work. Please try to think about your responses as though you were giving them to yourself rather than to me or to anyone else.

(Instruction "A") Here is a card with numbered responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. I will read the statement and you tell me which number on the card represents your response. While all of the statements are somewhat similar, each contains something different. Please think about the statements carefully before responding. (PUT CHECKS IN SPACES)



1875-1876



(Instruction "B") Here is the list of statements. The columns following each statement contain responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. While all of the statements are somewhat similar, each contains something different. Please read the statements carefully and put a check mark in the column indicating how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

NOTE: ALTERNATE INSTRUCTION "A" AND INSTRUCTION "B" PROCEDURE. USE "A" PROCEDURE IN FIRST INTERVIEW, "B" PROCEDURE IN SECOND INTERVIEW, AND SO ON. CIRCLE BELOW WHICH PROCEDURE USED.

- (1) Instruction "A"
- (2) Instruction "B"







	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. When I am through work at the end of the day, I hardly ever think about whether I did a good or a bad job.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. Doing my job well increases my feeling of self esteem.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. I sometimes feel uncomfortable when talking to people whose jobs carry more prestige than mine.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
e. I am very much involved personally in my work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
f. The type of work I do is important to me when I think about how successful I am in life.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
g. The most important things that happen to me involve my job.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
h. I think members of my family feel proud when they tell people what I do for a living.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
i. I live, eat and breathe my job.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
j. When I do my work well, it gives me a feeling of accomplishment.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
k. Most things in life are more important than work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
l. I sometimes feel ashamed to tell people what kind of work I do.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
m. I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



a. The major satisfaction  
in my life  
is my job.

Strongly  
Disagree

Disagree

Neither  
Agree nor  
Disagree

Agree

Strongly  
Agree



	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
n. I would be happy to have my children do the kind of work I do.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
o. I'm really a perfectionist about my work.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
p. When I make a mistake or do something badly at work, it sometimes bothers me for days.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
q. To me, my work is only a small part of what I do.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
r. If I could not do my job well, I would feel that I was a failure as a person.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
s. When I perform my job well, it contributes to my personal growth and development.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
t. I feel depressed when I fail at something connected with my job.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
The following statements do not necessarily refer to work.					
(1) I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(3) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(6) I take a positive attitude toward myself.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



<p>1 Strongly Agree</p>	<p>2 Agree</p>	<p>3 Neither Agree nor Disagree</p>	<p>4 Disagree</p>	<p>5 Strongly Disagree</p>
<p>1. I would be happy to have my children do the kind of work I do.</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>2. I'm really a perfectionist about my work.</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>3. When I make a mistake or do something badly at work, it embarrasses me for days.</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>4. To me, my work is only "work" and I don't like it.</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>
<p>5. If I had my choice, I would like to do something else.</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p>



	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(9) I certainly feel useless at times.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(10) At times I think I am no good at all.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____



Handwritten  
text in the  
margin

(1)



Now, to finish up, we need a little more information about you.

35. How old were you on your last birthday? (WRITE IN YEARS) \_\_\_\_\_  
(years)

36. How many years of school did you have? (CIRCLE)

6 7 8 9 10 11 12      1 2 3 4      M.A.    Ph.D.

37. Have you had any additional job training? Do you attend:

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO 38)

(IF YES)

What sort of training was it?

How long did it last?

38. How many years of school did your father have? (CIRCLE)

6 7 8 9 10 11 12      1 2 3 4      M.A.    Ph.D.

39. Do you have any children? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Yes

(2) No (GO TO 40)

(IF YES)

a. What are their ages? (RECORD BELOW)

b. Which ones, if any, are still in school? (IF IN SCHOOL) What year are they in school? (RECORD BELOW)

c. Which ones, if any, are employed full-time - not just during school vacation? (IF EMPLOYED FULL-TIME) What is their job? (RECORD JOB TITLE BELOW)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Year in School</u>	(or)	<u>Job Title</u>
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____
_____	_____		_____







40. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations? Do you belong to any like these? (GIVE CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS CARD) (CHECK BELOW ANY BELONGED TO AND THEN ASK FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING EACH ORGANIZATION MENTIONED.)

a. How often do you attend the regular meetings? Do you attend:

(WRITE IN CODE NUMBER BELOW)

- (1) All of them
- (2) Most of them
- (3) Some of them
- (4) None of them

b. Are you now or have you ever been an officer in the organization?  
(IF YES, PUT CHECK MARK IN SPACE)

<u>Organizations</u>	<u>Belong</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Office</u>
Church and church related			
Social or Fraternal			
Union			
Professional			
Political			
Neighborhood			
Civic			
School related			
Cultural			
Other			

41. Approximately what was your individual gross income last year?

(Annual Income)

42. Approximately what was your total family income last year?

(Annual Income)



40. Do you belong to any club or organization? Do you belong to any like these? (GIVE CLUB AND ORGANIZATION NAME) (CHECK BELOW ANY BELONGED TO AND TICK ASK FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING EACH ORGANIZATION MENTIONED.)

a. How often do you attend the regular meetings? Do you attend (WRITE IN CODE NUMBER BELOW)

- (1) All of them  
(2) Most of them



(NOTE: IF REFUSAL, ASK) Would you mind telling me if your individual gross income was above or below \$18,000 (IN C.T. 31.02) \$11,000 (IN C.T. 20)? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Above

1. Length of interview in minutes \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Below

2. Comments regarding interview (was interviewee cooperative; any questions

How about your total family income? Was it above or below \$18,000 (IN C.T. 31.02) \$11,000 (IN C.T. 20)? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Above

(2) Below

Thank you for your cooperation. Are there any comments you would like to make or information you would care to add?

I think we have all the information we need for the study but, in case we need to contact you again, could I have your telephone number please?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Telephone Number)



(NOTE: IF REFUSED, ASK: Would you mind telling me if your individual gross income was above or below \$18,000 (IN C.T. 31.02) \$11,000 (IN C.T.

30)? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Above

(2) Below

How about your total family income? Was it above or below \$18,000 (IN

C.T. 31.02) \$11,000 (IN C.T. 30)? (CIRCLE ONE)

(1) Above

(2) Below

Thank you for your cooperation. We appreciate your help in this project.



Interviewer Response Sheet

(PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IMMEDIATELY AFTER INTERVIEW)

1. Length of interview in minutes \_\_\_\_\_
2. Comments regarding interview (was interviewee cooperative; any questions where wording seemed awkward or inappropriate; any questions which interviewee had trouble understanding, etc.)

3. Conditions of interview  
(Anyone else present? Any interruptions? etc.)

4. Address where interview took place: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Other addresses tried and reasons for failure to conduct interview

Addresses

Reasons not interviewed

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Sex of interviewee

1. Male
2. Female

7. Race of interviewee

1. White
2. Black
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Other







# Socioeconomic Index for Occupations in the Detailed Classification of the Bureau of the Census: 1950

## Unemployed, and related workers

Unemployed and related workers	74
Actors and actresses	67
Authors, poets, and musicians	
Artists	
Artists, writers, and composers	
Artists	

## Occupations

Occupations	79
Telegraphers	74
Personnel and related occupations	84
Physicians	82
Physicians	80
Physicians	82
Physicians	82

## APPENDIX B

# Socioeconomic Index for Occupations in the Detailed Classification of the Bureau of the Census: 1950







Socioeconomic Index for Occupations in the Detailed  
Classification of the Bureau of the Census: 1950\*

Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index	Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
<i>Professional, technical, and kindred workers</i>		Optometrists	79
Accountants and auditors	78	Osteopaths	96
Actors and actresses	60	Personnel and labor-relations workers	84
Airplane pilots and navigators	79	Pharmacists	82
Architects	90	Photographers	50
Artists and art teachers	67	Physicians and surgeons	92
Athletes	52	Radio operators	69
Authors	76	Recreation and group workers	67
Chemists	79	Religious workers	56
Chiropractors	75	Social and welfare workers, except group	64
Clergymen	52	Social scientists	81
College presidents, professors, and instructors (n. e. c.)	84	Sports instructors and officials	64
Dancers and dancing teachers	45	Surveyors	48
Dentists	96	Teachers (n. e. c.)	72
Designers	73	Technicians, medical and dental	48
Dieticians and nutritionists	39	Technicians, testing	53
Draftsmen	67	Technicians (n. e. c.)	62
Editors and reporters	82	Therapists and healers (n. e. c.)	58
Engineers, technical	85	Veterinarians	78
Aeronautical	87	Professional, technical, and kindred workers (n. e. c.)	65
Chemical	90		
Civil	84	<i>Farmers and farm managers</i>	
Electrical	84	Farmers (owners and tenants)	14
Industrial	86	Farm managers	36
Mechanical	82		
Metallurgical, and metallurgists	82	<i>Managers, officials, and proprietors, exc. farm</i>	
Mining	85	Buyers and department heads, store	72
Not elsewhere classified	87	Buyers and shippers, farm products	33
Entertainers (n. e. c.)	31	Conductors, railroad	58
Farm- and home-management advisors	83	Credit men	74
Foresters and conservationists	48	Floormen and floor managers, store	50
Funeral directors and embalmers	59	Inspectors, public administration	63
Lawyers and judges	93	Federal public administration and postal service	72
Librarians	60	State public administration	54
Musicians and music teachers	52	Local public administration	56
Natural scientists (n. e. c.)	80	Managers and superintendents, building	32
Nurses, professional	46	Officers, pilots, pursers, and engineers, ship	54
Nurses, student professional	51	Officials and administrators (n. e. c.), public administration	66
		Federal public administration and postal service	84
		State public administration	66
		Local public administration	54
		Officials, lodge, society, union, etc.	58
		Postmasters	60

\*SOURCE: Otis D. Duncan, "A Socioeconomic Index for All Occupations." In Albert J. Reiss, Jr. (ed.), *Occupations and Social Status*, pp. 109-138. New York: The Free Press, 1961.







Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index	Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
Purchasing agents and buyers (n. e. c.)	77	Motor vehicles and accessories retailing	70
Managers, officials, and proprietors (n. e. c.)—salaried	68	Gasoline service stations	33
Construction	60	Eating and drinking places	37
Manufacturing	79	Hardware, farm implement, and building material, retail	61
Transportation	71	Other retail trade	49
Telecommunications, and utilities and sanitary services	76	Banking and other finance	85
Wholesale trade	70	Insurance and real estate	76
Retail trade	56	Business services	67
Food- and dairy-products stores, and milk retailing	50	Automobile repair services and garages	36
General merchandise and five- and ten-cent stores	68	Miscellaneous repair services	34
Apparel and accessories stores	69	Personal services	41
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	68	All other industries (incl. not reported)	49
Motor vehicles and accessories retailing	65	<i>Clerical and kindred workers</i>	
Gasoline service stations	31	Agents (n. e. c.)	68
Eating and drinking places	39	Attendants and assistants, library	44
Hardware, farm implement, and building material, retail	64	Attendants, physician's and dentist's office	38
Other retail trade	59	Baggagemen, transportation	25
Banking and other finance	85	Bank tellers	52
Insurance and real estate	84	Bookkeepers	51
Business services	80	Cashiers	44
Automobile repair services and garages	47	Collectors, bill and account	39
Miscellaneous repair services	53	Dispatchers and starters, vehicle	40
Personal services	50	Express messengers and railway mail clerks	67
All other industries (incl. not reported)	62	Mail-carriers	53
Managers, officials, and proprietors (n. e. c.)—self-employed	48	Messengers and office boys	28
Construction	51	Office-machine operators	45
Manufacturing	61	Shipping and receiving clerks	22
Transportation	43	Stenographers, typists, and secretaries	61
Telecommunications and utilities and sanitary services	44	Telegraph messengers	22
Wholesale trade	59	Telegraph operators	47
Retail trade	43	Telephone operators	45
Food- and dairy-products stores, and milk retailing	33	Ticket, station, and express agents	60
General merchandise and five-and-ten-cent stores	47	Clerical and kindred workers (n. e. c.)	44
Apparel and accessories stores	65	<i>Sales Workers</i>	
Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores	59	Advertising agents and salesmen	66
		Auctioneers	40
		Demonstrators	35
		Hucksters and peddlers	8
		Insurance agents and brokers	66
		Newsboys	27
		Real-estate agents and brokers	62



Section	Percentage of Total	Section	Percentage of Total
Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	27	Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	27
Manufacturing	26	Manufacturing	26
Construction	25	Construction	25
Proprietors (n.e.c.)-related	24	Proprietors (n.e.c.)-related	24
Managers, officials, and	23	Managers, officials, and	23
Freight agents and buyers (n.e.c.)	22	Freight agents and buyers (n.e.c.)	22
Government, n.e.c.	21	Government, n.e.c.	21
Government, n.e.c.	20	Government, n.e.c.	20
Other retail trade	19	Other retail trade	19
Wholesale trade, n.e.c.	18	Wholesale trade, n.e.c.	18
Food and drinking places	17	Food and drinking places	17
Gasoline service stations	16	Gasoline service stations	16
Motor vehicles and accessories (selling)	15	Motor vehicles and accessories (selling)	15
Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	14	Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	14
Manufacturing	13	Manufacturing	13
Construction	12	Construction	12
Proprietors (n.e.c.)-related	11	Proprietors (n.e.c.)-related	11
Managers, officials, and	10	Managers, officials, and	10
Freight agents and buyers (n.e.c.)	9	Freight agents and buyers (n.e.c.)	9
Government, n.e.c.	8	Government, n.e.c.	8
Government, n.e.c.	7	Government, n.e.c.	7
Other retail trade	6	Other retail trade	6
Wholesale trade, n.e.c.	5	Wholesale trade, n.e.c.	5
Food and drinking places	4	Food and drinking places	4
Gasoline service stations	3	Gasoline service stations	3
Motor vehicles and accessories (selling)	2	Motor vehicles and accessories (selling)	2
Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	1	Transportation, and utilities and telecommunications	1



Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index	Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
Stock and bond salesmen	73	Inspectors (n. e. c.)	41
Salesmen and sales clerks (n. e. c.)	47	Construction	46
Manufacturing	65	Railroads and railway express service	41
Wholesale trade	61	Transport, exc. r.r., communication, and other public util.	45
Retail trade	39	Other industries (incl. not reported)	38
Other industries (incl. not reported)	50	Jewelers, watchmakers, goldsmiths, and silversmiths	36
<i>Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers</i>		Job-setters, metal	28
Bakers	22	Linemen and servicemen, telegraph, telephone, and power	49
Blacksmiths	16	Locomotive engineers	58
Boilermakers	33	Locomotive firemen	45
Bookbinders	39	Loom fixers	10
Brickmasons, stonemasons, and tile-setters	27	Machinists	33
Cabinetmakers	23	Mechanics and repairmen	25
Carpenters	19	Airplane	48
Cement and concrete finishers	19	Automobile	19
Compositors and typesetters	52	Office machine	36
Cranemen, derrickmen, and hoistmen	21	Radio and television	36
Decorators and window-dressers	40	Railroad and car shop	23
Electricians	44	Not elsewhere classified	27
Electrotypers and stereotypers	55	Millers, grain, flour, feed, etc.	19
Engravers, except photoengravers	47	Millwrights	31
Excavating, grading, and road-machinery operators	24	Molders, metal	12
Foremen (n. e. c.)	49	Motion-picture projectionists	43
Construction	40	Opticians, and lens grinders and polishers	39
Manufacturing	53	Painters, construction and maintenance	16
Metal industries	54	Paperhangers	10
Machinery, including electrical	60	Pattern- and model-makers, except paper	44
Transportation equipment	66	Photoengravers and lithographers	64
Other durable goods	41	Piano and organ tuners and repairmen	38
Textiles, textile products, and apparel	39	Plasterers	25
Other nondurable goods		Plumbers and steam-fitters	34
(incl. not specified mfg.)	53	Pressmen and plate printers, printing	49
Railroads and railway express service	36	Rollers and roll hands, metal	22
Transportation, except railroad	45	Roofers and slaters	15
Telecommunications, and utilities and sanitary services	56	Shoemakers and repairers, except factory	12
Other industries (incl. not reported)	44	Stationary engineers	47
Forgemen and hammermen	23	Stone-cutters and stone-carvers	25
Furriers	39	Structural-metal workers	34
Glaziers	26	Tailors and tailoresses	23
Heat treaters, annealers, and temperers	22	Tinsmiths, coppersmiths, and sheet-metal workers	33
Inspectors, scalers, and graders, log and lumber	23	Toolmakers, and die-makers and sellers	50
		Upholsterers	22
		Craftsmen and kindred workers (n. e. c.)	32
		Members of the armed forces	18







Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
<b>Operatives and kindred workers</b>	
Apprentices	35
Auto mechanics	25
Bricklayers and masons	32
Carpenters	31
Electricians	37
Machinists and toolmakers	41
Mechanics, except auto	34
Plumbers and pipe-fitters	33
Building trades (n. e. c.)	29
Metalworking trades (n. e. c.)	33
Printing trades	40
Other specified trades	31
Trade not specified	39
Asbestos and insulation workers	32
Attendants, auto service and parking	19
Blasters and powdermen	11
Boatmen, canalmen, and lock-keepers	24
Brakemen, railroad	42
Bus-drivers	24
Chainmen, rodmen, and axmen, surveying	25
Conductors, bus and street railway	30
Deliverymen and routemen	32
Dressmakers and seamstresses, except factory	23
Dyers	12
Filers, grinders, and polishers, metal	22
Fruit, nut, and vegetable graders and packers, exc. factory	10
Furnacemen, smeltermen, and pourers	18
Heaters, metal	29
Laundry and dry-cleaning operatives	15
Meat-cutters, except slaughter and packing house	29
Milliners	46
Mine operatives and laborers (n. e. c.)	10
Coal mining	2
Crude petroleum and natural gas extraction	38
Mining and quarrying, except fuel	12
Motormen, mine, factory, logging camp, etc.	3
Motormen, street, subway, and elevated railway	34
Oilers and greasers, except auto	15
Painters, except construction and maintenance	18
Photographic-process workers	42
Power-station operators	50
Sailors and deck hands	16
Sawyers	5
Spinners, textile	5

Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
Stationary firemen	17
Switchmen, railroad	44
Taxicab-drivers and chauffeurs	10
Truck- and tractor-drivers	15
Weavers, textile	6
Welders and flame-cutters	24
<b>Operatives and kindred workers (n. e. c.)</b>	18
<b>Manufacturing</b>	17
• Durable goods	
Sawmills, planing mills, and misc. wood products	7
Sawmills, planing mills, and mill work	7
Miscellaneous wood products	9
Furniture and fixtures	9
Stone, clay, and glass products	17
Glass and glass products	23
Cement, and concrete, gypsum, and plaster products	10
Structural clay products	10
Pottery and related products	21
Misc. nonmetallic mineral and stone products	15
Metal industries	16
Primary metal industries	15
Blast furnaces, steel works, and rolling mills	17
Other primary iron and steel industries	12
Primary nonferrous industries	15
Fabricated metal ind. (incl. not spec. metal)	16
Fabricated steel products	16
Fabricated nonferrous metal products	15
Not specified metal industries	14
Machinery, except electrical	22
Agricultural machinery and tractors	21
Office and store machines and devices	31
Miscellaneous machinery	22
Electrical machinery, equipment, and supplies	26
Transportation equipment	23
Motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment	21
Aircraft and parts	34
Ship and boat building and repairing	16
Railroad and misc. transportation equipment	23
Professional and photographic equipment and watches	29







Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio-economic Index	Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio-economic Index
Professional equipment and supplies	23	Leather products, except footwear	14
Photographic equipment and supplies	40	Not specified manufacturing industries	16
Watches, clocks, and clockwork-operated devices	28	Nonmanufacturing industries (incl. not reported)	18
Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	16	Construction	18
Nondurable goods	3	Railroads and railway express service	15
Food and kindred products	16	Transportation, except railroad	23
Meat products	16	Telecommunications, and utilities and sanitary services	21
Dairy products	22	Wholesale and retail trade	17
Canning and preserving fruits, vegetables, and sea foods	9	Business and repair services	19
Grain-mill products	14	Personal services	11
Bakery products	15	Public administration	17
Confectionery and related products	12	All other industries (incl. not reported)	20
Beverage industries	19		
Misc. food preparations and kindred products	11	<i>Private-household workers</i>	
Not specified food industries	19	Housekeepers, private household	19
Tobacco manufactures	2	Living in	10
Textile mill products	6	Living out	21
Knitting mills	21	Laundresses, private household	12
Dyeing and finishing textiles, exc. knit goods	8	Living in	—
Carpets, rugs, and other floor coverings	14	Living out	12
Yarn, thread, and fabric mills	2	Private-household workers (n. e. c.)	7
Miscellaneous textile mill products	10	Living in	12
Apparel and other fabricated textile products	21	Living out	6
Apparel and accessories	22		
Miscellaneous fabricated textile products	17	<i>Service workers, except private household</i>	
Paper and allied products	19	Attendants, hospital and other institution	13
Pulp, paper, and paperboard mills	19	Attendants, professional and personal service (n. e. c.)	26
Paperboard containers and boxes	17	Attendants, recreation and amusement	19
Miscellaneous paper and pulp products	19	Barbers, beauticians, and manicurists	17
Printing, publishing, and allied industries	31	Barbers	19
Chemicals and allied products	20	Boarding- and lodging-house keepers	30
Synthetic fibers	9	Bootblacks	8
Drugs and medicines	26	Charwomen and cleaners	10
Paints, varnishes, and related products	15	Cooks, except private household	15
Miscellaneous chemicals and allied products	23	Counter and fountain workers	17
Petroleum and coal products	51	Elevator operators	10
Petroleum refining	56	Firemen, fire protection	37
Miscellaneous petroleum and coal products	14	Guards, watchmen, and doorkeepers	18
Rubber products	22	Housekeepers and stewards, except private household	31
Leather and leather products	16	Janitors and sextons	9
Leathers tanned, curried, and finished	10	Marshals and constables	21
Footwear, except rubber	9	Midwives	37







Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index	Occupations, by Major Occupation Group	Socio- economic Index
Policemen and detectives	39	Professional and photographic equipment, and watches	11
Government	40	Professional equipment and supplies	10
Private	36	Photographic equipment and supplies	16
Porters	4	Watches, clocks, and clockwork-operated devices	—
Practical nurses	22	Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	12
Sheriffs and bailiffs	34	Nondurable goods	
Ushers, recreation and amusement	25	Food and kindred products	9
Waiters and waitresses	16	Meat products	8
Watchmen (crossing) and bridge-tenders	17	Dairy products	13
Service workers, except private household (n. e. c.)	11	Canning and preserving fruits, veget., and sea foods	6
<b>Farm laborers and foremen</b>		Grain-mill products	6
Farm foremen	20	Bakery products	10
Farm laborers, wage workers	6	Confectionery and related products	10
Farm laborers, unpaid family workers	17	Beverage industries	16
Farm-service laborers, self-employed	22	Misc. food preparations and kindred products	5
Laborers, except farm and mine		Not specified food industries	14
Fishermen and oystermen	10	Tobacco manufactures	0
Garage laborers, and car-washers and greasers	8	Textile mill products	3
Gardeners, except farm, and groundskeepers	11	Knitting mills	4
Longshoremens and stevedores	11	Dyeing and finishing textiles, exc. knit goods	9
Lumbermen, raftsmen, and wood-choppers	4	Carpets, rugs and other floor coverings	14
Teamsters	8	Yarn, thread, and fabric mills	1
<b>Laborers (n. e. c.)</b>		Miscellaneous textile-mill products	6
Manufacturing	8	Apparel and other fabricated textile products	9
Durable goods		Apparel and accessories	11
Sawmills, planing mills, and misc. wood products	3	Miscellaneous fabricated textile products	6
Sawmills, planing mills, and mill work	3	Paper and allied products	7
Miscellaneous wood products	2	Pulp, paper, and paperboard mills	6
Furniture and fixtures	5	Paperboard containers and boxes	10
Stone, clay, and glass products	7	Miscellaneous paper and pulp products	8
Glass and glass products	14	Printing, publishing, and allied industries	23
Cement; and concrete, gypsum, and plaster prod.	5	Chemicals and allied products	8
Structural clay products	5	Synthetic fibers	4
Pottery and related products	7	Drugs and medicines	22
Misc. nonmetallic mineral and stone products	5	Paints, varnishes, and related products	8
<b>Metal industries</b>	7	Miscellaneous chemicals and allied products	8
Primary metal industries	7	Petroleum and coal products	22
Blast furnaces, steel works, and rolling mills	9	Petroleum refining	26
Other primary iron and steel industries	4	Miscellaneous petroleum and coal products	3
Primary nonferrous industries	6	Rubber products	12
Fabricated metal ind. (incl. not spec. metal)	7	Leather and leather products	6
Fabricated steel products	7	Leather: tanned, curried, and finished	2
Fabricated nonferrous metal products	10	Footwear, except rubber	10
Not specified metal industries	9	Leather products, except footwear	12
Machinery, except electrical	11	Not specified manufacturing industries	8
Agricultural machinery and tractors	14	Nonmanufacturing industries (incl. not reported)	7
Office and store machines and devices	17	Construction	7
Miscellaneous machinery	10	Railroads and railway express service	3
Electrical machinery, equipment, and supplies	14	Transportation, except railroad	9
Transportation equipment	11	Telecommunications, and utilities and sanitary services	6
Motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment	13	Wholesale and retail trade	12
Aircraft and parts	15	Business and repair services	9
Ship and boat building and repairing	2	Personal services	5
Railroad and misc. transportation equipment	8	Public administration	7
		All other industries (incl. not reported)	6
		Occupation not reported	19







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