

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 739

CG 009 607

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TITLE Toward a Model of Adolescent Self Evaluation: A Cross-National Application of Path Analysis.
PUB DATE Aug 74
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (Montreal, Canada, August 1974)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.76 HC-\$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Catholics; *Critical Path Method; *Cross Cultural Studies; Cultural Factors; Foreign Countries; *Models; Parent Child Relationship; Research Projects; *Self Evaluation; Sex Differences

ABSTRACT

This cross-national study initiated construction of a path model to analyze the development of self-evaluation among adolescents, and to show that this process of development occurs cross-culturally. Seven variables assumed to be antecedents of self-evaluation were included in the model: SES, support from the mother and from the father, the adolescent's evaluation of his/her mother and of his/her father; self-religiosity of the adolescent, and evaluation of culturally significant religious images. The model was evaluated using Catholic high school samples from five cultures: Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, West Germany, and the United States (n=1,069 boys and 916 girls). Results show that the same process of self-evaluation occurs cross-sexually and cross-nationally. Results also indicate that evaluation of the parents (an indicator of identification with the parents) and identification of the self with religious images (which are valued social symbols in these social situations) are the most important positive antecedents tested. Religiosity and SES are not significantly related to self-evaluation. Father support is positively related to self-evaluation, but mother support is negatively related. Explanation of this unexpected finding is provided. (Author)

Toward a Model of Adolescent Self Evaluation: a Cross-National Application of Path Analysis

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The purpose of this cross-national study was to a) initiate construction of a model to analyze the development of self evaluation among adolescents; and b) to show that this process of development occurs cross-culturally. A path model was constructed based on a symbolic interaction perspective. Seven variables assumed to be antecedents of self evaluation were included in the model: SES, support from the mother and from the father, the adolescent's evaluation of his/her mother and of his/her father; self religiosity of the adolescent, and evaluation of culturally significant religious images. The model was evaluated using Catholic high school samples from five cultures: Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, West Germany and the United States. The total sample included 1069 boys and 916 girls. The results show that the same process of self evaluation occurs cross-sexually and cross-nationally. The results also indicate that the evaluation of the parents (an indicator of identification with the parents) and identification of the self with religious images (which are valued social symbols in these social situations) are the most important positive antecedents tested. Religiosity and SES are not significantly related to self evaluation. Father support is positively related to self evaluation, but mother support, controlling for the interaction of the other dependent variables in the model, is negatively related. Explanation of this unexpected finding is provided.

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ED103739

A CROSS NATIONAL APPLICATION OF A
MODEL OF ADOLESCENT SELF-EVALUATION

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The purpose of this paper is to initiate construction of a model which analyzes the development of self evaluation among adolescents. The model formulated will be evaluated cross-nationally as a partial test of the presupposition that the process of developing self evaluation prior to adulthood is similar across cultures. Development of self evaluation in adolescence, especially positive self evaluation, has been previously demonstrated to be a crucial phase of the life cycle. Rosenberg (1965) points out that adolescence is the period in which questions of self importance and identity are paramount, and, since this is a period of rapid physical change, the self image is also undergoing rapid change. Erik Erikson also emphasizes the importance of self evaluation during adolescence. He claims, "Adolescence is the age of the final establishment of a positive ego identity What maturing youths are now primarily concerned with is who and what they are in the eyes of a wider circle of significant people" (1950: 306-307).

Previous research indicates that the level of self evaluation may act as a precipitator of a wide variety of consequences ranging from juvenile delinquency (in the case of low self evaluation), to academic success (in the case of high self evaluation). The present paper is more concerned with retreating one step further in the putative causal chain: we are concerned with the antecedents of self evaluation.

Theoretically, the development of self is viewed here from a symbolic interactionist perspective. Self evaluation is one essential component of the development of self (cf. Osgood, 1952). Following

Mead (1934) and Cooley (1909), the development of self evaluation, as one dimension of the total development of the self, would occur in the following manner: we imagine the evaluation others are imputing to us as we interact with them; we then react, in an evaluative manner, to this imagined evaluation; and we experience feelings of pride or shame. If we perceive consistent evaluations from a number of significant others, we begin to take this evaluation as our own evaluation of the object in question, the self. Thus, in short, one's self evaluation, as a part of the self, is formed in interaction with others.

There are other factors besides interaction with significant others that are included in the model presented in this paper. Interaction occurs within situations in which values and symbols are present. Identification of the self with symbols that are socially valued (e.g., a successful father) can lead to high positive self evaluation (hereafter SE). This evaluation of the self based on social values is both direct (the adolescent, identifying himself with socially valued objects, increases his self evaluation), and indirect (self evaluation is bolstered by interaction with significant others who have a high evaluation of the adolescent because of his/her identification with such socially valued objects).

Toward a Model

The variables included in the models, then, are derived from two theoretical sources: first, those that deal with interaction with significant others; and second, those concerned with identification with valued social symbols. These two sources are not meant to exhaust possible variable types. The model is explanatory, and new variables must be added in future research.

The model presented here is a simplified version of a model applied previously by the authors. The original model contained fifteen variables as compared to the eight in the present model¹ (see Buehler, 1972, for further analysis).

A word or two to explain the selection of variables and construction of models is necessary at this point. The analysis is secondary research, and thus initial selection of variables was limited by availability.² After a review of literature concerning the development of SE, relevant variables were selected from those available. In addition, some variables which were not mentioned in previous research were chosen either because they seemed theoretically important to the authors or because they were highly correlated with SE.

We have followed a procedure of analyzing survey data suggested by Rehberg, et al. (1970: 35): "... (1) order the data in accord with cues provided by the correlational analysis, and (2) cast these variables into a path analytic framework." Following this guideline, we chose variables that were theoretically linked to SE, and then used the correlational analysis to suggest how the remainder of the paths in the model (those from one independent variable to other independent variables) might look. In most cases there were previous theoretical links between variables provided by past literature, and thus the construction of the model was aided by a combination of past research and correlation guides where past research was lacking.

Using this technique we selected 15 variables that were all theoretically linked to SE, and most of which were also correlated with SE. We included some variables in the model that we considered to be theoretically

In most cases that the path analysis might specify an indirect relationship between the variable and SE). We constructed two models, one using all 15 variables and one using only eight (the eight variables which we believed to be most theoretically important). We compared the models in terms of ability to explain variation in SE and in terms of which model best allowed analysis of the process of development of SE. On both counts we chose the simplified model as superior.³ It explained the same amount of variance and the 15 variable model was too complex to use in comparing various subsamples. It is this simplified model that is used in this paper.

To reemphasize, we are attempting to test a process cross-culturally. We deemed the best technique to achieve this end to be path analysis (see Sewell, et al., 1970, for an example of using path analysis to compare various subsamples). We recognize that the model presented here is not causal, it is better described or termed as definitional. We are using path analysis not only to test a theoretically derived process, but mainly as a device of ordering eight variables across twelve subsamples. We agree with Blau and Duncan (1967: 172) that, "We are a long way from being able to make causal inferences with confidence, and schemes of the kind presented here had best be regarded as crude first approximations to adequate causal models." Again, quoting Blau and Duncan, they have suggested the technique used in this paper, "When the same interpretive structure is appropriate for two or more populations there is something to be learned by comparing their path coefficients and correlation patterns" (1967: 177). Thus, what we are attempting is only partially a

demonstration of a causal ordering of antecedents of SE, more importantly we have chosen the path analytic technique to demonstrate that the process of development of SE is a cross-cultural phenomena.

Figure 1 about here

The following is a presentation of the variables in Model S (see Figure 1) and a theoretical rationale for the inclusion of these variables. Again, these are not meant to be exclusive. They are exploratory variables designed to aid in the initial development of models which can be more fully developed and tested in future research.

The dependent variable in the model is self evaluation. The importance of the variable as a predictor of such phenomena is juvenile delinquency and academic success has been alluded to above. Working from left to right, the first variable is the exogenous variable, Father's Occupation. This variable is intended as an indicator of the Socio-Economic Status of the adolescent. We can sum up the basic direct effect of SES on self evaluation with a quote from Coopersmith (1967: 81), "If we assume that greater honor and material success accrue to persons on the higher rungs of the social ladder than those below them, we certainly expect persons on the higher rungs of the ladder to be higher also in their self esteem." The social status of the adolescent is the social status of his/her family; thus, we can predict a direct effect from the SES variable, Father's Occupation, on self evaluation. This is an especially exploratory variable since previous research has not been able to establish empirically strong links between the two variables (Coopersmith, 1967: 83; Fiedler, 1958; Hill, 1957; Rosenberg, 1965: 139; Wylie, 1961: 138).

The next two variables are based on the first theoretical source mentioned above, (viz., interaction with significant others as an important antecedent of positive self evaluation, assuming such interaction to be positive and reinforcing). The variables are Mother Support and Father Support. Gecas (1971: 472) found that, "...parental support is strongly and consistently related to the various measures of adolescent self evaluation." Coopersmith (1967: 178) found support generally related to positive self evaluation, "Where children with low self-esteem express more frustration and rejection, those with high esteem see less rejection and a greater amount of facilitation and approval." Other researchers have also found this relationship (Wylie, 1961: 121; Coopersmith, 1967: 110 and 170). Thus, we predict a direct effect from both Mother Support and Father Support on self evaluation.

The next pair of variables, Evaluation of the Mother and Evaluation of the Father by the adolescent, concern the identification of the adolescent with his parents by those with whom he interacts. According to Rosenberg (1965: 61), "Personal feelings of worth depend on the social evaluation of the groups with which the person is identified." Since the adolescent is identified with the family unit by society, his evaluations of his parents are important. If he evaluates his parents highly he should evaluate himself highly since he is identified with the parents both by society and by himself. Thus, the adolescent's evaluations of his/her parents should have a direct effect on self evaluation.

The final two variables deal with the religiosity of the respondents. Theoretically, we could expect religious adolescents to have lower SE scores than non-religious adolescents (see Berger, 1967, for

a theoretical rationale, and Tawney, et al., 1965, for empirical evidence). However, because of the nature of the samples used in this research, we expect the opposite. The samples were selected from Catholic high schools in the various cultures. The respondents, therefore, have a common religious background and probably a relatively homogeneous world view. Conformity to the tenets of this world view would bring support and approval, and thus lead to higher rather than lower self evaluation. We therefore predict that religiosity, in this case, is associated with positive self evaluation.

The preceding description concerns direct links to self evaluation in the path model to be evaluated. There are also indirect paths postulated in the model (see figure 1). Their inclusion is necessary to indicate what factors are involved in the calculation of the path coefficients from each variable to SE. The major emphasis of this paper, however, is to compare and analyze the cross-cultural utility of certain variables as direct effectors of self evaluation. Further analysis of the indirect paths and of other variables in the model will be the subject of future work.

Operationalization of the Variables

The dependent variable, self evaluation, is measured by a semantic differential scale. The technique has been used to measure SE previously (Stratton and Spitzer, 1967; Walberg, 1967; Fiedler, et al., 1957; Miller and Hagedorn, 1969; Phillips, 1969; Schwartz and Tangri, 1965; Pervin and Lilly, 1967). The stimulus concept for the SE scale is MYSELF. A factor analysis of the twelve adjective pairs used in the semantic differential scale was performed. The evaluative dimension was isolated and nine

adjective pairs were chosen to form the SE scale. Each pair formed a five point scale and the nine scales were added to form the SE scale.⁴

Mother Evaluation and Father Evaluation are also measured by semantic differential scales. The stimulus concepts for these scales are MOTHER and FATHER. The same factor analytic process as above was used to isolate the evaluative factor. In creating the dependent variables, five adjective pairs were chosen and added to form the Mother Evaluation Scale and the Father Evaluation Scale. By using a standard five items per scale in the construction of the dependent variables we were able to make the scale scores somewhat comparable and retain the .40 factor loading decision criteria used to form the SE scale.

Religious images in the final variable measured with semantic differential scales. For use in the model, three separate scales concerning religious images were combined to form the final Religious Images Scale. The stimulus concepts were BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, JESUS, and GOD. The same factor analytic process was used for each component scale to isolate the evaluative factor. Five items from each component scale were summed to arrive at the religious images scale.⁵ The same decision rule for selecting the adjective pairs to be used as that used to select the other dependent variable scales was used (five pairs; .40 decision rule).

Father's Occupation is measured by a ranking of occupations on a scale from one to nine. Occupations clustered heavily around the top of the scale.

Adolescent's Self Religiosity is measured by a scale which summed the responses to twenty-five items. The items were designed to cover the four constitutive dimensions (omitting the 'consequential' dimen-

sion) of religiosity specified by Glock and Stark (1965). A description of the scale and the items used can be found in Weigert and Thomas (1971).

The parental support variables are measured by the short form of the Cornell Parent Behavior Description (see Thomas and Weigert, 1971). Father Support and Mother Support scales were each constructed by summing responses to four Likert scale items. A high score indicates high support.

The Samples

The original data for this study were collected for a cross-national study of adolescent socialization (see references to Thomas and Weigert). The sample consists of male and female adolescents averaging about sixteen years of age. The questionnaire was administered at Catholic male and female high schools in the United States (New York and St. Paul), Mexico (Merida), Puerto Rico (San Juan), Spain (Seville), and West Germany (Bonn). ~~The total~~ (aggregate) sample consists of 1069 boys and 916 girls. Only Catholic respondents living with both parents are included in the sample.

Findings

Table 1 presents the direct path coefficients by sex and by cultural sample to SE. Only the direct results are presented since we are trying to evaluate which variables are important direct antecedents of SE. The results in Table 1 indicate that religious images and the variables measuring evaluation of the parents are of most importance, Father Support is also important, but Mother Support is, surprisingly, negatively related to SE.⁶

Table 1 about here

in an effort to search for consistent patterns across cultures (see Vallier, 1971), the ranking of the variables in each cultural subsample is presented in Table 2. The Table provides an illustration of the relative consistency of the strength of the direct paths of the variables to SE. The major exception to the pattern of the relative importance across sex and culture is Merida, an anomalous sample in many of the analyses performed on the data.

Table 2 about here

Rank order correlations were calculated to compare the consistency of the rankings. Table 3 shows that within each sex there is a strong consistency of ranking of the variables. Most of the associations are strongly positive. Three of the four negative results occur in the Merida samples. The consistency is considerably stronger for males than females.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 also shows that, except for the two American subsamples, there is a strong correlation between the male and female rankings in each cultural sample (average correlation = .52).

Conclusions and Discussion

Conclusions can be drawn according to three criteria: 1. is the variable an important antecedent of SE in general (i.e., does it have a high direct path coefficient); 2. is the variable consistently important cross-culturally and cross-sexually; and 3., and particularly important here is: are the variables selected for testing consistent in their rankings among themselves across the cultures and by sex?

It is our conclusion that the data demonstrate the cross-cultural applicability of the model. This lends further support to the hypothesis that some sociopsychological theories, such as symbolic interactionism, which were developed through observation of American samples, may have cross-cultural validity, and can be subjected to cross-cultural data. These conclusions are, of course, tentative and suggested, not tested by the data. In this paper, the methodology of testing and causal fitting was subordinated to the intention of exploratory secondary analysis. The logical next step is to test the simplified model with new data and adjust or expand the model to other variables to enhance the model's explanatory power. Verba (1971: 343), in assessing strategies of comparative analysis, indicates that the demonstration of the applicability of a model cross-culturally not only provides substantive data concerning the relation of the variables in the model across cultures, but also demonstrates the validity of the construction of the model.

Especially important in predicting self evaluation cross-culturally is location of the significant others with whom adolescents identify in their own cultural world and measurement of their evaluation of these others. Adolescents in every culture who attributed a high evaluation to their parents gave themselves a high evaluation. Also, adolescents who gave a positive evaluation to culturally relevant religious images gave themselves positive evaluations as well. In terms of variables designed to measure interaction with significant others, the results are significant and consistent cross-culturally, but not quite what was expected in the light of earlier and different analyses of this data and the results from other studies. Support from the father led to high

self evaluation in every culture and its ranking was rather consistent across the twelve subsamples (with the exception of the Bonn and St. Paul female subsamples).

Mother support, on the other hand, in terms of direct effect, was negatively related in ten of the twelve samples. This differs from previous research which found the relationship which we also expected to find: that mother support is positively related to SE (see Coopersmith, 1967: 170; and Gecas, 1971 for this result using other data; and Gecas, et al., 1970, for the same result in a previous analysis of this data). It should be pointed out that the total effect (correlations) of Mother Support and SE are positive in every sample described in this paper, it is only for the direct path coefficients (i.e., controlling for all other variables) that the negative results appear. The studies just cited use correlations to test the relationship between the variables.

Thus, in one sense we have replicated their findings (in all the studies ~~the correlations between SE and Mother Support are positive~~) and in another sense, we have specified this relationship (by the use of path analysis to control for interactive effects).

We believe that the results relative to Mother Support are due to a complicated interaction of the variables and not to some form of measurement error. Thus the problem is theoretical and not empirical. The relationship between support or love from the mother and the adolescents' self evaluation may be a result of the larger context within which the support takes place. If mother support is experienced too immediately, it may have a repressive effect on the adolescent -- it may become 'smother support.' Adolescents may need structural inter-

mediaries (e.g. positive evaluation of the mother) if support from the mother is to result in higher self evaluation on the part of the adolescent. Support from a mother who is not highly valued by the adolescent may not allow the adolescent to form a high opinion of his or her own worth. Thus, in the absence of other positive dimensions of the relationship between mother and child, mother support may become a threatening and repressing type of interaction for the child. (Note that this relationship is not sex specific, it occurs for both males and females).

Granted the plausibility of some of the above reflections, why do we not get the same results with respect to support from the father? We have no definite answer, but the following suggestions can be made. Mother is the expressive and, as we may say, the support leader in the family (see Parsons and Bales, 1955, for the basic instrumental and expressive roles in the family for husband and wife). Support is the mother's principle source and means of power. Thus, naked support without the interactive effect of other positive dimensions of the mother-child relationship becomes unaccepted dominance of the mother over the adolescent (who is trying, at this time, to establish an independent identity). The father, on the other hand, has other sources of power, both as a result of cultural norms and control of resources which are generally not available to mothers (perhaps especially in the more traditional cultures included in the samples reported here). Furthermore, the father is not as interactionally close, neither in intensity nor frequency. Thus, whatever support is manifested by the father may have a positive effect regardless of the adolescent's evaluation of him. The instrumental and relatively aloof role of the father renders any

support he offers to the adolescent a positive factor in the adolescent's view of himself or herself. Father support is not threatening, mother support may be. (Further research is needed here with an added variable, conjugal power, to clarify the proposed interaction of these variables).

Thus, the exploratory thrust of the present analyses led to a major suggested specification of previously reported findings (another advantage of using path analysis) and call for additional research and adequate multi-variate analyses to document the complicated relationship of mother support to adolescent self evaluation and by implication with other form of adolescent beliefs and behaviors as well.

Religiosity does not prove to be an important variable, an interesting finding considering the fact that the situations in which these actors are interacting have an expressed goal of instilling religiosity in these adolescents. It may be that all the adolescents are religious and thus there is no variation in the sample (however, this is not the case), or, simply, that religiosity is not, at the present time, an important element in determining self ideals and perceptions among adolescents. There is some element of reliability in our findings, however, since religiosity, although not very important for either sex, was even less important for males than for females.

Identification with religious symbols (images) is important. The conclusion may be that, religiosity per se does not have much effect on self evaluation, but identification with religious symbols in a religiously defined situation does lead to positive self evaluation. Or, in more general terms, identification with highly valued symbols or significant others, will lead to positive self evaluation.

variables are cross-cultural antecedents of self evaluation (father support, evaluation of one's parents, and identification with socially valued symbols and significant others); b) some variables do not seem to be important predictors of self evaluation in any of the cultures sampled here (self religiosity and father's occupation); and c) one variable, mother support, is negatively related to self evaluation when other variables are controlled for. These selected variables account for only 25% of the variance in self evaluation, and future research must attempt to add additional variables to the model. Some suggestions that the authors have relative to new variables are academic success and dating success, assuming these to be important elements of evaluation among adolescents. Also, the adolescent's estimation of his or her masculinity or femininity may be an important addition to future models.

The most important finding of this paper is the consistency of the ~~significance and ranking of the chosen variables.~~ We believe that the evidence suggests the cross-cultural applicability of a possibly culture bound theoretical framework, symbolic interactionism. We also suggest the further and future use of path analysis as a tool for analyzing such theoretical processes cross-cultural and for specifying the interaction of numbers of variables in such models (as in the case of mother support presented here).

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Notes:

1. The variables included in the expanded model, but not in the simplified model, are: conjugal power of the father, religiosity of the father, religiosity of the mother, education of the father, education of the mother, father control, mother control and conformity to others.
2. This did not present a problem since most of the variables deemed to be theoretically important were included in the original study.

Previous publications from this data include: Gecas, et al., 1970; Thomas and Weigert, 1971; Weigert and Thomas, 1970.
3. The "coefficient of alienation" (Land, 1962: 12) was used to compare the explanatory power of the models. It measures the amount of variance not accounted for. The coefficient was .760 for the expanded model and .763 for the simplified model, or no difference.
4. The pairs used were: strong-weak, brave-cowardly, clever-foolish, active-passive, friendly-unfriendly, happy-sad, attractive-repulsive, good-bad, and just-unjust.
5. The items used in the Mother Evaluation scale were: good-bad, friendly-unfriendly, just-unjust, happy-sad, and mild-stern.

The items used in the Father Evaluation scale are: brave-cowardly, ~~strong-weak, clever-foolish, active-passive,~~ and happy-sad.

The three scales used in constructing the Religious Images Scale are:

Blessed Virgin Mary: good-bad, just-unjust, clever-foolish, friendly-unfriendly, happy-sad.

Jesus: good-bad, just-unjust, clever-foolish, friendly-unfriendly, brave-cowardly.

God: clever-foolish, good-bad, just-unjust, friendly-unfriendly, and strong-weak.

6. There is a problem in that the high intercorrelation of responses to semantic differential items may produce spurious results. However, the controls used as part of path analysis, and the fact that different adjective pairs were used in each scale, should minimize the problem.

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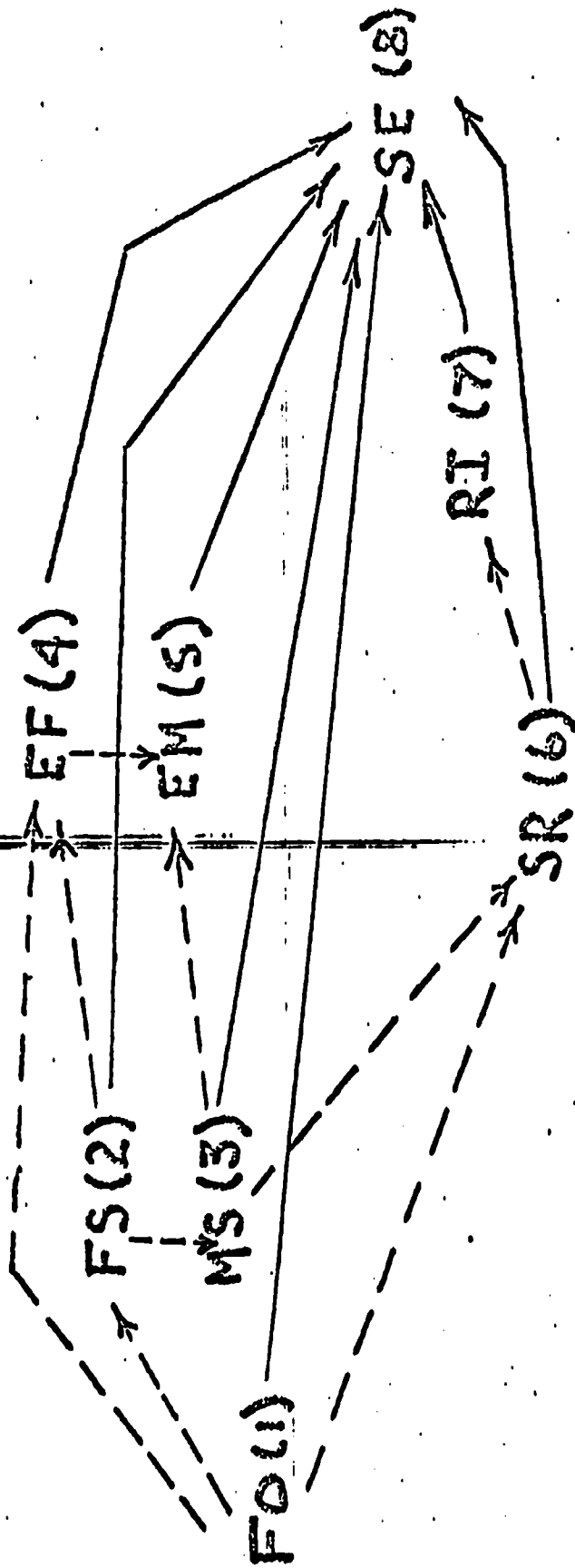
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Table 1
DIRECT PATH COEFFICIENTS FROM
EVALUATION BY
SEX AND CULTURE

Var. Path	Female					Male					Total
	Agg	NY	SP	B	SJ	Agg	NY	SP	B	SJ	
FO ¹	-.10	.04	-.10	-.07	-.06	.00	.07	.04	.01	-.08	-.04
FS	.12	.25	.05	.04	.17	.15	.12	.20	.18	.05	.18
MS	-.13	.06	-.10	-.07	-.12	-.13	-.14	-.18	-.10	-.04	-.08
EF	.23	.16	.28	.11	.27	.34	.15	.17	.12	.14	.21
EM	.28	.12	.22	.40	.27	.22	.29	.21	.37	.43	.30
SR	.07	-.03	.05	-.11	.07	.13	.07	-.18	-.10	.04	-.10
RI	.28	.14	.18	.44	.11	.09	.41	.31	.37	.33	.32

Figure 1
SIMPLIFIED MODEL (S) OF ANTECEDENTS OF ADOLESCENT SELF EVALUATION



FO-Father's Occupation (SES)
MS-Mother Support
EM-Evaluation of Mother
RI-Religious Imagery

FS-Father Support
EF-Evaluation of Father
SR-Self Religiosity

Direct path to SE.
Other paths used in calculation of path coefficients.

Table 2

RANKS OF DIRECT EFFECTS¹ OF VARIABLES ON SELF EVALUATION
BY SEX AND CULTURE

Variable	Rank															Total Sample
	Female							Male								
	NY	SP	B	SJ	S	M	Agg	NY	SP	B	SJ	S	M	Agg		
RI ²	3	3	1	5	2	7	1.5	1	1	1.5	2	1	7	1	1	
EM	4	2	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	2	2	1.5	1	2	2	2	2	
EF	2	1	3.5	1.5	6	1	3	3	6	4	3	6	1	3	3	
FS	1	6.5	7	3	5	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	
MS	5	4.5	5.5	4	4	5.5	4	4	4.5	5.5	6.5	5	5	5	5	
SES	6	4.5	5.5	7	7	3	6	6.5	7	7	4	7	6	7	6	
SR	7	6.5	3.5	6	4	5.5	7	6.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	4	4	6	7	

¹Variables are ranked in terms of strength of effect rather than direction.

²See Figure 1 on previous page for key to abbreviations.

Table 3

SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS FOR RANKS OF DIRECT EFFECTS
BETWEEN SUBSAMPLES BY SEX (FOR MODEL S)

	Female					Male					Between male and female
	SP	B	SJ	S	M	SP	B	SJ	S	M	
NY	.46	.00	.61	-.86	.14	.86	.86	.86	.56	.14	.23
SP		.64	.68	.25	.43		.93	.78	.71	.07	.23
B			.25	.64	-.75			.90	.63	.39	.57
SJ				.21	.57				.53	.33	.67
S					-.61					-.83	.67
M											.75