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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT DISCREPANCIES AND  
THE EXPRESSION OF NEED ACHIEVEMENT IN CHILDREN

by

Ian Griggs

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1967

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ABSTRACT

Relationship Between Self-Concept Discrepancies and  
the Expression of Need Achievement in Children

by

Ian W. Griggs, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1967

Major Professor: Dr. Arden Frandsen  
Department: Psychology

The present study was designed to test the hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between self-concept discrepancies and expressed need for achievement.

A self-concept discrepancy score was obtained and a low and high discrepancy group was isolated.

Expressed need for achievement was measured by the use of the Thematic Apperception Test and scored according to the Atkinson method.

Mean comparisons of need achievement scores of subjects whose discrepancies between actual and ideal self-concept were in the upper or lower one-third of the distribution were found not to be significant at the 5 percent level of confidence.

(48 pages)

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Personality theorists have suggested that imbalances within the individual's self-concept structure may lead to many and varied attempts to alleviate this condition. Investigators such as Brownfain (1952), Hilgard (1949), Murphy (1947), and Rogers (1947), have long been concerned with the relationship between the conflictive aspects of the self, and other personality variables. Among these investigators there seems to be general agreement that there may exist conscious or unconscious conflict between aspects of the self which will show itself in behavioral terms.

Since, in our culture, achievement is emphasized and approved, children, whose actual self-concepts fail to approximate their ideal self-concepts, might be expected to be concerned with achievement. This concept of achievement motivation has been developed by McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1953) and is defined as "concern over competition with standards of excellence," e.g., "winning or doing as well or better than someone else." The instrument for measuring this motive, n-achievement, is based on verbal fantasy responses to a series of stimulus pictures, essentially the thematic apperception method.

In the present study, it is expected that large self-concept discrepancies would be somehow related to high generalized achievement motivation. Such a prediction was made on the basis of a study

by Weinberger (1951), which suggested that subjects with high motivation for achievement rated achievement related traits as important more frequently than subjects having low achievement motivation. However, these high n-achievement subjects rated these same traits as not characteristic of them. This implied that dissatisfaction with the self was a general feature of the high n-achievement subjects but was not found in the low n-achievement group.

It is the purpose of the present study to investigate this relationship between actual and ideal self-concept discrepancies and expressed need for achievement. Specifically then, it is expected that subjects who show greater discrepancies between their ideal-self and actual-self ratings will show a correspondingly higher level of n-achievement motivation than those with small or insignificant discrepancies.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During the past ten years, research psychologists have done extensive work in the fields of both self-concept relationships and achievement motivation. Because of the abundance of material in both of these major areas, it became apparent that a comprehensive study of this particular topic would best be covered by categorizing the previous research into three major divisions. The first of these categories is entitled, the self-concept. This area will be concerned with the development and maturational changes of the self-concept, and its influence upon theoretical relevant variables and consequent behavior. Various measures of the self-concept and their derivation will also be discussed. The second category, fantasy in childhood and adolescence, is concerned with the effects of age upon verbal fantasy response to pictorial stimuli. The last category is entitled, the self-concept and its relationship to n-Achievement. The studies cited in this section will be concerned with the effect of self-concept discrepancies on the expression of n-Achievement.

#### The self-concept

Hilgard (1962) states that self-perception is an achievement that arises from growth and experiences. He feels that a newborn child makes no distinction between himself and the things outside himself. As both maturation and learning progress, the child begins to realize that his fingers are tied onto his body and his clothes are not. He

learns to stand-off and take a look at himself, to see his behavior in relation to the rest of the environment around him. The result of this perception is the complex awareness of self.

Hilgard further remarks that self-perception, as well as the personality, is a creation of complex interpersonal relations and of social interaction with other people. Our self-perceptions are formed largely by the acceptances and rejections of other people, although we may in self-defense deny what they see in us. Good mental health requires that our self-perceptions correspond in general to the perceptions others have of us.

Consider what we mean by prestige, jealousy, vanity, shame or guilt. Self-regard appears in all of these. Detach them from a perception of the self, and as just words, they will have very little meaning to the individual. Hilgard states further that a system of values and attitudes is built around situations that have goal character, situations that create either self-enchancement or self-disparagement. An ideal-self (what I would like to be) is developed, and a person judges his actual conduct against this ideal. This ideal and the self-judgement combine to give self-perception a central place in social motivation.

Motivational researchers such as Combs and Snygg (1959) postulate that the self is an object of primary value to us, and that the maintenance and enhancement of the self is the central feature of social motivation. Because we perceive the self as something of value, its success and failures are extremely important to us.

Using behavior and verbalizations of nursery school children, (age 1 month to 4 years) Ames (1952) built up a developmental picture

of the sense of self as it appears to change from age to age. She states, that between 1 and 12 months the infant discovers himself. He finds a place in, yet an apartness from, the outside world. At 2 years, the child is basically egocentric with his primary concern being his own individual activities. At about 30 months, he begins to develop interpersonal relations, and at 40 months, a child-child relationship definitely prevails. At 4 years interchange with other children is the almost exclusive interpersonal relation. Heterosexual friendships are strong now, and jealousy may be expressed freely in such relations.

Developmental changes in self-ideal congruence were found in a study conducted by Perkins (1958) with fourth and sixth grade children, chosen from a suburban county school system in Maryland. Evidence of childrens self-concepts and ideal-concepts were obtained by having all children perform a self-sort and an ideal-sort task. Correlating the self-sort with the ideal sort provided a measure of self-ideal congruency. The major findings of concern here are twofold. (a) The self-concepts and ideal selves of children become increasingly and significantly congruent through time. (b) The self-ideal self congruencies of girls generally are significantly greater than those of boys.

Perkins hypothesized that changes in self-ideal congruency of children in general may be a manifestation of growth and development and may reflect the positive influence of school experience. He states that the greater self-ideal congruencies of girls as compared to boys may relate to their greater physical maturity and may be influenced by the schools feminine mores and codes which tend to favor girls.

Smith and Lebo (1956) feel that a person's body characteristics might exert a central influence on the development of his self-concept. The problem they investigated was the interrelationship between the self-concept of male subjects, age 12 through 15, and physical maturity. Pre- and post-pubescent males differed significantly in certain projective aspects of their human figure drawings, with the post-pubescent males projecting stronger feelings of virility and masculinity into their drawings.

Another developmental trend in the ideal-self is shown in a study conducted by Havinghurst, Robinson, and Dorr (1946). This ideal-self developmental trend was revealed by self-reports by both pre-pubescent and pubescent subjects. The data was obtained by asking boys and girls to write a brief essay on the subject, "The person I would like to be like." The authors state that the developmental trend followed a predictable pattern of progression. The ideal-self commences in childhood as an identification with a parental figure, moves during middle childhood and early adolescence through a stage of romanticism and glamour, and culminates in late adolescence as a composite of desirable characteristics which are symbolized by an attractive, visible young adult, or simply by an imaginary figure.

These previously mentioned studies seem to indicate that the individuals ideal and actual concepts of himself achieve a rather high degree of organization during the course of development. Lechy (1945) states that eventually this self-concept development begins to resist change once a satisfactory self-definition has taken place. Brownfain (1952) feels that this self-concept stabilization is enough of a dimension of personality that it can be employed as a significant

predictor of behavior.

Before an objective behavioral prediction can be made by the use of either the stability or the instability of the self, it is apparent that some types of quantitative measure of it must be obtained. Wylie (1961) states that the most frequently used instruments for the measurement of the self, and self regard in particular, are the questionnaire, rating scales, and the adjective check list. In terms of the operations involved in isolating general self-regard, several categories of instruments can be found. They are as follows: (a) those which attempt to tap self-regard directly, i.e., asking the subject how he feels about his standing on a particular stated characteristic; (b) those which use the previously mentioned approach and also derive a discrepancy score from separately actual and ideal-self ratings; (c) those which utilize primarily a (self-ideal) discrepancy score; (d) those which rely on the report of the actual self only, with the ideal end of the scale being controlled by the experimenter.

Berger (1952), Phillips (1951), and Fey (1957) employed the use of omnibus type questionnaires in an attempt to measure self-acceptance by the direct approach method. They hypothesized that acceptance of self should lead to acceptance of others, and therefore the acceptance of self-score should correlate positively with the acceptance of other's scores. These predictions were generally confirmed, with correlations ranging from +.36 to +.74. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting this information. In all of the instruments that attempt to tap self-regard directly, a global score is obtained by a direct totaling of the items. In no instance has there been shown inter-item objectivity where self-regard measurement is concerned,

In the development of Brownfain's (1952) two-part index of self-evaluation, he hypothesized that the instability of the self-concept might be associated with "poor adjustment." He found that stable subjects gave themselves more favorable "realistic private self-concept" ratings, they had a significantly narrower range between their "realistic private" and "social self" ratings, and had overall healthier scores on the GAMIN Inventory.

Although the data is far from adequate, the few previously mentioned measures of self-concept have much more information available on norms, reliability, and validity than any other instrument of this type. For the remaining rating scales, questionnaires, and adjective check-lists, which attempt to measure self-concept, there is little or no available information concerning reliability or validity. In most cases they have been developed and used for only one particular study.

Self-report instruments which incorporate a (Self-Ideal) discrepancy score have been used quite extensively by various self-concept theorists. The Index of Adjustment and Values, devised by Bills, Vance, and McLean (1951), being the most widely known measure of this type. This instrument was designed to measure variables of importance in self-concept research, and has shown some promise as a measure of self-acceptance.

In separate studies, Bills found that a high acceptance of the self score on the Index of Adjustment and Values (1951) was significantly associated with greater perceptual accuracy (1953), lower incidence of depression signs (1954), and estimates of performance on a level of aspiration task (1953). Other experimenters such as Cowen, Heilizer, Axelrod, and Alexander (1957) have found that acceptance of self differed

significantly between those subjects who scored high and low on the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale lie score. The authors feel that this finding might shed some light on the role of defensiveness in test taking.

A study conducted by Lipsitt (1963) employed both self-concept and discrepancy measures in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade children and was concerned primarily with: (a) the comparative reliabilities of the discrepancy scores and the self-concept scores obtained by administering a 22 item adjective check-list; (b) the relationship of each of these two measures to scores on the childrens form of the manifest anxiety scale.

The anxiety scale and the adjective check-list was administered twice to approximately 300 subjects at a two week interval. A discrepancy score was obtained by subtracting the self-concept ratings from the ideal-self ratings. It was found that the self-concept rating taken by itself was more reliable than the discrepancy measure, and that the self-concept measure was more highly related to CMAS score than was the discrepancy score. Significant correlations were obtained for all grades and sex combinations between CMAS and self-concept scores, with high anxious subjects producing low self-concept ratings.

Another instrument that attempts to measure general self-regard through the use of a discrepancy score is the Worchel Self-Activity Inventory (1957). This device is a self-concept measure used to determine adaptability to military life, and as an inventory for predicting maladjustment (1947). Also, the Interpersonal Check-List designed by LaForge and Suczek (1955) is another index of this type. Both of these scales show some promise as experimental instruments,

however, both reliability and validity data is somewhat inconclusive.

### Fantasy

It is the feeling of Jersild (1963), that through make-believe daydreams, and other imaginative activities, the child is able to greatly extend the reaches of his world. The child, in his imagination, leaps beyond the boundaries of time and space and performs feats beyond the limits of his actual strength.

He states further that a child's imagination plays in important role in all aspects of his development. In the emotional sphere he can give play to desires, fears, hopes, and aggressive impulses. He frequently uses his imagination in his social development, and much of his play with other youngsters takes place in make-believe settings.

Later Jersild relates that the ability for a child to imagine seems to appear at about the same time that he begins to talk, with the first manifestations being the imitation of older persons. After a child learns to talk, make-believe becomes even more apparent. In a study by Markey (1935), where records of imaginative remarks and behavior were recorded, it was found that there was a 600 percent increase in the frequency of imaginative stories from two and one half years to four years. Jersild states that the younger child usually engages in make believe activity which is concerned with specific materials that he can see and touch, but the older child frequently enters into imaginative situations where he supplies the setting, the necessary equipment, and the required drama.

As the child nears the end of the pre-school period, much of his imaginary activity takes the form of private fantasy instead of the acting-out type of behavior that was characteristic of the younger



child. In these fantasy situations, the child plays a dramatic or heroic role in which he usually identifies himself with one of the central characters.

When discussing the child's desire to be someone, Breckenridge and Vincent (1943) state that the expression of hero-worship by the adolescent is an attempt on the part of the youth to identify himself with a personality he dreams as his own. Boys seem to identify in this particular manner more frequently than do girls. Older children show fewer unrealistic identifications than younger ones.

In a study that was concerned with the effect of age differences on wishes, identifications, and activities, Winkler (1949) found that the younger subjects (7-8 years) were more concerned with material things than the older (15-16 years) group. However, the opposite was true where vocational interest was concerned.

Thetford (1952) feels that although fantasy is but one facet of the child's personality, it has wide ramifications in reflecting the child's view of himself in relation to his surrounding environment. As the child develops, and with increasing exposure to formal education and social controls, a mature type of fantasy will occur.

The theory of projective testing is based, in part, on the fact that these fantasy situations will occur in a somewhat predictable manner. In short, a person's interpretation of what he perceives is determined not only by the objective nature of the stimulus, but also by his response to the subjective reactions within himself.

Symonds (1949) feels that the characteristic fantasy response of the early adolescent period can best be described as a rather unrealistic theme of success and achievement. He states that adolescence

is a period of the intensification of drives following patterns already laid down in infancy and childhood. The adolescent is beginning to seek respect from both peers and elders alike, and, consequently, strives for success.

McClelland (1953) feels that this striving for success can be aroused experimentally and will, in turn, cause both perceptive and apperceptive changes in the individual. The arousal of this need, n-Achievement, is usually concerned with some long-term problem of getting ahead at the ideal level of self-perception. He states, further, that the arousal of n-Achievement increases the possibility that the fantasy characters in projective stories will be described as wanting to get ahead or striving for long term success.

A study by Gladstone (1962) revealed that achievement motivation rises from kindergarten through grade 12, with the greatest increase being between grade 1 and 8. After grade 8, a discontinuity in the level of achievement motivation occurs. The continuous function then re-emerges during the 10th and 12th grades. She advances the suggestion that insecurity in the junior high school years, with the attending sense of "not belonging" to either elementary school or the high school, leads children to a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity about themselves. This uncertainty and insecurity manifests itself as a discontinuity in the upward trend of achievement motivation as it progresses with age.

It has been suggested by Winterbottom (1952) that high generalized achievement motivation is a phenomenon associated with youth or adolescence. It is her belief that high achievers probably had general achievement demands made on them when they were young and were consistently

rewarded for their accomplishments. She suggests that in a situation where the high achievement demands are unattainable because of personal limitations, such as low intellectual ability, or economic barriers, such as lack of financial support, dissatisfaction may result. This dissatisfaction might reveal itself as a substantial discrepancy between ideal and actual self conceptualization.

McClelland (1949) states that success, neutral, and failure experiences will produce three different intensities of n-Achievement, with success tending to decrease or satiate, and failure causing an arousal of achievement motivation. He later comments that moderate n-Achievement is characterized by a desire to achieve success.

Atkinson (1953) feels that n-Achievement is essentially positive motivation to experience feelings of accomplishment and success. A low n-Achievement score would imply relatively greater anxiety about failure.

Veroff (1953) reports that a n-Achievement score derived from response to imaginative stories is an expression of the level of achievement motivation present at the time of testing. He feels that this thematic apperceptive approach to the measurement of n-Achievement is the best available instrument for empirical exploration in this area of research.

When investigating the effects of age on TAT stories, Brachbill (1951) found that there was no significant difference between age groups (young vs old) in the total amount of needs expressed when responding to thematic stimuli. However, there is a tendency for the younger group to express more n-Achievement than older subjects. Symonds (1949), Wittenborn (1950), and Travieson (1944) seem to agree

that a stimulus picture elicits the best results when it contains characters of approximately the same age and the same sex as the subject.

There are differing opinions as to the reliability when scoring the TAT for n-Achievement. In a study conducted by Krumboltz and Farquhar (1957), it was found that the test-retest reliability within a nine week interval was only  $+0.26$  for the total group. They feel that this minimal figure casts some doubt on both the validity and the stability of the measure. However, a study was conducted by Feld and Smith (1958) that evaluated the McClelland-Atkinson scoring method for expressed n-Achievement. They concluded that by closely following the objective procedures outlined in the scoring manual, a researcher could obtain inter-judge scoring reliability that would be acceptable for research purposes.

#### The self-concept and its relationship to n-Achievement

There appears to be very few studies that are directly concerned with the interrelationship of self-concept discrepancies and n-Achievement. Even among the existing few, there is no easy comparison, since each uses a different instrument for obtaining a (Self-Ideal) score and also a different measure of n-Achievement. In fact, the majority of these studies employ a level of aspiration rather than n-Achievement, but they are included here since they seem most nearly to belong in this particular area.

Sears (1941) found an association between the size of positive discrepancy scores in a level of aspiration (LA) task and the size of (Self-Ideal) discrepancies of her subjects on academic tasks.

"Realistic" self was artificially held constant in the experimental LA situation so the discrepancy scores must be a function of individual differences in stated level of aspiration. However, one cannot tell from the data presented to what extent the larger discrepancies are due: to statements of unusually high ideals, low realistic self, or both.

Martire (1956), using male college students, obtained no relationship between either realistic or wishful LA scores on a scrambled words test and (Self-Ideal) discrepancies on five "achievement related traits." The traits were: Intelligence, Initiative, Creativeness, Motivation, and General Success. He did find that the subjects making high n-Achievement scores under both neutral and achievement related testing conditions showed high (Self-Ideal) discrepancies.

Lepine and Chodorkoff (1955) used two indices of self-regard: A "self-adequacy" score derived from selected Q-sort items, and a (Self-Ideal) discrepancy score based on the entire set of items. No significant correlations were obtained between either of these indices of self-regard and goal-discrepancy scores from a code deciphering task.

## CHAPTER III

### HYPOTHESIS AND PROCEDURE

Such studies as these suggest that relationships between the self-concept and need achievement do exist, even though the present research in the area is definitely inconclusive. In this particular study, the relationship between these two variables will be further investigated. The experiment has been designed to test the following hypothesis.

Subjects that have high self-concept discrepancies, as measured by a Likert type rating scale, should have correspondingly high need achievement scores, as measured by a thematic apperception test.

#### Procedure

The seventy-five subjects who participated in this study were students attending the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at the Edith Bowen Experimental School located on the campus of Utah State University, Logan, Utah. All of the pupils in these three classes participated in both phases of this particular study.

Two separate indices, both of which are discussed below, were used to measure self-concept discrepancies and n-Achievement. A thirty-four question, Likert-type rating scale was used to measure both the actual and the ideal self-concepts of each subject. The initial administration of this scale was followed immediately by a retest with only the specific instructions to the subjects being modified.

Each question on the scale required a graded response to each

statement. The individual statements are either clearly favorable or clearly unfavorable. Twenty-seven questions on the rating scale were listed in a positive manner, e.g., "I would like to be smart in school," and seven were worded in a negative vein, such as "I would like to be lazy."

Responses were weighed from the favorable to the unfavorable with a graduated value being assigned to each. The sum of the item credits represents the individual's total raw score.

In developing this scale, an attempt was made to use statements which represented several different types of social relationships. The questions relate to contacts within the home and family, within social groups, within play groups and within the classroom.

All questions were designed to be clear, concise, and unambiguous. It is believed that all of the vocabulary used in the test statements would be familiar to students in these grades.

The following is a list of the statements used in the present study.

I am:

1. Smart in school
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
2. Better than most of the class in group games
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
3. Thoughtful and considerate of my family
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.

I am:

4. Interested in getting good grades
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
5. Bashful among friends
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
6. Mean to animals
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time
7. A show-off
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
8. A person who can be trusted
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
9. Popular with friends
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
10. A leader at school
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
11. Eager to learn new things
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.



I am:

12. A person who means what he says
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
13. Afraid of failing
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
14. A person who likes to keep myself clean
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
15. Happy and cheerful
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
16. Lazy
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
17. A person who misbehaves at school
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
18. A person who obeys at home
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
19. Neat when doing school homework
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.

I am:

20. Friendly with others
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
21. A person who likes to be with others
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
22. Good looking
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
23. Honest
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
24. Accurate in my school tasks
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
25. Interested in getting good grades
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
26. Liked by my classmates
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
27. Polite around older people
  - (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,
  - (d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.

I am:

28. Determined to succeed in life  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
29. Unkind to younger children  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
30. Jealous of my classmates  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
31. Dependable  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
32. Courteous with everyone  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
33. Good to my friends  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.
34. Selfish  
(a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time,  
(d) Most of the time, (e) All of the time.

Identical tests were used for measuring both actual and ideal self-concepts. The only alteration of the test format was the heading on test number one, which read "I would like to be" as compared to the heading on test number two, "I am." Except for this modification, the tests were identical in every respect. Both tests were given in

succession to each class on a group basis. Before each session the examiner read this statement to the class.

This is a questionnaire which is being used to find out what people think about themselves. It is not a test or an examination, and there are no right or wrong answers for each question. You will not be required to put your name on the paper. As each question is read to you, listen carefully, think about it, and then circle the letter of the phrase that is most likely to describe you.

The examiner then read each question to the group at 45 second intervals. Upon completion of the thirty-four questions, the students received a short rest period, and then the second questionnaire was administered using the same general instructions and procedures. Tests were pre-coded, and the subjects were later identified by referring to the classroom seating chart.

The scoring system used was comparable to the one designed by Likert (1932). This system incorporates a graded response to each statement with this response being expressed in terms of the following five categories: (a) Not at all, (b) Not very often, (c) Some of the time, (d) Most of the time, and (e) All of the time. To score the scale, the alternate responses were credited 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, respectively, from unfavorable to the favorable end. For example, (e) "All of the time" would receive a score of 5, while (a) "Not at all" would receive a credit of only 1. Statement numbers 6, 7, 16, 17, 29, 30, and 34 have been phrased in a negative fashion and the scoring is reversed. Thus in these specific instances, a response of "All of the time" would receive a score of 1, instead of 5 as in the

positively worded statements.

A subject's self-concept discrepancy score (Self-Ideal) was represented for each individual as the difference between the total raw scores of each of the two separate tests.

#### Testing for n-Achievement

In accordance with the hypothesis, subjects who had self-concept discrepancy scores in either the top one-third or lower one-third of the (Actual-Ideal) distribution were selected for testing for n-Achievement. This testing was done on an individual basis by the writer with the subjects responses recorded on a tape recorder.

A modified form of the Thematic Apperception Test (1943) and the Michigan Picture Test (1953) was used as the pictorial stimulus. Cards T1, "Man looking out of a window" and T14, "Boy with a violin" have been selected from the TAT while Cards M3, "A classroom scene" and M6, "A group playing checkers" were taken from the Michigan Picture Test.

During the test session, each individual was seated comfortably at a desk in front of the examiner. The following instructions were then read to the subject before presenting the first card.

This is a story-telling test. I have some pictures here that I am going to show you, and for each picture I want you to make up a story. Tell what has happened before and what is happening now. Say what the people are feeling and thinking and how it will come out. You can make up any kind of story you please. Do you understand? Well, then, here is the first picture. You have five minutes to make up a story. See how well you can do.

Upon completion of the first story the subject was then given the other three cards. After transcription, the two-hundred stories were scored according to the method as outlined by Atkinson (1958).

#### Atkinson's scoring method

In describing the rationale behind his scoring methods Atkinson states:

We perceive the behavioral sequence originating when an individual experiences a state of need or motive (N). (Symbols in parenthesis denote scoring categories and will be used throughout the study.) He may also be anticipating successful attainment of his goal (GA+) or anticipating frustration and failure (GA-). He may engage in activity instrumental (I) to attainment of his goal which may lead to the attainment of the goal (I+) or not (I-). Sometimes his goal-directed activity will be blocked. The obstacle or block (B) to his progress may be located in the world at large (Bw) or it may be some personal deficiency in himself (Bp). He may experience strong positive and negative affective status while engaged in solving his problem, i.e., in attempting to gratify his motives. He is likely to experience a state of positive affect (GA+) when attaining his goal, or a state of negative affect (G-) when his goal directed activity is thwarted or he fails. Often someone will help or sympathize with him--Nurturant press (NUP)--aiding him in his goal-directed behavior. This, in brief, is our analysis of the behavioral sequence.

Presumably these categories may be used to describe the behavioral sequences no matter what the goal of the individual. For this reason, major attention must be directed to the definition of what constitutes an achievement goal. (Atkinson, 1958, p. 87)

Atkinson also states that Achievement Imagery is scored only if one of the following criteria is present: (1) a character in the story must compete with a standard of excellence, (b) be involved in a unique accomplishment, or (3) is striving to attain a long-term achievement goal.

The following statements are examples of Achievement Imagery:

He wants to be the best in the class and receive a scholarship.  
(Competition with a standard of excellence)

The young engineer has recently invented a carbureator which will be the most efficient model on the market. (Unique accomplishment)

The boy is thinking about being a doctor. (Long term involvement)

A story must contain reference to an achievement goal which fits one of the above mentioned categories before any of the sub-categories can be scored further.

Stories containing some references to achievement but which fail to meet the standards for Achievement Imagery are scored as Doubtful Achievement Imagery (T.I.) and are not scored further. For example, "The workman is making a bolt" is scored (TI) since the subject is not concerned about quality, mastery, or perfection which would be required if the response was to qualify as Achievement Imagery (AI).

Unrelated Imagery (UI) is scored when the story has not reference to an achievement goal. McClelland (1953, p. 104) states: "The difference between a story scored (TI) and one scored (UI) is simply that the (TI) story contains reference to some commonplace task goal and often contains other task-related sub-categories, but it fails to meet one of the three criteria for scoring Achievement Imagery. Whereas the story scored (UI) fails to have any reference whatsoever to achievement."

If a response qualifies as (AI) then the sub-categories are scored as follows:

Stated need for achievement (N) is scored when there is a definite statement of motivation by one of the characters in the story. An expressed desire to attain an achievement goal must be present. For

example, "The young man wishes to become a doctor." (N)

Instrumental Activity (I+, I?, I-) is scored as a sub-category if there is overt or mental activity by one or more of the characters in the story indicating that something is being done about attaining an achievement goal. It is scored I+, I?, or I- to indicate whether the outcome of the Instrumental Activity is successful, doubtful, or unsuccessful. Instrumental activity is scored only once per story even though there may be several instrumental acts stated. "He will try his best to become the most famous attorney in the U. S." illustrates (I+). "Jim studied hard but couldn't seem to understand" illustrates (I-). Doubtful Imagery (I?) is scored when there is a statement of activity within the story but the outcome of this activity is inconclusive. Anticipatory Goal States (Ga+, Ga-) are scored when someone in the story anticipates success or frustration and failure. This category is scored positive (Ga+) when a person in the story is thinking about his future level of achievement. The Anticipatory Goal state is scored negative (Ga-) when concern is shown over the possibility of failure. "Both men are sure they will be nationally famous if the invention is a success," is an example of (Ga+). "The girl wonders if all of her efforts have been a waste of time" illustrates (Ga-).

If the progress of goal of a character in the story is blocked by either a personal or an environmental factor, the story is scored (Bp) or (Bw). "The continued poor weather was a major factor in contributing to the failure of the project" is an example of (Bw). If the block is found within the individual in the form of a conflict or an inability, then it is scored (Bp). "His motives were admirable, but



he lacked the experience necessary for success" illustrates a response scored (Bp).

Nurturant Press (Nur) is scored when the character engaged in the goal directed activity is aided, guided, or encouraged by another individual. This assistance must be in the direction of the achievement goal and not merely incidental to it. "The journeyman spent long hours guiding and training the apprentice which contributed to his eventual success," is an illustration of a response that would be scored for Nurturant Press.

Emotional conditions which are associated with success for failure of the goal directed activity are referred to as Affective states and symbolized by (G+) or (G-) depending on whether they are positive or negative. "The parents are proud of their daughter because of her academic achievements" illustrates (G+), while "He feels inferior because of his handicap" would be scored (G-).

Achievement Thema (Th) is scored when there is present in the story an elaboration on goal directed activity. The plot of the response must center around goal achievement with the eventual attainment of this goal as the outcome.

To compute the n-Achievement score, give +1 for Achievement Imagery (AI), 0 for Doubtful or Task Imagery (TI), and -1 for Unrelated Imagery (UI). Subcategories can be scored only if AI has been scored. Each subcategory scored counts +1. Since each category may be scored only once, the maximum score possible for a single story would be +11 (AI, N, I, Ga+, Ga-, Bp, Bw, Nup, G+, G-, and Th). The n-Achievement score for a particular person is the sum of the scores obtained on all of the stories written by that person. (Atkinson, 1958, p. 88)

Some representative stories and the scores assigned are as follows:

1. A story from card T1 (Picture of a man looking out of a window). "There was this boy who feels that his parents have mistreated him so he has decided to run away. They made him go to bed without any food so he opened the window and started to climb down a tree. It was real dark. He went down the tree and stayed out about an hour and then he had enough and decided to go home. He climbed back into the house and decided that his mother and dad hadn't been so mean afterall."

In this story there is not reference to an achievement goal, so it is rated as being Unrelated Imagery (UI) and the score is -1.

2. A story from card T14 (Picture of a boy looking at a violin). "This little boy wanted to be a composer so he had his mother buy him a violin. He was suppose to take lessons but he didn't want to because he couldn't play very well and all the violin would do was to squeak. But he didn't give up and he kept trying, but it still squeaked. So he went home and decided to throw it in the garbage but at the last minute he didn't. He kept it and practiced and pretty soon he got to be a real good violin player. When he grew up, he got to be a real good composer and composed a lot of famous music."

This story indicates long term involvement and a unique accomplishment on the part of the central character and is scored for Achievement Imagery (AI). In reviewing the sub-categories there is present activity on the part of the character toward attaining an achievement goal ("He kept trying" and "he practiced") and Instrumental Activity (I) is scored. A personal block is present in the statement ("he couldn't play very well") and is scored (Bp). Achievement Thema (Th) was scored because the achievement imagery was elaborated in such a manner

that it became the central plot of the story.

The sum of all categories (AI), (I), (Bp), (Th) is four, the score assigned to this particular story.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In testing the hypothesis that subjects with high self-concept discrepancies as measured by a Likert-type rating scale, should have correspondingly higher need achievement scores as measured by a thematic apperception test the data were analyzed according to the following plan: (1) the scores of subjects with self-concept discrepancies at either extreme of the distribution were isolated by rejecting the middle one third of the total sample, (2) the individuals in both the upper and lower groups were then tested with a modified thematic apperception test and a  $n$ -Achievement raw score derived for each, (3) a comparison of the mean differences between the high and low groups were tested for significance by employing t-ratios.

#### Results of isolating discrepancy scores

A self-concept discrepancy score for each subject was represented as the arithmetic difference between the raw score obtained on the Ideal-self and the Actual-self sections of the test battery. The range of self-concept discrepancy scores was from 3 to 57, and the division into three separate groups occurred at scores 17 and 27. As a point of interest, the distribution was such that five students had (Actual-Ideal) self-concept scores that were nearly congruent and did not vary more than 7 points. On the other hand, one student had a total variance between the two scores (Actual-Ideal) of 57 points.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of Actual self-concept versus Ideal self-concept scores while Figure 2 presents the distribution of self-concept discrepancy scores for the total sample. Subjects with self-concept scores of 27 or above were considered as being in the high discrepancy group, while those having scores of 17 or below were designated as the low discrepancy group (Figure 2). It was these two groups of subjects, (high and low) that were later used for further testing with a modified form of the Thematic Apperception Test.

#### Results of testing for n-Achievement

Twenty-five subjects from the high and twenty-five from the low discrepancy group were tested and a n-Achievement raw score was derived for each. This was represented as the arithmetic sum of the scores attained by the individual in response to four separate pictorial stimuli.

Total raw scores ranged from 0 to 17 in the low discrepancy and from 0 to 18 in the high discrepancy group. Figure 2 presents both high and low discrepancy group distribution of scores for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade as well as a total for the three grades combined.

#### Comparison of high and low mean n-Achievement scores

A comparison of the means of the high and low self-concept discrepancy groups was accomplished by the use of t-ratios. The results of these calculations are shown in Table 2.

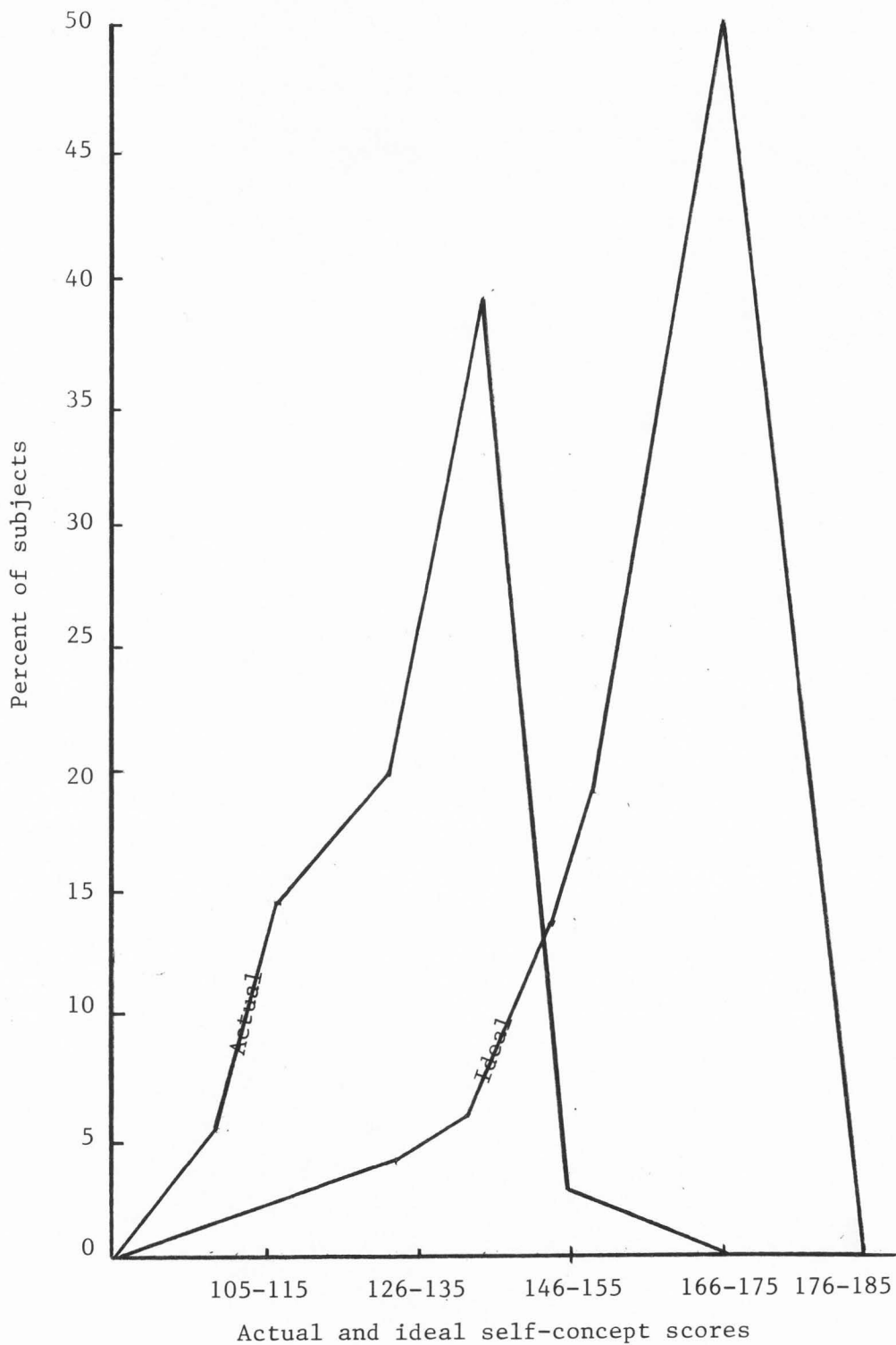


Figure 1. Frequency polygon showing the percentage of 75 fourth, fifth and sixth grade children receiving the indicated scores on the actual self-concept and ideal-self scales.

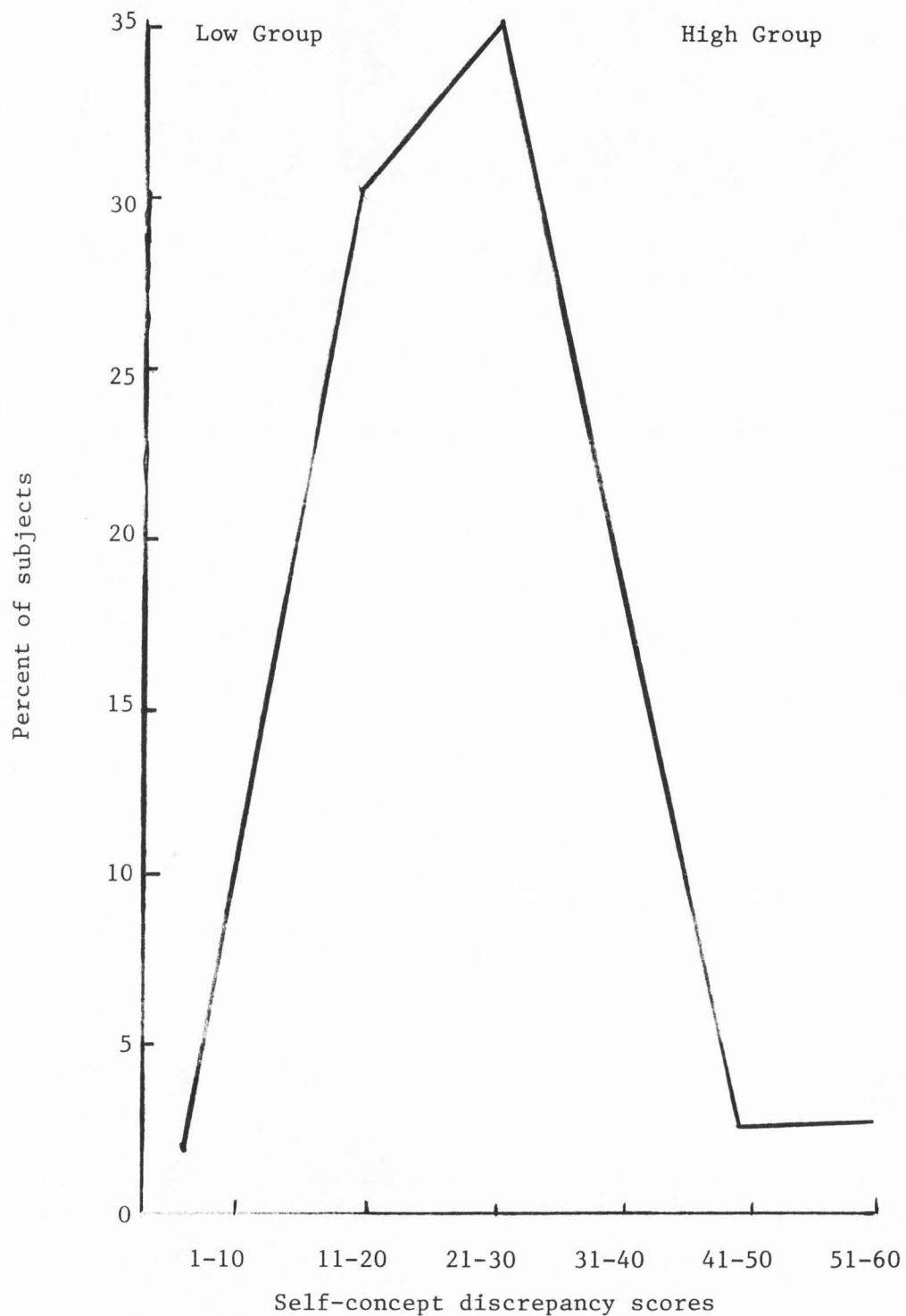


Figure 2. Frequency polygon showing the percentage of 75 fourth, fifth and sixth grade children receiving the indicated self-concept discrepancy scores.

Table 1. N-Achievement distributions of scores for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade and the total for the three grades combined.

Grade	Four		Five		Six		Combined Total	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Score 0			1	1			1	1
1			2	1		1	2	2
2			2				2	
3	1	1		1			1	2
4	2					1	2	1
5	1		2	1			3	1
6	1	1		1		1	1	3
7	1		1		1		3	
8			1	1	1		2	1
9		2	1		1		2	2
10	1	1			1	2	2	3
11			1	2			1	2
12	1	1					1	1
13								
14						3		3
15					1	1	1	1
16		1						1
17					1		1	
18				1				1
-N-	8	7	11	9	6	9	25	25

Table 2. Mean need-achievement scores of students in grades 4, 5, and 6 whose discrepancies between actual and ideal self-concepts are in the lower and upper thirds.

Grade	Four		Five		Six		Total	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Mean	6.37	9.29	4.63	7.00	11.00	9.77	6.72	8.64
N	8	7	11	9	6	9	25	25
t	1.66(1.77*)		1.05(1.73*)		.522(1.77*)		1.49(1.67*)	
P	.05		.05		.05		.05	

\*The level required for significance at the .05 level.



Each grade, as well as the combined total, was treated separately and in all cases the results were not significant. T-ratios, which in all instances, fall short of the level required for significance at the .05 level with one-tailed tests, do not support a rejection of the null hypothesis.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

#### Discussion

The observations made concerning the data gathered during this study indicated that there appears to be a dynamic relationship between the actual and ideal self-concept. In certain individuals, moreover, large differences between the two are found to exist. This relationship has long been of interest to the behavioral scientist. At present, there is general agreement among many investigators that there may exist conscious or unconscious conflict between aspects of the self which manifest itself in behavioral terms.

This information permits a reasonable inference that the high self-concept discrepancy scores, which were obtained in this study, might reflect subjects who have high achievement motivation (Ideal-self) but feel as though they do not possess the particular abilities or traits necessary for successful achievement (Actual-self).

These subjects with relatively large self-concept discrepancies were differentiated from the low discrepancy group by eliminating the middle one third of the distribution. Comparison of the mean n-Achievement scores was accomplished by the use of t-ratios. The means of the high and low discrepancy groups for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were also compared separately. In all instances, these mean differences between the groups were not found to be significant at the .05 confidence level.

There are several factors which might have easily affected the final outcome of the study. The size of the sample was limited, and this could contribute to the lack of significance between the means. The total distribution combined had a N of only twenty-five in each of the high and low discrepancy groups.

The dependability of the mean is contingent upon the size of the sample upon which the SE is based. In this case of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, the N's are extremely small which could easily affect the significance.

The use of a projective technique in an attempt to isolate specific motivational factors, such as n-Achievement, may have affected the final results of the study. Because of the dynamic content of fantasy, difficulties sometimes arise when too much dependence is placed upon inferences made from it. Although these projective tests have shown much promise in the past few years as a clinical and research tool, their complexity and lack of concrete scoring guidelines leave them more susceptible to error than more objective measures.

### Summary

Relevant research in this area suggests that imbalances within the individual's self-concept structure may lead to many and varied attempts to alleviate this condition. Since in our culture achievement is both emphasized and approved, children whose actual self-concepts fail to match their ideal self-concepts might be expected to be concerned with achievement.

The present study, designed to test the hypothesis that a significant relationship exists between self-concept discrepancies and

expressed needs for achievement was accomplished in three phases. The first consisted of obtaining a self-concept discrepancy score (Ideal-Actual) for seventy-five elementary school pupils. The middle one third of this distribution was rejected which isolated both a high and a low discrepancy group.

The second phase involved testing the high and low groups for expressed n-Achievement using a modified form of the Thematic Apperception Test and scored according to the Atkinson method.

The last step was primarily involved with determining the relationship, if any, between these two variables. Mean comparison of need achievement scores of students in grades four, five, and six whose discrepancies between actual and ideal self-concepts were in the upper or lower one third of the distribution were found not to be significant at the .05 percent level of confidence.

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VITA

Ian W. Griggs

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: The Relationship Between Self-Concept Discrepancies and the  
Expression of Need Achievement in Children

Major Field: Psychology

Biographical Information:

Personal Data: Born in Flint, Michigan, June 23, 1938, son of  
Campbell S. and Julia F. Griggs.

Education: Attended elementary school in Alpena, Michigan;  
graduated from Alpena Catholic Central High School in 1956;  
received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Western Michigan  
University at Kalamazoo, Michigan with a double major in  
Science and Psychology; graduate work was done in Psychology  
at Utah State University and at this institution the require-  
ments for the Masters of Science degree were completed.

Professional Experience: 1962 to 1966, worked in several capacities  
within the Industrial Relationship Department of Harrah's  
Inc., Reno, Nevada. These positions included staff functions  
as employee relations supervisor and training supervisor.  
Line responsibilities included that of personnel manager.  
Accepted position as development counselor in 1967 with the  
American Management Association.