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TOPIC: SELF ESTEEM IN RELATION TO THE
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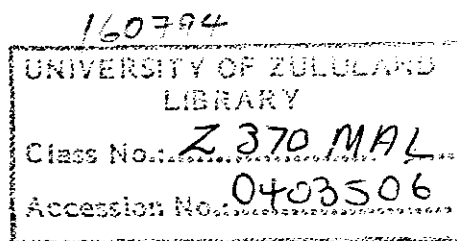
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SELF-ESTEEM IN RELATION TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATIONS OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine certain aspects of educational and occupational development in adolescent females. Specifically, the aims were: (1) to ascertain the nature of occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls, (2) to determine the relationship between black adolescents self esteem and occupational aspirations, and (3) to find out whether parents' level of education has an influence on black adolescents' occupational aspirations.

Subjects were 161 black girls, aged between 14 and 23 years, from two schools (one a private school and the other a government school) in the township of Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria. The overall results on the educational aspirations of this sample of adolescent girls indicated that these girls intend to graduate from, high school and achieve higher levels of education beyond high school. Occupational aspirations were assessed on the basis of their training requirements, on the first choice of occupation, which the students wanted more than the others; a majority of them aspired to occupations necessitating a degree.

The type of schooling did play a role in influencing occupational aspirations, it is thus important to acknowledge that socioeconomic factor is the important variable , since socioeconomic influences which children go to public schools and which go to private schools.

It was interesting to find that individual value for educational aspirations and social approval for educational aspirations were significantly related, and that the individual value for occupational aspirations and social approval for occupational aspirations were significant.

The t-test for equality of means showed that the government school girls were slightly higher than the private school girls on school ability, while the private school girls were significantly higher on occupational aspirations than the government school girls.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the study

Historically, theory building and research on educational and occupational development have tended to focus on male, rather than female, development. This situation has resulted in the lack of an adequate theory for explaining and predicting the educational and occupational choices of girls and women (Hansen, 1989:54).

It is as naïve to focus exclusively on personal factors as it is to ignore them, but until research has determined which specific factors, in which cultural settings, at which ages, are related to the choice process, theoretical advancements will not be possible and counselling interventions will be of limited value. Self-esteem has been regarded as one of the self-determining factors in the educational and occupational choice process. Numerous studies have attempted to link this construct with educational and occupational aspirations (Wylie, 1993:20).

The high school period plays an important part in shaping the eventual interests necessary to promote a broad career orientation. Furthermore, it is during this period that choices become increasingly confusing. It is essential that girls and boys, during these years, should be encouraged and taught to look ahead to the different directions their lives may take, as well as to examine the limitations their educational decisions may place on their later career development (Hansen, 1989:57).

As the high school years are considered extremely important for educational and occupational development, this research focuses on the educational and occupational aspirations of adolescent black girls in a South African setting. The relationships between these aspirations and various personal and social factors will then be considered. In this way, it is hoped that the results of the research will not only contribute to a broader theoretical base on black female educational and occupational development, but will also provide a starting point for counselling interventions.

1.2. Statement of the problem

This study proposes to address the following research questions:

- What is the nature of the occupational aspirations of black girls in South Africa?
- To what extent does self-esteem influence career choices among black adolescent girls?
- Is there any relationship between parents' educational level and black adolescent girls' occupational aspirations?

1.3 Aims of the study

The aims of this study are:

1.3.1 To ascertain the nature of the occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls.

1.3.2 To determine the relationship between black adolescents' self-esteem and occupational aspirations.

1.3.3 To find out whether parents' level of education has an influence on black adolescents' occupational aspirations.

1.4 Operational definitions of terms

In this study, terms are defined as follows:

1.4.1 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the way a person feels about and respects him/herself, whether the feelings are positive or negative.

1.4.2 Aspirations

Aspirations are hopes a person has for the future. Educational and occupational aspirations are thus hopes that a person has for a better and satisfying education and career.

1.4.3 Black South African

A black South African is a South African person born into a non-white racial group, and the culture and way of life of such a person are different from those of a white person. In this study, Indians and Coloureds are excluded from the classification 'black South African'.

1.4.4 Adolescence

Adolescence can be defined as that period after childhood and after a person has reached puberty, in which he or she tries to make sense of his/her world. For the purpose of the present discussion, South African high school students can be regarded as adolescents for the following reasons. In general, by the time these students leave high school they will have reached the age of puberty. Furthermore, they have not yet acquired the experience to assume a wide range of adult roles, nor have they attained total emotional and social maturity.

1.5 Hypotheses

Hypotheses will be formulated and will be based on the aims of the study listed above.

1.6 Method of investigation

1.6.1 Sample

Probability sampling will be used, because it allows one to specify for each element of the population the probability that it will be included in the sample. In the study, a stratified random sampling sample will be used.

1.6.2 Field study

The research that will be conducted will take the form of a field study.

1.6.3 Data analysis

As the variables in this study will not be manipulated by the research, the study will utilize correlational and multiple regression procedures, as they are suitable for ex post facto research. Jones (1989:59) defines ex post facto research as:

Systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables.

Two points are worthy of comment here: firstly, correlational and multiple regression procedures may provide evidence for a hypothesis of causation, but they cannot be used to prove causation, since the same correlation can be obtained even if causation is reversed.

Secondly, highly significant regression and correlational statistics can be obtained when there are no causal links between the independent and the dependent variables.

1.6.4 Instrument

The instrument for this study will be a self-report questionnaire, which will be constructed to measure the educational and occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls, the level of self-esteem these girls have, and other personal and social variables they possess.

1.6.5 Research procedures

Permission to do research at the two schools will be requested from the principals of the schools concerned. The aims of the study will be explained to the subjects. Guidance teachers will help in the handling of the questionnaire, and the researcher will be present to answer any questions that may arise and to give explanations where possible.

1.7. Outline of the study

1.7.1 Chapter One

This chapter consists of the motivation for the study, a statement of the problem, the aims of the study and an outline for the organisation of the whole scientific report.

1.7.2 Chapter Two

Chapter Two considers and discusses a theoretical background to the study. This background consists of the following:

- ❖ A review of previous work done in this field.
- ❖ The relationship between female aspirations and self-esteem.

1.7.3 Chapter Three

This chapter details the research design and methodology of the study. The design and method of investigation are discussed in detail.

1.7.4 Chapter Four

Chapter Four concerns itself with the empirical investigation; it describes how fieldwork was carried out and how the scale was administered. It also contains the analysis and interpretation of the data. The hypotheses formulated are tested in this section.

1.7.5 Chapter Five

This chapter concludes the research report by making recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

A literature review serves as an introduction to a research study and introduces the domain of the study (Kerlinger, 1986). A literature review has three functions (Kerlinger, 1986):

1. It brings clarity and focus to the research problem.
2. It improves methodology.
3. It broadens the researcher's knowledge base in the area of research.

Psychology is one discipline where theories, classifications, and labels often impose a somewhat artificial, overly simple and sometimes even inaccurate order. This order is useful; nevertheless, for it permits us at least to begin to understand things that otherwise would not be understood at all (Lefrancois, 1981:5).

The study of adolescent psychology is no exception. There is, in fact, no reason to believe that the confusion that exists in our attempts to understand this area is any less than that which exists in any other area.

2.2 Adolescence

Adolescence has been defined as a transitional, developmental, dynamic period, involving continual change between childhood and adulthood (Santrock, 1990;

Lefrancois, 1981). The problem with this definition is that of ascertaining when childhood ends and adulthood begins. If adolescence begins with sexual maturity and ends with adulthood, when does adulthood begin? Moreover, how do we know when sexual maturity begins?

Some authors (Louw, 1991) believe that adolescence commences when the individual enters high school, whereas others (Lefrancois, 1981) regard the pubertal stage as defining the onset of adolescence, and attempt to place it within a certain age period. Definitions by age can be misleading, since puberty in girls occurs approximately two years ahead of puberty in boys (Lefrancois 1981) and, even within the same sex, there are wide variations.

The culmination of adolescence is even more problematic than its commencement. Possibly one of the more encompassing definitions of the termination of adolescence is that offered by Keating (1988:13), which states that:

Adolescence ends when an individual attains emotional and specific maturity and has acquired the requisite experience, ability and willingness to assume consistently over a large range of activities the role of an adult as it is defined by the culture in which he lives.

On the basis of this definition, it can be seen that some individuals may remain adolescents through their lives. For example, some individuals may have undertaken certain adults' roles, such as those of worker, spouse or parent, but nevertheless lack either emotional or social maturity.

Adolescence is regarded as a critical period of human development (Lefrancois, 1981). However, theoretical orientations have tended to focus on male development. In particular, white male adolescents, with their life and development, make up the bulk of the literature that is concerned with adolescence (Lefrancois, 1981). It is possible that theoretical orientations based on white male samples will not be broad enough to account for both male and female adolescent behaviour.

In recent years, a body of literature has attempted to clarify the similarities and differences in adolescent male and female development. Extensive reviews on sex

role socialisation have increased our understanding of the effects of socio-cultural forces on adolescent development (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980).

It is extremely difficult to discuss adolescent development without taking an interactionist approach. As noted by Parsons (1980:5):

Biological processes do not unfold in a cultural, experiential vacuum. Likewise, the delineation of experiential effects independent from a consideration of biological processes is futile, if not impossible. Experience does not accumulate in a biologically neutral organism. In addition, neither of these processes (biological or experiential) takes place in a socio-historically neutral context.

However, the emphasis in this chapter is upon psychosocial development during adolescence, and how it may affect educational and occupational choices. Biological development is discussed where its effects have been considered to impinge upon either psychological or social development. In order to present a coherent discussion, psychosocial development is considered under the headings of cognitive and personality development, with special emphasis on identity and social development.

2.3 Cognitive development

Differences have been found between the cognitive activity of the child and the adolescent, in so far as there are steady increases, with age, in vocabulary knowledge, numerical reasoning and general problem solving ability (Keating, 1988).

It is reasonable to assume that mental capabilities increase as children grow older, paralleling physical growth, on the basis of both IQ tests and educational curricula. Even where attempts have been made to identify specific abilities in the structure of intelligence (Guilford, 1987), it is still not known whether different biological structures in the nervous system perform different mental tasks, or whether certain learning opportunities promote differential abilities.

Genetic differences, despite considerable arguments about the heritability of IQ, have been found to be responsible, to a certain extent, for individual differences in intelligence. However, as heritability does not account for all of the variance, environmental influences, or the possible interaction between the individual's own resources and what the environment offers, must account for the remaining proportion of the variance that exists (Lefrancois, 1981).

Although it is easy to observe that cognitive performance does increase with age and environmental interaction, what is more difficult to understand is what distinguishes adolescent thought from childhood thought. Piaget argues that cognitive growth during adolescence occurs due to neurological development at the time of puberty, interaction with the social environment, experience with things and internal cognitive reorganisation (Lefrancois, 1981).

2.3.1 Sex differences

Maccoby and Jacklin (1990), in the research they reviewed, did not find consistent sex differences on Piagetian tasks. However, some researchers have reported sex differences favouring males (Lefrancois, 1981). These differences led Lefrancois (1981) to suggest that adolescent girls are more likely to apply formal operations to interpersonal situations than to scientific situations. However, another possible interpretation of sex differences on physical science tasks is that adolescent girls may not have had the same experience with things as adolescent boys. It has been well documented (e.g. Weitzman, 1980) that the toys parents give to their children differ with the sex of the child.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1990) also found that girls were just as capable as boys of producing a variety of hypotheses and unusual ideas, with certain exceptions. One study reported that 18-year-old females were superior to 18-year-old males on number of hypotheses formed and number of obvious consequences, but inferior on number of remote consequences. Despite these exceptions, most researchers working in a Piagetian framework have not found consistent sex differences, which suggest that adolescent girls are just as likely as adolescent boys to develop formal operational modes of thought.

Within a psychometric paradigm, the majority of studies concerned with general ability have reported no sex differences in subjects over the age of six (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1990). Although no consistent sex differences have been seen for specific abilities during childhood, differences have been reported for adolescents. Maccoby and Jacklin (1990) have presented evidence that adolescent girls, on average, are superior on verbal ability, whereas adolescent boys, on average, excel in visual spatial ability and mathematical ability.

The verbal superiority of females includes vocabulary, listening, speaking, ability with verbal analogies, and comprehension of difficult material, creative writing, fluency and spelling (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1989). Several explanations for sex differences in verbal ability have been advanced. Although there is some evidence that biological factors may be influential (Peterson in Parsons, 1980), it would appear that environmental factors, such as mothers' tendency to verbalise with and stimulate their female, rather than their male, offspring, are much more important.

It has been suggested that male superiority with regard to mathematical ability is related to visual spatial ability. Wood (1990) found that when a problem could be solved by algebraic processes, girls were better than boys. However, boys were better than girls at interpreting graphs and solving geometric problems. Biological evidence for sex differences in mathematical performance is meagre. Hoyenga and Hoyenga (1989:243) argue, "The most important causes of sex differences in mathematical performances are related to sex role socialisation". Although both sexes experience equal difficulty with mathematics, this difficulty affects female preferences and choices more than those of males.

As visual spatial ability is considered essential for architects and engineers, it is interesting to find that the proportion of males to females in these fields does not reflect Maccoby and Jacklin's (1990) findings, since fewer than six percent of architects and engineers in the USA are women. Yet, despite these results on general and specific abilities, it has been found that adolescent girls obtain better overall grades than adolescent boys, and are more likely to graduate from high school than boys (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1990). Weitzman (1980) argues that female achievement in the years after the completion of high school declines sharply, in comparison to male achievement. In my opinion, females have, over the years,

taken a stand, and are now seen as professionals, not only in the nursing and teaching fields but also in other professions, such as engineering, the military, law and business.

2.4 Personality development

A major focus in the study of personality development during adolescence has been a concern with the 'self', whether this is manifested in the development of a stable sense of identity (Erikson in Westaway, 1983), the perception of the self as a member of society (Kohlberg in Westaway 1983), self-regulatory systems, such as self-reinforcement and self-criticism (Bandura in Westaway, 1983), or the adolescent's need to find congruence between the perceived self and actual experience (Rogers in Westaway, 1983). What is apparent from these various viewpoints on the self is that adolescence is a period of heightened self-awareness.

Since adolescents are more cognitively complex than younger children are, the way they evaluate themselves and others is a central part of their personalities. Although children are aware of themselves, they are not capable of taking the perspectives of others in viewing themselves. Adolescents, on the other hand, have a more distinct view of themselves as unique individuals, whilst at the same time being aware of others' reactions to them (Lefrancois, 1981). Therefore, it is during adolescence that a true sense of self emerges.

This emerging sense of self is concerned with the establishment of an identity as a unique person, which constitutes the central core of being human. However, a strong sense of identity is not determined simply by establishing uniqueness, but rather by the individual's awareness of both his or her own uniqueness, and his or her similarity to others, as well as a realistic appraisal of strength and weaknesses (Lefrancois, 1981). Erikson's work on the establishment of an identity as the central task for adolescence has provided a major impetus for research on personality development during adolescence (in Westaway, 1983). No discussion of adolescent self-awareness, therefore, could be complete without an analysis of Erikson's position on identity.

2.4.1 Identity

Adolescence, according to Erikson (in Westaway, 1983:119), is:

The last and the concluding stage of childhood. The adolescent process, however, is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates. These new identifications are no longer characterised by the playfulness of childhood and the experimental zest of youth: with dire urgency they force the young individual into choices and decisions which will, with increasing immediacy, lead to a more final self-definition, to irreversible role pattern, and thus to commitments for life.

As Erikson recognises, adolescence is an extremely difficult developmental stage. It is a stage where young people have to define themselves, both as individuals and with regard to their relationships with others. There are various choice points, and the choices that are made will, in turn, determine future lifestyles.

All societies, according to Erikson (in Westaway, 1983:119), allow periods of varying lengths between childhood and adulthood, "psychosocial moratoria, during which a lasting pattern of inner identity is scheduled for relative completion". A psychosocial moratorium allows an individual to try out various roles, in order to determine who he or she is, as a unique individual and in relationship to society. This period is regarded by Erikson (in Westaway, 1983:120) as a bridging period between "what [the individual] was as a child and what he is about to become, and will reconcile his conception of himself and his community's recognition of him".

Striving to be true to oneself whilst finding one's place in society is very difficult for adolescents, and, as Erikson (in Westaway, 1983:126) recognises, "the adolescent, during the final stage of his identity formation, is apt to suffer more deeply than he ever did before (or ever will again) from a definition of roles". Although a person's identity is continually developing and changing throughout life, its normative crisis occurs during adolescence. It is necessary to examine what Erikson means by

'identity', as well as by 'crisis', and why he believes that this crisis occurs during adolescence.

Erikson (in Westaway, 1983) admits that his conceptualisation of an identity is vague and ambiguous. However, from his definition, it can be seen that he emphasises a conscious sense of individual uniqueness, as well as the interaction between person and environment. His is a psychosocial perspective, in that maintenance of each individual's uniqueness does not depend solely upon the individual, but upon the individual in interaction with society.

Erikson's (in Westaway, 1983:57) definition of a crisis does not describe impending disaster, but, rather, a turning point. Therefore, the potential for a crisis exists at every stage, "because of a radical change in perspective" in Westaway, 1983: The identity crisis that occurs during adolescence can be regarded as greater than other crises, since not only the individual's future, but also the future of the next generation, depends upon its satisfactory resolution. This identity crisis occurs during adolescence, since identity, according to Erikson (in Westaway, 1983:732), "has its own developmental period, before which it could not come to crisis because the somatic, cognitive, and social preconditions are not yet given".

Due to increased cognitive complexity, individuals are not only capable of looking back over their lives, but can also look forward towards the different directions their lives may take. Adolescents experience serious pressure that forces them to define themselves in different ways. Parents encourage more independent and responsible behaviours, whilst teachers suggest that they should start thinking about the kind of work for which they are suited. It is reasonable, then, that adolescence is the period when identity becomes the focal point. As Erikson's perspective is a developmental one, it can be seen that resolution of the identity crisis is dependent upon the successful resolution of the previous crises: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, and industry versus inferiority.

In turn, resolution of the identity crisis prepares the way for the next developmental stages: intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair. Resolution of the identity crisis is not only dependent upon successful resolution of previous crises, but is a pivotal period where previous

childhood conflicts are recapitulated and future adult conflicts are anticipated. Therefore, Erikson (in Westaway, 1983) says that the conflict of adolescence, that of identity versus identity diffusion, is composed of seven subsidiary conflicts, which either retrace previous conflicts or prefigure future ones.

The conflict between time diffusion and temporal perspective reflects the first conflict of trust versus mistrust. Adolescents who experience this conflict have difficulty in planning for the future. Although they feel that they must make important decisions, they are anxious about change and about becoming adults. The conflict between self-consciousness and self-certainty mirrors the conflict of autonomy versus shame and doubt. Adolescents are concerned with how others view them. Physiological changes, for some adolescents, can result in embarrassment, thus causing them to become self-conscious. Behaviour during this period can be inconsistent and unpredictable, leading to difficulties in defining who one is.

The conflict between role experimentation and role fixation is indicative of the child's struggles with initiative and guilt. Adolescents need to try out various roles and not settle prematurely on one role. The final conflict stage of childhood, that of industry versus inferiority, is represented in adolescence by a conflict over how best to utilise one's resources for work and study. Some individuals may experience difficulties in concentration, or pursue one activity to the exclusion of all others.

Anticipation of the three adult conflicts is presaged during adolescence by attempts to define one's own sexual identity (intimacy versus isolation), by the struggle to choose from the many available options and find one's unique niche in society (generativity versus stagnation), and by attempts to formulate a set of values out of competing ideologies (integrity versus despair).

Erikson (in Westaway, 1983) has acknowledged that adolescence is a highly individual matter, and that his conceptualisation might not be able to be generalised validly to all adolescents. As he (in Westaway, 1983:25) states: "Whether, and in what way, disturbances such as are outlined here also characterise those more completely placed somewhere near the middle of the socio-economic ladder, remains, at this time, an open question". Furthermore, no two individuals are likely to experience the crisis points in the same way. Adolescents in similar societies may

face similar problems, but these may be resolved in different ways due to differences in personality, different environmental interactions, or even differences in the interactions between personality and social development. One of the major issues in this period of identity formation is, according to Erikson (in Westaway, 1983), that of occupational choice. As he says: "In general it is primarily the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs young people". Yet, there are important differences between the sexes with regard to a vocational identity.

The essential difference between the sexes is due to the fact that a woman's "somatic design harbours an inner space destined to bear the offspring of chosen men and, with it, a biological, psychological, and ethical commitment to take care of human infancy" (in Westaway, 1983:266). This somatic design predisposes a particular female emphasis on inner, rather than outer, orientations, in that girls see their role as developing inside the house, and "take it for granted that the outer world space belongs to the men" (in Westaway, 1983:274).

Woman's entire existence is concerned with this inner orientation, with one exception. During late adolescence, when she is experimenting with different roles, she may venture out into the male-dominated outer world. However, her psychosocial moratorium does not lead to resolution of her identity crisis, since woman's identity is bound up with her husband and children. One implication of Erikson's viewpoint is that identity resolution for females will be delayed beyond adolescence.

The inner direction of woman is, according to (in Westaway, 1983:57) Erikson (in Westaway, 1983), in contrast to the outer direction of man. Whereas female identity centres around the home, male identity focuses on the world outside the home. Therefore, identity formation for boys is closely intertwined with vocational commitment. For adolescent girls, an occupational identity is secondary, since affiliation needs are more important. It has been reported that adolescent males are expected to achieve a sense of self-certainty, decide upon their work orientation, and initiate sexual relationships (Baldock, 1975). They are also told that their future lives depend upon themselves. Furthermore, since the male, traditionally, has been regarded as the economic 'head' of the household, adolescent boys are taught that

not only their lifestyles, but also the lifestyles of their future families, depend upon their occupational success.

Traditionally, for the majority of girls, female identity has been highly dependent upon the identities of the men they will meet and marry (Marini, 1980). In recent years, however, there have been certain changes in the female role. Women are becoming more self-aware, in that their needs, as opposed to the needs of others, are assuming more importance in their lives. Women are also entering the labour force in increasing numbers (Marini, 1980). This increased work orientation has definite implications for women's lifestyles, as well as for the lifestyles of their husbands and families. However, it is still not clear whether adolescent girls will centre their identities on husbands and children, or on their occupational choices, or even on some possible unknown combination of roles.

If there are changes with regard to female identity, then it is highly possible that there will be changes with regard to male identity. At present, interpretations of adolescents' male and female identity formation and resolution appear highly speculative. The social upheaval which all societies are experiencing does not allow for a definite explanation of the adolescent identity crisis. Although Erikson has been criticised for his biological orientation, he has stated that human behaviour is not determined solely by biology. He (in Westaway, 1983) argues that biology determines behavioural effects in interaction with cultural and psychological variables. Therefore, human behaviour is not rigidly controlled by anatomical and physiological development, but is subject to differences in personality and historical changes in male and female roles.

Erikson's focus on the development of a sense of identity as the most critical and definitive feature of adolescence has made a major contribution to our understanding of adolescent development. As such, his theory is worthy of inclusion in any study on adolescents.

2.5 Social development

Although social development takes place throughout infancy and childhood, it would appear that "parents and other adults see adolescence as a last chance to ensure

that the child effectively identifies with the most primitive reference group and consolidates a sense of his/her appropriate gender" (Douvan, 1990:86). Adolescence, rather than infancy or childhood, is a period of intensified preparation for the assumption of adult roles. Therefore, during adolescence boys and girls experience pressure from parents, teachers and their peers to fulfil the acceptable male or female role, with all its circumscribed behaviours. All cultures believe that there are certain sex-appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, which they teach to their children.

Historically, male and female adult roles have been differentiated on the basis of a division of labour. Socialization procedures in Western societies have taken account of this division of labour, and have trained their children to accept the traditional male and female roles. In recent years, however, questions have been raised about the advantages and disadvantages of traditional sex role learning (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980). It is possible that acceptance of traditional sex role definitions not only places limitations on future options, but also contributes to psychological impairment. Therefore, there are two areas of adolescent social development that need further exploration: acceptance or non-acceptance of traditional sex roles, and possible psychological effects of these roles.

2.5.1 Acceptance of traditional sex roles

Children learn their gender identity at an early age. Before they can go to school, they are able to label themselves as either boys or girls, and others as either males or females. Initially, these labels have very little meaning. It is only as children get older that they understand what it means to be a male or a female (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980). Boys, according to Douvan (1990), experience problems at approximately two and a half years, when they have to give up their passive dependent babyhood behaviours. Girls, on the other hand, do not experience a crisis at this age, since passive dependent behaviours are considered acceptable for females.

It is during adolescence that girls experience problems with regard to acceptance of traditional female role definitions. As Douvan (1990:90) states:

Socialisation through childhood is a double system - in which she is allowed dependency but is also encouraged and supported through school to be independent, individualistic, competitive and achieving, she now finds at adolescence that she must abandon or disguise these individual competitive traits if she is to be acceptably feminine. Adults and especially her peer group expect her to shift from direct achievement to vicarious achievement and take as her major goals becoming a wife and a mother.... Both the future and the present suddenly restrict her expression to those aspects of her behaviour, which emphasise winning and holding the affection of others.

Douvan (1990) emphasises the problem faced by adolescent females in acceptance of traditional female roles. However, Conger (1991) argues that Western societies allow considerably more leeway for girls, in their acceptance or non-acceptance of traditional roles, than for boys. Boys are actively discouraged from cross-sex behaviours, such as wearing dresses or playing with dolls, whereas no such discouragement exists with regard to girls' wearing jeans or playing with mechanical toys. Conger does not underestimate the problems that are faced by girls, but he does regard societal prescriptions for appropriate male behaviour as being applied rigidly to boys, whereas there is certain ambivalence with regard to girls. Therefore, adolescent males, as compared with females, have a more limited range of options.

Other researchers have found that high school boys aspire to a wider range of occupations than girls, and tend to select professional and scientific occupations more than girls do (Marini, 1980). Douvan (1990) reports that for every level of education and occupational aspiration, girls have a higher grade-point-average than boys do, suggesting that girls' academic achievement level is not related to their future occupational plans. Studies on university women have found that more women in the 1980s than in previous years were "postponing marriage, postponing childbearing within marriage, and reducing their family size expectations". Where marriage was considered, the women studied expected to combine it with a career, and did not think that women should confine themselves solely to the roles of wife and mother. It would appear that, although high school boys and girls seem to accept traditional male and female role definitions with regard to work, marriage and family plans, by late adolescence, females are moving away from traditional role

expectations, and considerable expansion has taken place in the assessment of their future adult roles.

Some research evidence has suggested that girls experience ambivalence with regard to acceptance of the traditional female role. For some girls, preference for the female appears to decrease during adolescence, concomitant with an attraction for masculine activities, preference for fathers rather than mothers as role models, and perception of the female role as less important than the male role. Regarding these ambivalent feelings, Coleman (1980:77) considers adolescent girls today to face more difficulties than boys do in determining their sex roles, since:

First, sex roles are usually less clear for girls than they are for boys; second, in many circumstances higher status is accorded to masculine roles, so that girls may face confusion as to which is more preferable; and third, women's position in society is at present passing through a period of rapid change, making it even more difficult for adolescent girls to make personal choices in line with what is or is not expected of them.

As can be seen from Coleman's (1980) analysis of the problems that adolescent females face, the main operative word appears to be 'confusion'. On the one hand, adolescent females recognise that their traditional role is not as highly valued as the traditional male role, but on the other hand, socialisation procedures have conditioned them into acceptance of the traditional female role. Acceptance of the dual role of homemaker and employee in the labour force cannot be regarded as the substitution of a new role for an old one, but rather as the addition of a new role to an old one. It is no wonder, then, that adolescent girls face confusion in determining their sex roles. Adolescent boys, however, whose future role is more clearly defined, should experience less confusion than girls with regard to acceptance of the traditional male role.

2.5.2 Psychological effects

As was mentioned previously, adolescence is a period of increased cognitive complexity for both boys and girls. Despite findings that sex differences in intellectual ability are minor (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1990), societal prescriptions for

appropriate masculine and feminine behaviours appear to apply to certain areas of academic achievement. Although primary school children do not think that mathematics and reading are sex-typed subject areas, by the twelfth grade, boys and girls regard mathematics as a masculine subject and reading as a feminine subject. Yet mathematical achievement is regarded as the basis for a wide range of career options (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980). Therefore, girls who consider it a masculine achievement area are considerably reducing their range of future options.

Cultural stereotypes regarding appropriate masculine and feminine achievement areas also appear to be related to school performance. The verbal, social and artistic spheres are considered to be representative of feminine achievement areas, whereas masculine achievement is considered to lie in the mechanical, spatial and athletic fields (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980). Adolescent girls have been found to be more interested in performing well in English and artistic subjects than in science, athletics or mechanical subjects, whereas adolescent boys, in general, have the opposite performance motivation.

Societal prescriptions, therefore, not only affect adolescent achievement, but also have long-term consequences for adult achievement. Cultural stereotypes can also affect personality dimensions. In Western societies, the dominant male stereotype is that of a competent, aggressive, independent, unemotional and ambitious person. The dominant female stereotype is that of a dependent, emotional, sensitive and incompetent person. Although not all individuals fit these two extremes, adolescents are aware of these cultural stereotypes, and, as a result, they become "an important part of the social setting in which the adolescent must search for his or her own sex-role identity" (Coleman, 1980).

Although cultural stereotypes imply that both males and females possess both positive and negative characteristics, it is acceptance of the negative, rather than the positive, characteristics that appears to be harmful for healthy adult functioning. The aggressive behaviours attributed to males imply that there is a lack of concern for the feelings of others, and as such can lead to difficulties in interpersonal relationships. The dependent, incompetent behaviours attributed to females tend to emphasise feminine, passive aspects, and can lead to feelings of anxiety or even inadequacy in many situations.

Bem (1980) has argued that some masculine behaviour may prove more functional than feminine behaviours, and some feminine behaviour more functional than masculine behaviours, depending on the situation. Therefore, individuals who exhibit both masculine and feminine type behaviours - psychological androgyny - function better in various situations than individuals who exhibit only one style of behaviour. Bem (1980), in a longitudinal study, has presented evidence that boys who are highly masculine, in the sense of having traditional male interests, possess more self-confidence and greater feelings of adequacy than boys with relatively feminine interests. When these same boys were studied as adults, however, the highly masculine subjects felt less positive about themselves than the other subjects did.

It appears that total identification with traditional male or female personality characteristics is not functional for all situations. Houston-Stein and Welch (1980) have suggested that socialisation procedures during adolescence should be directed towards producing androgynous persons of both sexes, since a combination of the more positive masculine and feminine characteristics, such as independence, competence and sensitivity in interpersonal relationships, seems to be more adaptive for adult functioning.

2.6 Ascertaining the educational and occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls

The emphasis in this study is upon the educational and occupational aspirations, along with certain personal and social factors that have been considered to be related to these aspirations, of black adolescent girls. Where necessary, the aspirations of black adolescent boys are compared and contrasted with those found for adolescent girls. In considering adolescent aspirations, it is important to realise that the bulk of the research has utilised male, rather than female, subjects, which has led to criticism relating to whether results derived from research on one sex can legitimately be applied to the other sex.

In recent years, however, there has been an upsurge of interest in female development, due, no doubt, to the realisation that "dramatic changes have taken place in women's participation in the labour force and, correspondingly, their

participation in home and family roles, particularly child rearing" (Marini, 1980:42). Interest in female development has led to research on sex differences in educational and occupational aspirations, as well as various reviews on factors that have been considered to inhibit female achievement and career orientation (Marini, 1980).

What is becoming increasingly apparent is that female development is more complex than male development, in so far as females experience certain problems that are unique to their sex. Coleman (1980) summarises these problems:

- (1) The female at the earliest stage of development is socialised primarily by another female, usually her mother, who often holds traditional views of what constitutes appropriate educational and occupational attainment.
- (2) Society tends to sex-type occupations in a manner such that pressures exist to express femininity in the choice of certain occupations that are restricted both in range and status as compared to the options open to males.
- (3) During the adolescent years, the female may experience a serious attitudinal conflict between notions of success defined in terms of educational and occupational attainment, on the one hand, and of marriage and motherhood, on the other.
- (4) The influence relating to attainment of others, including parents, teachers, peers, husbands, and possibly husbands' employers, often tends to encourage marriage-motherhood roles at the expense of further educational and occupational achievements.

During the years since Coleman's article was published, it appears that there have been certain changes in female attitudes. A longitudinal project conducted by the University of Michigan on 916 families in the Detroit area has found that young women expect to marry at a later age than they did twenty years ago, and that they are reluctant to allow early marriage to interfere with their career plans. From this research, it would appear that conflicts over marriage and educational and occupational attainment are no longer applicable to all young women.

It is during the high school years that attitudes, interests, and values are becoming more clearly defined. During this period, young people have to make important decisions, which will have long-term consequences for their future adult roles. These years, therefore, can be considered as vital in determining their future roles in society. One of the most important areas where adolescent decisions have long-term consequences is that of education. The educational system, according to Inoue (1999:1), plays a significant role in sorting "people according to differences in valued abilities, channels them into streams of training which develop their capacities, and encourages them to aspire to adult roles that are in keeping with their talents". However, not all young people take advantage of what the educational system can provide.

Many young people leave school as soon as they have reached the statutory school-leaving age. Some of these young people have gone as far in the educational system as their academic ability will allow, whilst others do not consider education to be a prerequisite for their future adult roles. The study of adolescent aspirations and plans is of particular interest, since it provides information on how these young people view their future adult roles. However, aspirations do not develop in isolation, but are formed and modified in social interaction (Inoue, 1999). Yet social factors alone cannot account for those individuals who successfully overcome enormous barriers in order to achieve their desired objectives in life.

It would appear that a psychosocial perspective would be more useful in understanding adolescent aspirations, as the influence of both psychological and social variables can be examined. The literature review that follows consists of a survey of the available research on educational and occupational aspirations, as well as on the effects of certain psychosocial variables that have been considered to be related to these aspirations. The major psychosocial variables are: self-esteem, self-perceived ability, social approval, individual value for the aspiration, and socio-economic status. Finally, the effects of level of academic achievement and family size are briefly discussed.

2.6.1 Educational aspirations

The majority of studies on female educational aspirations tend to focus on plans for college or highest degree desired (Inoue, 1999). Where female high school and post-high school educational aspirations have been compared, it is of interest to find that 33% of Croy's (1968) sample of adolescent New Zealand girls aspired to a university entrance educational qualification, whereas only 6.7% of this sample wanted to go to university. Therefore, their post-high school aspirations can be regarded as much more modest than their high school aspirations.

There are several possible interpretations for Croy's (1968) data. The high school educational aspirations of these girls were considered unrealistically high, since only approximately 19% of New Zealand's adolescents, at that time, gained a university entrance educational qualification. Their post-high school educational aspirations were considered to be more realistic, as approximately 11% of New Zealand's adolescents were admitted to university at that time.

It is difficult to understand why there was this discrepancy between high school and post-high school educational aspirations. Perhaps these girls considered high educational aspirations during school years to be consistent with their roles as students, but inconsistent with their future roles of wives and mothers. However, it is possible that these girls either regarded a university entrance educational qualification as a status symbol and, therefore, something to strive for, or that they might have perceived such a qualification as serving as an entrance to better jobs.

Bem (1980) reports that American adolescent girls tend to reduce the levels of their educational aspirations during the high school years. Marini (1980:728) interprets this decrease in level of aspirations in the following manner:

As girls become more oriented towards their relationships with boys and their own future roles as wives and mothers, they apparently become less inclined to view higher education as a necessary or realistic alternative.

From the evidence presented in the University of Michigan survey, it does not appear that Marini's (1980) interpretation is valid for all girls.

2.6.1.2 Sex differences

When male and female adolescent aspirations are compared, it has been found that females are less likely to plan on going to college than males, and are more likely than boys to aspire to short-term educational programmes (Super, 1971). More recent research (Marini, 1980) has found that American adolescent boys have significantly higher educational aspirations than American adolescent girls do. These sex differences have been interpreted as being due to social pressures. The social pressures on males to succeed in the occupational spheres produce higher educational aspirations among boys than among girls. Boys, therefore, are more likely than girls to regard further education as both necessary and desirable in preparation for their future adult roles as workers and family providers.

Dunne, Elliot and Carlsen (1987), in their study on rural youth in grades 10, 11 and 12, found that female educational aspirations were higher than those of males. Of the female respondents, 31.1% planned to go to work immediately after high school, and 36% aspired to four years of college. Of the male respondents, 48% planned to go to work immediately after leaving high school, 27% aspired to two years of college, and 25% aspired to four years of college. There were significant differences by sex for all plans.

Dunne et al. (1987) conclude that the higher educational aspirations evinced by the females in their sample could be related to the increasingly complex qualifications required to pursue even the traditional 'women qualifications', such as secretary, nurse, or teacher, rather than to rising female ambitions. The lower educational aspirations found for boys, in the opinion of these authors, could be related to perceptions that higher education is unnecessary for the acquisition of a reasonably well-paid job.

Although the majority of studies have found that adolescent boys tend to have higher educational aspirations than girls do, it is possible that this situation has changed in recent years.

2.6.2 Occupational aspirations

The study of female occupational aspirations is much more complicated than that of educational aspirations. Psathas (1975) have suggested that girls and women lack vocational goals and realistic career planning. Psathas (1975) regards female occupational choices as being limited by social and economic factors. This may be correct, since a large proportion of girls and women have been found to choose occupations that are unrealistically low, in terms of their aptitudes and interests, but at the same time reflect societal prescriptions for appropriate female career choice. The socialisation process tends to inhibit female, as compared with male, occupational choice. It would thus appear that sex stereotyping of occupational choice and conflicts over the traditional role are inhibitors of female development.

2.6.2.1 Sex stereotyped occupations in Western societies

Adolescent girls tend to restrict their vocational aspirations to a small number of occupational fields, such as teaching, social work, nursing, or secretarial work (Marini, 1980), occupations that are usually defined as female-orientated. Adolescent boys, although their occupational aspirations are not as restricted as those of adolescent girls, tend to select occupations that are male-dominated, such as accountant, mechanic, engineer, doctor, farmer, or lawyer. The occupational aspirations of both sexes can be regarded as sex stereotyped, with girls choosing the 'helping professions', and boys choosing the occupations that are traditionally masculine.

As Dunne et al. (1987) note, out of their sample of 926 females, only two wanted to be mechanics, and seven aspired to be truck drivers. Out of their 800 male adolescents, only one wanted to be a secretary, and none of these boys aspired to nursing. It would appear that neither girls nor boys, in general, aspire to occupations that contradict societal norms for sex-appropriate career choice. Marini (1980:730) argues for caution in interpreting sex differences in the prestige levels of occupations, as:

Occupations such as nurse, social worker, and teacher represent fairly high levels of prestige, but not the highest levels - where male-dominated professions, such as doctor, architect, and lawyer, are located. On the other hand, most female-dominated jobs are white collar and do not fall at the lowest prestige levels, where labourers and other semi-skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers are located.

Why, then, are females underrepresented in the highest- and lowest-prestige occupations, and why, in general, do they aspire to occupations in the female-dominated spheres?

As Houston-Stein and Welch (1980) note, many professional and managerial occupations require a great deal of time and travel, and a spouse, in order to fulfil job demands. The traditional role of wife and mother is, for many women, incompatible with such demands. Women who work outside the home still assume the major responsibility for childcare and the household. Even where couples are highly-trained professionals and are both in full-time occupations, "the husband's participation in childcare is called baby-sitting, and his assumption of housework is labelled 'helping around the house' - a clear indication of where responsibility lies" (Houston-Stein & Welch, 1980)

Although low status occupations demand less commitment, the hours spent at work are, in many cases, long and flexible, which make family responsibilities difficult to fulfil. It would appear that women are underrepresented in the highest- and lowest-prestige occupations due to conflicting role demands. Whether women are involved in high or low status occupations, childcare and household obligations are their primary responsibility, and tend to conflict with work role demands. Men, on the other hand, for whom childcare and household obligations are of a secondary nature, do not experience such conflicting role demands.

It is possible that girls limit both choice and level of occupational aspirations to occupations that require less training, permit easy movement in and out of the labour force, and are traditionally female, due to their perceptions of their future adult roles. Secretarial work does not involve a long training period nor, in the majority of cases, long inflexible hours. Teaching, nursing, and social work do

involve a lengthier period of training. However, teaching, nursing, and social work are regarded as highly suitable female occupational choices. On the one hand, they benefit society, and on the other, they allow for individual self-fulfilment. Teaching is an extremely useful occupational choice for married women with families, since its scheduling permits them to be at home when their children are at home.

2.6.2.2 Role conflict

The conflict that adolescent girls experience between the traditional female role and career commitment has been identified by Matthews and Tiedeman (1970) in five attitudinal themes. In order of importance, these themes are:

- (1) woman's impression of man's reaction to the use of her intelligence; (2) struggle over the possible position of dominance of men at work and the 'place' of women at home; (3) conflict between family and work demands on the time of a wife and mother; (4) dilemmas of timing in dating and marriage; and (5) issues in acceptance of the general outline of the feminine role.

In the years since Matthews and Tiedeman's article was published, three of these attitudinal themes no longer appear to be relevant. Coleman (1980) found that college women in the 1980s, as compared with a similar cohort in 1975, were less likely to minimise their intellectual competence when they were with men. Marriage is no longer as important to adolescent girls as it is was in the past, and girls are reluctant to allow early marriage to conflict with their career plans. As the female role is in a state of flux, it is possible for adolescent girls to experience a wide range of roles.

From the evidence presented in this chapter, it appears that conflict is still experienced by adolescent girls on attitudinal themes 2 and 3. Adolescent boys do not experience this conflict over a combination of roles to the same extent as girls, since they are socialised primarily for work.

2.7 The relationship between self-esteem and educational and occupational aspirations

In a large-scale study on adolescent self-images, Rosenberg (1965:30) cited in Westaway, 1993, defines self-esteem as "a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self". Individuals who have a positive attitude towards themselves do not, according to Rosenberg (1965) cited in Westaway, 1993, necessarily feel superior to others, nor accept themselves unconditionally, but they do respect themselves and consider themselves worthy. Furthermore, they recognise their limitations and have expectations concerning their growth and improvement.

In contrast, individuals who take a negative attitude towards themselves do not respect themselves, and have feelings of self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and self-contempt. Rosenberg's (1965) cited in Westaway, 1993, discussion on positive and negative self-images points to his concern with global levels of self-esteem. Walz and Bleur (1992:27) define self-esteem as "appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly toward others".

According to Super (1963), cited in Walz and Bleur (1992), the selection of an occupation is an attempt by the individual to fulfil his or her sense of self. Self-concept plays an important role in vocational development, which progresses in a continuous, orderly fashion through adolescence and into adulthood. The adolescent must crystallise a vocational preference, which means that self-image gradually takes form as vocational choices are evaluated. The formulation of tentative ideas regarding the field of future work then becomes more specific.

Super (1963), cited in Walz and Bleur (1992), proposes congruence between self-concept and vocational concept. Since self-esteem is an aspect of self-concept and since self-concept influences vocational development, high or low self-esteem may affect the progress of adolescents' crystallisation process. Conversely, adolescents' career decisiveness or indecisiveness may reflect their feelings of self-worth.

Empirical studies generally support this generalisation that there is a relationship between certainty of vocational choice and level of self-esteem. Maier and Herman (1974), in Walz and Bleur (1992), found that college students who are certain about

their vocational choices have higher self-esteem than do their undecided counterparts. Khan and Alvi(1983) cited in Walz & Bleur (1992)found a positive correlation between self-esteem and career maturity, as measured by the Career Maturity Inventory, in a sample of Canadian high school students. Robbins (1987) found a negative correlation between self-esteem and goal instability, as measured by the Goal Instability Scale, among college students. With regard to educational and occupational aspirations, Rosenberg (1965) cited in Westaway, 1983 considers only occupational orientation, and does not present separate evidence by sex, though the statements made by girls are included. In the total sample, individuals of low self-esteem tended to reject a leadership position with regard to work, but at the same time desired a position that had low supervision and did not involve competition with others. On the other hand, high self-esteem individuals did not avoid positions of leadership or responsibility, and preferred competitive situations.

No significant differences in their desire for success in an occupation were found between individuals of high and low self-esteem. The two groups were similar in considering it very important to get ahead in life. Yet, though both groups wanted to get ahead in life, low self-esteem individuals did not expect to be as successful in their work as high self-esteem individuals. These results led Rosenberg (1965:236), cited in Westaway (1983) to conclude that, though all individuals want to be occupationally successful, people of low self-esteem doubt "that they will succeed in achieving what all value".

Where more recent research has utilised Rosenberg's (1965) cited in Westaway (1983),measure of self-esteem, no significant relationship has been found between self-esteem and educational aspirations, or between self-esteem and preferred career for college women (Zuckerman, 1980). Studies on the relationship between femaleness and self-esteem that have not used Rosenberg's (1965) cited in Westaway (1983) measure have produced conflicting findings. Spence and Helmreich (1980) found a positive relationship between their measure of self-esteem and a work orientation factor, for both high school girls and female undergraduate students.

Farmer (1980) found no association between self-esteem, as measured by the Coopersmith Inventory, and the achievement and career motivation of her sample of

adolescent girls. To further complicate the issue, when self-esteem is regarded as personal confidence, a direct link has been found between personal confidence and occupational aspirations for white adolescent girls (Ridgeway & Jacobson, 1980).

Ridgeway and Jacobson (1980) interpret these different findings in terms of the idea that occupations are of less immediate concern to high school girls than are their educational goals.

2.8 The relationship between self-perceived ability and educational and occupational aspirations

Individuals of high, rather than low, self-esteem, have been found to choose occupations that they perceive to require their high abilities. However, Korman (1970) cited in Westaway (1983) suggests on the basis of the congruence between self-perceived abilities and occupationally required abilities that the female members of his sample tended to choose occupations that called more for their low abilities than their higher ones.

Research on white college women has found that, though self-esteem is unrelated to career goals, self-estimates of intelligence are significantly related to non-traditional career goals and greater preferred career commitment (Zuckerman, 1985). If individuals, in general, choose occupations in accordance with their self-perceptions of their abilities, it is reasonable to expect that their educational aspirations are in accordance with self-estimates of their abilities.

Zuckerman (1985) did find that the higher the self-estimate of intelligence, the higher the educational goal, although there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and educational goals.

2.9 The relationship between social approval and educational and occupational aspirations

According to Korman (1970) cited in Westaway (1983), low self-esteem individuals reject their own attributes as guides, and rely on social referents to maintain consistency with their self-concepts of inadequacy. Thus a "low self-esteem person

may evaluate a situation in terms of how he perceives others rate it and what its general social 'acceptability' is, rather than in terms of how the situation meets his needs" Korman (1970) in Westaway (1983). Therefore, low self-esteem individuals, due to their external orientations and reliance on social cues, should conform to the opinions of others in planning their educational and occupational goals, rather than relying on their own self-perceptions.

If social influence is rejected by high self-esteem individuals, then there should be a negative or low positive correlation between self-esteem and social approval. Lopez (1980) reported a significant positive relationship between their measure of social approval and global self-esteem, indicating that individuals of high self-esteem were concerned about social approval.

With regard to occupational choice, it has been found that females do conform to the opinions of others (Fitzgerald & Crites, 1981), which could be interpreted as a result of low levels of self-esteem. However, in an extensive review, Maccoby and Jacklin (1990) did not find evidence of low levels of female self-esteem. To this writer's knowledge, there is no available literature on the relationship between socially influenced self-esteem and the educational and occupational aspirations of adolescent girls.

Therefore, it is possible, as Korman (1970) in Westaway (1983), suggests, that girls with high levels of self-esteem reject social influences in planning their educational and occupational goals.

2.10 The effects of parental education on the educational and occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls

There has been an over-abundance of studies documenting the effects of socio-economic status on adolescent aspirations, including the work of Astin (1970) and Burlin (1980), to name but two. Regardless of whether the indicator of socio-economic status was father's education (Swell & Shah, 1970) cited in Westaway (1983), mother's education (Marini & Greenberger, 1980), father's occupation, or a complete index (Swell & Shah, 1970) in Westaway (1983), all studies have reported

a positive relationship between females' socio-economic origins and their educational aspirations.

A similar positive relationship has been found between girls' socio-economic status and their vocational aspirations (Austin, 1970), though this relationship is considerably weaker than the one found between socio-economic status and educational aspirations. This weaker relationship could be due to level of education and training being regarded as more important than family socio-economic status for occupational choice (Austin, 1970).

However, other factors, such as girls' limited number of choices in traditionally female occupations, could reduce the variance in their levels of vocational aspirations. This, in turn, "tends to constrain the relationship between girls' occupational aspirations and socio-economic background" (Marini, 1980:732).

These findings on the relationship between socio-economic status and aspirations indicate that class origins are important for the formation of educational and occupational orientations. Therefore, socio-economic status should be included in research attempting to analyse the choice process (Wylie, 1993).

It is, obviously, impossible to change socio-economic origins. However, awareness of the possible advantageous or deleterious effects of socio-economic status on adolescent girls' aspirations not only allows for a greater understanding of these girls' future orientations, but should also inspire intervention programmes capable of combating influences over which the girls themselves have no control.

2.11 Summary

Adolescent boys tend to have higher educational aspirations than girls. Girls have more modest post-high school educational aspirations than high school aspirations. There is a significant positive relationship between educational and occupational aspirations, for both boys and girls.

Adolescent girls tend to restrict their vocational aspirations to the female-dominated fields, and boys to restrict theirs to the male-dominated fields. The female-

dominated occupations are usually in the middle of the prestige hierarchy. Girls experience conflict with regard to their future roles as wives and mothers, and career commitment. Boys do not experience this conflict over their future roles, and as their primary orientation is towards work, they tend to have higher occupational aspirations than girls.

However, not all girls have low educational and occupational aspirations, and some women have been extremely successful in coping with a combination of roles.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter on research methodology includes the research approach that will be followed in executing the research in this study of self-esteem and the educational and occupational aspirations of black South African adolescent girls. First, the research design is identified and explicated. Plans, procedures and considerations are discussed as part of the broad process of the research design. These include the measuring instruments, operationalisation of variables, method of data collection, research questions, research hypotheses, sampling and sample characteristics, proposed procedures for data analysis and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

Kerlinger (1986:279) defines research design as "the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions". Two basic purposes are to help researchers obtain answers to research questions and to help them control experimental, extraneous and error variances in the research problem under study (Kerlinger, 1986). This ensures that the study fulfils a particular purpose and that the research can be completed with the available resources (Durkheim, 1999).

As the variables in this study will not be manipulated by the researcher, the study will utilise correlational and multiple regression procedures, as they are suitable for post facto research. Jones (1989:59) defines ex post facto research as:

Systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already

occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables.

Several points are worthy of comment concerning this study. Firstly, correlational and multiple regression procedures may provide evidence of a hypothesis of causation, but they cannot be used to prove causation since the same correlation is obtained even if causation is reversed. Secondly, highly significant regression and correlational statistics can be obtained when there are no causal links between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, the sampling process can also produce spuriously correlated observations, which are due to chance. Therefore, the results from these procedures will require cautious interpretations.

Huysamen (1994) points out that, in a correlational design, a single group of subjects is obtained, and each individual in the group is measured on two or more variables at more or less the same point in time, and that the relationships between these variables are analysed. In line with this, in this study, a sample of black South African adolescent girls will be obtained, and each of the girls will be assessed on self-esteem, educational and occupational aspirations and the relationship between the three variables explored.

Thus, the information that will arise from this study will be correlational in nature, and not imply a cause and effect relationship between the variables in the study (Sheskin, 1997). It will be correlational in the sense that the focus will be particularly directed at examining the relationships between the three variables and not necessarily at ascertaining whether one causes the other or not.

As research design is considered to be a strategic framework that is deliberately and objectively planned to guide and enable the researcher to execute the research process (Kerlinger, 1986), aspects of the research design in this study are discussed as follows: first, the measuring instruments are described, with the rationale behind their use and their relevance in this study provided. The variables in the study are then operationalised, and, thereafter, the method of data collection is explicated. Subsequently, research questions and hypotheses are stated. This is followed by a

description of the sample and sampling method. The spotlight is then turned on the proposed procedures for data analysis.

3.2.1 Measuring instruments

The measuring instruments used in the study are introduced and briefly described, and each one is explained in detail below. In addition, the questionnaire that was used to gather information about participants' demographic data, self-esteem, and educational and occupational aspirations, will be discussed. It consists of measuring instruments such as the following (See APPENDIX A):

- Demographic information on participants' family background, parents' occupations and the levels of parents' education.
- Global self-esteem scale.
- Self-perceived ability.
- Social approval.
- Individual value for the aspiration.
- Educational aspirations.
- Occupational aspirations.

The research participants completed self-administered questionnaires on the preceding measures, and responded to the items in these instruments in the presence of the researcher, so that the researcher could clarify the language for the participants whenever necessary.

3.2.1.1 Global self-esteem scale

Self-esteem was measured with the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (1965) found in Westaway (1983). The scale consists of ten items, which are answered on a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Five items are reversed.

3.2.1.2 Self-perceived ability (SPA)

The items on the SPA scale are self-evaluative questions about academic ability, such as 'How do you rate yourself in school ability compared to your close friends?' There are five response alternatives, from which subjects select one. Responses were scored from 1 to 5 for each one.

3.2.1.3 Social approval

This item was measured by asking subjects how important they thought their educational and occupational aspirations were to other family members and people outside their families.

3.2.1.4 Individual value for the aspiration

Individual value for the aspiration was measured by asking subjects to rate how important their educational and occupational aspirations are to themselves.

3.2.1.5 Educational aspirations

Two items measured educational aspirations. In the first item, subjects were asked to indicate what level of high school education they would really like to obtain. In the second item, subjects were asked to indicate what further education or special training they would like to undertake after leaving high school.

3.2.1.6 Occupational aspirations

Occupational aspirations were measured by asking subjects to list eight occupations, starting with the one they would most like. This item is based on Holland's (1973) cited in Westaway (1983) procedure for eliciting daydreams.

3.2.2 Operationalisation of variables

Neuman (1997:136) defines operationalisation as "the process of developing an operational definition", which is "a definition in terms of specific operations,

measurement instrument, or procedures" for the construct. He indicates that the operational definition is occasionally referred to "as the indicator or measure of an instrument". Furthermore, he asserts that the two variables that are in a hypothesis should be conceptualised and operationalised. In quantitative measurement, operationalisation helps to link abstract theoretical constructs or ideas with concrete observable reality (Neuman, 1997).

In this study, adolescent girls are a constant, because the population in this study involves only adolescent girls who are doing grades 10 and 11. The variables of interest are self-esteem and educational and occupational aspirations. They are on the interval levels of measurement.

3.2.3 Method of data collection

A survey is a method in which the researcher asks respondents questions in a written questionnaire that is either mailed or handed to the respondents, or in which the researcher records answers during an interview (Neuman, 1997). A survey was used for data collection in this study because it was appropriate for collecting a large amount of data about the relationship between self-esteem and educational and occupational aspirations from black adolescent girls within a limited time. This claim is supported by Neuman's (1997:31) convictions that: "In survey research, the researcher may ask many people numerous questions in a short time period", and that the researcher may summarise the "answers to the questions in percentages, tables, or graphs".

In this study, self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data about self-esteem in relation to the educational and occupational aspirations of black South African adolescent girls. This is the type of survey method where a questionnaire is handed to the respondents to fill in. According to Neuman (1997), the self-administered questionnaire type of survey is advantageous because it is by far the cheapest. However, its shortcoming is that it is usually too limiting in terms of research control, because questions requiring visual aids, or contingency questions, may not be asked.

3.2.4 Research questions

The research questions in this study are the following:

- What is the nature of educational and occupational aspirations of black girls in South Africa?
- To what extent does self-esteem influence educational and occupational aspirations among black adolescent girls in South Africa?
- Is there any relationship between parents' educational level and black adolescent girls' educational and occupational aspirations?

3.2.5 Research hypotheses

In most research studies, research problems are stated in the form of hypotheses (Kerlinger, 1986). Neuman (1997:137) mentions that a "hypothesis has at least two variables", in which one is usually an independent variable while the other one is a dependent variable. In the present study, the research hypotheses are the following:

- Educational aspirations are positively related to occupational aspirations.
- Self-esteem is positively related to school ability.
- Type of school significantly affects educational and occupational aspirations.
- Self-esteem is significantly related to educational and occupational aspirations.
- School ability is significantly related to educational and occupational aspirations.
- Parental educational level and social approval are more important predictors of high educational and occupational aspirations than self-esteem, self-perceived ability and individual value for the aspiration.

3.2.6 Sampling and sampling characteristics

Sampling refers to the process of using any portion of a population or universe in research, and studying it as a representation of that population or universe (Kerlinger, 1986). The type of sampling that was used in this study is stratified random sampling. In stratified random sampling, the population is divided into subgroups or strata (Steyn, Smit, Du Toit & Strasheim, 1994). Each stratum is homogeneous with respect to the characteristics being studied.

In this study, grade 10 and grade 11 pupils can be regarded as two strata in the population of adolescent girls. Steyn et al. (1994) are of the opinion that stratified random sampling has the following advantages:

- It provides a sample with a smaller sampling error and is therefore more reliable.
- It provides additional information on subgroups (that is, the strata), and this makes it possible to study the subgroups separately.

The greatest disadvantage of this method (Steyn et al., 1994) is that a complete list of all the population elements must be available before it can be applied. Demographic information, such as family size, parents' educational level and parents' occupational level, was asked for from each participant to enhance data analysis, but was not used to select the sample. The participants were selected from two high schools in Gauteng (one government school and one private school). At first, permission was requested from the principals of the schools concerned, and later informed consent was requested from the participants themselves.

3.2.7 Proposed procedure for data analysis

Correlation will be used to determine the relationship between self-esteem, educational aspirations and occupational aspirations of black South African adolescent girls. This study measures the association, strength and direction of the relationship between self-esteem and educational and occupational aspirations (Neuman, 1997). Multiple regression analysis will be used for data analysis.

This is a method used for studying the effects of more than one predictor variable on one criterion variable using principles of correlation and regression (Kerlinger, 1986; Sheskin, 1997).

3.3 Conclusion

The plans, procedures and considerations for executing this research study have been delineated in this chapter. The results of the study will be reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the research. The first section consists of a demographic profile of the participants. The second section addresses the age at which students expect to leave high school, and the levels of high school education and further education that they want to attain. The fourth section deals with occupational aspirations, the fifth aspect is the Interco relational matrix for the measures, and the sixth aspect is stepwise multiple regression.

4.2 The sample

The sample consisted of 161 black South African adolescent girls from two high schools in Atteridgeville (a township west of Pretoria). The girls were in grades 10 and 11. Forty-two percent were from a private high school, and 58% were from a government high school.

Table 4.1 Distribution of respondents by school

School	Frequency	Percentage
Private	67	42
Government	94	58
Total	161	100

Table 4.2 below depicts a breakdown of the grades of the participants in the two schools.

Table 4.2 Grade vs school

		Grade		
		10	11	Total
Private school	Count	33	34	67
	% total	20.5%	21.1%	41.6%
Government school	Count	48	46	94
	% total	29.8%	28.6%	58.4%
Total	Count	81	80	161
	% total	50.3%	49.7%	100%

4.2.1 Age

The average age of the respondents was 16.61 years (sd = 1.48), with a range from 14 to 23. The girls from the government school were significantly older ($t = 5.3, p < 0.001$) than the girls from the private school.

Fifty seven percent of the girls were 16 years old, followed by 35% who were 15 years old and 31% who were 17 years old. It is interesting to note that all the girls whose ages fell between 20 and 23 were from the government school and were in grade 11. The following graph shows the breakdown of schools and ages.

4.2.2 Family size

Students were asked about the sizes of their families, i.e. how many older/younger brothers and/or sisters they had. The numbers of children were grouped, so that families of one to two children were classified as small families, families of three to four children were classified as medium-sized families, and families of five or more children were classified as large families. The X2 statistics were used to analyse the respondents' family sizes. The following table depicts the students' responses.

Table 4.3 Family size

	Small (1-2)	Medium (3-4)	Large (5+)	Totals
Private	21	33	13	67
Government	19	41	34	94
Totals	40	74	47	161

The chi square = 6.0 (5.99), df = 2, p= 0.005.

46% of the respondents belong to medium-sized families, 29% to large families and 25% to a small family.

4.2.3 Parents' educational levels

When asked about their parents' levels of education, 81% gave responses for their mothers' levels of education, leaving only 19% who responded that they did not know their mothers' levels of education. For their fathers' levels of education, only 40.2% responded, leaving 59.8% who stated that they did not know. The X² statistics were used again.

Table 4.4 Mothers' educational level

	Some high school	Completed high school	Post-matric diploma	University degree	Post-graduate degree	Total
Private	4	12	28	10	6	60
Government	26	24	16	3	0	69
Totals	30	36	44	13	6	129

Chi square = 32.71, df = 4, p<0.001. Because three cells have less than five people, the Mann Whitney U test was conducted. Mann Whitney = 919.0, p< 0.001. Seven students from the private school reported that they did not know the levels of their mothers' education, while 25 students from the government high school reported that they did not know the levels of their mothers' education.

Table 4.5 Fathers' educational level

	Some high school	Completed high school	Post-matric diploma	University degree	Post-graduate degree	Total
Private	1	6	10	7	1	25
Government	15	12	9	3	0	39
Totals	16	18	19	10	1	64

The chi square statistic is 14.54, $df = 4$, $p = 0.006$. Four cells have less than five people so the Mann Whitney U test was conducted. $U = 225.0$, $p < 0.001$.

Forty-two girls from the private school reported that they did not know the levels of their fathers' education, while 55 girls from the government school said that they did not know their fathers' levels of education. For both mothers' and fathers' educational levels, the government school girls had more parents who had completed only some high school, while the private school girls had more parents who had a degree or a postgraduate degree.

4.2.4 Parents' occupational levels

Students were asked about their parents' occupations. Forty-one percent of the girls reported that their mothers are unemployed, while 55% reported that that their fathers are unemployed. The chi-square was used to analyse the responses.

Table 4.6 Mothers' occupational levels

	Unemployed	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Professional	Total
Private	13	6	32	12	4	67
Government	53	16	20	5	0	94
Totals	66	22	52	17	4	161

$\chi^2 = 34.893$, $df = 4$, $p = <0.000$. The Mann Whitney U test was conducted because two cells had less than five people. $U = 2585.500$, $p < 0.000$.

Table 4.7 Fathers' occupational levels

	Unemployed	Unskilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Professional	Total
Private	31	10	15	6	5	67
Government	57	18	18	0	1	94
Totals	88	29	33	6	6	161

$\chi^2 = 14.795$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.005$. Two cells had less than five people, so the Mann Whitney U test was conducted. $U = 2469.000$, $p < 0.010$.

4.3. Age at which to leave high school

Students were asked at what age they were expecting to leave high school. The following table depicts their responses.

Table 4.8 Ages at which respondents expect to leave high school

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16	3	1.9
17	63	39.1
18(+)	95	59
	N=161	100

4.3.1 Level of high school education

When the students were asked what level of high school education they would really like to obtain, it was clear that the majority of the students wanted a matric exemption (91.3%) and 1.8% wanted a matric pass, while 0.6% wanted just a grade 11 pass. Cross tabulation using SPSS was done, to find out the level of high school education in relation to each school.

Table 4.9 High school education desired and school

School	Grade 11	Matric Pass	Matric Exemption
Private	0(0%)	2(3%)	65(97%)
Government	1(1.1%)	11(12%)	82(87%)

Table 4.9 shows that there is no significant difference in the level of high school education the students in the different schools want to attain.

4.3.2 Further education

Students had to indicate what further education or training they would like to undertake after they leave high school. Table 4.10 shows their responses.

Table 4.10 Further education desired

	Frequency	Percentage
Further education		
Apprenticeship	7	4.3
Commercial training	31	19.3
Technical college	36	22.4
Teachers' training College	2	1.2
University	85	52.8
	N=161	100

Table 4.11 depicts the responses in a breakdown by school of further education desires.

Table 4.11 Further education desires and school

	Apprenticeship	Commercial training	Technical college	Teachers' training	University
Private	2(3%)	14(21%)	12(18%)	0(0%)	39(58%)
Government	5(5.3%)	17(18.1%)	24(25%)	2(2%)	46(49%)

Looking at tables 4.9 to 4.11, it is clear that high school educational aspirations are in line with post-high school educational aspirations, because the majority of the students wanted a matric exemption and all of them aspired to some further education or training after high school, mostly at university.

4.4 Occupational aspirations

Occupational aspirations were measured using an adapted version of Holland's (1973), cited in Westaway (1983) procedure for eliciting occupational daydreams. The original procedure asked students to list eight occupations or careers that they wanted to pursue, placing the most recent job choice first. Scores were assigned to each of the occupations listed, based upon their training requirements (Farmer, 1980), and coded from 1 (less than matric) to 6 (Master's Degree). Most students in this study listed fewer than eight occupations, and only the first three listed by each has been taken into account.

The following tables show the students' responses (the chi-square statistic was calculated for the first three occupations).

Table 4.12 Occupation 1

School	Diploma/ Certificate	Bachelor's Degree	Honour's Degree	Master's Degree	Total
Private	9	35	8	8	60
Government	27	39	15	9	90
Total	36	74	23	17	150

$\chi^2 = 5.631, df = 3, p = 0.131.$

Table 4.13 Occupation 2

School	Diploma/ Certificate	Bachelor's Degree	Honour's Degree	Master's Degree	Total
Private	12	33	8	7	60
Government	36	43	5	6	90
Total	48	76	13	13	150

$\chi^2 = 8.422, df = 3, p = 0.04.$

Table 4.14 Occupation 3

School	Diploma/ Certificate	Bachelor's Degree	Honour's Degree	Master's Degree	Total
Private	11	34	10	5	60
Government	45	33	7	5	90
Total	56	67	17	10	150

$\chi^2 = 15.820, df = 3, p = 0.001.$

4.5 Inter-corelational matrix for the measures

Educational and occupational aspirations are significantly related ($p = 0.02$). Individual value and social approval for educational aspirations are significantly related ($p < 0.01$), and individual value for and social approval of occupational aspirations are also significantly related ($p < 0.01$).

Social approval is more important to educational and occupational aspirations than the value an individual places on them.

Self-esteem is significantly related to school ability ($r = 0.33, p < 0.001$). High levels of self-esteem equal high levels of school ability.

School ability is significantly related to individual value for educational aspirations ($r = 0.31, p < 0.001$), social approval for educational aspirations ($r = 0.20, p = 0.01$) and social approval for occupational aspirations ($r = 0.22, p < 0.001$).

Table 4.15 Inter-correlational matrix

	2	3	4	5	6
1.Educational aspirations	0.19	0.03	0.26	0.10	0.22
2.Occupational aspirations		- 0.05	- 0.07	0.07	0.21
3. Individual value for educational aspirations			0.35	0.17	0.17
4. Social approval for educational aspirations				0.01	0.31
5. Individual value for occupational aspirations					0.41
6.Social approval for occupational aspirations					—

The t-test for equality of means was conducted, and shows that the government school girls are slightly higher than the private school girls on school ability ($p = 0.04$), while the private school girls are significantly higher on occupational aspirations ($p = 0.03$) than the government school girls.

4.6 Stepwise multiple regression

Table 4.6.1

Stepwise regression predicting educational and occupational aspirations

Step	Variable entered	R2	R2 Change	F
Educational Aspirations				
1	Social approval	0.091	0.091	13.64*
Occupational Aspirations				
1	Mother's education	0.100	0.100	12.28*
2	Social approval	0.171	0.171	11.52*

* p < 0.001

- ❖ Social approval for educational aspirations explained 9% of the variance in educational aspirations.
- ❖ Mother's education explained 10% of the variance in occupational aspirations.
- ❖ Social approval explained an additional 7% of the variance.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 The sample

The sample for this study consisted of 67 girls from a private school and 94 girls from a government school. Both these schools are located in the same township, Atteridgeville, to the west of Pretoria.

5.1.1 Age of respondents

The girls from the government school were significantly older than the girls from the private school. This could be because in most cases students from government schools tend to repeat classes more often than students from private schools do. Most of the girls from both schools (57%) were 16 years old, while those girls whose ages fell between 20 and 23 were from the government school, and were in Grade 11.

5.1.2 The family size of respondents

Forty-six percent of the respondents belonged to a medium-sized family (i.e. they had two to three siblings). Twenty-nine percent belonged to a large family, while 25% belonged to a small family. It is interesting to note that 72% of the girls from the government school belonged to a large family, while only 8% of the girls from the private school were from a large family. Family size plays a role in shaping the self-esteem of these girls, because adolescents need attention from family members.

5.1.3 Parents' educational levels

5.1.3.1 Mothers' educational levels

Most of the girls (81%) knew only their mothers' educational levels, because either they came from single parent families or their fathers had passed away. For the mothers' levels of education, 37% of the girls from the government school reported that their mothers had some high school education, while 7% of the girls from the private school reported that their mothers had some high school education.

Twenty percent of the mothers of the girls in the private school had completed high school, while 35% of the girls from the government school reported that their mothers had completed high school. Forty-seven percent of the girls in the private school reported that their mothers had a post-matric diploma, while 23% of the girls from the government school reported this. It is interesting to note that 17% of the mothers of the girls in the private school had university degrees, while only 4% of the mothers of girls from the government school had university degrees.

Ten percent of the girls in the private school reported that their mothers had postgraduate degrees, while none of the mothers of girls in the government school had postgraduate degrees.

The level of the mothers' education for the girls in the private school was higher than the level of the mothers' education for the girls in the government school. This is to be expected, because those mothers who can afford to send their children to a private school are usually more educated and have better jobs.

5.1.3.2 Fathers' levels of education

Forty-two girls from the private school reported that they did not know the level of their fathers' education, while 55 girls from the government school said that they did not know their fathers' educational level. Four percent of the girls from the private school reported that their fathers had postgraduate degrees, while none from the government school reported this. Twenty-eight percent of the girls from the private school had fathers who had university degrees, compared to only 8% from the

government school. Forty percent of the fathers of girls in the private school had post-matric diplomas, while only 23 percent of the fathers of girls in the government school had post-matric diplomas.

Twenty-four percent of the girls from the private school reported that their fathers had completed high school, while 31% of the girls from the government school reported this. Four percent of the girls from the private school mentioned that their fathers had some high school education, while 38% of the girls from the government school reported that their fathers had some high school education.

It is interesting to note that, as with the mothers' levels of education, the girls who were from a private school had more fathers with better levels of education than the girls who were at a government school. A parent's having a higher level of education will, in most cases, influence children to attain a similar level of education or to improve on it.

5.1.4 Parents' occupational levels

The levels of parents' occupations help in shaping the levels their children will attain, particularly if the children themselves have the desire and ability to have a better occupation. In this study, 41% of the girls reported that their mothers were unemployed, while 55% reported that their fathers were unemployed.

5.1.4.1 Mothers' occupational levels

Fifty three of the girls from the government school reported that their mothers were unemployed, while only 13 girls from the private school reported that their mothers were unemployed. Six of the mothers of girls in the private school were unskilled, while 32 were semi-skilled. In the government school, 16 of the girls' mothers were unskilled, while 20 were semi-skilled. Twelve of the mothers of girls in the private school were skilled and four were professionals, while five of the mothers of girls in the government school were skilled and none of the girls reported that their mothers were professionals.

This shows the differences that exist in the mothers' occupational levels. Most of the occupations of the mothers of girls from the private school required a higher level of education, and thus it appears that they want their children, too, to have a better education, and so send them to a private school.

5.1.4.2 Fathers' occupational levels

In the private school, 31 of the fathers were unemployed, while at the government school 57 were unemployed. Ten of the fathers in the private school were unskilled, while 15 were semi-skilled. Eighteen of the fathers of girls in the government school were unskilled and 18 were semi-skilled. Five of the fathers of girls in the private school were professionals, while only one father with a daughter at the government school fell in that category.

There is not much difference between the fathers' occupational levels in the private school and in the government school. In most cases, the mothers had better occupational levels than the fathers. When girls choose their occupations, they will, in most cases, look up to their mothers, rather than their fathers, because either their fathers are unemployed or they come from single-parent families headed by women.

5.2 Age at which to leave high school

Two percent of the girls indicated that they would leave high school when they were 16 years of age, 39.1% would leave high school when they were 17 years old and 59% of the girls would leave high school when they were between 18 and 23 years of age. The girls who reported that they would leave high school at 20 to 23 years of age were all at the government school.

In most cases, students at the private school were much younger than students at the government school. It is possible that this could be because students at government schools tend to repeat classes much more often than students at private schools do. Teachers at private schools give their students individual supervision, which may account for their students' wanting to complete high school.

5.3 Educational and occupational aspirations

The results indicated that the majority of this sample aspired to either a Grade 12 level of education or a University Entrance Matriculation Certificate.

The overall results on the educational aspirations of this sample of adolescent girls indicated that these girls intend to graduate from high school and achieve higher levels of education beyond high school. Marini (1980), in her study of American adolescents, found that girls are more likely than boys to complete high school, but less likely than boys to aspire to high educational levels on completion of high school. Westaway (1983: 97), in her study on white adolescent girls in South Africa, found that although the majority of her sample intended to graduate from high school, only a minority aspired to achieve higher levels of education beyond high school.

It would appear that black South African adolescent girls have higher levels of educational aspirations than American adolescents or white South African adolescent girls. However, the time differences between the three studies on adolescents must be borne in mind.

Occupational aspirations were assessed on the basis of their training requirements, since it was assumed that girls of this age were capable of understanding the lengths and levels of training required for the jobs to which they aspired.

On the first choice of occupation, which the students wanted more than the others, 49% of the girls aspired to occupations necessitating a degree. When this finding was broken down by school, it was shown that 58% of the students at the private school, as against 43% of the girls from the government school, aspired to an occupation necessitating a degree. Thirty percent of the girls from the government school aspired to an occupation that required only a diploma or certificate, as against only 15% of the girls from the private school.

On the second choice of occupation, 55% of the girls from the private school aspired to an occupation necessitating a degree, as against only 48% of the girls from the

government school. Forty percent of the girls from the government school aspired to an occupation necessitating a diploma or certificate, as against only 20% of the girls from the private school.

On the third choice of occupation, 57% of the girls from the private school aspired to an occupation necessitating a degree, as against only 37% of the girls from the government school. Fifty percent of the girls from the government school aspired to an occupation necessitating a diploma or certificate, as against only 18% of the girls from the private school.

Occupational aspirations were therefore in line with post-high school educational aspirations, since 52.8% of this sample aspired to a university education. Occupations 1 (Chi-square = 5.63, df = 3, p = 0.03), two (Chi-square = 8.43, df = 3, p = 0.04) and three (Chi-square = 15.82, df = 3, p = 0.001) were all statistically significant. On all these chosen occupations, it was clear that the private school girls had higher occupational aspirations than the government school girls. Therefore, it can be concluded that their type of schooling did play an important role in the occupational aspirations of these adolescent girls.

Westaway (1983) found that 42% of her sample aspired to occupations that would require only one year of training after leaving high school with a matriculation certificate. Occupational aspirations were, therefore, not in line with post-high school educational aspirations, since 30% of that sample aspired to a university education.

5.4 Hypothesis 1 Educational aspirations are positively related to occupational aspirations. (Aim1: To ascertain the nature of the occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls).

Some of the girls who participated in this study were well aware of the relationship between their levels of education and the jobs to which they aspired. Significant positive relationships were found between high school, post-high school, and overall educational and occupational aspirations. For this sample, education beyond high school was perceived as important, and as equal to high occupational attainment and

education during the high school years. Occupational and educational aspirations were related ($r = 0.19$, $p = 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 received support.

5.5 Hypothesis 2

Self-Esteem is positively related to school ability.

(Aim1: To ascertain the nature of the occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls).

For this sample, self-esteem was significantly related to school ability ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for hypothesis 2.

5.6 Hypothesis 3

Type of schooling significantly affects educational

and occupational aspirations.

(Aim 2: To determine the relationship between black adolescents' self-esteem and occupational aspirations).

In this study, the type of schooling did play a major role in influencing occupational aspirations, but not in influencing educational aspirations. In the discussion of educational aspirations, 52.8% of the sample aspired to a university education. Fifty-eight percent of the girls from the private school and 49% of the girls from the government school wanted to further their educations at universities.

Looking at occupational aspirations, the majority of the girls aspired to occupations necessitating degrees. Looking at the first choice of occupation, which was seen as more important than the others, 58% of the girls from the private school aspired to an occupation necessitating a degree, while 43% of the girls from the government school aspired to an occupation necessitating a degree. The girls from the private school had higher occupational aspirations than the girls from the government school, and therefore it can be concluded that type of schooling affects occupational aspirations, but not educational aspirations. Hypothesis 3 received partial support.

5.7 Hypothesis 4

Self-esteem is significantly related to educational

and occupational aspirations.

(Aim 2: To determine the relationship between black adolescents' self-esteem and occupational aspirations).

In this study, although coefficient alpha for the self-esteem scale was 0.94 for all the adolescent girls, self-esteem was not related to either educational or occupational aspirations. The girls had high levels of educational and occupational aspirations, but this was not related to their levels of self-esteem.

This finding that self-esteem is not related to educational and occupational aspirations is supported by Farmer (1980), who did not find that self-esteem was a significant predictor of achievement motivation. Nor did Zuckerman (1980) find that self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg scale, was a significant predictor of high educational goals. In contrast, Westaway (1983), in the study she did with white adolescent's girls in South Africa, found that self-esteem was a significant predictor of high educational aspirations. Hypothesis 4 did not receive support.

5.8 Hypothesis 5 School ability is significantly related to educational and occupational aspirations.

In this study, school ability was significantly related to individual value for educational aspirations, social approval for educational aspirations and social approval for occupational aspirations, but was less significant for educational and occupational aspirations. Approval of these girls' educational and occupational aspirations from their family members, friends and teachers at school played a role in their school ability.

The more an individual has high value for her educational aspirations, and the more social approval she gets for those aspirations, the higher her school ability. Hypothesis 5 did not receive support.

5.9 Hypothesis 6 Parental educational level and social approval are more important predictors of high educational and occupational aspirations than self-esteem, self-perceived ability and individual value for the aspiration.

(Aim 3: To find out whether parents' level of education has an influence on black adolescents' occupational aspirations).

In this study, parental educational level did not predict educational and occupational aspirations, but social approval for educational aspirations, individual value for occupational aspirations and social approval for occupational aspirations were predictors of high educational and occupational aspirations.

It must be borne in mind that 19% of the girls in this study reported that they did not know their mothers' levels of education, while 59.8% of the girls reported that they did not know their fathers' levels of education. Twelve of the girls from the private school reported that their mothers had completed high school, and ten reported that their mothers had university degrees, while 24 of the girls from the government school reported that their mothers had completed high school and only three reported that their mothers had university degrees.

Six of the girls from the private school reported that their fathers had completed high school, while 12 of the girls from the government school reported the same. Seven of the girls from the private school reported that their fathers had university degrees, as against only three from the government school.

Parental education did not predict high educational and occupational aspirations, but social approval, self-perceived ability and individual value for the aspiration did. Therefore, hypothesis 6 received partial support.

5.10 Summary

High school educational aspirations were in line with post-high school educational aspirations, because the majority of the girls wanted a matric exemption pass, wanted to go to universities and wanted occupations that necessitated degrees.

Family size and parents' educational and occupational levels made no significant difference to either educational or occupational aspirations. Type of schooling did influence occupational aspirations, but not educational aspirations and self-esteem.

It is important to bear in mind that although the type of schooling did play an important role in the occupational aspirations of the adolescent girls under the study, it is important to bear in mind that socio-economic factor is the important determining variable, since socio-economics influences which children go to public schools and which go to private schools.

It was interesting to find that individual value for educational aspirations and social approval for educational aspirations were significantly related, and that the individual value for occupational aspirations and social approval for occupational aspirations were significant.

The t-test for equality of means showed that the government school girls were slightly higher than the private school girls on school ability, while the private school girls were significantly higher on occupational aspirations than the government school girls.

5.11 Recommendations

Studies designed to assess and compare educational and occupational aspirations in South Africa could extend the findings of this study. Furthermore, results from South Africa could be compared with results from other countries, in order to determine whether individuals in different cultures have similar or different aspirations for the future.

It would be interesting employ a longitudinal design to ascertain how much influence aspirations have on later attainment for individuals in South Africa.

Given the results of the present study on the relationships between self-esteem, self-perceived ability and aspirations, future research could investigate whether these self-evaluation variables have similar or different effects when sex, race, or age differences are taken into account.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF STUDENTS FEELING ABOUT THEMSELVES AND PLANS FOR THEIR EDUCATION AND FUTURE OCCUPATION

INFORMED CONSENT

AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT.

TITLE OF STUDY: Self-esteem in relation to the educational and occupational aspirations of black South African Adolescent girls.

1. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to ascertain the educational and occupational aspirations of black adolescent girls in relation to their self-esteem and determine the relationship among the value on individual places on her goals and self-esteem.

2. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

For this study, personal questions will be asked concerning yourself. The questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes of your time.

3. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY

This study will provide a better understanding of the educational and vocational aspirations of black adolescent girls in a South African setting and also provide a starting point for counselling interventions.

4. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. No compensation for participation will be given. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

All records obtained in this study will be regarded as confidential.

6. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the above information before signing this consent form. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

Interviewee Signature

Date

Witness

Date

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF STUDENTS FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES AND PLANS FOR THEIR EDUCATION AND FUTURE OCCUPATION

I would like to ask you some questions about yourself, and about your plans for your education and future occupation. You may have asked yourself whether you should gain more education or find yourself a job after passing matric (Grade 12). You have also probably thought about a future occupation.

Please try to answer the questions as honestly as possible. All the information you give will be treated as CONFIDENTIAL, and you will only be seen by myself. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers.

PLEASE **PRINT** YOUR ANSWERS CLEARLY IN THIS SECTION.

1. Name _____ of _____ school
2. Grade _____
3. Date _____ of _____ Birth
4. Age _____
5. How many older brothers and sisters do you have?
Brothers _____ Sisters _____
6. How many younger brothers and sisters do you have
Brothers _____ Sisters _____
7. What is your Father's occupation? (Please give details)

8. What is your Mother's occupation? (Please give details)

IN THIS SECTION, MAKE A CROSS (X) NEXT TO THE RELEVANT STATEMENT

9. What is the level of your Father's education?

- a) Grade 10 or less
- b) Grade 11
- c) Grade 12
- d) One year post matric diploma
- e) Two or more years post matric diploma
- f) University degree
- g) Post graduate University degree
- h) Other (Please specify)

i) Don't know

10. What is the level of your mother's education?

- a) Grade 10 or less
- b) Grade 11
- c) Grade 12
- d) One year post matric diploma
- e) Two or more years post matric diploma
- f) University degree
- g) Post graduate University degree
- h) Other (Please specify)

i) Don't know

IN THIS SECTION MAKE A CROSS (X) ON THE RELEVANT NUMBER

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
11. I feel that I'm a person of worth at least on an equal basis with others	1	2	3	4
12. I feel that I have a number of good qualities	1	2	3	4
13. All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	1	2	3	4
14. I am able to do things as well as others	1	2	3	4
15. I feel I do not have much to be proud of	1	2	3	4
16. I take a positive attitude toward myself	1	2	3	4
17. On the whole I am satisfied with myself	1	2	3	4
18. I wish I could have more respect for myself	1	2	3	4
19. I feel useless at times	1	2	3	4
20. At times I think I am no good at all	1	2	3	4

IN THIS SECTION, PLACE A CROSS-(X) NEXT TO THE RELEVANT STATEMENT.

21. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with your **close friends**?

- a) I am the best
- b) I am above average
- c) I am average
- d) I am below average
- e) I am the poorest

22. How do you rate yourself in school ability compared with **others in your class** at school?

- a) I am the best
- b) I am above average
- c) I am average
- d) I am below average
- e) I am the poorest

23. Think of all the other **classes in your year** at school. Where would you place yourself in terms of your school ability?

- a) Among the best
- b) Above average
- c) Average
- d) Below average
- e) Among the poorest

24. To become a teacher, nurse or a pharmacist, you have to go to college or University and pass difficult examinations. How likely could you do this?

- a) Very likely
- b) Somewhat likely
- c) Not sure
- d) Unlikely

e) Most unlikely

25. In your own opinion, how good do you think your schoolwork is?

a) Excellent

b) Good

c) Average

d) Below average

e) Much below average

26. What kinds of marks do you really think you are capable of getting?

a) Mostly 10/10

b) Mostly 7/10

c) Mostly 5/10

d) Mostly 3/10

e) Mostly 1/10

27. At what age do you expect to leave high school?

16 years

17 years

18 years or older

28. What level of high school education would you really like to obtain?

a) Grade 10

b) Grade 11

c) Matric pass

d) Matric exemption

29. What further education or training after you have left high school, would you really like to undertake?

a) Apprenticeship

b) Commercial training

- c) Technical college
- d) Teacher training college
- e) University
- f) Other (Please specify)

IN THIS SECTION, GIVE A RATING FROM 1 (VERY UNIMPORTANT) TO 10 (VERY IMPORTANT) FOR THE LEVEL OF FURTHER EDUCATION OR SPECIAL TRAINING YOU HAVE CHOSEN.

30. How important is your choice of further education or special training to yourself?

31. How important do you think your choice of further education or special training is

- a) To your mother
- b) To your father
- c) To your teachers
- d) To other members of your family
- e) To your close friends

32. Rank Order 8 occupation you would like to pursue

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____
- h) _____

IN THIS SECTION, GIVE A RATING FROM 1 (VERY UNIMPORTANT) TO 10 (VERY IMPORTANT) FOR YOUR FIRST CHOICE OF OCCUPATION.

33. How important is your first choice of occupation to yourself?

34. How important do you think your first choice of occupation is

a) To your mother

b) To your father

c) To your teachers

d) To other members of your family

e) To your close friends

35. If you have any comments please write them in the space provided

7 THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION IN FILLING IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE