Reference Group Theory and Predisposition toward Teacher Dropout

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REFERENCE GROUP THEORY AND PREDISPOSITION
TOWARD TEACHER DROP OUT

by

Anton J. Tomas Jr.

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of the School of Graduate
Studies in partial fulfillment
of the
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Kalamazoo, Michigan
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Anton J. Tomas
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Social Psychology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Introduction

Both the shortage\(^1\) and discontent\(^2\) of public school teachers have become evident features of current American education. They

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\(^1\) For an overview of the teacher shortage situation, see: Foster, Clifford D., "Teacher Supply and Demand." Review of Educational Research, XXXVII (June 1967), 260-267. From a review of educational literature since 1963, Foster concludes: "As was the case when Stone (1963) reviewed the literature, the supply of qualified teachers for the nation's schools continued to be the foremost problem in public education in 1966." (p.160). See also: Bartels, Martin H., "Index of Teacher Demand Through 1965." Educational Forum, XXXI (November 1966), 444; __________, "Teachers - The Shortage Worsens." School and Society, VC (January 1967), 43.

\(^2\) Numerous articles and reports have recently appeared which imply or attest to a strong dissatisfaction felt by public school teachers with some of the existing conditions concerning their positions. A few noted were: Winkle, Harold Van, "What's Behind Teacher Unrest?" Ohio Schools, VL (March 1967), 26-27; Brown, R. J., "Anatomy of a Strike; What Really Happened in Woodbridge." School Management, XI (May 1967), 76-82; Nalte, M. C., "Public School Employees Can Be Enjoined From Conducting Strike and Picketing." American School Board Journal, CLII (June 1966), 15-16; __________, "Teacher Walkouts in Michigan." Michigan Education Journal, IVL (September 1966), 13-14; Cohodes, A., "Teachers May Lose More Than They Bargain For." Nations Schools, LXXIX (January 1967), 37; Zimmerman, A., "Was It a Strike in Cleveland, or Wasn't It?" Nations Schools, LXXIX (March 1967), 82-83; Powers, F. R., "Was it Ethical and Professional?" Kentucky School Journal, VL (December 1966), 9; Boutwell, W. D., "What's Happening in Education? Is it Right for Teachers to Strike?" The P. T. A. Magazine, LXI (January 1967), 17-18.
are being noted and surveyed with growing concern by spokesmen of educational issues, formers of educational policy, and others who share an interest in our institutions for learning. The exigency of the situation is underscored at a time when education has emerged as personally indispensable and collectively necessary for the functioning of a complex industrial society.

Though our nation has been graduating from its colleges and universities increasing numbers of those certified to teach, the number of certified teachers employed in public schools continues to remain inadequate in the presence of expanding national needs (primarily increasing student enrollments). This continuing gap between supply and demand is apparent at both elementary and secondary levels. Failure to close it has been attributed to at least three factors: (1) Not enough persons yet prepare for teaching careers in public education, (2) Too few enter the field after undergoing formal preparation, and (3) Of those who do begin teaching in elementary or secondary education, too many subsequently drop out, or leave the field for other occupations or activities. This last factor is of special importance.

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3 Foster, op. cit., pp. 261-262.


The withdrawal of teachers from public education contributes heavily to the present situation of a teacher shortage in this area. In part, it may be both indicative of and the result of the discontent among the ranks of public school teachers. Not only have efforts to "sell" the virtues of a career in public education to prospective college students fallen short of desired success, but it appears that many of those who have been "sold," or otherwise have entered the field, soon become sufficiently disenchanted with the teaching role to depart. Each year thousands of elementary and secondary teachers, many who have taught less than four years, voluntarily leave the classroom and the field of public education, presumably never to return again. Though many are able or appear able to continue teaching, they apparently abandon it for other occupations.

Teacher dropout has thus become a focal concern to many educators and others who hold an interest in the areas of teacher supply and demand and job satisfaction. It constitutes in itself a problem of major dimensions, complexity, and importance. It is also of sociological interest.

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Nature of the Problem

A recent study revealed that, for every 100 college graduates who satisfy state certification requirements for teaching, about 60 actually enter the classroom. Of these 60 persons, about 53 return to their classrooms the following (second) year. An additional 10 to 15 per cent drop out of teaching at the conclusion of their second year. After ten years, only 12 to 15 of the initial 100 persons prepared to enter the classroom may be teaching in elementary and secondary schools. From a survey of school records data, Edwards concluded that each year one out of every twelve teachers leaves the teaching ranks. Nelson stated that fewer than 10 per cent of those who start teaching will be found in the classroom 10 years.

7The author is indebted to Edsel L. Erickson for providing a similar statement of the problem and a bibliography which has been expanded for this review. (See: Erickson, Edsel L., Jacobs, George W., Johansen, Judith J. and Robin, Stanley S., Teacher Mobility, Teacher Dropout, and the Expectations of Family and Friends, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Research, Project No. 6-8968. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, March 1968, pp. 5-8.)


hence. He stated further that, due to increasing student enrollments in public schools, "the large number who leave teaching (each year) cannot be replaced by the new group graduated each year by institutions of higher learning."  

The National Education Association Research Division estimated that, in order to fill positions created by roughly an eight per cent dropout from the fall of 1965 to the fall of 1966, the nation's schools would have to replace 76,683 elementary and 59,283 secondary teachers.  

Bruce, in speaking of teacher dropouts, said: "Of all the problems which boards of education have to contend with, the turnover of teachers is perhaps the most troublesome and confusing."

Why do teachers leave education? This is the general question to be investigated in this research. It has also been the subject of numerous other investigations.

A survey of recent studies (from 1960 to 1966) of the problem of teacher dropout (i.e., elementary and secondary teachers who leave elementary and secondary education) reveals that numerous deter-

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11 ibid.

12 Foster, op. cit., p. 263.

mining factors have been put forth in explanation. Nelson summarizes some of these factors as follows: low salary; heavy teaching loads; assignments beyond regular classroom teaching; inadequate supervision; poor assignments given to first year teachers; discipline problems and inability to handle classes; pressure groups in the school and in the community; poor mental hygiene; marriage and pregnancy; inadequate preparation or knowledge of subject taught; unfair teacher evaluation; inadequate facilities; poor faculty relationships; lack of opportunity to develop new ideas; routine clerical duties; competition between schools and industry for trained personnel; poor school boards and ill health.

The popular conclusion, that salary is usually the single, primary reason for dropping out of education (i.e., when other reasons, such as pregnancy, are clearly not involved), has been
criticized. Brookover and Gotlieb\textsuperscript{15} stated: "An easy conclusion is that salaries would solve the teacher-supply problem. But this is hardly an adequate explanation, when other factors are considered." These authors feel that teachers often are less involved with financial success than with economic security.\textsuperscript{16} Also, they believe that the image of teachers expressed in the "teacher stereotype" is possibly of more importance than money in discouraging teachers from staying in the field of education.\textsuperscript{17}

Other sources appear to indicate that discipline problems and a lax attitude toward the control of pupil behavior are primary reasons why teachers are unsuccessful and leave education.\textsuperscript{18}

Although not concerned directly with the problem of teacher dropout, some educational writers and researchers conclude that the teacher's self-concept and fulfillment of certain socio-psychological needs (e.g., needs for approval, adequacy, and self-realization) are of crucial importance in determining the extent to which he


\textsuperscript{17}loc. cit., pp. 357-388.

\textsuperscript{18}Nelson, op. cit., pp. 467, 469; Sorenson, Schaefer and Nyman, op. cit.; Elena, Stevenson and Webb, op. cit.
is effective and satisfied in this role.\footnote{Lynch, William W., Jr., "Interpersonal Perception: A Neglected Aspect of Teaching." Theory into Practice, II (May 1963), 90-94; Combs, Arthur W., "The Personal Approach to Good Teaching." Educational Leadership, XXI (March 1964), 374, 376; Jersild, Arthur T., When Teachers Face Themselves. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1955.} A logical extension of their conclusions suggests a general hypothesis: If the teacher's socio-psychological needs are not being satisfactorily met in the school setting, then he may likely leave the teaching profession. Although this sounds plausible, no research or articles could be found that were concerned specifically with the relationship of socio-psychological needs or states and withdrawal from teaching.\footnote{At the time this research was being conducted, the above statement was true. Since then, there has appeared the recently completed research by Erickson et al, Teacher Mobility, Teacher Dropout, and the Expectations of Family and Friends. (See p. 4, footnote 7.) This study, however, was concerned with socio-psychological needs of the teacher and their fulfillment within the school setting only as a secondary analysis on a post hoc and general basis. Its primary focus was on the teacher's needs and relationships with others outside the school setting and the importance of these for sustaining or not sustaining a career in secondary education. Nevertheless, with respect to the suggested hypothesis above, it should be noted that this secondary analysis did not find support for views stating that student discipline problems, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with others (i.e., other teachers and principals) in the school setting (all factors which might involve and affect the fulfillment of socio-psychological needs within the school setting) are significant factors in determining whether or not a teacher will leave this occupation (p. 41).}
Erickson et al. point out that most of the existing studies of teacher dropouts are open to criticism for two reasons: (1) their post hoc nature, and (2) their lack of any theoretical framework concerning career change. They take the position that theoretical formulations must be used which hypothesize in advance teachers who will or will not leave the field of education if these formulations are to be considered useful or valid.

An additional criticism of some studies of teacher dropouts is their lack of specific classification and comparison of different kinds, or types, of teachers associated with dropout rates and factors predictive of those who leave or stay in education. Ryan, in his study of teacher characteristics, concluded that certain personal and behavioral differences exist between teachers classified according to various social characteristics. Some of the social classification variables he included in his study were age, number of years teaching experience, sex, marital status, selected experiences during childhood and adolescence, avocational activities, grade level taught, and subject matter taught. Among other personal and behavioral differences, Ryan's results demonstrated dif-

\(^{21}\) op. cit., p. 5.

ferences in emotional stability, verbal understanding, classroom procedures used in teaching and controlling pupils, attitudes toward pupils, understanding of pupil needs and behavior, and teacher effectiveness in general. Accordingly, it is reasonable to suspect that the causative factors involved in leaving education might also vary in nature and importance among teachers differentially classified according to various social and educational characteristics.

Erickson et al. made a further criticism of teacher dropout studies which illustrates this general lack of concern for classification rigor. They state: "Among most studies of teacher turnover, teacher mobility (a change in district of employment) is not distinguished from teacher dropout (teachers leaving education for other careers)." They caution that a different set of factors may be more appropriate for explaining teacher dropout than would be appropriate for explaining teacher mobility.

23, 24

An example of a study in which there is no conceptual clarification of the dependent variable "teacher turnover" is cited by Browning, Rufus C., "How to tackle the Problem of Teacher Turnover." School Management, VII (June 1963) 80-82. Though the implication of this study for the specific problem of teacher dropout is not clear, it does possibly suggest something of the magnitude of the problem and the relative importance of salary as a causative factor.

Browning stated that a large Middle Atlantic school system loses about one out of every seven teachers annually, and that 82 per cent of those leaving serve three years or less. Of 854 teachers hired by this school system for the 1960-61 school year,
In commenting on the many studies of teacher turnover, job satisfaction, and conditions of employment conducted over the past several years, Gordon summarized his conclusions as follows:

When one looks for research going beyond the collection and rough classification of quantifiable facts about current conditions, the picture is rather bleak. The literature mostly consists either of statements of opinions and ideas or of descriptions of plans and panaceas - together with unevaulated and often uncritical and highly biased descriptions of innovations. Few studies which are based on clearly stated hypotheses and strict definitions of conditions have been reported.

The Research Problem

In view of the discussion above and other considerations stated below, this study will be focused and conducted in the following manner.

The specific question to be investigated in this research is:

Why do some male high school teachers leave high school education nearly 30 per cent voluntarily left after the first year. Browning comments that similar statistics (for dropout and/or mobility?) can be cited for many other districts. In an effort to find out why teachers were leaving this particular school system, 241 of its former teachers were surveyed in a questionnaire study. The results indicated that "excessive pressures and work overload" and "dislike for administrative and supervisory practices" were the major reasons for leaving. (Again, mobile teachers were not distinguished from dropout teachers.) Salary was mentioned infrequently, and then only by men (four out of 32).

for other occupations? An answer to this question will be sought by examining the teacher's prestige and reference group associations in the social system of the high school he attended as a student. More precisely, the focus will be on comparing three categories of teachers with respect to hypothesized differences in these aspects of their past high school experience. The three categories of teachers are: (1) current teachers who plan to leave high school education (dropouts), (2) current teachers who are undecided concerning staying in or leaving high school education (potential dropouts), and (3) current teachers who plan to stay in high school education (non-dropouts).

Major features and considerations in the design of this research are these:

1) Only male teachers will be involved in this study. There are two reasons for this sex restriction.

   a) Although the literature reviewed regarding this matter

26During the formulation of this study, a search through educational and sociological literature failed to produce any research dealing in any form with both reference group theory and teacher dropout. Since that time, however, the study cited earlier by Erickson et al (p. 4, footnote 7) has been completed. Although this study used reference group theory to explain teacher dropout, the particular way in which it was used has no direct bearing upon the rationale of the research hypotheses of this study. It may be noted, though, that reference group theory as used by Erickson et al was found to be highly useful in predicting male teachers who leave or remain in secondary education (p. 41).
was not explicit, it appears that primary reasons for teacher dropout among female teachers are marriage, pregnancy, and other aspects of the female roles of wife and mother. The obscurity and confusion involved in answering the question of why teachers leave education (and thus the existence of a problem) seems to exist largely in relation to male teacher dropouts.

b) Though the explanation for teacher dropout which will be hypothesized in this study is probably not by its nature, if it does prove tenable, found exclusively among male teacher dropouts, it is felt that this explanation may be more important in male dropout than female dropout and methodologically easier to detect among males as opposed to females. Due to the nature of the male and the male role in our society (e.g., the male is not expected to discontinue working because of marriage), it is apparent that other factors must be primary in explaining teacher dropout among males. Also, because such factors as marriage and pregnancy will not be involved by focusing exclusively on male teachers, they will have no opportunity to confound or obscure the operation of other factors which are of interest and which might be of importance in explaining dropout among teachers.

2) This study will be concerned only with those males who teach in secondary education and are referred to as high school teachers.
as opposed to junior high school teachers. High school teachers are defined here as both those who teach all or part of their time at grade levels 10, 11, and/or 12 and those who teach only at grade levels 7, 8, and/or 9 but within a working environment that contains grades 10, 11, and 12. Junior high school teachers are viewed as those who teach grade levels 7 and/or 8 or 7, 8, and/or 9 within a working environment that does not include grades 10, 11, and 12. 27 The following considerations underlie

27 In most public school systems, the terms elementary education and secondary education refer respectively to grades 1 through 6 and grades 7 through 12. These are the meanings they will have in this study.

It is common in many school systems to subdivide the secondary level into junior high school and senior high school, or simply high school. Sometimes grade 9 is included with grades 10, 11, and 12 as part of high school. Grades 7 and 8 then form the junior high level. Perhaps more frequently, though, grades 7, 8, and 9 are considered as junior high school and grades 10, 11, and 12 as high school. The secondary level division is usually a formal one when the secondary grades are housed in two different buildings or building complexes. Thus, grades 10, 11, and 12 (or grades 9, 10, 11, and 12) may be set apart from lower grades in some school systems and officially referred to as high school, and only these teachers would be called high school teachers. Similarly, grades 7, 8, and 9 (or grades 7 and 8), if housed separately from the higher grades, are often formally called the junior high school, and teachers in this situation would be called junior high teachers.

When grades 7 through 12 are housed within a single building or building complex, a distinction between junior high and high school is often not made, or occurs only on an informal basis. It is common in this situation to call teachers in the lower secondary grades (e.g., grades 7 and 8) high school teachers as well as those in higher grades (e.g., grades 11 and 12). In other words, the entire building or building complex may be referred to as high
this restriction.

a) More male teachers are typically found in secondary education than in elementary education. Thus, accessibility of respondents is one reason for confining attention only to this teaching level.

b) Previous research has revealed certain characteristics of the high school social system - specifically, grades 9 through 12 - and adolescent behavior within this system which are pertinent to the theoretical framework that will be used in this study to examine teacher dropout. This theoretical orientation suggests a causal relationship between certain past self-evaluation experiences in school. Some teachers in this type of school teach at both the "junior high" and "high school" levels.

As specified above, this research will distinguish between the junior high and the high school in secondary education. Accordingly, the junior high school refers to those single educational settings inclusive of grades 7 and 8 or 7, 8, and 9 only. The high school refers to those single educational settings inclusive of grades 10 through 12, grades 9 through 12, or grades 7 through 12 only. (For a further discussion of grade level divisions in education, see: Bent, Rudyard K. and Kronenberg, Henry H., Principles of Secondary Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1961, p. 2-3, 6-7.)


ences of an individual within a hierarchal, group structured context (e.g., the high school) and present self-evaluation experiences when he again becomes part of a similar social context.

Because the above cited research did not deal with what has been defined here as the junior high school, which may therefore differ from the high school in ways important to this theoretical framework, junior high school teachers are excluded from this analysis.

3) This study will focus primarily on inexperienced teachers, or those who have taught for a relatively short time (e.g., two years), rather than experienced teachers, or those who have taught for a longer time (e.g., seven years). Two reasons underlie this restriction.

   a) As developed in Chapter II, Theoretical Framework for Analysis, the hypotheses of this research appear logically more relevant to the explanation of dropout among inexperienced teachers as opposed to experienced teachers. (See pp. 102-103.)

   b) The general problem of teacher dropout seems more acute among inexperienced teachers and the reasons less clear. Thus, by focusing on inexperienced teachers in addition to male teachers (p.12-13,item 1a), this research again will be concerned with what appear to be the more important and confusing aspects

30 Hunter, op. cit.; Steiner, op. cit.; Browning, op. cit. p. 80; Wolf and Wolf, op. cit.
4) In dealing with teacher turnover, attention will be given only to teacher dropout. Teacher mobility, or movement of teachers from one school system to another, will not be studied.

5) A socio-psychological theoretical approach (reference group theory) will be used in attempting to explain teacher dropout. Hypotheses which derive from this theoretical framework will be formulated.

6) This study will not attempt to establish predictive validity, or actually measure a future position on a dependent variable. Due to time and financial limitations, no attempt will be made to determine which male teachers presently employed as high school teachers do at some time in the future actually leave the profession for some other occupation. Instead, the dependent variable of this study - future occupational status as a high school teacher - will be assessed indirectly through questionnaire items designed to reveal the teacher's present plans, or predisposition, concerning staying in or leaving high school education. It is assumed that current intentions to leave or stay in high school education are positively associated with the corresponding later behavior of leaving or staying in high school education.

Thus, the three categories to be established on the dependent variable - dropouts, potential dropouts, and non-dropouts (see p.
12) - will be viewed as forming an ordinal scale of the probability of dropout for current high school teachers. Dropouts will be regarded as those teachers most likely to leave high school education, potential dropouts as those less likely to leave, and non-dropouts as those least likely to leave.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The section that follows presents the theoretical approach used in this research. This is reference group theory and its socio-psychological basis. The basis of reference group theory is discussed first.

Theoretical Framework

The self-concept and self-evaluation

Lindesmith and Strauss\(^31\) define the self as, "... an organization or integration of an individual's reactions to (conceptions of) his behavior." Also, "... one may think of self as: (1) a set of more or less consistent and stable responses on a conceptual level, which (2) exercises a regulatory function over other responses of the same organism at lower levels."\(^32\) Implicit in these definitions is the idea that man has or develops the capacity to view himself as an object. That is, he can react to and define himself and his behavior just as he can react to and define other aspects of his environment.


\(^32\) loc. cit., p. 416.

19
The second definition given above implies that the self is involved in directing and guiding the individual's behavior, presumably certain overt, conceptual, and affective activities. In other words, the definitions of oneself and behavior resulting from the process of reacting to oneself as an object determines to some extent how one behaves overtly and covertly.\(^{33}\)

A primary and continuing part of the content of the individual's reactions to and definitions of himself and his actions consists of his perceptions of how other people react to and define him and his behavior.\(^{34}\) In other words, when the individual views himself as an object, the conceptions of this object that he identifies as himself are often those which result from assuming the role of others (i.e., viewing himself as he thinks others view him). To a large extent, a person accepts as defining himself those characteristics and traits that he presently perceives, has perceived, and believes he will perceive other people attributing to him.


In this sense, we can speak of the constitutive aspects of one's self, or self-concept, as being socially derived, or resulting from interaction with others. If the self influences the overt and covert behavior of the individual, and if its content is derived in part from others, then it follows that a person's overt, conceptual, and affective behavior is determined and guided to some extent by this process by others.

It was indicated in the definitions given above that the self-concept is characterized to some degree by stability, or invariance, in its organization and content. Some elements of the self-concept remain unchanged throughout the individual's life. Other aspects may remain constant for relatively long periods of time.

The sociologist Charles Horton Cooley contributed much to the development of the concept of self as a product derived and fashioned from interaction with one's social environment. (See: Cooley, Charles H., Human Nature and the Social Order. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902, pp. 168-210; and Cooley, Charles H., Angell, Robert C. and Carr, Lowell J., Introductory Sociology. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933, pp. 117-132.) He is especially well known for his concept of the "reflected" or "looking-glass" self, which is essentially the nature of the self that is being emphasized in the theoretical orientation of this research. In essence, Cooley defines the "looking-glass" self as the image of oneself that is perceived or believed to exist in the minds of others. This image is viewed as resulting from and constituting the reactions of others to oneself. Thus, in a way analogous to viewing and reacting to his image in a real mirror, the individual views and reacts to a self-image that is or is believed to be reflected from the mirror of his social environment. Self-feelings determined by the nature of this image are self-reactions determined by perceived and/or believed reactions of others to oneself.
before undergoing any change. Much of this consistency in the self-structure may be accounted for by the fact that a person functions to a considerable extent in sociocultural contexts.

To the extent the individual is aware of consistency and similarity in certain ways that he perceives others defining him and his actions, he is apt to react to himself in those ways in the same manner with consistency. Thus, in part, stability in self-components can originate in circumstances external to the individual. People in general define each other and their behavior in a constant and predictable fashion and hold in common various expectations for themselves and others. By virtue of this perceived constancy, certain aspects of the self (e.g., identifying oneself as a male) normally remain unchanged throughout life.

Though stable in some ways, a person's self-concept is by no means absolutely rigid. Certain aspects do usually remain unchanged throughout all or most of life, but other areas of the structure may be and are altered. Present self-characteristics can be changed or replaced and other characteristics can be added to the existing structure.

Much of this alteration that may occur in the self-concept is also a result of the fact that a person functions in social and cul-

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36 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 417.
tural contexts. A society and its culture is an integrated system consisting of differentiated parts; socially and culturally patterned differences and changes are evident and occur with respect to people and their behavior. It is characteristic that individuals move within such a system spatially and over time.

For example, the high school English teacher who quits teaching to become a welder has not only moved in a physical sense, but he has also moved within the structure of a socio-cultural system. Performing in this new occupation, he now probably interacts with socially different people and within a setting of somewhat different behavioral expectations. Similarly, the local grocery store owner who becomes the town's mayor, although perhaps he has not changed his physical surroundings, or even the people with whom he interacts, has changed his position within a structure of interaction relationships and expectation patterns. Also, the girl who was once a "tomboy" but is now a "young lady" of age 16 has moved to another part of the sociocultural structure. The passage of time has brought about physical changes in her which have related her to a different realm of social expectations.

Through movement such as this, changes in and additions to a person's self-concept can occur. The social actions of and reactions to an individual as he encounters different parts of a
society and its culture may change qualitatively and/or in content. Perception of different circumstances and differences in how others view oneself could lead to changes in self views. Another way of stating this is that persons typically come to occupy and exchange various ascribed and achieved statuses and roles during their lives, and many of these changes do or may result in altering self-conceptions.  

Various statuses and roles are arranged in sequences within the general sociocultural structure and its parts. To the extent that their assumption and the sequence of their assumption are ascribed, or part of a normative order, changes in and additions to the social self may be "forced," or somewhat automatic. In other words, if the assumption of new or additional statuses and roles can result in self-concept changes (due to the perception of different social definitions and expectations in relation to changes in status occupancy and role enactment), then, to the extent that their assumption is commanded through the normative order, self-concept changes are similarly commanded. For instance, an individual is typically defined by others, and therefore


by himself, as first a child, then a teenager, and finally an adult. Or, a son is expected to become a husband and then, perhaps, a father. Through occupying these successive statuses and enacting their role prescriptions, self-concept changes could proceed accordingly.

Although a person is socialized through others acting within sociocultural structures and is continually sensitive to their expectations and actions as patterned by these structures (as well as by the more unique behavior people display), this does not necessarily mean that a person or his behavior is a mere reflection of what any particular others, concrete or abstract, decide or expect. That an individual is compliant to the demands of his social environment is true, but he is also, at the same time, an active agent. An individual is free to some extent within the confines and content of his general and particular sociocultural structures to define himself and act in ways resulting from his own somewhat unique motivations and experiences.

An important part of the self structure consists of the person's evaluative notions about himself. These notions can

39 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 430, 598; Meltzer, op. cit., p. 17.

form a basis for self-esteem, which refers to the conceptualized and affective extent of satisfaction with (or approval of) one's self-concept in general. As part of his self-concept, an individual's evaluations of himself, both in quality and content, may be determined to some extent by others. Since the process of self-evaluation contains the element of self-esteem, then the latter may be determined or affected to some degree by others. A person may be satisfied or dissatisfied with himself and his behavior according to perceived evaluations and extent of approval received from other persons.

As with other aspects of the self-concept, so are an individual's evaluative notions about himself (and thus his self-esteem) subject to change and partly a function of his own initiation. It is probable that various facets of the self are differentially

\[41\] Self-esteem may be thought of as an overall self-evaluation resulting from "averaging" specific evaluations on factors comprising the self-structure at any given time. It is assumed that people are inclined to (1) generalize and strive for consistency, or balance, with respect to their self-evaluations (Deutsch and Krauss, op. cit., p. 22), and (2) rank their values and the symbols (people, things, characteristics, and activities) that serve as indicators of these values, thereby giving more weight, or significance, to self-evaluations based on more important values and symbols. Based on these assumptions, it is likely that overall self-assessments occur. It is further assumed that a person can hold both specific evaluations of himself and a general evaluation of himself, and that each can affect the other.

\[42\] Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 598.
evaluated by both the individual and others. Given this, it may be possible that various of these facets, individually and in combination, can enter into conscious mental activity with differing emphases at any given time under differing social and/or psychological circumstances. Thus, self-esteem could change, or vary. Also, particular facets may be evaluatively altered (thereby possibly affecting self-esteem) through perceived changed reactions of others and/or of the individual toward these parts of his self-structure. Such evaluative changes would likely follow any real alteration in performance or attribution on certain factors according to which the individual is judged. They could also take place even without actual alteration in such factors as the individual moves from role to role and from one social structure to another. The perception of changed reactions of others alone might result in changing self-evaluations.

Some socio-psychological assumptions and self-esteem

To many sociologists, most of man's behavior has, basically,


44 All statements that will be made in this analysis concerning relationships between self-esteem, social judgments, and reference group behavior should be interpreted as applying only within the context of our sociocultural system or those greatly similar to it.
a social origin and a social orientation. Though certain aspects of human behavior, such as some "needs" or "drives," are and possibly may be innate or potential, they nevertheless acquire their particular characteristics and mode of functioning, or become functional, only as they are related to other people and their behavior.

Wrong, in his article, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," comments that sociologists typically view man's behavior (i.e., his behavior beyond the state of infant) as being motivated primarily by the desire to achieve a positive image of oneself by winning acceptance or status (prestige) in the eyes of others. This desire to maintain and enhance one's self-esteem, or to maximize one's overall self-evaluation, by winning approval from others, along with the notion of internalization of social norms, is often taken as constituting, "... a model of human nature, explicit or implicit in much of modern sociological literature." The model can be viewed as operating in the following manner.

Man, at least in our society and culture, has a fundamental

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46 Ibid.
"need" to maintain and maximize his self-esteem. Since the fulfillment of this need is dependent primarily on approval from others, he must seek their approval. In order to obtain this approval, he must orient himself toward their norms and values and behave according to their definitions and expectations. In order for approval or disapproval by others to affect one's self-esteem (i.e., to result in self-enhancement or self-devaluation), he must also accept, or adopt, to some degree, the standards of others. Through their internalization, he does come to accept them as well as conform to them. They become a frame of reference for him (i.e., things referred to, or turned to, for guidance and direction) within and according to which he directs and evaluates his own and others' behavior.

This orientation, then, assumes that man, beyond the beginning stages of his life, directs his behavior primarily through sociogenic motives in an effort to secure acceptance from his fellows and become favorably distinguished among them. Because of this need and the nature of its satisfaction, the cooperative basis necessary for societal living is procured. And through the fulfillment of this need, the individual obtains an optimum psychological and emotional equilibrium necessary for

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47 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 413, 420, 446, 522; Sherif and Sherif, op. cit., p. 388.
his welfare.

It might be added here that obtaining this optimum equilibrium referred to above might also aid in permitting the individual to cooperate effectively with others for the continuance of the social order within which he functions. In other words, though the existence of the need for self-esteem and the mode of its fulfillment may motivate the individual to apply himself in this direction of effort, the fulfillment of this need to some extent (which also may motivate the person to cooperate effectively with others) might also be necessary in order to permit the individual some success in this endeavor. Mental and emotional impairments often limit effective interaction and thus disrupt cooperative effort for mutual welfare.

Wrong accepts this model as valid but with some reservations. He feels that it is often carried to extremes, in that it denies other factors involved in man's social and biological nature which have significance for his motivation. However, he is not explicit regarding the identification or nature of these factors. Without attempting to deal with other probable motivational alternatives for man's behavior, further examination of this model is warranted, since it does form a basis for reference group theory.

Regarding the internalization of social expectations, it
should be pointed out that the norms and values a person may adopt as a reference for orienting, guiding, and evaluating his behavior depends on those with which he comes in contact through his experiences with others. Obviously, in our culture, these are numerous and varied; they are not confined to those extant among the persons with whom an individual has established relatively enduring patterns of interaction. The particular norms and values an individual actually comes to adopt or internalize, though, are most often those derived from the groups to which one belongs.  

Granting this, however, should not be a denial of the possibility that groups to which one does not belong might also serve as referents for some areas of behavior.  

In our society a person is likely to come in contact with various socializing agencies, and can conceivably internalize, or accept as applying to him, various norms and values, some of which may not stem from primary groups or even people with whom one interacts.

The other half of the sociological model of human nature as

48 Merton, op. cit., p. 307; Sherif and Sherif, op. cit., p. 117.


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this appears to be evidenced in our sociocultural system contends that the maintenance and enhancement of self-esteem is primarily and ultimately accomplished through perceived approval from others. The model also contends that in order to elicit such approval, one must fulfill those social expectations that direct favorable social attention to oneself. Assuming this model deals with variables, the following relationships would appear evident here: (1) The extent to which one fulfills the expectations of others determines to some degree the extent to which he receives their approval or disapproval, and (2) The extent to which one experiences social approval or disapproval determines to some degree the extent to which self-esteem is enhanced or diminished (assuming that internalization of those norms and values upon which the social judgment is based has taken place).

Both of the above relationships as stated are general. It would seem likely that each involves other and more specific

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Cooley seems to make essentially the same point regarding the second item above in his discussion of the "looking-glass" self. (See: Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, op. cit., pp. 183-185.) He says that often, "...the social referent takes the form of a somewhat definite imagination of how one's self... appears in a particular mind, and the kind of self-feeling one has is determined by the attitude toward this attributed to that other mind." (pp. 183-184). Since Cooley's term "self-feeling" can be interpreted in part as meaning a conceptual and affective self-evaluative reaction (pp. 169-175), he is saying, in effect, that perceived judgments of oneself by others can affect self-esteem.
factors. Accordingly, at least two questions can be raised for further analysis of this model. First, what specific factors function in eliciting and determining the degree of approval (or disapproval) from others? Second, what specific factors determine how and to what extent social approval (or disapproval) affects the individual's self-esteem? This first question inquires into the more exact nature of the process of meeting social expectations in order to garner approval from others; the second seeks the identification of contingent variables that might function in the relationship between social approval and self-esteem.

In order to help identify some of the factors that are required to answer these questions, we must focus specifically on how a favorable self-image might be brought about through approval by others. The view that will be presented here, partially derived from the work of Eisenstadt and Murphy, is that there are two general ways (by no means mutually exclusive) through which a person can maintain self-esteem and experience self-enhancement (or self-diminution), and that each involves a somewhat different type and source of social approval (or disapproval).

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These ways may be thought of as two kinds of evaluation situations - non-comparative and comparative.\textsuperscript{52} A discussion of each follows. Because it appears to be more relevant for those aspects of reference group theory important to this research, comparative evaluation will be discussed in greater detail.

**Non-comparative evaluation**

One way through which self-enhancement may occur involves perceived general approval from specific and concrete others. If a person feels that he is positively valued and accepted by others simply as a "person," for being what he \textit{is} in comparison to what he \textit{should} or \textit{could} be, then he may experience, to some extent, a heightening of his self-esteem. Such an evaluative situation does not, ideally, involve ranking and deference behavior, but instead a perceived recognition and acceptance of intrinsic worth and value. In this connection, it is readily seen that approval of oneself is quite apt to be a function of the perception of direct and voiced approval from others with whom one is in interaction.

\textsuperscript{52}Although it is being stated here that self-esteem with respect to its social derivation is affected through two different types of evaluation situations, it is recognized that these situations are not clearly differentiated from or, most likely, independent of one another. Perhaps they may best be thought of as representing the two polar extremes on a continuum. Perhaps also one evolves from the other. If this is the case, it would seem more likely that non-comparative evaluation comes from the comparative type. Regardless, though, of the actual extent of overlap in nature and origin between them, an analytical distinction is made.
especially status equals and primary others.

**Comparative evaluation**

The other way through which a person's self-esteem can be affected involves more specific forms of approval (or disapproval) by way of performance and "achievement" according to standards representative of general or abstract others. It is in this connection that social ranking occurs, with resulting differences in prestige and deference behavior. From this point of view, the act of approval or disapproval of a person involves evaluating him with reference to, and through the employment of, some specific variables in man's physical, social, or cultural environment. The person is compared by others and/or compares himself to group standards or to other people with respect to performance or attribution on these variables and is assigned and/or assigns himself a rank on each of them that may range from low to high. These ranks, which place a person in hierarchal positions relative to others, constitute the evaluations of the person. The evaluations may in turn be reacted to by others with various degrees of approval or disapproval.

*Given the basic relationship between self-esteem and social*

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53 These variables used for interpersonal (and intergroup) evaluation will often be referred to as "evaluative criteria" in subsequent parts of this analysis.

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sentiment, how any of these perceived (or believed) evaluations affect one's self-esteem can be viewed as depending on at least three factors. These are: (1) the perceived magnitude of the evaluation, or the extent to which the individual's rank on or according to a criterion is believed by him to be high or low, (2) the significance, or importance, of the criterion to the individual for his self-esteem as opposed to rank on this criterion, and (3) the legitimacy the individual attaches to the evaluation and its context. It will be instructive to consider each of these factors in detail.

1) Rank on evaluative criterion and self-esteem. The first factor mentioned above operates in a straightforward fashion. There may be a close correlation (positive or negative) between the degree to which one's rank on (or according to) some evaluative criterion is high or low and extent of social approval. Self-esteem then could vary directly according to the rank the person believes he occupies on a criterion as a result of the degree of approval he perceives or believes is associated with that rank. If a higher rank on particular variables brings correspondingly more and greater degrees of social approval, then self-enhancement may result from obtaining the higher rank. However, this is not an invariant relationship. Other variables may affect the association of one's rank on a criterion, degree of social approval,
and self-esteem.

2) Significance of evaluative criterion for self-esteem. Different evaluative criteria, regardless of the rank one attains on them, can be of differential importance, or significance, for an individual's self-esteem. High or low rank on those variables that carry greater weight in this respect relative to others have a greater affect on overall self-evaluation than high or low rank on variables of lesser weight.

This significance of a criterion for self-esteem can be viewed as depending on at least three conditions. One of these would be the rank order of importance, or value, of criteria used in personal evaluation that is perceived to exist in the general sociocultural system (or perhaps a sub-system). The extent to which an evaluative criterion is perceived to be of general social value may decide in a direct and positive way

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The significance of a criterion for an individual's self-esteem should not be interpreted here as meaning the same thing as its importance to the person. As will soon be pointed out, the extent to which the person regards some variable as important in his value scheme is only one of at least three factors that may determine the degree to which it is important in maintaining self-esteem. Insofar as self-esteem is subject to influence by factors over which the individual has no immediate control, it varies independently of personal value schemes and volitional efforts.

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the extent to which one's rank on it (i.e., a particular evaluation on this criterion) enters into the determination of overall self-evaluation. Criteria of high general social value may well be more crucial for self-esteem than criteria of low general social value. Viewed within the framework of the aforementioned sociological model, two requirements appear necessary for the occurrence of such a situation. On requirement would be the identity of the social rank of a criterion with the social approval of a criterion. This identity might be established as follows.

Criteria perceived to be of high and low general value, or rank, occupy their respective positions because it is perceived that more people regard the former as positive in value, and probably more strongly positive, than the number of people who strongly regard the latter as positive in value. If this situation can be interpreted as constituting differences in general approval, then it may be concluded that criteria of higher social value constitute those to which are attached greater "amounts of" social approval and criteria of lesser social value constitute those to which are attached smaller "amounts of" social approval. In other words, evaluative criteria (norms, values, and their symbols) may receive various degrees of social approval or disapproval just as different people with respect to their performance on such criteria are regarded as more or less favorable than
others.

In order for criteria of different social ranks to assume varying proportions in determining self-esteem, it would also seem a requirement that the social approval attached to a criterion can be perceived by the individual as being directed toward himself, insofar as that criterion may be applied to him. If the individual is able to transfer (or transform) in his mind the orientation of social approval (or disapproval) directed toward criteria to that which is directed toward himself, then his self-esteem may become vulnerable to the perceived social ranking of these criteria. Thus, his rank on criteria of high general value might assume greater weight in determining net self-evaluation than his rank on criteria of perceived low general value (because more pervasive and stronger sentiments of approval are believed to be attached to the former variables in comparison to the latter). To succeed on highly ranked variables brings more approval (and thus possibly greater self-enhancement) to the person than success on lower ranked variables. For this same reason, failure (or low rank) on highly ranked variables of interpersonal evaluation involves the possibility of being subjected to more pervasive and stronger sentiments of disapproval (and thus possibly greater self-devaluation) than failure on lower valued criteria. In other words, if a low rank on a criterion brings disapproval from
others, then the higher the criterion ranks in general social value, the more social disapproval one may perceive being directed toward himself.

If the social ranking of evaluative criteria can affect the individual's self-esteem in the way just indicated, then two analytically separable sources of the "total amount" of approval (or disapproval) that one may perceive being directed toward his achievements and attributions have thus far been delineated. Recalling the discussion presented earlier concerning the relationship between one's rank on a criterion and social judgment (pp. 36-37), it would appear that the extent of approval an individual may receive from others emanates from: (1) the rank he holds on various criteria, and (2) the rank of various criteria upon which he is evaluated.

A certain rank position, or particular rating, on some variable X that ranks low in general social value as compared to a similar position attained on another variable Y that ranks relatively high in social importance might bring, in sum, less approval from others than in the latter situation. Though rank on each variable might be the same, the perceived degree of social approval attached to each rank may vary. Thus the rank on variable Y may be given greater weight in the determination of overall self-evaluation than the rank of variable X. The same situa-
tion might also obtain even if rank on variable X is higher than rank on variable Y. A high rating on a low ranking variable still might merit less approval from others (and thus may have a less favorable affect on self-esteem) than a mediocre rating on a high ranking variable. The maintenance of self-esteem, then, depends not only on acceptable performance or attribution, but it may also depend on which variables such performance or attribution occurs.

Because perceived approval from others may vary both with rank of criteria as well as one's rank on criteria, it is conceivable that no relationship whatsoever may exist between general social approval and level of performance on some evaluative criterion. A criterion may be of such low social rank that, regardless of where one ranks on it, no noticeable change is perceived or actually occurs in the nature and extent of social judgment directed toward oneself. Thus, self-esteem would not be affected by level of performance or attribution on a criterion of this nature. For example, if an adult male was pronounced in official tournament as tiddlywinks champion, it is doubtful that this title in most parts of our culture would rate any more general social approval than if he were proclaimed a duffer at tiddlywinks. In fact, it is conceivable that any American adult who lets it be known that he is seriously interested in his proficiency
at tiddlywinks may be berated by others in general regardless of how well he does in this endeavor. Tiddlywinks may be regarded by the majority of others as negative in value with respect to adults. This view might prevail because engaging in tiddlywinks is an act which brings disapproval from others as a result of lowering one's rank on other criteria of more importance to adults.

The second important condition that determines the significance of the criterion to the individual for self-esteem is the extent to which the person adopts, or internalizes, the criterion as important as opposed to the extent to which it is regarded favorably by society (or one of its sub-systems). Generally, whatever society regards as important, the individual, because he is socialized in that society, is likely to regard as important also. The relationship is not a perfect one, however. The individual may perceive or believe that, in general, a particular criterion is ranked by society in one way and yet he himself may rate it differently in value, with or without reference to its applicability to himself. This could occur as a result of the strong internalization of norms and value emphases perceived within the milieu of his own somewhat unique social interactions. With respect to certain

\[56\] See p. 37, footnote 54.
criteria, the individual may look toward his own (or other) more specific groups for social evaluation and approval rather than toward general others, where he may perceive that standards are different. Thus a low rank on some variable viewed as important in general, even though it may bring extensive social disapproval, may not much affect an individual's self-esteem if the sources to which he directs his attentions in order to secure approval relegate that particular variable to a position of minor importance, or of no importance at all. The Hippies and their no-bath etiquette are a case in point. They may be "dirty, and smell foul" to general America, but within their own sub-culture (or contra-culture) the definition and judgment of this situation is apparently different.

Finally, the present state of a person's self-esteem must be considered in order to assess the degree to which a particular variable, or rank on that variable, is important in its affects on self-esteem. This would necessitate consideration of the person's rank or other variables important to him and/or society in general. An individual who rates quite high on several evaluative criteria that he and others consider important may not suffer as much loss of self-esteem because of some other important measure upon which he feels he ranks low as compared with a person who feels he ranks low on this as well as the other notable
criteria toward which he and society is oriented. The former person may have sufficiently high enough ratings in other important areas to minimize the effect of a low rating in any one area.

3) Legitimacy of evaluation and self-esteem. In addition to the above discussed factors which contribute to determining one's self-esteem, at least one other general factor may be considered. In order for self-esteem to be affected, the person must to some extent accept the social reactions and evaluations he perceives being directed toward his performance or attribution regarding various criteria as legitimate (i.e., reasonable or true) or possibly legitimate.

It has been stated that the extent of social approval or disapproval perceived being directed toward oneself with reference to functioning within one's own sociocultural system may per se influence self-esteem (i.e., regardless of the direction or strength of personal value and reference orientations). It would also seem, however, that the degree of legitimacy a person attaches to an evaluation situation is an additional important factor in deciding this influence. To believe sincerely that a particular social judgment or its context is in some way invalid, with no possibility at all of being correct or true, would, it seems, largely negate any of its effect on self-esteem. Several factors are seen as involved in determining the extent of legiti-
macy perceived in a social evaluation situation. Among them, the following are major considerations: (1) perceived (or believed) degree of consensus among others as to what is desirable and undesirable performance or attribution according to particular variables (i.e., how discernible the scale is for any particular variable), (2) perceived degree of consensus among others regarding where one does rank on particular variables, (3) the perception of where one should rank on certain variables as compared to other persons and what are perceived as the group standards, determined in part by where a person feels others predominantly expect him to rank, (4) who the others are that one perceives doing the ranking (i.e., the authority and knowledge believed to be possessed by the raters), and (5) how many others one perceives evaluating his performances and attributions. Of course, all of these factors would probably operate together and interact with one another in this process of validity assessment. *

In connection with point three above, it should be noted that an individual's overall self-evaluation not only depends on the perception of where other people actually do rank him in comparison to others, but that it can also depend on his perception of where others expect him to rank. If the person perceives agreement among others (whether actual or not) as to what their expectations for him are, and if he regards these expectations as legitimate,
then, if he actually proceeds to measure up to these expectations, enhancement or maintenance of self-esteem can result.\textsuperscript{57} We may illustrate this point with the following example.

A person who adopts as an important evaluative reference "skill at baseball" could be very much contented and satisfied with himself knowing that he is only the "best sand-lot baseball player in the neighborhood," even though he and others are fully aware that he ranks very much below Willy Mays with respect to this skill. The person's self-esteem doesn't suffer from this knowledge because he knows others (including Willy Mays) do not expect him to rank as high as Mays. He perceives that others are in agreement in evaluating him in this skill only within the context, or boundaries of expectations, of (1) no special talent that would rate big league status, (2) no special and intensive training in this sport, (3) no relatively great amount of experience in this sport, and (4) baseball is only an avocation for the individual. The aficionado also perceives that he is being compared only to others who fit the same context. On the basis of these perceptions, and the knowledge that others regard him as "the best in the neighborhood," his self-esteem with respect to baseball may be as high as Willy Mays' (or higher if Mays has a bad

\textsuperscript{57}Merton, op. cit., pp. 267-268.
All the mechanisms discussed above under the heading of comparative evaluation are facilitated by and conducted through interpersonal and intergroup comparisons of achievement and attribution according to essentially group valued variables that have been referred to as evaluative criteria. Such variables may be value orientations, specific values referring to material or non-material symbols, or norms. They may vary with different persons and groups and through time. The variables themselves may be evaluated and ranked according to other criteria, and they may be ranked differently by different people. What these variables have in common is their function - they serve as reference orientations for individuals in (1) organizing their behavior for the maintenance of social living, and (2) evaluating their behavior, hopefully in order to maximize self-esteem.

Approval from others with respect to this comparative evaluation situation need not be so direct as implied in the discussion of non-comparative evaluation in order to increase self-esteem. If a person perceives that he ranks high in comparison to others on some criterion that he accepts as being of positive value, his self-esteem accordingly may be enhanced to some extent, especially if he perceives that others adopt this criterion as a reference for orienting their behavior and, furthermore, consider it to be of
importance (i.e., the criterion is perceived as ranking high relative to other criteria). This perception of high rank could be gained through superficial observation and comparison in essentially non-interaction situations in addition to more intimate, informal and verbal interaction situations. Also, if the person simply believes, as a result of past learning and selective perception, that he ranks high on an evaluative variable others consider important, he may experience maintenance or enhancement of his self-esteem, even though his belief be, in actuality, wrong.

Essentially, approval from others in a comparative evaluation situation consists of perceived or believed recognition and acceptance of superiority and inferiority, or differences in prestige. If, for example, person A views himself as superior to person B in terms of some perceived mutually valued criterion and perceives that B recognizes this superiority, then A is apt to experience enhancement of his self-esteem. This could take place regardless of the particular behavior that B might display towards A (for example, hostility). As long as person A feels person B does or would recognize and accept his (A's) superiority, then, at least in A's eyes, a prestige differential exists. This may be all the "approval" person A requires to experience some degree to self-enhancement. This is especially apt to be so if person A feels that his superiority is recognized and positively
sanctioned (or approved) by others in general, most of whom he has no interaction with.

Reference group theory

It was noted before that men orient and evaluate their behavior within a social frame of reference consisting of the norms and values provided by the groups of which they are a part, or of which they are members. Also, it was noted that those people with whom one sustains established patterns of interaction are often the persons from whom we seek approval. The reference group concept, which incorporates these facts, provides further for the recognition that, "...men frequently orient themselves to groups other than their own in shaping their behavior and evaluations..."\(^{58}\) It is this orientation to non-membership groups rather than membership groups that is the distinctive feature of reference group theory. "...reference group theory aims to systematize the determinants and consequences of those processes of evaluation and self-appraisal in which the individual takes the values or standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference."\(^{59}\)

Two general types of reference groups that have been distin-

\(^{58}\)Merton, op. cit., p. 282.

\(^{59}\)Merton, op. cit., p. 234.
guished are the normative type and the comparative type. The first refers to a group which sets and maintains standards for the individual and serves as a source of values assimilated by him (i.e., a socializing agency). An example of this type might be one's family group. The second refers to a group which serves as a frame of reference adopted by the individual from which he evaluates himself and others. An example here might be a college student's professors. These two types are actually only analytically distinct, since the same reference group can serve both functions—that is, as a socialization agency and as a framework in terms of which the individual evaluates himself. However, it is the comparative function of a reference group that will be the concern of this analysis and research. A comparative reference group shall be considered mainly as a structured social context in which one makes interpersonal comparisons on certain criteria and uses when arriving at self-evaluations.

The group concept. The idea of an evaluative arena has been linked to the concept of group. This latter term has been employed in at least three different ways in connection with reference group behavior. It has been used in referring to three somewhat

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60 Merton, op. cit., pp. 283-284.

distinct social formations.

The sociological usage of the concept of group, "... refers to a number of people who interact with one another in accord with established patterns." A person may, then, seek approval and enhancement of self-esteem from a specific number of particular people with whom he actually interacts on the basis of the particular criteria they use in their evaluative behavior.

In addition to referring to a definite assemblage of interacting individuals, the term group has also been used in referring to a number of people that share and support a body of social norms and values but do not all interact with one another. Such a social structure is designated a collectivity. Using a collectivity as an evaluative frame of reference suggests that the evaluation and approval a person receives from others with respect to the perceived common body of norms and values may be indirect and implied. Approval or disapproval would be felt or imagined as recognition. In other words, a person's evaluation, by himself and by others, would be in terms of comparison and social ranking.

Distinct from the sociological group and collectivity is the

63 Merton, op. cit., p. 299.
social category, or categorical group, which is an aggregate of people sharing like statuses, roles, or social characteristics but not necessarily in actual interaction with one another nor oriented toward a common body of norms and values. Examples of social categories are teenager, single man, fat man, leader, teacher. Social categories could serve as comparative reference groups in that a person may perceive that statuses and their defining characteristics are differentially valued and ranked by others. For example, an individual may perceive that the status of "athlete" is valued highly by others, such as a particular sociological group that he is a member of or some collectivity. Though he may not be a member of this category (i.e., he doesn't occupy this status), he might utilize this status as a comparative frame of reference for evaluating himself and directing his behavior. To maximize his overall self-evaluation, he may attempt to become an athlete. If he succeeds in becoming a member of this group he may thereby obtain approval from other members and from those who may not be members but are part

64 Merton, op. cit., p. 299.


of the collectivity that deems being an athlete a positive value. Perceiving that he is approved of and evaluated highly by others, and accepting the situation as legitimate, the person may approve of and evaluate himself highly.

The concepts membership and non-membership. The terms membership and non-membership have been used above and need to be clarified. Although criteria for establishing whether or not one is a member of some particular sociological group could involve frequency and type of interaction, such criteria would not be wholly applicable when considering membership in connection with social categories and collectivities. A definition of membership (and non-membership) that would take into consideration all three kinds of social formations would involve self definition and perceived definition by others with respect to the group's defining characteristics. 67 Thus, an individual's membership in some group would imply that he perceives himself as belonging to a particular group and perceives that others (members and/or non-members) consider him as belonging also. The individual belongs to a group as a member if he conforms, with respect to certain attributes and/or performances, to his perceptions of the group's defining characteristics to a degree that he ranks as

67 Merton, op. cit., p. 286.
adequate and to a degree that he feels others (members and/or non-members) rank as adequate.

From this standpoint, then, membership or non-membership is viewed as, "...not essentially physical, but symbolic."\(^{68}\) And, "Because of the symbolic nature of group membership, questions of affiliation and allegiance must be discussed in terms of identification rather than simple (physical) belonging."\(^{69}\) Membership need not be a matter of the extent and nature of one's interactions. For the individual to consider himself a member of some group, he must think he belongs, which necessitates the use of language. Through this medium of inter- and intra-personal communication, the person may come to define himself, or identify himself, as a member or non-member, with or without the perceived consent of others.

Similarly, the affects of various membership and non-membership groups upon an individual's behavior and attitudes toward himself and others need not be a matter of actual interaction, though it may be this too. "Because of their symbolic nature, the influences of groups on individual behavior is not determined by sheer physical belonging, but by the impact they have on the

\(^{68}\) Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 238.

\(^{69}\) Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 239.
individual's thinking . . . " Self-esteem considerations could be a result of this impact.

Reference groups, norms, and values. In view of the above discussion concerning the nature of groups and membership, it may be useful to think of a person's comparative reference orientations as being particular norms and values, or particular degrees of display of certain norms and values, rather than actual persons. Such criteria, then, could be seen by the individual as being embodied in or reflected by various people as well as possibly single individuals. A person would orient his behavior and his search for approval towards certain others as a result of his value orientations. Put in these terms, it is readily seen how social categories can serve as reference groups and can be viewed in terms of membership and non-membership considerations, since they may symbolize particular values toward which the person is oriented.

Reference group behavior. Although a person might define himself as a member of some group, and the group could also

70 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 243.
73 The concept "group" will be used at times in subsequent
be a positive and comparative reference for him, he may desire no interaction, or only interaction of a restricted nature, with other members with whom he is in a position to interact. He may not like them or accept them because of certain criteria he adopts and employs in guiding and evaluating his behavior other than his perceptions of the definitional criteria of membership in this particular group. For example, a person may consider himself as belonging to a certain social category. Placed in a given social context, he may perceive that certain others belong to this category also. Although in a position to interact in various ways with these others, the person may choose not to do so because of consideration arising from his membership in other social categories or sociological groups and the perceived non-membership status in these other groups of the other persons.

Although the above situation involving the rejection of other members of a group to which one is positively and comparatively oriented may be extreme, it does emphasize the idea that a particular group is not necessarily, or usually, a referent and a guide with respect to all aspects of a person's behavior. A person may parts of this analysis without specifying whether it refers to a sociological group, a social category, or a collectivity. It was thought either that (1) any of these three social formations might logically fit into the discussion, or (2) the context of the discussion would imply which kind or kinds of groups are logically relevant.
be positively or negatively oriented toward some group only in terms of specific norms or values. Thus, reference groups may operate as such with reference to distinct kinds of evaluation and behavior.  

Membership in some particular group does not necessarily mean that the individual considers it an important comparative reference group. If he does not, it is possible that the group would have little significance in any part of his self-evaluation. For example, if the defining criteria of this group are not perceived as ranking high and/or persons in the group have little legitimacy, he may be little concerned with how others evaluate him with respect to these criteria. He will not be overly concerned with seeking approval from others on these terms.

If some group to which one belongs is taken as an important comparative frame of reference, then it seems likely it would be of significance to the person's self-esteem. His ratings on the criteria reflected by this membership group may enter prominently in determining his overall self-evaluation. Whether self-esteem would be affected negatively (lowered) or positively (raised) would depend on whether the person viewed the group and its

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75 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 522.
defining characteristics negatively (rejection and disapproval) or positively (acceptance and approval). 76 If the individual perceives himself as belonging to some group the essence of which he de-values (i.e., he disapproves of its norms and values or the extent to which these are manifested), he may, by virtue of this fact, devalue himself. As a member of this group, he is part of that which he rejects. On the other hand, if the individual perceives himself as belonging to a group the essence of which he positively values, then, because he is an example of that which he approves, he may thus approve of himself and experience self-enhancement.

As stressed before, a non-membership group (i.e., a group to which an individual does not belong) may also serve as a reference group. If an individual is oriented towards a non-membership group as a positive comparative reference framework, this could affect his self-esteem negatively. He may believe that those whom he thinks are members of this group, and perhaps other non-members also, assign him a low ranking on certain variables he values highly and perceives others value highly. Thus, he may rate himself low also. If this were the case, the individual may aspire to become a member, for by becoming a member his

76Merton, op. cit., p. 300.
self-esteem might be raised as a result of negating or denying the low evaluation. Whether or not he actually tries to gain entrance into this group might depend upon whether he perceives himself to be eligible for membership (in terms of that group's defining characteristics) or whether he perceives the members as perceiving him eligible. 77 If ineligibility is perceived in either or both cases, this may motivate the individual to seek out different groups within which he can establish membership and enhance or maintain his self-esteem. Assuming that an individual does eventually establish membership within some group to which he positively orients himself, and does come to derive from his membership satisfactory self-evaluative experiences, the question may be raised: What becomes of the experience of perceived failure and negative self-evaluation with respect to a reference group to which the person aspired but could not attain membership?

Merton, in speaking about persons who once held membership in groups significant for them but who no longer are members of these groups, makes the statement that, "... membership in a (past) group which has involved deep-seated attachments and sentiments cannot be easily abandoned without psychological residue." 78


78 Merton, op. cit., p. 294.
In answer to the question posed in the preceding paragraph, it is possible that "psychological residue" may remain here also. A person who has experienced failure, or has not attained a desired objective, and some loss of self-esteem with respect to the norms and values of a past positive comparative reference group might still be negatively affected by this rememberance. This is more apt to be so if the group is still or again becomes a significant positive reference orientation for him.

A person's positive comparative reference orientations are not usually limited to one group. It is quite possible, regardless of present membership successes, for a person to continue to evaluate himself from a perspective of certain norms and values held as desirable but perceived as unattainable. In other words, he may continue to wish for membership in some group(s) toward which he is positively oriented but feels he is ineligible to belong, even though he may not actually attempt to gain entrance. If this is the case, and especially if the person perceives social disapproval directed toward himself because of his non-membership status in this particular group, his self-esteem may continue to suffer. He may at times be acutely conscious of what he perceives or believes are certain personal failings that have unfavor-

able social repercussions. Given the need to maintain self-esteem, this would lead the individual to make some sort of adjustment, possibly like the one illustrated in the following quote from Lindesmith and Strauss:

... the need to maintain self-regard often produces a vicious cycle; those situations wherein a weakness could be overcome are avoided. A good part of social relations is unconsciously devoted to the search for companions and activities which allow weaknesses to remain hidden or relatively unnoticed while one's stronger points are exploited.

The person, then, who feels he has a certain weakness (feels he ranks low according to certain values and norms he deems desirable and worthy) may well try to avoid situations (i.e., certain groups or activities) where he thinks this weakness would be perceived by others. He may believe, possibly with justification, that in such a situation the others involved would directly notice the weakness (actually perceive and evaluate him low according to these norms and values), which would be detrimental to his efforts to maintain self-esteem. That is, directly perceiving that others evaluate him negatively according to criteria that comprise a positive orientation for him, but according to which he also evaluates himself negatively, the person may, through the selective

80 Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 432.
focus his awareness on these variables and his low rank on them to an extent sufficient enough to result in diminution of his self-esteem despite his efforts to the contrary. But if the individual avoids this kind of a situation, his self-esteem conceivably need not suffer due to focus on his weaknesses. By orienting himself toward situations and activities he can excel in, and through the employment of other defense mechanisms such as rationalization, displacement, selective inattention, and dissociation, he may to a large extent maintain or even enhance his self-esteem.

Seemingly in opposition to what was just stated – that is, self-devaluation may occur in a social interaction situation where one perceives that others besides himself evaluate him negatively – it should be pointed out that, "Psychiatrists and clinical psychologists have long noted the human tendency to ignore or misperceive things which would be damaging to their egos if correctly noted."\(^{83}\) Though this may well be, the situation just illustrated is not entirely invalidated because of it. The extent to which selective

\(^{81}\) Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 86-91, 105-106; Sherif and Sherif, op. cit., pp. 583-587.

\(^{82}\) Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., pp. 432, 501, 628.

\(^{83}\) Lindesmith and Strauss, op. cit., p. 90.
inattention for the maintenance of the ego (or self) can operate is partly a function of the structure of the social interaction situation. The behavioral context may be of such a compelling nature that the individual is "forced" to note certain negative aspects of himself. For example, openly competing with others in some activity about which there is agreement on standards of adequacy but in which one's inadequacy becomes blatantly obvious to the others involved will, under normal circumstances, most certainly be noticed by the one who is failing as personal failure and ineptitude. Selective inattention, then, as a device for maintaining self-esteem, is limited. If people could completely or largely ignore and distort certain aspects of a situation within which they are acting that have self-devaluative significance for them, why would they tend to avoid these encounters?

Determinants of reference group orientations. Sociological groups, social categories, and collectivities are innumerable. Any of the groups of which one is a member as well as groups of which one is not a member could conceivably become frames of reference for shaping one's attitudes, evaluations, self-concepts, and behavior. A central concern of reference group theory involves identifying those general factors responsible for any individual's particular reference orientations. However, as Merton

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Merton, op. cit., pp. 304-305.
indicates, "In contrast to other parts of the developing theory, this part has been accorded relatively little attention during the past few years." Two factors that have been identified follow.

As suggested before, one's membership groups are likely to be one's reference groups. This is especially apt to be so if a particular membership group is a stable assemblage of interacting individuals as opposed to a social category. Through directly perceived disapproval or approval from those comprising the group and extensive engagement of one's self in the group's activities, the individual may be socialized to its norms and values (i.e., the group may become a normative reference for him). If this were the case, he would probably react to himself evaluatively from this perspective - that is, the group may become a comparative reference for him.

A second determinant of an individual's selection of comparative reference groups is the perception within his social environment of the general rank order in prestige (approval) of various groups. If a person perceives that a certain group of which he is not a member is valued highly by others, he may be motivated to select this group as a positive comparative reference orientation.

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He may aspire to become a member in anticipation of the approval and prestige membership might suggest. He may also desire to belong in this group in order to avoid disapproval from others that might accompany a non-membership status. If a person is already a member of such a group, he will probably strive to maintain his membership as opposed to aspiring toward membership in a group that he and/or others perceive to be of low rank. This too would follow from the desire for social approval and the wish to avoid disapproval from others in order to maintain self-esteem.

Reference groups, rank on criteria, and rank of criteria.  

The above factor of perceived rank order in social value and prestige of various groups in society is of twofold interest and importance to this analysis of reference group theory. Not only does it appear to operate in selecting for the individual his comparative reference orientations, but it also appears possible that it can be a decisive factor in determining self-esteem despite the fact that one may have achieved membership in personally important positive reference groups and thus presumably should experience self-enhancement because of this. To understand this situation, we must

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86 Those ideas expressed earlier under the heading of Comparative Evaluation that are most relevant to this present discussion appear in the sub-sections entitled, Rank on evaluative criterion and self-esteem (pp. 36-37) and Significance of evaluative criterion for self-esteem (pp. 37-44).
consider more closely the relationship between self-esteem and social approval (or disapproval) as this might be reflected in reference group orientations.

It has just been pointed out that an important determinant of an individual's selection of positive comparative reference orientations (at least within our society) is the perception within the social structure of those areas to which are attached much general social approval - that is, statuses, roles, and groups of people perceived to rank high in social value or prestige. One reason that has been given in explanation of such orientations is that these parts of the social structure, because of this perceived accompanying approval, may offer for the individual the most favorable opportunities for experiencing self-enhancement. Self-esteem may be further enhanced by focusing exclusively upon high ranking membership groups than by orienting reference behavior toward high or low ranking non-membership groups. Furthermore, that a non-member of a high ranking group might well direct his reference orientations upward is also consistent with the notion of a need to secure and maintain self-esteem through social approval. If the non-member feels he may be able to eventually attain membership status in some highly ranked group, then, in his mind, he would be maximizing his opportunity to acquire prestige and self-enhancement more through orienting his thoughts and actions in this
direction than toward lower levels of his social system.  

Aside from any calculated efforts to secure approval from others and to avoid their censure, it must also be recognized that a person may direct his positive reference orientations toward perceived high ranking areas of a sociocultural system as a result of his socialization within that system. In other words, he is likely to have internalized as high in value those norms, values, and standards upon which he has perceived his society placing a high premium. The fact that they are important to some degree in his personal value scheme means that any evaluative comparison of himself on the basis of these criteria to groups perceived to exemplify these criteria constitutes for him a positive comparative reference orientation toward highly rated groups. Thus, from this perspective, even the non-member of high ranking sociological or categorical groups who perceives social disapproval directed toward himself because of this non-membership status may still assume positive reference orientations toward such high prestige positions. Though these groups may not offer for this non-mem-

87 It should also be pointed out that the non-member who chooses to strive for membership in a high ranking group might for that reason alone receive more approval from others than if he aspired instead to become a member of a group lower in social value. In our culture, this might indicate that one is at least supporting if not actually displaying the high ranking value of upward mobility. Such support may rate general social approval. Thus, maintenance or enhancement of self-esteem may ensue.
ber a cognitive or behavioral context in which to experience self-enhancement (which he desires) but rather self-devaluation (which he desires to avoid), the fact that he may still view them as favorable and his psychological capacity to relate to others on an evaluative basis may nevertheless cause them to be adopted to some extent as positive reference frameworks.

Of course, it is also possible that an individual may have positive comparative reference orientations toward groups of lower general social stature. Because of his particular social experiences and socialization within particular parts of the general sociocultural system, he may pledge much of his loyalty and efforts to groups of this nature rather than those perceived to be approved of more widely by his society. Thus, an important basis of social approval for the individual's self-enhancement might be the criteria exemplified by these lower ranking groups. Also, an important source of social approval for the individual might be those whom he perceives as sharing these particular value orientations, who may be recognized as the only legitimate judges of himself in these respects. Assuming this to be the case, then if the individual ranks high on these particular criteria according to those who are perceived to be knowledgeable in this matter (i.e., if the individual is considered to be a member of these particular positive comparative reference groups), and
thus rates approval from these others, it may be possible for him
to experience self-enhancement. However, whether this possibility
is realized would depend upon the person's membership status in
and perspective of groups perceived to be higher in social value.

If an individual holds to some degree positive comparative reference orientations toward high ranking groups of which he considers himself a non-member, and especially if he does not expect to attain eventual membership in these groups because of perceived ineligibility, his self-esteem might be more affected by this negative experience than by the positive experience of success (membership) within another reference group but one perceived to be of low social value. Non-membership status of an individual with respect to a group high in social rank (i.e., the individual ranks low on criteria of high rank) might warrant more extensive and stronger sentiments of general social disapproval than non-membership status with respect to groups lower in social rank (i.e., the individual ranks low on criteria of low rank). Similarly, being a member of a high ranking group (i.e., ranking high on criteria of high rank) would seem to be associated with more approval from others than being a member of a low ranking group (i.e., ranking high on criteria of low rank). Thus, the possibility arises that the social approval stemming from membership status in a group of low social value may not be great enough to offset the

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social disapproval stemming from non-membership status in a group of high social value. Insofar as self-esteem is a function of perceived approval and disapproval from others, it would seem that self-devaluation could persist as a dominant attitude for an individual caught up in such a situation. Of course, this assumes that the person has internalized to some extent the criteria associated with both the high and low ranking groups as being of positive value and legitimate bases for his self-evaluation, by himself and by others.

Assuming that comparative reference groups may function as such to different degrees for the individual, the analysis above raises this question: Is it possible for a person to experience, in general, self-devaluation as a result of his non-membership in higher ranking reference groups despite the possibility that he is less strongly oriented toward these groups than toward lower ranking reference groups within which he does hold membership status (and thus should experience self-enhancement)? The opinion here is that it is possible for this to occur, assuming the individual is concerned to some extent with social approval on the basis of general recognition according to the norms and values perceived to be important in his society (or possibly a sub-system). Though

88 Rosen, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
this person is apt to experience some self-enhancement as a result of certain valued achievements and through his primary relationships with others, he may find it difficult to stabilize such feelings in view of the realization that he has failed with respect to goals and expectations perceived to be more general and of major import.

Even though he might at times truly look upon some of these highly rated measures of success with something less than conviction as to their worth, the need for perceived general approval and avoidance of disapproval on these bases in order to sustain his ego may be an overriding factor which ultimately determines his thoughts and feelings of worth despite the ordering of values he personally has internalized and established in rational thought.

Speaking generally, if the above reasoning is correct, it would seem possible that a person's rank (high or low) on less strongly adhered to comparative reference values could, if he perceived them to be high in general social rank, affect his self-esteem to a greater extent than his rank (high or low) on more strongly adhered to comparative reference values if he perceives that the latter are lower in general social rank. In other words, overall self-evaluation might be "forced" upon a person by the perceived value structure of the general sociocultural system, or that of other general groups to which he belongs, despite his successful self-evaluative experiences in certain activities toward which he personally is
attracted, and has chosen, and within which he has found he can excel.

The above analysis assumes greater importance and feasibility if the individual functions in a social setting where the high ranking non-membership groups have a particular and pervasive importance. A relatively closed social system, in which the individual is obliged to function, that contains strongly valued, high ranking non-membership groups with valued criteria might well elevate these non-membership groups to a pre-eminent place in the establishment of self-esteem.

Summary of Theoretical Framework

Concepts and ideas developed in the theoretical section are reviewed here. These presented are the most relevant to the development of the research in subsequent section.

Definitions of major concepts

1) Collectivity: A number of people who share and support a body of social norms and values but (usually) do not all interact with one another. Furthermore, a collectivity consists of, "people who have a sense of solidarity by virtue of sharing common values and who have acquired an attendant sense of moral obligation to fulfill role-expectations."

   Socio-cultural systems could be

   ...
designated collectivities, as well as sub-systems within a larger system.

2) **Sociological group:** A number of people who interact with one another in accord with an established and common pattern of normative conduct based on shared values and who are recognized by themselves and others as comprising a social entity.

3) **Social category:** An aggregate of people who share like statuses, roles, or other social characteristics but who are not necessarily in actual interaction with one another or oriented toward a common body of norms and values. It should be noted that members of a particular social category (or categorical group) may, however, by virtue of the category's nature (e.g., a particular status), share and exemplify certain specific norms and values.

4) **Group membership and non-membership:** For the purposes of this research, membership or non-membership of an individual in some group is considered a matter of self-definition, or self-identification, as opposed to either perceived definition by others (as a member or non-member) or considerations of frequency and nature of interaction. Thus, an individual is or is not a member of some group according to whether or not (i.e., to what extent) he defines himself as a member or non-member. It is presumed that a person will define himself as a member or non-member of some given group according to the extent he considers
himself to exemplify what he perceives to be the norms, values, and standards which essentially characterize that group and/or whether or not he occupies a status recognized as indicating or, by virtue of occupancy, as defining one's membership in that group. The criterion of self-definition as a member or non-member of some group is considered applicable for indicating membership status in collectivities, sociological groups, and social categories.

5) **Positive comparative reference group:** A comparative reference group refers to a group (e.g., a particular social category) which manifests or implies certain norms, values, and standards that are used by the individual as a basis for inter-personal comparisons and self-evaluations. A positive comparative reference group is one which manifests or implies certain norms, values, and standards that are positively valued by the individual and according to which he seeks or desires favorable self-evaluations and approval from others (i.e., members and/or non-members of the reference group).

6) **Stratified social system:** The group structure of many social systems tends to be hierarchal, or stratified along various dimensions such as authority, power, and prestige. For the

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90 The existence of stratification, although it has not been explicitly discussed per se, has been implied in various parts of the preceding discussion of reference group theory.

purposes of this research, a stratified social system refers to a collectivity of persons within and according to which subcollectivities, sociological groups, and social categories are hierarchically arranged according to prestige and prestige conferral abilities.

It is assumed that prestige differences among people in this system ultimately emanate from differential performance and attribution of persons according to shared norms and values (i.e., evaluative criteria) which may themselves be ranked in importance and desirability (and thus may have different prestige conferral abilities).

It should be noted that, if a social system is defined as above, by identifying one's membership and non-membership groups (sociological groups and social categories) in this system and determining the extent of his "achievement" within membership groups, the prestige position of this person relative to others in the system might be estimated at any given time.

Major ideas and related concepts

1) The maintenance of self-esteem (or an overall favorable self-evaluation of oneself) is important to the individual. This concern may motivate him to thoughts and/or actions which represent an attempt to experience self-enhancement and avoid self-devaluation.

2) Self-esteem is subject to change and fluctuation, which may be induced by the individual's reactions of approval and disapproval.
toward himself.

3) The maintenance of and change (including fluctuation) in self-esteem is partly a function of the extent of perceived approval and disapproval expressed by others toward oneself. Social approval may lead to the maintenance of enhancement of self-esteem. Social disapproval may lead to the diminution of self-esteem (i.e., self-devaluation).

4) Approval and disapproval of oneself by others may be perceived by the individual in the form of social recognition, or prestige, within stratified social contexts. Thus, what one perceives to be his position (prestige standing) in a stratified social system may determine or influence his self-esteem. A high position may lead to self-enhancement; a low position may lead to self-devaluation. This position (and thus self-esteem) may be determined by the specific groups in the system to which the person belongs and self-evaluation, by the individual and/or others, according to the norms, values, and standards used in the social system for interpersonal and intergroup comparisons.

5) A person's self-esteem may be determined or influenced as a result of his positive comparative reference group orientations. This may occur because of perceived approval or disapproval of oneself by oneself and/or others resulting from self-evaluations on the basis of the norms, values, and standards perceived to be
exemplified by these specific groups (i.e., self-evaluations on the basis of the perceived defining characteristics of these groups).

6) An individual may be oriented toward numerous groups as positive comparative reference frameworks, at any one time and through the space of time. Positive comparative reference group orientations may also change to other groups.

7) A person's positive comparative reference groups (i.e., his positive comparative reference orientations) may be membership groups (i.e., groups to which he belongs) or non-membership groups (i.e., groups to which he does not belong).

8) Sociological groups, social categories and even individuals may serve as positive comparative reference orientations for a person. Furthermore, an individual may hold positive comparative reference orientations toward a particular sociological group only insofar as it symbolizes for him a particular social category or some other sociological group.

9) If an individual perceives himself to be a member of a group that serves as a positive comparative reference orientation for him, this may result in the maintenance or enhancement of his self-esteem (because membership may indicate high or otherwise favorable self-evaluations for the person and social approval). If he perceives himself to be a non-member of a positive comparative reference group, this may result in the diminution of his self-
esteem. Non-membership may indicate low or otherwise unfavorable self-evaluations for the person and little social approval, or social disapproval. Self-esteem may be affected in these ways by perceived membership or non-membership status in either sociological or categorical groups.

10) Membership in some particular group does not necessarily mean that the individual is oriented toward it, or strongly oriented toward it, as a positive comparative reference group.

11) A person's positive comparative reference groups may operate as such with reference to distinct kinds of evaluations and behavior. In other words, only certain segments, or characteristics, of a group may be adopted by the individual as a positive comparative reference orientation.

12) The self-devaluation that may result from the individual's non-membership in a positive comparative reference group may motivate him to make an adjustment of some kind in order to maintain self-esteem (p. 75, item 1). This adjustment may involve both (a) avoiding those social situations wherein this kind of group is readily visible, approved of by others and wherein the individual's non-membership status may become patent to others, and (b) seeking out those social situations which offer possibilities of achieving membership and approval in other positive comparative reference groups he may have or develop and/or which offer
approval from others as a result of membership already held in certain groups. Either or both of these responses may result in maintaining or enhancing self-esteem (i.e., in preventing self-devaluation stemming from this source).

If the individual is unable to avoid another or repeated contact with situations described above in (a), self-devaluation may again occur or continue to occur. In other words, the extent of similarity between the social situation which first brought on this self-devaluation and social situations subsequently encountered may determine whether or not, and to what degree, self-diminution of this nature is again experienced.

13) Groups high in prestige (or ability to confer prestige) within a particular sociocultural context are apt to be more often and more strongly adopted as positive comparative reference orientations for the individual who functions in this context than groups which are a part of this context but lower in prestige (or ability to confer prestige).

14) Because one's self-esteem may be a function of the extent of approval or disapproval directed toward him by others, the effect upon self-esteem of either membership or non-membership status in a positive comparative reference group of high prestige or value may be greater than that which may occur with respect to membership or non-membership status in a positive comparative
The High School Social System and Reference Group Theory

This section focuses the preceding discussion of reference group theory upon the structure and functioning of the high school student social system as revealed through two researches.

Wabash High

Gordon conducted a participant observation study of the school life of adolescents in grades 9 through 12 at a high school given the pseudonym of Wabash High. Some of the conclusions that emerged from his study that are relevant to this present research are given below. A discussion of these conclusions will follow.

The students at Wabash were found to be organized into a somewhat dynamic stratification system integrated primarily around social prestige. The structure and functioning of this prestige hierarchy - the kinds of stratification variables employed, the hierarchal organization of these variables, and the judgment of performance and attribution according to these variables - appeared to be determined to a large extent by the students themselves. They acted within and with reference to a somewhat unique socio-

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cultural system of their own making. It was concluded that the adolescent's motivations and general pattern of social behavior while in the high school setting could be explained to a large extent in terms of the values of this system, his general status within its stratification structure, and his attempts to maintain and secure prestige in the system. The students competed extensively with one another for favorable recognition from other students. 93

The differentially valued statuses, roles, and social categories comprising this adolescent sociocultural system were viewed as originating from three general sub-systems of school organization. These were: (1) the formal organization of the school (which consisted of grade levels and classes, and prescribed academic learning achievement as a fundamental value), (2) a system of voluntary student organizations (extra-curricular activities), and (3) an informal organization of student interpersonal relationships (cliques). The general social status of the student, or his overall prestige rating, was found to be dependent upon his rank position within each of these sub-systems. 94

The stratification of students within this system appeared to be multidimensional. The students employed numerous variables,

93loc. cit., pp. 5, 22-25, 130-134, 137.

94loc. cit., pp. 3, 130-134, 137, 139-140.
taken from all parts of the school setting as well as outside the school, in their judgments of one another. Some of the general criteria Gordon found used in defining overall status were friendships, dress, grade level, clique membership, dating, morally approved behavior, physical traits, personality traits, athletic prowess, membership in extra-curricular activities, and academic achievement. Social position of the student's family was related to status in the school but did not definitely determine it. "Values of the youth culture . . . were the crucial determinates."

Gordon concluded that two primary determining factors of a high school student's general prestige position were the particular extra-curricular organizations of which he was a member and his achievement within these organizations. These organizations were ranked in a value hierarchy which was strongly correlated with the prestige hierarchy of students. Those students who were a part of the higher ranking organizations, especially athletics, tended to have more peer prestige conferred upon them than those in lower ranking activities.

The informal system of interpersonal relations among the

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95 loc. cit., pp. 131, 134.
96 loc. cit., pp. 22-25.
students were differentiated into definite clique patterns, corresponding, among other things, to grade levels and the various extra-curricular organizations. The cliques were distinguished from one another (as well as from those students who were not recognized as being incorporated in any particular clique) and ranked in terms of both factors and values that were a part of the organization of the school institution and those that were more a resultant of the student culture. Clique control over the individual's behavior was quite pronounced.  

Gordon implied that the students of Wabash did seem to possess their own culture, which operated somewhat independently of formal institutional prescriptions. This appeared evident from the conflict that often resulted between students and teachers. The teachers were viewed as representatives of the formal system. Probably the most obvious indicator of this distinction between the formal institutional normative order and the student normative order was the finding that the fundamental value of the institution, academic achievement, was relegated to a position of lower importance in the student culture. Of these two systems, the formal and the informal (i.e., the student culture), Gordon concluded that,  

for student behavior in general, "The dominant motivation to action was to meet the expectations of the informal structure."\(^{100}\)

It has been pointed out that one of Gordon's primary conclusions was that the behavior of most students at Wabash was highly oriented toward the maintenance and acquisition of prestige. The statuses, roles, and social categories available to the adolescents in the school setting were viewed by the students as instrumental in achieving this objective.\(^{101}\) Gordon seemed to imply that the basis of this concern for prestige was a concern for self-esteem. This inference appears in the following rather dramatic conclusion: \(^{102}\)

The system of adolescent organization in this school situation is best characterized as a system of action based on efforts to achieve a differentiated social status because life as a member of the undifferentiated mass is unbearable. The pupil eventually had to exist in this situation with the protections of group membership which made him a visible, active "somebody," whose image was reflected upon himself through the eyes of those who viewed him, presumably with enough esteem to give him the necessary potency to act in a highly competitive environment. Oblivion may be worse than infamy.

That a concern for social prestige, or the acquisition of favorable or superior positions on positively valued group criteria, is indicative of a striving to maintain and enhance self-esteem

\(^{100}\)loc. cit., p. 2.

\(^{101}\)loc. cit., p. 131.

\(^{102}\)loc. cit., p. 24-25.
jibes with the theoretical perspective given earlier. From this perspective, to seek social prestige means to seek approval from others through the employment of comparative evaluation (p. 48). Since self-esteem is influenced through this form of social approval, then self-esteem can be influenced by means of acquiring or losing prestige.

Another of Gordon's primary conclusions was that the dominant motivation of the majority of adolescents in the Wabash School setting appeared to be conformity to and the meeting of the expectations of the student sociocultural system. In part, as Gordon seemed to imply throughout his report, this is undoubtedly a result of the adolescent's strong desire for peer approval. Others have also emphasized the importance of the peer group in influencing the adolescent's behavior. Extending our previously discussed theoretical reasoning to this conclusion, it would appear that the majority of Wabash's students were concerned to a large extent with maintaining and enhancing their self-esteem with respect to the other students and their expectations. In other words, the others from whom approval was typically sought were students.

Approval (prestige) could be perceived and self-enhancement experienced when the student achieved or was considered to rank high within the complex of statuses, roles, and social categories that were seen to be positively valued by the students in general. Conversely, disapproval could be perceived and self-devaluation experienced when the student did not achieve or rank high within this complex of activities and attributes.

Although not explicitly stated as such, it would seem reasonable to say that comparative reference group behavior operated within and with reference to the student sociocultural system of Wabash High. These adolescents appeared to be concerned with maintaining their self-esteem through seeking approval from other students according to achievement upon evaluative criteria comprising their own culture. Thus, it is likely that the students compared themselves to one another in terms of positions held on shared prestige variables and evaluated themselves as relatively high (approval), low (disapproval), or somewhere in between.

The fact that Gordon concluded Wabash's student body and social structure was organized into a stratified system of varying amounts of prestige (recognition, social approval) permits further assumptions concerning self-evaluation and comparative reference group behavior in Wabash High. Since one part of this system (the upper strata, or higher ranking groups) was highest in prestige,
it would seem likely that much positive comparative reference behavior, for those students belonging to this part of the system as well as for those who were not members of high ranking groups, was oriented in this direction in preference to other parts of the system or outside the system (p. 79, item 13). It would also seem likely that many of those students who were members of the higher prestige groups enjoyed higher self-esteem, or more stable feelings of self-regard (because they perceived greater peer recognition bestowed upon them than upon others), than many of those from lower ranking groups. Furthermore, it may be suspected that many of those students who were in the lower strata of this socio-cultural system but who aspired or wished to belong to the upper strata (i.e., held strong positive comparative reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups), though never actually succeeding in their efforts or realizing these desires, suffered greater loss of self-esteem than those within their own groups who did not aspire toward or wish for membership in high ranking groups (i.e., held less strong positive comparative reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups).

The Adolescent Society

Coleman also conducted a study of adolescent high school life.

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104 This heading is taken from the title of the book by Coleman, op. cit.
Ten high schools, each consisting of grade levels 9 through 12, were the objects of Coleman's investigation. Although he did find variation among these schools with regard to the structure and functioning of adolescent behavior in each, he concluded that they were basically quite similar in these respects. Many of his general conclusions parallel Gordon's conclusions.

Coleman was convinced that adolescents, in and out of school, do constitute a somewhat unique sub-culture in our society. He states:

... (adolescents) are still oriented toward fulfilling their parents' desires, but they look very much to their peers for approval as well. Consequently our society has within its midst a set of small teen-age interests and attitudes on things far removed from adult responsibilities, and which may develop standards that lead away from those goals established by the larger society.

Coleman found that the adolescent sociocultural system in each of the ten high schools he investigated was a stratified system. Students rated one another in prestige and popularity according to achievement and ascription on mutually valued criteria. There were "leading crowds" and non-leading cliques. Personality, athletic prowess, grades, looks, clothes, money, and possession of a

105 loc. cit., pp. vii-ix, 92-93.
106 loc. cit., p. 9.
car were some of the valued variables upon which students were rated. Structures of stratification were based on multiple standards and operated somewhat independently of the formal institutional norms of the school and adult guidance.

Coleman discussed some of the psychological effects of the stratified adolescent school society upon its members. Among his more general conclusions, he found that the elites, or those students of high rank in the stratification structures of the various schools, evaluated themselves more favorably than those of lower rank in these structures. Coleman attributes this variation in self-esteem to the differing amounts of recognition (approval) that students receive as a result of their occupying differentially valued positions in the school stratification structure.

Also, and of particular interest here, Coleman compared the self-evaluations of those students who were not a part of the "leading crowd" (i.e., who were of low or medium rank in the stratification system of their school) but wished to be (i.e., aspired or desired to belong to a high ranking non-membership group) with those who were not members of high ranking groups and did not want to be (i.e., did not aspire or desire to belong to a high ranking non-membership group). His results indicated that the former students

evaluated themselves, in general, lower than the latter students.\(^{111}\) Thus it would appear that lower ranking students who have strong positive comparative reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups (i.e., a strong enough orientation to indicate on a questionnaire item that they desire membership in these groups) may be adversely affected psychologically, given that it is to the person’s welfare to maintain self-esteem. According to Coleman:\(^{112}\)

\[\ldots\text{the adolescent culture has a great impact upon the self-evaluation of adolescents, especially upon those excluded from the positions they want. Regardless of what it takes to get into the leading crowd in a particular school, those who don't have what it takes, but who still aspire to be in, are powerfully affected.}\]

How many lower ranking, high aspiring adolescents are there? Coleman answers:\(^{113}\) "The ones who \(...\text{do not want in (the leading crowd)}\) are fewer in number than those who are not in but want in."

How does a person react to negative feelings of self-worth? It was indicated earlier that one possible reaction to feelings of inadequacy with respect to specific evaluative criteria is to withdraw from the situation bringing on such feelings and turn to other

\(^{111}\text{loc. cit., p. 226.}\) \(^{112}\text{loc. cit., p. 226.}\) \(^{113}\text{loc. cit., p. 226.}\)
situations and activities where one can feel good about himself (pp. 78-79, item 12). With a change in social environment, one that perhaps emphasizes other values, it may be possible to alter ill feelings about oneself, or to stabilize a favorable self-image to some extent. The adolescent with low self-esteem engendered by his performances and attributions within the school society, although most likely not free to entirely withdraw from the school environment, may nevertheless attempt to withdraw from it as much as possible. Coleman states:

\[114\] a person with any strength of ego will not sit still while his (overall) self-evaluation is being lowered by the social system of the school. He may attempt to gain status through those activities that give status. If this is not possible, either because status is ascribed to a predetermined group, or because he has no talent in status-bringing activities, he will take his psychological self and his energies elsewhere, leaving only a physical self in the school.

Coleman further indicates that such a student might also physically avoid the school and any organized activities connected with it as much as possible.\[115\]

Coleman analyzed two categories of students he referred to as "the scholars" and "the athletes."\[116\] The former were adolescents

\[114\] loc. cit., p. 228.

\[115\] loc. cit., p. 228.

who stood high in academic achievement and who exemplified the formal values of the learning institution. The latter students were prominent figures of school sports. Coleman concluded that the prestige standing of non-athlete scholars was different than that of non-scholar athletes. In all schools he studied, the latter category of students were rewarded with more peer approval than the former category. However, it was found that a student identified as both a scholar and an athlete usually ranked higher in prestige than persons identified as only one or the other.

The High School Social System, Reference Group Theory, and Teacher Dropout

It will be recalled that the question to be investigated in this study is: Why do male high school teachers leave high school education for other occupations? In light of Gordon's and Coleman's findings and conclusions viewed through our development of reference group theory, it is suggested here that the teacher's own experiences within the student sociocultural system of the high school he attended as a student may provide a partial answer to this question. Perhaps the teacher's past thoughts and feelings of self-esteem as conditioned by these earlier experiences may be causally related to present feelings of self-esteem in response to a similar social situation. In turn, perhaps these present feelings of self-esteem may be causally related to the decision to remain in or leave the
occupation of high school teaching.

These above hypothesized connections will presently be explained more fully. At this point, two prefacing comments are in order, both especially relevant to this explanation.

It should be reiterated that a person's self-esteem can change and fluctuate (p. 75-76, items 2 and 3). These alterations, in addition to being brought about possibly through actual changes in rank position on group valued variables of personal evaluation, might also result from changes in the individual's psychological activity and/or changes in the social contexts within which he may function. How the individual evaluates himself in general might vary according to his focus of attention or manifest behavior on various criteria which he holds as important to some degree and upon which he may rank differently. This focus might be influenced by the particular social situation of which he becomes a part. The people in that situation, their behavior, and what he perceives as their criteria and standards of evaluation may serve to channel the individual's behavior and reflections upon himself in these terms. In other words, given that the individual may rank differently on different criteria, his overall self-evaluation may change according to which criteria figure prominently in his conscious awareness and/or which criteria he manifests or believes he manifests in behavior to others at any given time. This selectivity may result
from the particular people with whom he interacts, compares himself, and looks toward for approval.

Because an individual may hold positive comparative reference orientations toward groups of which he is not a member (and thus to some extent may aspire toward membership in these groups, at least in the sense that he is desirous of the social approval that he perceives bestowed on such members) as well as those in which he does consider himself a member, therein lies a potential for self-devaluation. (See pp. 77-79, items 9 and 12.) In his strivings to maintain self-esteem, or enhance his self image, the person is likely to participate, when able, in those social situations within which he perceives those activities and attributes in which he can excel are highly valued. The person may attempt to devote his physical and psychological energy to membership groups he adopts as positive comparative reference frameworks. Social approval and self-enhancement might be forthcoming. But the individual may also be aware of certain other activities and attributes that bring social approval but according to which he feels he is of low rank and thus rates disapproval. If the person perceives or has perceived a certain extent of social approval in connection with these variables, then he also may view these criteria as being of positive value despite his low rank on them. Evaluative reflection upon himself in relation to these variables and those groups which exemplify them
would be an example of a positive comparative reference orientation toward non-membership groups. Whether his low self-evaluation in connection with this orientation lowers his self-esteem to any felt degree of discomfort might very well depend upon whether or not he has avoided or can avoid actual social situations in which these variables are strongly valued, patently used in interpersonal evaluations, and wherein it is possible that the person's low rank on these criteria might become manifest to others and/or wherein he might become extensively preoccupied with these low ranks. If he has been exposed or is again exposed to such situations, these particular self-evaluations could become significant factors in the determination of his feelings of self-worth.

A second comment concerns the nature of the adolescent sub-culture. Although Coleman has stressed that adolescents in many ways do constitute a somewhat unique society, one should bear in mind that, most likely, many of those things which are important to the teenager are also important to adults. That is, many, if not most, of the values in this sub-culture are also values in the general culture. This is explicit in the term sub-culture. Both adults and teenagers may value, and value much in the same way,

nice clothes, "success" with the opposite sex, a "social personality," a nice car, physical beauty, athletic prowess, and leadership traits, among other things. Both adolescents and adults stratify one another according to prestige, form cliques, and value being a part of certain cliques.

What gives teenagers their uniqueness and permits in many instances labeling them as a sub-system in our society and culture, then, is not the uniqueness of what they value, but rather it is the uniqueness of how they value. That is, the value hierarchy of adolescents (and consequently their behavioral orientations) is probably in many cases only arranged differently than adult value hierarchies. For example, whereas adults may rank certain values quite high, teenagers, though they also may adopt these values, may rank them lower. Conversely, a value that adults may rank low in relative importance may be ranked by teens as high in relative importance.

One further point should be noted from the above discussion. Though there may be differences in the value emphases of many teenagers as compared to those of many adults, it is perhaps true that such differences exist only in general. Possibly in some specific instances adult value hierarchies are essentially the same as teenage value hierarchies. Values accorded high position by teens might also be accorded equally high position by some adults.

With the preceding comments in mind, certain relationships
that possibly might exist between a teacher's high school experience as a student and his decision to leave or remain in high school education may now be dealt with more fully. The following hypothetical sequence of events is used for this purpose.

Suppose that a person was once a student in a high school essentially the same as Wabash High or those schools described by Coleman. Imagine that this person as a teenager ranked low in the student prestige hierarchy of his school but held strong positive comparative reference orientations toward a high ranking group (or groups) of which he never became a member. Assume that he aspired, in thought and/or action, to become a member of this group. Then it can be concluded that this person quite possibly suffered some degree of self-devaluation at that time with respect to those norms and values exemplified by that reference group - that is, those students accorded much approval in the teen sub-culture of the school.

Suppose that since his high school days, this individual believes he has not changed his prestige rating (his self-evaluation) in relation to these once strongly ascribed to norms and values. In other words, he still considers himself a non-member of groups similar to the one held as a strong reference orientation when a student in high school. However, imagine this person has changed or altered his reference behavior because of exposure to a somewhat different
social and cultural climate outside of the high school (and the desire to avoid further self-devaluation stemming from a positive reference orientation toward groups in which he does not hold membership). Imagine that, under these different circumstances, he is now encouraged and allowed to adopt (or adopt more strongly) other kinds of groups as positive comparative reference orientations within which he does achieve or already holds membership. If this is so, we might expect that this person is now more apt to maintain self-esteem than when a student in high school. He may no longer consider the aforementioned norms and values according to which he still ranks low as important as before in entering into his overall self-evaluation (although they may still be a part, even if dormant, of his personal value scheme).

Now, let's further suppose that this person once again becomes a participant in the social system of the high school but this time as a teacher, assuming that role in a school very similar to the one he attended as a student. Imagine that this person who is now a teacher perceives that these same norms and values he was strongly oriented toward in his evaluative behavior when a teenager - the ones according to which he still ranks low and that were exemplified by his previous reference group of fellow students - are operating in this social situation, strongly and dominantly. Imagine that he feels these are among the principal criteria used by the majority
of students as well as possibly others in the system to judge one's prestige and worth.

It would seem logical that under such circumstances the neophyte teacher would now more frequently recall and respond to his own experiences as a high school student who had failed to some extent in garnering enough peer approval to sustain his self-esteem. Former reactions to and thoughts of inadequacy might be reactivated by the stimulus of his present surroundings. It also seems possible that this teacher might once again frequently view himself in light of these norms and values in arriving at an estimate of his present worth, especially if he still considers these criteria as legitimately applicable to him and as being to some extent approved of, or socially valued, in general. Perhaps these norms and values would now serve as a relatively more important source for personal evaluation than during the interim prior to his entrance and participation as a teacher in this particular social system but after he left it as a student. This teacher might again adopt a type of group of which he is a non-member as a fairly strong positive comparative reference orientation.

Thus, it might be expected that this teacher will initially suffer some degree of self-devaluation in his role. Through the stimulus of his new but familiar surroundings, the reactivation of former self sentiments and/or a change in his present basis of self-esteem to
one that existed for him in the past might result now in self-diminu-
tion. How he copes with his perception of declined self-esteem (though he may not recognize it as such) and, possibly, perceived or believed low prestige in the eyes of the others with whom he in-
teracts in the school setting can vary. If his suffering is especially acute, he may not adjust to or confront the situation at all, but in-
stead withdraw from it. Regardless of whether or not this begin-
ing teacher explicitly recognizes the source and nature of his
suffering, it may cause him to leave this particular social system.

Hypotheses

General hypothesis

The general hypothesis suggested by the preceding hypothetical sequence of events is: Reference group experiences of the teacher that occurred in the social system of the high school he attended as a student are associated with the probability of his leaving the field of high school education for some other occupation.

Some of the more important reference group experiences dis-
cussed above concern (1) perceived prestige standing, (2) reference orientations toward perceived high ranking non-membership
groups, (3) perceived present membership status (member or still

118Rosen, op. cit., pp. 143-144.
non-member) in groups similar to previously held non-membership reference groups of high rank, and (4) the effects of these factors on self-esteem. The research hypotheses will deal with the first three of these factors and their relationship to teacher dropout.

**Research hypotheses**

The logic of the above discussion of teacher dropout viewed self-esteem as an important intervening variable. The actual and remembered reference group experiences in the high school social system as a student, interacting with present high school experiences, affects the present self-esteem of the high school teacher which in turn affects his decision to remain in or leave the occupation of high school teaching. The hypotheses here advanced for investigation, though, do not deal directly with self-esteem.

If self-esteem in the high school setting is causally related to the decision to remain in or drop out of teaching, and if certain past high school experiences as independent variables can be causally related to the determination of the teacher's self-esteem in this position, then it may be expected that there is a relationship between these experiences of the teacher as a high school student and the stay or leave decision concerning his present occupation, the dependent variable of this research. The research hypotheses stated below are directed toward this relationship.
The above discussion of teacher dropout focused upon inexperienced teachers, or those persons who have taught for a relatively short time, rather than more experienced teachers or both inexperienced and experienced teachers. The research hypotheses also are directed toward inexperienced teachers. (See pp. 16-17, item 3). This emphasis seems warranted in view of the nature of the study's independent variables (prestige and reference group associations of the teacher in the high school he attended as a student) and the theoretical assumption that they are related to the dependent variable (teacher dropout or non-dropout) through self-esteem processes.

Though a lowering of self-esteem in the teaching role severe enough to cause dropout from this role might occur at any time during one's teaching career, and could conceivably result from a variety of causes, self-devaluation experienced in this setting which is brought on primarily by the independent variables of this study would seem more likely to manifest itself and cause dropout early in this career rather than later. The conditions theorized here as contributing to the teacher's loss of self-esteem have already occurred; they are present upon first entering this role. If these conditions are in fact able to produce sufficient self-devaluation to cause some teachers to withdraw from the high school social environment, it seems more plausible that these teachers will leave after one or two years rather than, say, seven or eight years. The
more experienced teacher who leaves teaching would probably do so for reasons other than severe loss of self-esteem or severe loss of self-esteem occurring later and caused primarily by other factors.

For reasons given earlier (pp. 12-13, item 1), the research hypotheses are further restricted to male teachers.

\( H_1 \) Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students are more likely to drop out of high school education than inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students.

\( H_2 \) (1) Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (2) who were positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting, are more likely to drop out of high school education than (3) experienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (4) who were not positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting.

\( H_3 \) (1) Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (2) who were positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting, and (5) who continue to perceive themselves as non-members in these kinds of groups (changed status aside), are more likely to drop out of high school education than (3) inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (4) who were not positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting.

\( H_4 \) Successively stronger relationships will be found for the above hypotheses in the order in which they are presented.

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CHAPTER III

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

Universe and Sample

The universe for this research consists of inexperienced male high school teachers who teach within public school systems located in metropolitan areas. The sample for this research consisted of 89 males all of whom had been employed as high school teachers at the time of sample selection and during the preceding school year.

All subjects were selected from high schools in two public

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119 High school teachers were defined for this research as persons who teach all or part of their time at grade levels 10, 11, and/or 12 or at grade levels 7, 8, and/or 9 only but within single educational settings containing grades 10, 11, and 12. (See pp. 13-16.)

120 It was originally intended that data for this research would be collected during the latter half of the 1966-67 school year, thus permitting only teachers who were presently employed as teachers at the time of sample selection to be included in the sample. (See p. 12.) As it turned out, all data were instead collected during the summer of 1967, after the 1966-67 school year was over. (See p. 108.) Contacting subjects at this later date meant there existed the possibility that at least some were no longer teachers, or already dropouts. Appropriate changes were made in the questionnaire in order to identify such respondents. After all data had been collected, it was found that this had apparently occurred. On 10 of the returned questionnaires, it was indicated that the respondent was no longer employed in high school education and did not intend to be so employed for the coming year.
school systems, each located in a major population center in the southern half of the lower peninsula of Michigan. At least five schools from each system were involved.

It was assumed for this study that all of the 89 teachers were at one time students in high schools (i.e., educational settings containing grades 10, 11, and 12) wherein the pupils organized themselves into a stratified social system based upon peer prestige. It was also assumed that all of these teachers taught in high schools wherein the students were organized into a stratified social system based upon peer prestige. Furthermore, it was assumed that the kinds of groups and organizations, both formal and informal, within these past and present high schools were basically the same as those described by Gordon and Coleman in their research.

Selection of Sample

Neither the school systems chosen nor those schools that were represented in this research constituted a probability sample. The two systems were selected for convenience and

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121 The kinds of educational institutions referred to in this research as high schools and that were considered in selecting the sample are those single educational settings inclusive of grades 10 through 12, grades 9 through 12, or grades 7 through 12 only. (See pp. 14-15, footnote 27.)

122 See the sections in Chapter II entitled Wabash High (pp. 80-87) and The Adolescent Society (pp. 87-92.)
because the investigator was able to obtain permission from authorities in each to query their teachers.

The 89 teachers selected for this research also did not constitute a probability sample. They comprised instead a combined listing of two populations, one from each school system.

One of these research populations was extracted from an original list of 330 persons which, at the time subjects were being selected, constituted in itself a known population from one of the school systems. This larger population had the following characteristics: (1) All persons were males, (2) All were teachers, (3) All taught in either secondary public schools or vocational schools, and (4) All persons were newly employed in this school system during either the 1965-66 school year or the 1966-67 school year.

In addition to names and addresses, this list of 330 persons also supplied information on the type of school in which each taught. All schools were explicitly classified as junior high

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123 This list of persons was previously used in the research cited earlier by Erickson et al (p. 4, footnote 7). Erickson and the school system which compiled this list subsequently consented to allow its use again for this research.

124 It may be noted that although all teachers on this list were newly employed in this school system during one of the above mentioned school years, this is not to say that all of these persons were new or inexperienced teachers. Some of these persons had taught previously in other school systems.
schools, senior high schools, or vocational schools.

In selecting subjects from this larger population, it was assumed that those schools designated specifically as junior high schools did not contain any grades higher than the ninth. It was assumed also that those schools labeled as senior high schools contained at least grade levels 10, 11, and 12. Thus, because it was desired to restrict the sample to high school teachers as previously defined, only those teachers who taught in schools specifically designated as senior high schools were selected. This procedure resulted in a total list of 50 persons.

The other research population, or the second part of the sample, was obtained from the 1965-66 and 1966-67 school directories of the other school system involved in this study. Each directory supplied the names, addresses, and positions of all employees in this system for that particular school year.

The teachers were classified in these directories according to the type of school in which they taught. The schools were designated as elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools. Although the grade levels contained in the secondary schools were not indicated in these directories, it was known

125 The vocational schools in this list were open to the general public, both adolescents and adults, and focused only upon the teaching of various trades.
prior to selecting the subjects that all junior high schools consisted of grades 7 through 9 and that all high schools contained either grades 7 through 12 or 10 through 12. As before, only those teachers who taught in schools specifically designated as high schools were selected for the sample. Using school directories for both years, the names and addresses of all male teachers who had taught high school in this system at least during the 1966-67 school year were obtained. This resulted in a total list of 39 different persons.

The total initial sample from both school systems consisted, therefore, of 89 persons.

Data Collection and Respondents

All data were obtained through mailed questionnaires. The questionnaires and letters requesting cooperation and explaining the project were sent to the homes of the selected teachers during the summer of 1967. By the fall of 1967, all data had been collected.

The method followed in securing returns of mailed questionnaires was...

126 Some of the teachers listed in the 1965-66 directory but not in the 1966-67 directory were nevertheless employees in this school system during the 1966-67 school year. Thus, in order to select what was assumed to be all male high school teachers in this system who were employed in it during 1966-67, both directories were used. Neither of the two school directories distinguished between newly employed teachers in this system and those who had taught in it for two or more years.
naires was a shortened version of one suggested by Robin.\textsuperscript{127}

Essentially, this method involves three steps. First, a prequestionnaire letter is sent to each prospective respondent requesting his help in the research and explaining its general nature. Second, the questionnaire and another letter accompanying the questionnaire are sent to the respondent. Third, if the respondent fails to return the questionnaire within a specified time interval, additional letters (and possibly another questionnaire) are sent to him which again request his cooperation.

Following the above procedure, prequestionnaire letters (see Appendix A) were sent to the selected 89 male high school teachers. Eight of these letters failed to reach their intended recipients and were returned to the investigator. Questionnaires (see Appendix B) and follow-up letters (see Appendices C, D, and E) were then sent to the remaining 81 teachers. It was assumed that all of them received these questionnaires and additional letters. Sixty-three (78\%) of these 81 persons finally returned the questionnaires.

When editing these 63 questionnaires, eight were found to be either incorrectly filled out or not completed. These were

eliminated from all analyses. Seven of these respondents were identified as still teachers, or current teachers, when they received the questionnaire and one was identified as no longer a teacher, or a non-current teacher, when contacted. Of the 55 remaining respondents, 46 were current teachers and nine were non-current teachers. (See p. 104, footnote 120, and pp. 124-126.)

Tests of the research hypotheses involved only current teachers. (See pp. 12, 17, 103.) To remain consistent with the theory from which the hypotheses were derived, tests were also restricted to these respondents identified as inexperienced teachers. Current experienced teachers were examined only in secondary analyses. (See pp. 16-17, item 3, and pp. 102-103, 122-124.) The above restrictions resulted in N<30 for all tests. 128

Variables and Instruments

The student groups

The assessment of the independent variables in this study involved the use of a list of 12 groups, or categories, of high school students (Table A) which appeared in the questionnaire. 129

128 Hypotheses H2 and H3 introduced additional variables into the analysis of the current inexperienced teachers, thereby further reducing the N of 30 used in the test of hypothesis H1.

129 Actually, the questionnaire listed 13 groups rather than 12. However, the group Male Cheerleaders, which is H in Appendix B, was not involved in any respondent's answers to any of the questionnaire items except 13, 14, and 15. To simplify analysis,
TABLE A

STUDENT GROUPS (CATEGORIES) IN THE STRUCTURE
OF HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Governing and Planning Groups (class officers, Student Council, prom committees, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Service Groups (4-H, Hi-Y, Junior Rotarians, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Academic Clubs (Latin Club, science club, art club, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Non-Academic Clubs (radio club, roller skating club, rifle club, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. School Staffs (yearbook, newspaper, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Performing Groups (plays, debating teams, recitals, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Music Groups (band, orchestra, choir, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Intramural Athletes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Major Sport Athletes (includes football, basketball, baseball, track)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Other Sport Athletes (such as tennis, golf, swimming, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Social Leader Groups (popular, much dating, &quot;in the know&quot; about fads and fashions, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Good Student Group (&quot;A&quot; students, members of National Honor Society, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teacher's (respondent's) ranking of these groups according to the amount of prestige each conferred upon its members was used in determining the hierarchal group structure of the student social system in his student-high school. This in turn provided a basis for describing his prestige and reference group associations as a high school student.

Selection of the kinds of groups that were included in this list was based on findings from the studies conducted by Gordon and Coleman. Because of the many student- and teaching-high schools involved in this study (see pp. 104-105), and thus the high probability that there was much variation in specific formal and informal high school groups (e.g., some high schools may not have had a Latin Club, a swimming team, etc., whereas other schools possibly did have these groups), categories of groups rather than lists of individual groups were used. In this general it was decided to eliminate this category from the ranking schemes established by each respondent in answer to these questions. The respondent's ordering of the 12 remaining groups, however, was maintained. (See Appendix B.)

The term student-high school refers here to the high school the respondent attended as a student. The term teaching-high school will refer to the high school in which the respondent is or was a teacher.

form, it was assumed that the same list was applicable to the structure of all student- and teaching-high schools. Thus, the same list was sent to all respondents and it was not necessary for each to describe the group content of his own particular student- and teaching-high school.

In view of the general nature of this list, it was recognized that teachers may have responded to it in terms of more specific social categories and/or sociological groups perceived to have been included within the broader categories. No effort was made to identify the specific membership groups, non-membership groups, and reference groups of the teachers. The hypotheses tested in this research did not call for such specification.

Part of the questionnaire used in this study was pretested on a convenience sample of 14 junior and senior high school teachers during the winter of 1967. This pretest questionnaire included items for measurement of the independent variables. A qualitative appraisal of the reliability and validity of these items by the pretest subjects resulted in only minor changes in their format.

The only major criticism by pretest subjects concerned the list of student groups and questions 13, 14, and 15, which requested that ranked orders be established for these groups. Some of these teachers felt that it was difficult to rank all of these groups differently. Apparently, it was not made explicit in the directions given in this pretest form of the questionnaire that all groups did not have to be ranked differently but some could receive tied ranks. This criticism resulted in changing these directions so that the alternative of tied ranks was explicitly stated in the final form of the questionnaire. (See Appendix B.)

When the pretest subjects were asked specifically whether or not the overlap in membership in various of the listed groups (i.e., students belonging to more than one group at the same time) interfered with ranking them, the reply was unanimously negative, providing those who perceived tied ranks among some of these groups could be allowed to indicate this.
Independent Variables

A) Prestige in the student-high school. A primary independent variable of this research that was involved in hypotheses $H_1$, $H_2$, and $H_3$ was the teacher's prestige position in the adolescent sociocultural system of the high school he attended as a student.

Along with the student groups listed in Table A, the items below were used in assessing this variable: (See also Appendix B.)

1. In the school in which you were a high school student, RANK the student groups in the order of the amount of prestige each conferred upon its members in the eyes of the general student body. (Directions: A group with a rank of 1 would have the highest prestige in this, a group with a rank of 2, second highest, etc. If you feel two or more groups should be ranked the same, indicate this by using the same number for each. For example, if you feel that student groups D. and F. are equal in prestige, and that both rank fourth, you would place the number 4 in the blank following D. and in the blank following F.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___
H. ___ I. ___ J. ___ K. ___ L. ___

2. CHECK (✓) the student group(s) of which you were a member when a high school student. (For example, if you were in the school band, you would place a check mark in the blank following G.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___
H. ___ I. ___ J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. other group(s)
(specify) ____________ N. no groups __
3. CHECK (✓) the student group(s) of which you were an officer, or in other ways a leader, when a high school student.

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___
I. ___ J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. other group(s) (specify)

________________________ N. no groups ___

4. Suppose the concentric circles below represented the activities that went on in the high school you attended as a student. How far out from the center of things do you feel you were? (Indicate your answer by placing an X through one of the numbers.)

These items and the student groups were used in the following manner.

For each respondent, the 12 groups were arranged from high to low (i.e., from the group(s) receiving a rank of 1 to the group(s) receiving a rank of 12 or another largest number) according to how he had ranked them (item 1 above). In cases of no ties, groups

133 In nine cases respondents did not rank all of the groups. Unranked groups for each of these teachers were assigned the lowest and same rank according to his ranking scheme. For example, if the respondent ranked only seven of the groups and used only the
were simply ordered from 1 to 12. Where ties occurred (and thus 12 ranking numbers were not used), a 12-position ranking scheme was created. Groups that were tied for a particular rank were assigned the mean rank of the ranks they would have received if all groups had been rated differently from 1 to 12.

Following this, the 12-position ranking scheme established for each respondent was divided into quartiles and responses to items 2, 3, and 4 above were noted. All persons were then ranked through the use of four successively applied criteria.

Teachers were first ranked according to both number and rank of membership groups (i.e., groups in which they indicated they were members) each held in his first (or highest ranking) quartile. Those with the greatest number of and highest ranking membership groups in this quartile were ranked highest. Ties ranks of 1, 2, and 3, the five unranked groups all received a rating of 4.

The exact procedure used was as follows. Teachers who were members of all three of their first quartile groups were ranked above all other teachers. Those who were members of two of their first quartile groups with one of these membership groups being the highest ranking group were ranked just below these respondents. Teachers who were members of only one first quartile group, that being the highest, and those who held membership in two of their first quartile groups but neither of which rated highest, were placed next. These teachers were then followed by all persons who held membership in only one of their first quartile groups but one which was not the highest in rank. Teachers who were members of no first quartile groups were ranked below all others.
that occurred according to this criterion were broken by ranking those teachers with a greater overall number of membership groups higher than those with a smaller overall number of membership groups. Further ties were broken by considering overall number of leadership groups (item 3) and, finally, responses to item 4. Regarding this last item, respondents who checked zones closest to the center were ranked above those who checked zones furthest from the center.

The above procedure resulted in a rank order list of all respondents. The interpretation rendered from this list was that the higher ranking teachers on the list ranked higher in prestige in the high school each of them attended as a student than the lower ranking teachers on the list. Teachers who ranked low on the list were viewed as also ranking low in prestige as high school students.

For purposes of analysis, this list of ranked teachers was divided into quartiles, which were labeled high (first quartile), medium high (second quartile), medium low (third quartile), and low (fourth quartile). Each respondent, then, was considered to have ranked in prestige in his student-high school as either high, medium high, medium low, or low.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{135} For further discussion of the measurement of this variable, see Appendix F.
B) **Positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school.** This variable appears in hypotheses \( H_2 \) and \( H_3 \). Both teachers who ranked low in prestige (i.e., medium low and low) as high school students and those who ranked high in prestige (i.e., high and medium high) were involved in the examination of this variable.

Prior to assessing whether the teacher was positively oriented toward any high ranking non-membership groups in his student-high school, all of the groups in Table A toward which he was positively oriented at that time but in which he did not belong were determined. This was done with the following item: (See also Appendix B.)

5. **CHECK** (✓) the student group(s) that you, **when a high school student**, wished you were a member of but were not a member of.

A. ___  B. ___  C. ___  D. ___  E. ___  F. ___  G. ___  H. ___  
I. ___  J. ___  K. ___  L. ___  M. other group(s) (specify) 
N. no group(s) ___

The general groups checked by the teacher in this item were used as an index of non-membership social categories and/or sociological groups within the high school in which he was a student which, at that time, were adopted by him as positive reference groups.

For all respondents who did not check response category N. in item 5 above, the ranks of their non-membership reference
groups were then determined. This was done by observing for each respondent where these groups were positioned in the 12-position ranking scheme that was previously established for him (pp. 115-116). These group hierarchies were dichotomized into six high and six low groups and it was simply noted whether the respondent's highest ranking non-membership reference group(s) ranked high or low in prestige conferral ability in his student-high school.

Thus, for either the high or low prestige teacher who checked at least one group in item 5 that ranked high, it was concluded that he was positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in the high school he attended when a student. If none of the groups the high or low prestige teacher checked in item 5 were of high rank, or if he checked the space N., then it was concluded that he was not positively oriented toward any high ranking non-membership groups in the high school he attended when a student.

A further note on the theoretical reasoning underlying hypotheses $H_2$ and $H_3$ in relation to the above variables $A$ and $B$ might again be an order at this point.

It was stated earlier that a general low prestige position within some collectivity of which one is a member, irrespective of specific reference orientations within the collectivity, could
affect self-esteem negatively and that a general high prestige position within the collectivity could affect self-esteem positively. (See pp. 70-72 and p. 76, item 4.) It was also stated that rank within some collectivity of one's reference groups (membership groups or non-membership groups) could have differential affects on self-esteem. (See pp. 79-80, item 14.) Hypotheses $H_2$ and $H_3$ are concerned with what was interpreted as the near extremes of these conditions.

Assuming the validity of hypothesis $H_1$ (i.e., low prestige does lead to greater dropout than high prestige), it was expected that there would be a stronger relationship (1) between low prestige respondents who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups and high prestige respondents who did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups, than (2) between low prestige respondents who did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups and high prestige respondents who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups. Greater differences in self-esteem (and thus dropout rates) were envisioned as existing between high and low prestige teachers in the first situation above (which is hypothesis $H_2$) than between high and low prestige teachers in the second situation above. Theoretically, the first situation would be comparing dropout rates for high prestige teachers with highest self-esteem (because they do not have high ranking
non-membership reference orientations and thus experience no self-devaluation from this source) and low prestige teachers with lowest self-esteem (because they do have high ranking non-membership reference orientations and thus may experience self-devaluation from this source as well as that which may occur through their position of low prestige).

C) Present membership status in groups similar to the high ranking positive non-membership reference group(s) held in the student-high school. This variable appears in hypothesis \( H_3 \) and was restricted in its measurement to one of the two classes of respondents categorized on variable B above - those teachers who did have positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school (i.e., those who did have high ranking non-membership reference group(s) in this setting). In the test of \( H_3 \), it was examined only for those teachers who were of low prestige as high school students (i.e., medium low and low). Measurement of this variable was by the following item: (See also Appendix B.)

6. "Aside from the usual routine sort of social maturation, I guess that I'm still basically the same type of person that I was when I was a high school student."

(CHECK one)

strongly agree ___ agree ___ uncertain ___ disagree ___

strongly disagree ___
If the teacher checked either "strongly agree" or "agree" in item 6, this was interpreted as indicating (for those teachers who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in the student-high school) the perspective of a present non-membership status in groups similar to his past high ranking non-membership high school reference groups. If the teacher checked either of the two disagree categories, it was assumed that he now held the perspective of a member of these kinds of groups.136

Control variable

Experience as a high school teacher. This variable was viewed as a contingent condition under which the research hypotheses, if actually tenable to some extent, would reveal their tenability. In light of the nature of the independent variables specified above and the fact that self-esteem was theoretically presented as an intervening variable (and thus was viewed as the immediate causative factor in the decision to remain in or leave high school teaching), it was thought that the research hypotheses would be more valid and theoretically sound in predicting which beginning, or relatively inexperienced, teachers leave high school education than in predicting which experienced teachers leave, or those who have taught for a longer time. (See pp. 101-103.)

136None of the respondents involved in the analysis of variable C checked the category "uncertain" in item 6 above.
Accordingly, a prior decision was made to test all hypotheses for current inexperienced respondents alone rather than combined current inexperienced and experienced respondents.

The following item was used to determine experience as a high school teacher: (See also Appendix B.)

7. How many years have you been or were you a teacher?
   __less than 1 year   __5 years
   ___1 year           ___6-8 years
   ___2 years          ___9-11 years
   ___3 years          ___12 years or more
   ___4 years

Table B shows the resulting frequency distribution of the 46 current teachers according to the number of years they had taught school and the division separating what was defined as the inexperienced teacher and the experienced teacher. The nine non-current teachers (not shown in Table B) were classified according to the same division. Eight of these respondents were designated as inexperienced (i.e., had taught three or less years) and one as experienced (i.e., had taught four or more years).

Though the particular dividing line shown in Table B was established after data had been collected, it was not made prior to the test of hypothesis \( H_1 \). The resulting distribution of respondents in Table B and sample size considerations were the

137 The determination of current or non-current status for each respondent will be discussed when instruments for the dependent variable of the research are presented (pp. 124-127).
### TABLE B

**DISTRIBUTION OF CURRENT TEACHERS ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF YEARS TAUGHT AND IDENTIFICATION OF INEXPERIENCED AND EXPERIENCED TEACHERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years a High School Teacher</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>10 Inexperienced Teachers (N=30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>4  Experienced Teachers (N=16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 8 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 or more years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary factors in deciding to establish the cut-off point between three and four years rather than earlier.\(^{138}\)

**Dependent variable**

*Future occupational status as a high school teacher.* This variable was determined for two kinds of respondents - those identified as current high school teachers at the time they were 138Notice might also be taken of the fact that the division used probably corresponds with tenure policy in most public schools. The decision of whether to place a teacher on tenure is usually not made until after he has taught for at least two or three years. Thus, we might think of the untenured teacher as still "on trial," or still an "inexperienced" teacher.
contacted (i.e., those persons who were still teachers at the time they received questionnaires) and those identified as non-current high school teachers at the time of contact (i.e., persons who had already left high school teaching at the time they received questionnaires). The following item was used to distinguish between these respondents: (See also Appendix B.)

8. Your plans for next year:
   a. ___ teach high school in the school system I taught in last
   b. ___ teach high school in another school system
   c. ___ change occupations and not teach high school
   d. ___ continue in my present occupation, which does not involve teaching high school
   e. ___ other (Please specify) ____________________________

Respondents who checked either category a. or b. in item 8 were identified as current high school teachers. Those who

139 In the absence of contrary data, it was assumed that teachers who leave high school teaching do not necessarily forever remain dropouts from this field. Some may return after leaving. It was thus reasoned that the above dependent variable, which refers to future occupational status as a high school teacher, could logically be assessed for both kinds of respondents. Given that attitudes and behavior are to some extent related, it was thought that attitudes regarding returning to or staying out of high school education might conceivably be associated with the actual and corresponding behavior of returning to or staying out of this field.

140 It was not known how many, or if any, of these respondents had already signed contracts when they received questionnaires. No questionnaire item asked whether the respondent was in fact presently under contract for the next school year. It was assumed for this research that all respondents who indicated they would be teaching in the coming year either were presently under contract or intended soon to be under contract. In other words,
checked category c. or d. were identified as non-current high school teachers. 141

All respondents were classified on the dependent variable according to whether they were non-dropouts from high school education, potential dropouts from high school education, or dropouts from high school education. (See p. 12.) These categories were viewed as forming a scale upon which respondents could be ordered with respect to the probability of their leaving or staying out of high school teaching. (See p. 17-18) Non-dropouts were viewed as those least likely to leave (i.e., least likely to change from current to non-current status) or stay out (i.e., most likely to change from non-current to current status), potential dropouts as more likely to leave or stay out, and dropouts as most likely to leave or stay out.

The future teaching status of current high school teachers was assessed by the item below: (See also Appendix B.)

it was assumed that these persons still identified themselves as high school teachers, and thus still were high school teachers, at the time they received questionnaires.

141 It was found that all respondents who checked the category "other" in this as well as other items could be placed in one of the alternative response categories for that particular item.
9. (Answer this question only if your plans are to teach high school next year)
   I intend to --
   \[\text{non-dropouts}\]
   a. ___ stay in high school education regardless of other opportunities currently available
   b. ___ stay in high school education unless better occupational opportunities are made available
   \[\text{dropouts}\]
   c. ___ leave high school education as soon as reasonable opportunities are available
   d. ___ undecided concerning staying in or leaving high school education
   e. ___ other (Please specify) ___________

The future teaching status of respondents who were not high school teachers at the time of contact (i.e., non-current teachers) was assessed by this item: (See also Appendix B.)

10. (Answer this question only if your plans are to not teach high school next year)
    \[\text{non-dropouts}\]
    a. ___ I do intend to eventually go back to high school teaching.
    \[\text{dropouts}\]
    b. ___ I do not intend to go back to high school teaching.
    \[\text{potential dropouts}\]
    c. ___ I am undecided concerning re-entering high school teaching.
    d. ___ other (Please specify) ___________

It should be noted that the definition of the future high school teacher dropout used in this study does not imply that a dropout is a person who leaves or stays out of all parts of the field of education. A person who leaves high school teaching to teach at some other level of education would still be classified in this research as a teacher dropout (i.e., high school teacher dropout).
Analysis

Tests of the research hypotheses involved current inexperienced teachers. A secondary analysis for possible additional insight concerned current experienced teachers and non-current inexperienced teachers. (See pp. 12, 102-103, 109-110, 122-127.)

Part of this secondary analysis also involved the introduction of a non-hypothesized variable relating to the theory of this study and for which data had been gathered. Because of further reduction in sample size, this variable was considered only in relation to the variables of hypothesis $H_1$. Current inexperienced teachers, current experienced teachers, and non-current inexperienced teachers were involved in this examination. This variable will be presented in Chapter IV, Findings and Analysis.

The primary descriptive statistic used in the analysis of data was Goodman and Kruskal's coefficient of ordinal association (gamma, or $G$). The standard score ($z$) of $G$ was computed and used in its test of significance. All significance tests were one-tailed with alpha set at .05.

The test of hypothesis $H_4$ was based on an examination of the $G$'s and $z$ scores obtained for the tests of hypotheses $H_1$, $H_2$, and $H_4$.

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143 loc. cit., pp. 162-175.
$H_3$. Successively increasing $G$'s and $z$'s for these three tests was to be taken as evidence for the validity of $H_4$. 
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the research hypotheses developed in Chapter II will now be presented. Secondary data and analyses will also be reported.

First Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis $H_1$ was stated as follows:

Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students are more likely to drop out of high school education than inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students.

Test of $H_1$ (current inexperienced teachers)

The results of the test of hypothesis $H_1$ are presented in Table 1. For male teachers with three years or less teaching experience, prestige rank in their student-high school was found to be significantly associated, in the predicted direction, with probable future status (dropout or non-dropout) as a high school teacher ($G = .46$ and $z = 1.65$). Thus, hypothesis $H_1$ is supported. Inexperienced male high school teachers who were of low prestige as high school students do appear more likely to drop out of high school education than those who were of high prestige as high school students.

130
Table 1 also reveals that the majority (21) of these 30 teachers are probable non-dropouts. Only seven of them are potential dropouts and only two are dropouts. Considering only low prestige teachers, it is evident that the majority of these (11 out of 17) are also non-dropouts. This suggests that, regardless of prestige as a high school student, most inexperienced male high school teachers are apt to remain in this profession at least until they become "experienced" teachers.

Secondary data on H₁

Current experienced teachers. In examining the 16 current experienced teachers (Table 2), no significant relationship was found between prestige as a high school student and probable future

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium High</td>
<td>Medium Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = .46  z = 1.65  p<.05
TABLE 2

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT EXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = -0.06  z = -0.10  p > 0.05

status as a high school teacher (G = -0.06 and z = -0.10). Prestige when a high school student does not appear to be an important factor in the dropout that occurs among more experienced male high school teachers.

This finding is in accord with theoretical expectations. The theory suggests that, if self-esteem is an intervening variable between the prestige and future teaching status (or dropout) variables, then prestige in the student-high school should be time bound in its effects on teacher dropout; it should be a causal factor in dropout among inexperienced teachers but not among experienced teachers. (See pp. 101-103.)

Thus, considered together, results from the analysis of current inexperienced teachers (test of $H_1$, Table 1) and results from this analysis of the current experienced teachers suggest that
prestige in the student-high school affects the status of male high school teachers as probable dropouts or non-dropouts from this role through its affects on self-esteem in this role.

Non-current inexperienced teachers. These respondents were also assessed according to the variables of hypothesis H1 (Table 3).

TABLE 3

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (NON-CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prestige</th>
<th>Medium High</th>
<th>Medium Low</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Teaching Status</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(G = .50\)

\(^a\)Only one of the nine non-current teachers was an experienced teacher. This person had taught high school for nine or more years and was classified as medium high in prestige and a potential dropout.

Since they were actual dropouts, it was felt that a separate analysis was advisable despite their small number (N=8). The categories on the dependent variable for these former teachers should be interpreted as follows: non-dropout - least likely to stay out of high school education; potential dropout - more likely to stay out of high school education; and dropout - most likely to stay out of high
school education. (See pp. 124-127.)

Because the significance test for gamma requires at least an N of 10, G for Table 3 could not be tested for significance. It may be noted, however, that prestige as a high school student was found to be associated with future status as a high school teacher for these eight non-current teachers in the direction predicted by the theory (G = .50). This might suggest that former male high school teachers who were low in prestige as high school students are more apt to stay out of and not return to high school education than those who were high in prestige.

Table 3 also indicates that the majority (five out of eight) of these non-current teachers were high in prestige rather than low. Since these eight respondents were all inexperienced teachers and, regardless of attitudes concerning returning to or staying out of high school education, they were already actual dropouts from this field, this result is contrary to what might have been predicted according to the theory and results from the test of H₁ (Table 1). If inexperienced male high school teachers who were of low prestige as high school students are in fact more likely to leave high school teaching than those who were of high prestige, then we might have expected the majority of the inexperienced respondents in Table 3 to have been low in prestige as students rather than
Second Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis $H_2$ was stated as follows:

(1) Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (2) who were positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting, are more likely to drop out of high school education than (3) inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (4) who were not positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting.

An earlier assumption made in this research concerning the methods used in measuring prestige in the student-high school may be germane in explaining the above result among non-current respondents (i.e., the finding that more non-current inexperienced teachers were of high rather than low prestige) in light of test results for $H_1$.

Because no data could be found on the distribution within the teaching-high school of high and low prestige teachers when they were high school students, it was assumed that, in general, there were equal numbers of highs and lows employed as high school teachers. Accordingly, essentially equal numbers of high, medium high, medium low, and low prestige respondents were established. (See pp. 114-117.) However, this assumption of equal numbers might well be false.

Perhaps among high school teachers in general, there is actually a greater number who were of high prestige in their student-high school than the number who were of low prestige as students. (See: Brookover and Gottlieb, op. cit., pp. 367-370, 372, 385.) If this is so, we might logically expect that, even though $H_1$ is valid, more dropouts will be of high rather than low prestige. Under these circumstances, a better indication of the validity of $H_1$ would consist of comparing the proportion of low prestige teachers who are still teaching to the proportion of low prestige teachers among those who have left teaching rather than comparing the proportion of low prestige actual dropouts to the proportion of high prestige actual dropouts (which was done above). If $H_1$ is valid, then there should be a significantly greater proportion of lows among non-current teachers than among current teachers.
Test of $H_2$ (current inexperienced teachers)

Condition (2) in the statement of hypothesis $H_2$ above pertains to only one class of low prestige respondents (i.e., low and medium low prestige) on the dichotomized variable "positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school." The other class, low prestige teachers (1 above) who did not have any positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting, were excluded in the test of $H_2$. Similarly, category (4) above pertains to only one class of high prestige respondents (i.e., high and medium high prestige) on the reference group variable (i.e., positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school). High prestige teachers (3 above) who did hold positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups in their student-high school were also excluded from this test. (See pp. 118-121.)

The results of the test of hypothesis $H_2$ are presented in Table 4. No significantly different relationship with the dependent variable was found for high prestige teachers who did not have any high ranking non-membership reference groups in the student-high school and low prestige teachers who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in this setting ($G = .44$ and $z = 1.16$). Thus, hypothesis $H_2$ is not supported.
TABLE 4

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, REFERENCE ORIEN­TA­TIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prestige and Reference Orientationsa</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future Teaching Status</td>
<td>High (No)</td>
<td>High (No)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G = .44  z = 1.16  p > .05

aNo = no reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups in the student-high school.
Yes = all or some reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups in the student-high school.

The fact that G for this second hypothesis is essentially the same as the G obtained in the test of hypothesis H1 (Table 1, G = .46) suggests that the non-significant z score obtained for H2 is the result of reduction in sample size. Only 18 of the 30 teachers involved in the test of H1 were involved in the examination of H2. With a larger N, a G of .44 for H2 might have been significant. However, a comparison of probable dropout rates for each class of the reference group variable while controlling for prestige (Table 5) suggests that the reference group variable is not
TABLE 5

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige and Reference Orientations (^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Col. No. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

\(^a\)See subscript a in Table 4.

actually predictive of future teaching status.\(^{145}\)

The distribution of high prestige respondents in columns 1 and 2 of Table 5 is in accordance with the theory. Column 1 type teachers should enjoy higher self-esteem than column 2 type teachers and thus should be less apt to leave high school teaching. The data in these columns support this reasoning. The distribution of medium lows in this table is also consistent with (if not strongly supportive of) theoretical expectations. Column 6 type teachers should suffer greater self-devaluation than column 5 type teachers. We would

\(^{145}\)Note that the test of \(H_2\) in Table 4 combines columns 1, 3, 6, and 8 of Table 5.
thus expect to find more dropouts (in this case, the one dropout) in the former rather than the latter column. The distributions of respondents in medium high and low prestige columns in Table 5, however, are not in accordance with the theory.

Note especially the low prestige teachers (columns 7 and 8). The data here suggest that low prestige teachers who, according to the theory, suffer the most self-devaluation (column 8) are less apt to drop out of teaching than those who suffer the least self-devaluation (column 7). This same situation is also suggested for the medium high prestige teachers (columns 3 and 4).

The distributions of respondents in Table 5, then, suggest that, regardless of prestige in the student-high school, the reference group variable of this study (i.e., whether the teacher did or did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups in his student-high school) has no relationship to future teaching status that is consistent with and predictable from the theoretical perspective of this study. Respondents who did hold high ranking non-membership reference groups do not seem consistently more inclined to drop out of high school teaching than those who did not hold high ranking non-membership reference groups. Thus, it appears that the association found in Table 4 ($G = .44$) is a reflection of the previously established association between prestige and dropout found in the test of hypothesis $H_1$ (Table 1).
The distribution of current inexperienced teachers according to the above reference group and future teaching status variables is shown in Table 6 without controlling for prestige in the student-high school. The data again suggest there is no relationship between rank of non-membership reference groups in the student-high school and probable dropout status as a high school teacher. In addition, Table 6 clearly shows that the majority of these respondents - 21 (column 2) out of 30 - were positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in their student-high school (and thus the majority of these teachers did have non-membership reference groups, irrespective of the ranks of these groups). This finding is also revealed in Table 5 through adding and then comparing the totals of columns 1, 3, 5, and 7 and columns 2, 4, 6, and 8.

**TABLE 6**

REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Reference Orientationsa</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Col. No. (1) (2)

aSee subscript a in Table 4.
Tables 5 and 6 also reveal that the finding of a majority of teachers held high ranking non-membership reference group orientations is consistent for all prestige positions except high prestige (Table 5, compare column totals) and for all future teaching status categories except the dropout category (Table 6, compare row classes).

The relatively large number of respondents (15) in the upper part of column 2 in Table 6 appears to be a result of two general trends in the data. First, as previously noted in the analysis of $H_1$ (pp. 130-131), and as again shown in Table 6 (compare row classes), the majority of these respondents (21 out of 30) are probable non-dropouts. In Table 6 this is shown to be true for both those teachers who did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups (column 1) and those who did have such reference groups (column 2). Second, as just noted above in Table 6, the majority of respondents did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in their student-high school.

The reference group variable of $H_2$ (i.e., positive orientations toward high ranking non-membership groups) in the student-high school) has been considered thus far as a dichotomy. Respondents were classified as either having high ranking reference orientations or not having high ranking reference orientations. However, teachers who had no high ranking non-membership
reference groups in their student-high school can be of two kinds in this research - those who had only low ranking non-membership reference groups and those who had no non-membership reference groups (and thus no high ranking non-membership reference orientations). (See pp. 118-119.)

Three classes of respondents, then, were actually established in the measurement of the reference group variable: (1) those who had high ranking non-membership reference orientations, (2) those who had only low ranking non-membership reference orientations, and (3) those who had no non-membership reference orientations in the student-high school. Column 2 of Table 6 shows that 21 of the 30 current inexperienced teachers fall into the first class above. An analysis of the nine respondents in column 1 of Table 6 (not shown) revealed that one of these teachers who had no high ranking non-membership reference groups had only low ranking groups (the second class above) and eight had no non-membership reference groups (the third class above). (The one person who had only low ranking non-membership reference orientations was medium low in prestige and a non-dropout.)

Because eight of the nine respondents who had no high ranking non-membership reference groups had no non-membership reference groups, and because the one person who had only low ranking groups occurred in the largest category of the dependent variable

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(the non-dropout category), we may conclude that Tables 4, 5, and 6 essentially reflect distributions of only two of the three possible classes of respondents for this research with respect to the reference group variable - those who had high ranking non-membership reference groups and those who had no non-membership reference groups. If the one respondent who had only low ranking groups was eliminated from these tables and their analyses, results would still remain basically unchanged. Thus, the general conclusion suggested by these analyses - the reference group variable has no relationship with or affect on the dependent variable of this research - is suggested for these two reference group classes alone.

This conclusion of no differential affect on or relationship with teacher dropout for teachers who had no non-membership reference groups in their student-high school and those who had high ranking non-membership reference groups in this setting has the following implication. According to the theory of this research, greater differences in dropout rates should occur between these two classes of male high school teachers than between any other combination of the three possible classes of the reference

---

A change in cell number or distribution among cells with relatively large frequencies may have less affect on results than a similar change in cell number or distribution among cells with relatively small frequencies.
group variable. Under similar prestige conditions, teachers who had no non-membership reference groups in the student-high school should experience no or little self-devaluation stemming from this social situation, those who had only low ranking groups of this nature should experience greater self-devaluation, and those who had high ranking non-membership reference groups should experience the greatest self-devaluation. (See pp. 76-78, items 5 and 9, and pp. 79-80, item 14.) Therefore, the analyses that were made in Tables 4, 5, and 6 suggest that, even under conditions where the greatest differences in dropout rates could theoretically be expected, the reference group variable of hypothesis $H_2$ has no apparent relationship with or affect on future teaching status.

**Secondary data on $H_2$**

**Current experienced teachers.** The analysis of the current experienced teachers according to the variables of hypothesis $H_2$ is shown in Table 7. Similar to the examination of these respondents for $H_1$ (Table 2), non-significant results were also obtained for this analysis ($G = -0.03$ and $z = -0.01$). No significantly differ-

---

$^{147}$Non-current inexperienced teachers were not examined separately for hypothesis $H_2$ or $H_3$. Because of the sample size reduction that would have ensued for these eight respondents and the fact that there are no non-dropouts or potential dropouts among high, medium low, and low prestige respondents in Table 3, it was felt that any further analysis of these persons alone for the variables of $H_2$ and $H_3$ would be totally meaningless.
TABLE 7.
PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT EXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige and Reference Orientations(^a)</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High (No)</td>
<td>High (No)</td>
<td>Low (Yes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(G = -.03\) \quad \(z = -0.01\) \quad \(p > .05\)

\(^a\)See subscript a in Table 4.

A significant relationship with the dependent variable (future teaching status, or teacher dropout) was found for those of high prestige who did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups in the student-high school and those of low prestige who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in this setting. This suggests that the reference group variable, like the prestige variable (Table 2), also has no relationship to future teaching status for current experienced male high school teachers.\(^{148}\)

\(^{148}\)No meaningful analysis of the reference group variable in relation to the dependent variable while controlling for prestige could be made for the current experienced teachers. Comparison
Because it appeared that the reference group variable has no actual affect on dropout for current inexperienced teachers (Tables 4 and 5), results in Table 7 cannot be interpreted as indicating support for the theoretically assumed presence of self-esteem as an intervening variable between the reference group variable and future teaching status as was the case in the examination of prestige in the student-high school in relation to future teaching status (Tables 1 and 2). The non-significant results obtained for both Tables 4 and 7 suggest that, regardless of teaching experience, the variable "positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school" has no relation to future teaching status and thus, from the perspective of the theory of this research, has no effect on self-esteem in the teaching role.

Third Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis $H_3$ was stated as follows:

(1) Inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked low in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (2) who were positively oriented of the column totals in Tables 2 and 7 show that all medium low and low prestige teachers had high ranking non-membership reference groups. Also, because Table 2 reveals that no respondents occur in the potential dropout and dropout categories for medium high prestige, distribution differences over the range of the dependent variable for medium highs who did and did not have high ranking reference orientations cannot be ascertained (and thus differences in probable dropout rates cannot be determined).
toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting, and (5) who continue to perceive themselves as non-members in these kinds of groups (changed status aside), are more likely to drop out of high school education than (3) inexperienced male high school teachers who perceived that they ranked high in prestige in the high school they attended as students, and (4) who were not positively oriented toward high ranking non-membership groups in this setting.

**Test of H₃ (current inexperienced teachers)**

Condition (5) in the statement of hypothesis H₃ above refers to only one class of low and medium low prestige respondents - those who are still non-members - on the dichotomized variable "present membership status in groups similar to the high ranking positive non-membership reference group(s) held in the student-high school." The other class, low and medium low prestige respondents categorized as "now members" of such groups, was excluded in the test of H₃. The high and medium high prestige respondents involved in the test of this third hypothesis included only those who did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups in the student-high school and thus could not be classified on the membership status variable (i.e., present membership status in groups similar to the high ranking positive non-membership reference group(s) held in the student-high school). (See pp. 121-122.)

The results of the test of hypothesis H₃ are presented in Table 8. As expected from the test of H₂ (Table 4), the G
TABLE 8

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, PRESENT MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN GROUPS SIMILAR TO HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP REFERENCE GROUPS OF THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige, Reference Orientations(^{a}) and Present Membership Status(^{b})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout (no)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout (no)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout (yes; Non-Mem.)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(G = .44 \quad z = 0.96 \quad p > .05\)

\(^{a}\)See subscript a in Table 4.

\(^{b}\)Non-Mem. = still a non-member of groups similar to high ranking non-membership reference groups of student-high school.

obtained for this third hypothesis is also non-significant (\(G = .44\) and \(z = 0.96\)). Thus, hypothesis \(H_{3}\) is not supported.

The smaller sample for \(H_{3}\) \((N = 13)\) as compared to \(H_{2}\) \((N = 18)\) appears to account for the smaller \(z\) score obtained for this third hypothesis despite the fact that \(G\) for each is the same. The fact of identical gammas indicates that respondents are still distributed similarly for both hypotheses.
The affects of the membership status variable on teacher dropout while controlling for prestige are revealed in Table 9. Distributions for both classes of the membership status variable are presented in this table for both high and low prestige teachers who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in their student-high school.

According to the theory of this research, there should be a greater tendency toward dropout for those teachers who assume the perspective of "still non-members" of high ranking non-membership reference groups in the student-high school than for those who assume the perspective of "now members" in these kinds of groups. For both medium high and medium low prestige teachers in Table 9, results are in accord with the theory. Potential dropouts and dropouts occur only in the non-member categories (columns 4 and 6). The member categories (columns 3 and 5) contain only non-dropouts. For the high and low prestige teachers in Table 9, however, results are not in accord with the theory. The one potential dropout among the high prestige teachers occurs in the member category (column 1). Among the low prestige teachers, distributions for the two categories of the membership status variable (columns 7 and 8) are proportionately the same.

The test of $H_3$ (Table 8) and examination of Table 9, then, suggest that the membership status variable (i.e., present member-
TABLE 9

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL OF TEACHERS WHO DID HAVE REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBER-SHIP GROUPS IN THIS SETTING, PRESENT MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN GROUPS SIMILAR TO HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBER-SHIP REFERENCE GROUPS OF THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Col. No. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

aMemb. = now a member of groups similar to high ranking non-membership reference groups of student-high school.

Non-Memb. = (See subscript b in Table 8.)
ship status in groups similar to the high ranking positive non-membership reference group(s) held in the student-high school has no relationship to future status as a high school teacher dropout or non-dropout.

Secondary data on H3

Current experienced teachers. Table 10 presents the analysis of the variables in H3 for current experienced teachers. We may note that the introduction of condition (5) in the statement of H3 above has eliminated all but one of the eight low and medium low prestige respondents (compare column totals of Tables 7 and 10). Thus, nearly all of the low prestige current experienced teachers were classified as "now members" of high ranking non-membership reference groups held in the student-high school.

Since gamma where used in the analyses of the second and third research hypotheses is also meant to reflect the relationship between the variables of prestige and future teaching status, this statistic would have little meaning for Table 10 and thus was not computed. Since virtually no low prestige teachers remain in this table, no comparison with the dependent variable can be made for both high and low prestige teachers. Thus, no relationship between the prestige and dropout variables can be determined.

Though not shown in any of the above tables, all three of the
TABLE 10

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, REFERENCE ORIENTATIONS TOWARD HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, PRESENT MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN GROUPS SIMILAR TO HIGH RANKING NON-MEMBERSHIP REFERENCE GROUPS OF THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT EXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige, Reference Orientations, ( ^a )</th>
<th>and Present Membership Status, ( ^b )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High (no)</td>
<td>Medium High (no)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a \)See subscript a in Table 4.

\( ^b \)See subscript a in Table 9.

current experienced teachers of high and medium prestige who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in their student-high school were classified as "still non-members" of such groups.\(^{149}\)

Fourth Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis \( H_4 \) was stated as follows:

\( ^{149} \)Five of the high and medium high prestige current experienced teachers had no high ranking non-membership reference groups (see column totals in Table 10). Thus, of the total of eight high and medium highs (see column totals in Table 2), three persons did have high ranking non-membership reference groups.
Successively stronger relationships will be found for the above hypotheses in the order in which they are presented.

Test of $H_4$ (current inexperienced teachers)

The test of hypothesis $H_4$ was based on an examination of the pattern exhibited by the $G$'s and $z$ scores resulting from the tests of the first three research hypotheses. The general pattern that has been observed (Tables 1, 4, and 8) is one of declining $G$ and $z$ values rather than the predicted successive increase in $G$ and $z$ values. Gamma for $H_1$ ($G = .46$) was significant ($z = 1.65$) and slightly larger than the non-significant, identical $G$'s for $H_2$ and $H_3$. ($H_2$, $G = .44$ and $z = 1.16$; $H_3$, $G = .44$ and $z = 0.96$.) Thus, hypothesis $H_4$ is not supported by results from these tests.

Though the non-significance of the $G$'s obtained for $H_2$ and $H_3$ seems to be primarily a result of successively smaller samples for the tests of these hypotheses, examination of the reference group and membership status variables while controlling for prestige in the student-high school (Tables 5 and 9) suggested that these two variables are not actually related to future teaching status. Thus, even assuming larger samples for the three research hypotheses and, thereby, the possible attainment of significance for all of them, it still appears doubtful that $G$ for $H_2$ and $H_3$ would be substantially different in value than $G$ for $H_1$. Gamma for the
second and third hypotheses would probably still reflect, for the most part, the relationship between prestige and dropout established for the first hypothesis. If so, hypothesis $H_4$ would still remain unsupported.\footnote{All tests and secondary analyses of the research hypotheses presented above have considered current and non-current teachers separately on the dependent variable of future teaching status. (See pp. 124-127) Another secondary analysis that was made but which was not presented above considered current and non-current teachers together on the dependent variable.

In this analysis, all inexperienced current teachers were reclassified as either non-dropouts or potential dropouts according to their attitudes regarding dropping out of high school teaching and the eight non-current inexperienced teachers were viewed on a post hoc basis as dropouts on this variable. In effect, the non-current respondents were viewed as being representative of current teachers who are in fact most likely to drop out of and stay out of high school education. These categories were established according to the following scheme.

Non-dropouts and potential dropouts from among the current teachers were combined and called non-dropouts; dropouts from among the current teachers were called potential dropouts; and dropouts and potential dropouts from among the non-current teachers were combined and called dropouts. This reclassification provided the most conservative view of the data.

Though the N's were comparatively larger in the analyses of combined current and non-current respondents, all results were non-significant. They were also clearly explicable from results already obtained in the separate analyses of current and non-current respondents, thus providing no further insight into the meaning of the data.}
11. "Most students in the high school in which I teach (or taught) tend to judge their teachers by many of the same major standards that they use to judge each other." (CHECK one)

  strongly agree  agree  uncertain  
  disagree  strongly disagree

An assumption underlying all of the hypotheses of this research was that high school teachers tend to judge themselves by various student standards (retrospectively and, possibly, with respect to their teaching-high school) more frequently and with greater emphasis when they again become part of the high school social system. It was assumed that present judgments in terms of certain of these standards could still be viewed by the teacher as legitimate and that a high rating on and social approval with respect to these standards could be desired by him. Item 11 above assesses the variable "perception of student judgment of teachers according to student standards (i.e., norms, values, and other evaluative criteria)."

When the questionnaire for this study was being devised, it was felt that this variable was possibly another relevant factor with respect to theorized self-esteem processes and might, therefore, be included. It is consistent with the theory to expect that particular self-assessments occurring in combination with the direct perception of similar assessments of oneself by others may have a greater effect on self-esteem (and thus might more likely
bring about an adjustment response if the effect is negative) than self-assessments unaccompanied by the direct perception of corresponding social judgment. Perceived social assessments and sentiments would tend to reinforce and confirm similar self-assessments and sentiments.

This reasoning suggested that those teachers who ranked low in prestige in their student-high school (and thus, presumably, might still rank low on important high school student evaluative criteria) and who agree with item 11 above are more likely to drop out of teaching than those low prestige teachers who do not agree with item 11. Conversely, it was thought that teachers who ranked high in prestige in their student-high school (and thus, presumably, are still likely to rank high on important high school student evaluative criteria) who also agree with item 11 are less likely to leave high school teaching than high prestige teachers who disagree. The "agree" high prestige teachers would not only rate themselves favorably by student standards, but would also perceive student approval according to these standards. Perhaps this additional favorable reinforcement would tend to more strongly anchor the high prestige teacher in his present occupational environment.

The respondent classes examined for the student judgment variable (item 11) were current inexperienced teachers, current experienced teachers, and non-current inexperienced teachers.
Current inexperienced teachers

With the rationale presented above in mind, the student judgment variable was examined in relation to the variables of hypothesis $H_1$ for current inexperienced teachers. Table 11 presents these respondents for all classes considered on these variables.

We may note first from Table 11 that those teachers who were low in prestige (i.e., medium low and low) and who do feel (or admit the possibility) that students judge them by student standards (columns 6 and 8) appear more likely to drop out of high school teaching than the lows who do not feel that students judge them by student standards (columns 5 and 7). This is in accord with the theory. However, among the high prestige teachers (i.e., high and medium high), findings contradict the theory. There seems also to be a greater tendency toward dropout among these respondents who agree (columns 2 and 4) than among the ones who disagree (columns 1 and 3). Thus, for all respondents, those who agree appear more likely to drop out of high school teaching than those who disagree.

Columns 2, 4, 6, and 8 of Table 11 are combined and presented again in Table 12. According to the theory, a stronger relationship

151The second and third research hypotheses and the additional variables introduced in these were not involved in the analysis of the student judgment variable. (See p. 128.)
TABLE 11

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, PERCEIVED STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige and Perceived Student Judgment\textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future (1)</td>
<td>Medium (2)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium (3)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium (4)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree (5)</td>
<td>agree (6)</td>
<td>disagree (7)</td>
<td>agree (8)</td>
<td>disagree (9)</td>
<td>agree (10)</td>
<td>disagree (11)</td>
<td>agree (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Disagree = strongly disagree + disagree

\textsuperscript{b}Agree = strongly agree + agree + uncertain. (See p. 155, item 11.)

\textsuperscript{b}There was one "no response" in this prestige category to item 11.
TABLE 12

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL OF TEACHERS WHO AGREE\textsuperscript{a} TO STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ G = .46 \quad z = 1.44 \quad p > .05 \]

\textsuperscript{a}Agree = (See subscript a in Table 11.)

between the variables of \( H_1 \) was expected for the "agree" respondents only than the relationship expected (and obtained) for all "agree" and "disagree" respondents considered together in the test of \( H_1 \) (Table 1). As the above examination has already suggested, this expectation was not borne out (\( G = .46 \) and \( z = 1.44 \)). Gamma for Tables 1 and 12 are identical. Though \( z \) for Table 12 might have been significant with a sample size equivalent to the sample size used in \( H_1 \), the resulting \( G \) would probably have remained the same providing that a similar distribution were obtained.

Since there appeared to be a relationship between perception of student judgment of teachers by student standards and future teaching status regardless of the respondent's prestige rank.
(Table 11), Table 13 was constructed for these variables alone.

The relationship obtained was not significant ($G = .43$ and $z = 1.29$).

In view of the fact that $N = 29$ for Table 13 is essentially the same as $N = 30$ for Table 1, and since significant results were obtained in the test of $H_1$, it appears that prestige in the student-high school is a better predictor of future teaching status for inexperienced male high school teachers than is the student judgment variable.

**Table 13**

**PERCEIVED STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT INEXPERIENCED TEACHERS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$G = .43$ $\quad$ $z = 1.29$ $\quad$ $p > .05$

*Disagree = strongly disagree + disagree.
Agree = strongly agree + agree. (See p. 155, item 11.)*

Examination of the column totals in Table 11 reveals an interesting finding for these current inexperienced teachers. For successively decreasing prestige ranks, we note a progressively decreasing proportion of respondents who feel students do judge...
them by student standards. These ratios for agreement are: high prestige (columns 1 and 2), 6 out of 7 (86%); medium high prestige, 3 out of 5 (60%); medium low prestige, 5 out of 9 (56%); and low prestige, 4 out of 8 (50%). It appears that the higher prestige teachers were more apt to perceive student judgment of themselves on this basis than the lower prestige teachers. Retrospectively, this finding can be interpreted in light of the theory, assuming that these differences in judgments were not dependent to any great extent upon differences in the students or in the structure of the social systems of these respondents' teaching-high school but were, rather, primarily differences in individual perceptions of similar environments.

Given a desire on the part of the high school teacher for high or otherwise satisfactory ratings on certain interpersonal evaluative criteria perceived to be used by his students, it is consistent with the rationale presented earlier to expect high prestige teachers to be inclined to express agreement on the student judgment variable and to expect low prestige teachers to deny such evaluation. Because he desires to enhance his self-esteem, the high prestige teacher has more to gain by expressing agreement rather than disagreement. Because the low prestige teacher desires to maintain (as well as enhance) his self-esteem, he has more to lose by expressing agreement rather than disagreement.
By denying or misperceiving such sources and possibly negative kinds of social evaluations and sentiments (if they do exist to some extent for him), the high school teacher who ranked low in prestige in the student-high school might be in a better position to insulate what still may be a bruised ego as a result of certain past experiences.¹⁵²

Considering all low prestige teachers together and comparing them to all highs, we may also observe from the column totals of Table 11 that a majority of both high and low prestige respondents expressed agreement with respect to the student judgment variable. Among the high prestige teachers, nine out of 12 (75%) were in the agree category. Among the lows, nine out of 17 (53%) appeared in this category. Thus, overall, the majority of these respondents (18 out of 29, or 62%) agreed that students judge them by student standards.

Current experienced teachers

The relation of the student judgment variable to future teaching status was also examined for current experienced teachers.

The theory of this research predicts that experienced teachers who agree with regard to the student judgment variable, irrespec-

¹⁵² Although not dealt with in the research hypotheses, this process of selection and distortion in perception was discussed earlier (and slighted to some extent) in Chapter II, Theoretical Framework for Analysis. (See pp. 62-63.)
tive of prestige in the student-high school, are no more likely to
drop out of teaching than those who disagree. The reasoning here
is identical to that given earlier regarding prestige in the student-
high school and future teaching status. (See pp. 101-103.) Namely,
self-esteem is again assumed to be an intervening variable and the
student judgment variable, like the prestige variable, is also
assumed to be operative at the beginning of one's teaching career.
Thus, if such perception of teacher evaluation by students is indeed
a causal factor in teacher dropout, its affects should be readily
noticeable only when examining dropout among inexperienced teach­
ers. The experienced teacher who was of low prestige in his
student-high school and who agrees to judgment of himself by stu­
dents according to their standards must not have been strongly
affected by these experiences. If so, he would have dropped out by
now.

Table 14 classifies both "agree" and "disagree" current experi­
enced respondents according to prestige and probable teaching
status. We may note that the overall distribution follows no appar­
tent pattern, which is in accord with the above theoretical reason­
ing. Though the medium high prestige respondents cannot be ana­
lyzed for the differential effects of agreement and disagreement on
dropout (all cells in column 3 are empty), and thus cannot be com­
pared to high prestige respondents, the distributions for medium
Table 14

PRESTIGE IN THE STUDENT-HIGH SCHOOL, PERCEIVED STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS, AND FUTURE STATUS AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER (CURRENT EXPERIENCED TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Teaching Status</th>
<th>Prestige and Perceived Student Judgment&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Medium High</th>
<th>Medium High</th>
<th>Medium Low</th>
<th>Medium Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dropout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Dropout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Col. No. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

<sup>a</sup>See subscript a in Table 11.
low and low prestige teachers are not consistent with one another. Among medium lows, dropout seems most likely for those who express agreement on the student judgment variable (compare columns 5 and 6). Among lows, dropout seems most likely for those who express disagreement (compare columns 7 and 8).

It was noted above in Table 11 that low prestige current inexperienced teachers who did perceive themselves being judged by students according to student standards (columns 6 and 8) appear more likely to leave high school teaching than those current inexperienced lows who did not perceive such judgments (columns 5 and 7). For purposes of another analysis of current experienced teachers, this finding was generalized and assumed valid. Under this assumption, the following situation was then hypothesized (in an ad hoc fashion) for male high school teachers:

If inexperienced teachers who were low in prestige as high school students and who agree with respect to the student judgment variable are in fact more likely to drop out of high school teaching than those who were low in prestige but disagree with respect to this variable, then we may expect, as a consequence, that a greater proportion of "disagree" individuals will be found among low prestige experienced teachers than among low prestige inexperienced teachers.

Thus, due to the assumed differential dropout rates between "agree" and "disagree" inexperienced low prestige teachers, it was reasoned that the proportion of each kind in the experienced and inexperienced populations should differ. Both theory and data (i.e.,
Table 11) led to the prediction that the greatest proportion of "disagree" lows (and the smallest proportion of "agree" lows) should be found among experienced rather than inexperienced teachers.

Current experienced and inexperienced low prestige respondents (i.e., medium low and low prestige) are classified in Table 15 according to the student judgment variable. We see from this table that the above hypothesized situation is supported by its limited post hoc data. Among the experienced teachers, five out of eight (62%) disagree; among the inexperienced teachers, eight out of 17 (47%) disagree.

**TABLE 15**

EXPERIENCE AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER AND PERCEIVED STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS (LOW AND MEDIUM LOW PRESTIGE CURRENT TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Student Judgment ^a</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\^aSee subscript a in Table 11.

We may also note from Table 15 that, among the experienced low prestige respondents, it is a majority (62%) who disagree that students judge them by student standards. For inexperienced low
prestige respondents, the majority (53%) agree.

Table 11 also reveals a stronger tendency toward dropout for high prestige teachers who expressed agreement regarding the student judgment variable (columns 2 and 4) as compared with highs who expressed disagreement (columns 1 and 3). In view of the findings from Table 15, we might ask: Does this mean that a greater proportion of "disagree" individuals might also be found among high prestige experienced teachers as compared to high prestige inexperienced teachers?

Table 16 reveals that the relationship found for the low prestige respondents (Table 15) does not hold for those who were high in prestige as high school students. The proportion among experienced teachers who disagree that students judge them by student standards (two out of eight, or 25%) is identical to the proportion of inexperienced teachers who disagree (three out of 12, or 25%).

Given the assumption that both inexperienced high and low prestige teachers who express agreement on the student judgment variable

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153 Observe also in Table 16 that a majority of both inexperienced and experienced teachers express agreement regarding the student judgment variable. This is what we would expect from the theory. Both inexperienced and experienced high prestige teachers should stand to gain in self-esteem by the perception of teacher assessment by students according to student criteria. We would expect only the low prestige experienced teacher, in an effort to sustain himself in a situation that may have some devalutative affect on him, to deny such evaluations (as Table 15 might suggest).
are in fact more likely to drop out of teaching than those who disagree (as suggested by Table 11), these results are contrary to expectations and inconsistent with findings in Table 15.

TABLE 16

EXPERIENCE AS A HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER AND PERCEIVED STUDENT JUDGMENT BY STUDENT STANDARDS (HIGH AND MEDIUM HIGH PRESTIGE CURRENT TEACHERS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Student Judgment</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inexperienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aSee subscript a in Table 11.

Since the results in Table 15 were predicted (post hoc) from the distribution of low prestige teachers on the student judgment variable in Table 11, it could be suggested that this variable may have more discriminatory power for inexperienced teachers who were of low prestige in their student-high school than for those who were of high prestige. Though the high prestige teacher may more likely agree to self-assessments by high school students according to their criteria, perhaps this has negligible self-enhancement value (or possibly self-diminution effects, if he feels he does not measure as high according to the student standards of his
teaching-high school in comparison to those by which he was judged when himself a student) for an already assumed favorable self-image in these respects. For the low prestige high school teacher who has an unfavorable self-image by these criteria, the perception of being judged or not being judged by his wards in a similar manner may be more crucial for his self-esteem and thus his continuing status as a teacher.

**Non-current inexperienced teachers**

Considering the eight non-current teachers of Table 3 (i.e., those persons who had already left teaching when contacted) with respect to the student judgment variable leads us back to our earlier speculation. That is, high prestige teachers who agree to student judgment of themselves by student criteria are more likely to remain in high school teaching than highs who disagree; low prestige teachers who agree are more likely to leave high school teaching than lows who disagree. (See pp. 154-156.)

According to this reasoning, we might predict that, among actual teacher dropouts, a majority of those who were high in prestige should express disagreement on the student judgment variable and a majority of those who were low in prestige should express agreement. In the case of this study's non-current teachers, results are consistent with such a prediction. Of the five high pres-

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154 This examination is not shown in table form.
tige respondents in Table 3, four disagreed that students judged them by student standards whereas only one agreed. Of the three low prestige respondents, two agreed that students judge them by student standards and one disagreed.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of this research are reviewed below. These are the results from tests and related examinations of the research hypotheses and results from secondary analyses that appeared most consistent and theoretically meaningful.

Significant results were obtained in the test of hypothesis $H_1$. Prestige in the student-high school was found to be associated with future status as a high school teacher (i.e., probable teacher dropout or non-dropout) for current inexperienced male high school teachers. Those who were of low prestige as high school students appear more likely to drop out of high school education than those who were of high prestige as high school students.

The analysis of current experienced respondents in relation to the variables of $H_1$ suggested that prestige when a high school student is not related to future status as a high school teacher for more experienced male high school teachers. In light of the test results of $H_1$, this finding is also consistent with the theory of this research.
No significant relationship between the prestige/reference group combination of variables and future teaching status was found in the test of hypothesis $H_2$. Non-significant results were also obtained for the test of $H_3$, which introduced the membership status variable into the analysis of prestige, reference orientations, and teacher dropout. From these results and associated analyses, it was concluded that neither the reference group variable nor the membership status variable appears to be related to future status as a high school teacher for current inexperienced male high school teachers. Trends in the data among both high and low prestige respondents were not wholly consistent with theoretical expectations.

The results from the tests and examinations of the first three research hypotheses indicated that hypothesis $H_4$ is not supported.

The variables of hypothesis $H_1$ were also examined in relation to the non-hypothesized variable "perception of student judgment (presumed evaluation and sentiment) of teachers according to student standards." Though none of the specific analyses resulted in significant relationships, the overall pattern of results suggested

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155 The reference group variable refers to "positive reference orientations toward high ranking non-membership group(s) in the student-high school." The membership status variable refers to "present membership status in groups similar to the high ranking positive non-membership reference group(s) held in the student-high school." (See pp. 118-122.)
that this variable may be related to prestige in the student-high school and future teaching status for inexperienced male high school teachers in ways consistent with and important to the theory.

Two major patterns discerned in this analysis were the following: 1) Analyses of current inexperienced teachers, current experienced teachers, and non-current inexperienced teachers were all supportive of the view that low prestige inexperienced teachers who express agreement regarding the student judgment variable appear more likely to drop out of high school teaching than those low prestige inexperienced teachers who express disagreement with respect to such judgments. 2) All analyses also suggested that high prestige inexperienced and experienced teachers appear more likely to agree that students judge them by student standards than low prestige inexperienced and experienced teachers, who may be more inclined to disagree.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Problem, Theory, and Methods

The general problem of this research was teacher dropout, or Why do teachers leave education? The research problem, or the specific question investigated, was: Why do male high school teachers leave high school education for (presumably) other occupations? An answer to this question was sought by examining the male high school teacher's prestige and reference group associations in the social system of the high school he attended as a student.

The theory underlying this research viewed the individual's prestige and reference group associations in some social system in which he functions as factors which can result in the extent of social approval (or disapproval) perceived to be directed toward oneself. In turn, the individual's perception of the extent of approval (or disapproval) of himself by others was viewed as a primary factor involved in the maintenance of self-esteem. It was theorized that the perception of little or no social approval of oneself (or perceived social disapproval) could lead to self-devaluation; conversely, it was thought that the perception of sufficient
social approval (or no social disapproval) could lead to the main-
tenance or enhancement of self-esteem.

The maintenance or enhancement of self-esteem was assumed
in this theory to be a major motivating force in human behavior.
Thus, it was further theorized that, in an effort to accomplish this,
the experience of self-devaluation could, if circumstances permit-
ted, call forth the adjustment response of withdrawal from the social
context in which it occurs (thereby avoiding a situation of perceived
lack of social approval, or perceived social disapproval). Assuming
no subsequent changes for the individual with regard to those
factors (e.g., certain abilities) which, at one time, led to inter-
action consequences that negatively affected his self-esteem in a
particular context that he has since left (for whatever reason or
need), it was also theorized that further encounters with similar
situations might again result in the perception of little or no social
approval, loss of self-esteem, and consequent withdrawal from the
situation.

Applied to the research problem, this theory suggested that
self-esteem and reference group factors (including prestige)
might be related to teacher dropout in the following manner: Inex-
perienced male high school teachers who suffered self-devaluation
in their student-high school because of perceived lack of peer
approval attendant with their prestige and reference group associa-
tions in that social system, may leave high school teaching as a consequence of again experiencing self-devaluation through contact with a similar student social system in their teaching-high school.

Thus, through the intervening variable of self-esteem, the theory suggested certain relationships between prestige and other reference group experiences of the teacher in the student-high school and the likelihood of his dropping out of high school teaching. Accordingly, the hypotheses stated in Chapter II were advanced for investigation. (See p. 103.)

Scales for measuring the variables for these hypotheses (and all other variables involved in this study) were constructed from questionnaire items. The dependent variable - probable teacher dropout or non-dropout - was assessed through items designed to ascertain present attitudes regarding future employment as a high school teacher. All items were developed specifically for this research. Those that were used to measure the independent variables were assessed for reliability and validity through a qualitative appraisal by pretest subjects.

The sample for investigating these hypotheses consisted of 89 male high school teachers. All persons were selected on a convenience basis. They comprised both current and non-current (actual dropout) teachers, experienced and inexperienced (begin-
ning) teachers.

All data were collected through mailed questionnaires during the summer of 1967. Sixty-three of the 89 teachers responded and 55 of these respondents were involved in the overall analysis.

Tests of the research hypotheses involved only current inexperienced respondents, a restriction that resulted in N < 30 for all tests. Current experienced and non-current inexperienced respondents were involved in secondary analyses. (There was only one non-current experienced respondent.)

Results from these tests and secondary analyses are summarized and discussed below.

The Research Hypotheses

Results from the test of the first research hypothesis suggest some support for the general hypothesis that reference group experiences of the teacher which occurred in the social system of the high school he attended as a student are associated with the probability of his leaving high school teaching for some other occupation. Theoretical usage of the concept reference group as involved in the maintenance of and changes in self-esteem through social approval (and disapproval) has led to empirical evidence which offers some substantiation for the basic hypothesized relationship of this study. It was demonstrated, through assessments of attitudes regarding
future behavior, that beginning or inexperienced male high school teachers who were of low prestige in the student social system of the high school they attended as students appear more likely to leave the profession of high school teacher than those who were of high peer prestige when high school students. Stating this in reference group terminology, it was shown that inexperienced male high school teachers who appear most likely to drop out of high school teaching were (1) members of groups within the collectivity of their student-high school which ranked relatively low in value or prestige conferral ability, and (2) non-members of relatively higher ranking groups in this setting.

Number as well as rank of membership groups was used in this research as an index of prestige in the student-high school. Thus, according to this operationalization, the results of hypothesis $H_1$ also suggest that inexperienced male high school teachers who are probable dropouts from high school teaching belonged to (or were members of) fewer groups in their student-high school than those less likely to drop out.

Results from the tests and examinations of the second and third (and thus the fourth) research hypotheses do not support the general hypothesis of this research. The examination of hypothesis $H_2$ suggested that differential dropout rates from high school education cannot be predicted for inexperienced male high school
teachers who did and did not have high ranking non-membership reference groups in their student-high school. Similarly, the examination of hypothesis \( H_3 \) suggested that, among inexperienced male high school teachers who did have high ranking non-membership reference groups in their student-high school, differential dropout rates also cannot be predicted for those who now assume a membership perspective in groups similar to these past non-membership groups and those who still assume a non-membership perspective regarding such groups.

**Meaning of Secondary Data**

Findings from secondary analyses of the data that appeared most meaningful with regard to the theory and results from tests of the research hypotheses were those concerning the variable "perception of student judgment of teachers by student standards." While not included in the research hypotheses, this variable is found in the theory. Two major implications of the analysis of the student judgment variable are seen.

Generally, it appeared that this analysis supported, or was consistent with, the theoretically assumed but not tested presence of the variable self-esteem as intervening in the relationship found between prestige in the student-high school and probable future status as a high school teacher (dropout or non-dropout).
for current inexperienced teachers (test of $H_1$). Both prior analyses and subsequent interpretation of the limited data as well as post hoc working hypotheses and subsequent examination of results quite consistently supported this theoretically derived assumption. This supports the theory precipitating this research.

The second major implication resulting from analysis of this variable, though not predicted by the hypotheses investigated, is also consistent with the theory. This implication concerns responses to self-esteem changes and the one response assumed to result from negative change that was examined in this research—teacher dropout.

The research hypotheses were concerned only with withdrawal from the high school as a theoretically possible response to self-devaluation experienced by the beginning teacher in that setting, which was viewed in turn as resulting from the independent variables of the research. Analyses of the student judgment variable can be interpreted as indicating another possible response to such self-devaluation experienced by the high school teacher; one which may allow him to continue in this role despite the fact that it may potentially result in a loss of self-esteem severe enough to cause him to leave. The teacher may deny similar social evaluation and sentiment directed toward himself that might, if acknowledged, tend to more strongly confirm or more frequently effect negative
The inexperienced male high school teacher who suffered severe self-devaluation as a high school student because he ranked low in peer prestige, and thus presumably ranked low on certain student evaluative criteria, may more readily avoid severe self-devaluation of a similar nature in his teaching-high school if he is able to conclude that the students in this present setting do not actually judge him by their criteria (whether in fact they do or do not). By misperceiving as non-existent what might otherwise become an important source of social disapproval and consequent further loss of self-esteem for the teacher, he may thus be able to continue in this role despite any self-devaluation he possibly might feel as a result of self-reflection. On the other hand, if the teacher does perceive that his students evaluate him by criteria according to which he evaluates himself as low, and perceives that his students also evaluate him low in these respects, he may become a dropout. Loss of self-esteem through both social and self-disapproval might then be sufficient enough to result in his leaving the role of high school teacher.

A finding that most directly supports the above reasoning was one suggesting that current inexperienced teachers who were of low prestige as high school students, and who agree that students
judge them by student standards, appear more apt to drop out of high school teaching than low prestige current inexperienced teachers who disagree regarding such judgments. This result was also suggested indirectly by examination of the current experienced and non-current inexperienced respondents.

In addition to the analyses of the student judgment variable, the analysis of the current experienced teachers in relation to the variables of the first research hypothesis also supports the assumption that self-esteem is an intervening variable in the relationship between prestige in the student high school and future teaching status for current inexperienced teachers. The non-significant results obtained for experienced respondents, in light of the significant findings for inexperienced respondents (test of \( H_1 \)), suggests that the independent variable of prestige in the student-high school is time bound, as it should be if it affects dropout rate through its affects on self-esteem.

Limitations of Study

**Methodological limitations**

Most of the analyses made in this research were based on 30 or fewer respondents. Attempts to generalize from this meager sample size and to suggest "trends" from distributions that totalled in some instances to five or less people are clearly recognized as
inferences having questionable empirical support.

In addition to its small size, the sample in this study was not selected on a probability basis. Thus, there is no statistical justification for projecting significance results to the population of male high school teachers considered in this study other than that based upon descriptive analysis of the data. This description was used as a guide in order to arrive at inferences developed through its conceptual implications. None of the inferences made, of positive or negative meaning for the theory, can be supported by results obtained from the tests of significance.

Perhaps a basic flaw in the design of this research is the way in which its dependent variable was measured. Future status as a high school teacher is a behavioral variable of a dichotomous nature - either the teacher eventually drops out of teaching or continues to remain a teacher. It was assumed for this research that this variable was in fact being measured, but not directly. Attitudes, or intentions, on the part of current teachers regarding whether they think they will drop out of or remain in high school teaching were assessed and accepted as a valid and reliable indicator of their later behavior in this respect. The assumptions of validity and reliability of such an indicator, however, are suspect. Attitudes regarding future behavior of staying in or dropping out of high school education may not be strongly or consistently corre-
lated with the corresponding later behavior. If not, then prediction and explanation of teacher dropout has not occurred in this study.

Another weakness apparent in this research is the fact that self-esteem was not measured for its respondents. In view of its crucial role in establishing the construct validity of reference group theory as used in this research, this was unfortunate. Without the measurement of this variable, relationships which might exist between prestige and reference group orientations of the teacher in his student-high school and dropping out of high school teaching stand ultimately only as findings, which might conceivably be accounted for and predicted by theories entirely divergent from that used in this research.

Further limitations are seen in this research regarding the validity and reliability of all its instruments. Only a modest attempt was made to assess their validity and reliability beforehand. This effort consisted of asking pretest subjects to comment on the purpose and content of some of the questionnaire items. Thus, on this basis alone, the data and results of this research may not be valid indications of the validity (or non-validity) of its theory and not typical for the respondents considered from its perspective.

Both membership status and reference orientations were considered in this study as dichotomies. Either a respondent was or
was not a member of some group; either he was or was not posi-
tively oriented toward it as a comparative reference framework
for self-evaluation. In actuality, there probably exist various de-
grees of group membership and orientations toward a group as a
reference group.

It should also be noted that the 12 "student groups" employed in
the measurement of prestige were not 12 specific groups, but
rather 12 categories of groups. For any respondent who indicated
that he was a member of any of these categories, it was not known
whether he was a member of a low ranking group in that category
or a high ranking group (assuming that specific groups within these
categories were ranked).

Of all the variables operationalized and measured in this re-
search, it would seem safe to conclude that the prestige variable
was planned and measured with most care and forethought. Though
its operationalization was crude, all other operationalizations were
extremely crude by comparison.

Another possibly important methodological limitation in this
study is the fact that virtually no specific information was obtained
from respondents concerning their lives during the interim be-
tween high school student days and employment as a teacher. The
possible occurrence of significant events during this interim that
might have fundamentally altered self-concepts and reference
group behavior for some respondents were not identified. Thus, it is possible that important effects have been registered in the data and relationships established in this study the sources of which are unknown.

The above characteristics of this research are perhaps its primary methodological weaknesses. Taken together, they clearly indicate that all hypotheses of and conclusions derived from this study purported to be supported or not supported by its findings must still be viewed as essentially hypotheses that have not yet been sufficiently tested to warrant any conclusive decisions regarding their probable tenability or untenability on an empirical basis.

**Theoretical limitations**

Considering the extent of the foregoing methodological limitations, weaknesses in the content or logical structure of the theory, though undoubtedly present, cannot be discerned by the empirical results of this investigation. Tentative as they are, these results do suggest, however, an apparent major weakness in the implementation of this theory and in the drawing out of its implications as presented in Chapter II.

The secondary analysis of the student judgment variable (i.e., perception of student judgment of teachers according to student standards) suggests that the research hypotheses did not account
for what appeared to be another important adjustment mechanism in coping with self-devaluation in the teacher role. The hypotheses assumed withdrawal from this role as the more important and likely response to lowered self-esteem. As established in the test of the first hypothesis, low prestige inexperienced teachers in general do seem more inclined to drop out of high school education than their high prestige counterparts. As previously pointed out, however, it appears also that low prestige teachers are more apt to sustain themselves in the teacher role if they do not perceive their students judging them by student criteria. Low prestige respondents who indicated they did perceive such judgments appeared more likely to drop out than the ones who did not perceive such judgments. (See pp. 179-181.)

If the theory in relation to the subject matter of this research is valid, the implication of the above finding for the problem of teacher dropout is clear: The perspective of this theory utilized for the purpose of predicting on a behavioral basis which male high school teachers will and will not leave high school teaching is limited. Withdrawal from the situation engendering loss of self-esteem may be only one of several responses to self-devaluation that can occur in the teacher role as a result of the study's independent variables. Other responses which permit the self-devaluated teacher to remain in his position may occur with equal
Recommendations for Further Research

In light of the preceding, it cannot be concluded that the theory of this study does not warrant further investigation in relation to the problem of explaining teacher dropout. The partial attempts that were made here to test and use this theory for this problem should be regarded as just that. The study was conceived and designed as a conclusive rather than descriptive type of survey, but its implementation lacked the breadth required for such research. Its instrumentation also lacked the depth required for proper analysis of its theoretical substance. Acceptance or dismissal of the theory's relevance in an area (teacher dropout) of such important consequences and urgently in need of adequate explanations must be decided by replication under more ideal circumstances. Thus, the following recommendations are offered as essential considerations in the design of future studies.

1) The variable self-esteem should be operationalized and included in future study for empirical assessment in addition to the variables assessed in this research. Validation and modification of the theory in relation to its use for this problem (or other problems) cannot proceed otherwise.
2) The dependent variable of this research should be measured directly rather than (or in addition to) assessed indirectly through attitudes. Predictive validity of the independent variables of this study could then be determined, which in turn would aid in establishing the construct validity of the theory.

3) In view of what appears to be a relatively unexplored theoretical area in relation to the problem of teacher dropout, perhaps it would prove insightful to apply the concepts and ideas of this theory to the problem in an initial exploratory and case study approach - a study similar to Gordon's\textsuperscript{156} but focussed instead upon teachers. Selection of one or a few high schools and intensive efforts to secure detailed information from and about their teachers with regard to the problem and theory might suggest methods which would more adequately measure what appear to be the relevant variables for the problem and the relevant variables themselves. Such information might then be used in designing larger surveys in order to more conclusively test hypotheses derived from or related to this theory (as well as possibly others derived from the exploratory study).

One other recommendation is offered here. Studies of "teacher effectiveness" (and perhaps "teacher satisfaction") might find

this theoretical perspective of value for understanding problems of functioning while in the teacher role.

Among at least beginning (or inexperienced) teachers, it seems likely that factors responsible for dropout from this role and effectiveness in this role are related. As suggested by this study, perhaps responses other than withdrawal from the teacher role may occur as a result of self-devaluation stemming from variables similar to the independent variables considered here. If so, perhaps these responses (and the self-devaluation) have an important effect on the teacher's role performance. For example, misperception of student evaluative behavior and, perhaps, excessive self-concern might lead to ineffective interaction with students.

Thus, the theory of this research may be relevant for assessing differences in the "effectiveness" of various teachers, or distinguishing between the "good" and "bad" teacher, as well as identifying probable dropouts. Accordingly, we might ask: Is the effective high school teacher also a person who was an "effective" high school student? Or, conversely, Is the ineffective (but continuing) high school teacher also a person who was an "ineffective" high school student? Such questions seem worthy of examination in light of the findings and conclusions of this research concerning dropout. Teacher ineffectiveness and teacher dropout may, in many instances, be only different stages in the same
phenomenon rather than different phenomena.
APPENDIX A

Prequestionnaire Letters

The prequestionnaire letter below was sent to all teachers selected for the sample of this study who had previously taken part in another related research. (See p. 4, footnote 7, and p. 106, footnote 123; see also pp. 106-107.)

Recently you participated in a study being conducted by Western Michigan University in cooperation with the ________ Public Schools. The purpose of this research is to determine factors which affect the job satisfactions of first- and second-year teachers. To accomplish this purpose we are again in need of your help and other secondary high school teachers' help in responding to a few more additional items. Consequently, you will shortly be receiving another questionnaire in the mail containing these items.

We apologize for asking you to contribute more of your time. But if you can spare it we would be most grateful for your further help once more. This very brief questionnaire you will soon receive and that we hope you will complete will be final. No more of your time and energy will be requested.

All responses will, of course, be confidential. All results will be a product of group analysis, no individuals will be identified.

We think you will find this last questionnaire quite interesting and not time consuming. Again, we thank you.
The following prequestionnaire letter was sent to all teachers selected for the sample of this study who had not taken part in this other related research.

Very soon you will be receiving a questionnaire in the mail. The content of this questionnaire concerns high school experiences of teachers when they were students and current reactions and views in relation to student activities in schools.

The __________ Public Schools are cooperating with Western Michigan University in the attempt to understand those conditions important for the teacher's career and job satisfaction. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information on selected factors that may be relevant to this attempt.

The nature of the educational study to which this questionnaire pertains is exploratory and, admittedly, may not have any practical consequences. But this is precisely why your assistance is being requested.

Your responses will substantially determine the direction that future research effort shall take, the validity of its findings, and the success of its applications. We will be most grateful to secure your candid views concerning the items in this questionnaire.

All responses will be confidential. All results will be subjected to group analysis only, anonymity in every way is assured.

The questionnaire is brief and will not be very time consuming. We think you will find it interesting. Thank you.
APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Items

The following items were included in the questionnaire. They appear here in the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire.

Directions: Please supply the following background information about yourself by checking (✓) the responses that are most nearly correct for you. Please answer the questions even if you are no longer employed as a teacher or will no longer be employed as a teacher.

1. What is your marital status?
   ___ single
   ___ married
   ___ separated
   ___ divorced
   ___ widower

2. (Answer this question if it applies)
   How many children do you have?
   ___ none
   ___ one
   ___ two
   ___ three
   ___ four or more

3. How old are you?
   ___ Younger than 21
   ___ 21 through 23
   ___ 24 through 26
   ___ 27 through 29
   ___ 30 through 32
   ___ 33 through 35
   ___ 36 through 45
   ___ Over 45
4. What subject area(s) do you or did you teach?  
(If more than one, indicate your MAJOR area with a double check (✓)  
(____ Counselor)  
____ English  
____ History; social studies  
____ Science  
____ Mathematics  
____ Foreign Languages  
____ Home economics  
____ Business or commercial subjects  
____ Physical education; health  
____ Fine arts (music, art, etc.)  
____ Industrial arts  
____ Other (Please specify) ___________________

5. What grade level(s) do you or did you teach?  
(If more than one, indicate your MAJOR grade level(s) with a double check (✓)  
____ 7th grade  
____ 8th grade  
____ 9th grade  
____ 10th grade  
____ 11th grade  
____ 12th grade  
____ Other (Please specify) ___________________

6. How many years have you been or were you a teacher?  
____ less than 1 year  ____ 5 years  
____ 1 year  ____ 6-8 years  
____ 2 years  ____ 9-11 years  
____ 3 years  ____ 12 years or more  
____ 4 years

7. For what length of time did you teach in the school you taught in most recently?  
____ 1 to 2 months  ____ 2 years  
____ 2 to 4 months  ____ 3 years  
____ 4 to 10 months  ____ 4 to 7 years  
____ 1 year  ____ Over 7 years
8. In how many schools have you taught?
   __ 1 school  ______  4 schools
   __ 2 schools  ______  5 schools
   __ 3 schools  ______  6 schools

9. In what school system did you teach during the 1966-1967 school year?
   __ ________ Public Schools
   __ ________ Public Schools
   __ ________ Other (Please specify) ________
   __ ________ None

10. Your plans for next year:
    __ teach high school in the school system I taught in last
    __ teach high school in another school system
    __ change occupations and not teach high school
    __ continue in my present occupation, which does not involve teaching high school
    __ other (Please specify) ________

11. (Answer this question only if your plans are to not teach high school next year)
    __ I do intend to eventually go back to high school teaching
    __ I do not intend to go back to high school teaching
    __ I am undecided concerning re-entering high school teaching
    __ other (Please specify) ________

12. (Answer this question only if your plans are to teach high school next year)
    I intend to --
    __ stay in high school education regardless of other opportunities currently available.
    __ stay in high school education unless better occupational opportunities are made available.
    __ leave high school education as soon as reasonable opportunities are available.
    __ undecided concerning staying in or leaving high school education.
    __ other (Please specify) ________
This last part of the questionnaire is designed to provide research insight into the student organization of high schools and individual experiences in them. In the following part of the questionnaire the list of student groups below will be used to facilitate responses to the items. Please scan this list and refer to it when responding to items 13 through 20.

A. GOVERNING AND PLANNING GROUPS (class officers, Student prom committees, etc.)

B. SERVICE GROUPS (4-H, Hi-Y, Junior Rotarians, etc.)

C. ACADEMIC CLUBS (Latin Club, science club, art club, etc.)

D. NON-ACADEMIC CLUBS (radio club, roller skating club, rifle club, etc.)

E. SCHOOL STAFFS (yearbook, newspaper, etc.)

F. PERFORMING GROUPS (plays, debating teams, recitals, etc.)

G. MUSIC GROUPS (band, orchestra, choir, etc.)

H. MALE CHEERLEADERS

I. INTRAMURAL ATHLETES

J. MAJOR SPORT ATHLETES (includes football, basketball, baseball, track)

K. OTHER SPORT ATHLETES (such as tennis, golf, swimming, etc.)

L. SOCIAL LEADER GROUPS (popular, much dating, "in the know" about fads and fashions, etc.)

M. GOOD STUDENT GROUP ("A" students, members of National Honor Society, etc.)
13. In the high school in which you now teach (or in which you last taught), RANK the student groups in order of the amount of prestige each confers upon its members in the eyes of the general student body. (Directions: A group with a rank of 1 would have the highest prestige in this, a group with a rank of 2, second highest, etc. If you feel two or more groups should be ranked the same, indicate this by using the same number for each. For example, if you feel that student groups D. and F. are equal in prestige, and that both rank fourth, you would place the number 4 in the blank following D. and in the blank following F.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___

14. In the school in which you were a high school student, RANK the student groups in the order of the amount of prestige each conferred upon its members in the eyes of the general student body. (Follow same directions as in question 13.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___

15. In the school in which you were a high school student, RANK the student groups in order of the amount of prestige each conferred upon its members according to your judgment when you were a high school student. (Follow same directions as in question 13.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___

16. CHECK (✓) the student group(s) of which you were a member when a high school student. (For example, if you were in the school band, you would place a check mark in the blank following G.)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___ N. other group(s) (specify) _______
O. no groups ___
17. CHECK (✓) the student group(s) of which you were an officer, or in other ways a leader, when a high school student.

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___ N. other group(s) (specify) ______
O. no groups ___

18. When you were a high school student, to what student group(s) did the students to whom you compared yourself belong - that is, those students who set the standards of achievement, popularity, etc., that you looked upon with favor and measured yourself against. (CHECK ✓)

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___ N. other group(s) (specify) ______

19. CHECK (✓) the student group(s) that you, when a high school student, wished you were a member of but were not a member of.

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___ N. other group(s) (specify) ______
O. no groups ___

20. If you had been a student in the high school in which you are now teaching (or in which you last taught), CHECK (✓) the student group(s) that you realistically would be a member of.

A. ___ B. ___ C. ___ D. ___ E. ___ F. ___ G. ___ H. ___ I. ___
J. ___ K. ___ L. ___ M. ___ N. other group(s) (specify) ______
O. no groups ___

21. "Aside from the usual routine sort of social maturation, I guess that I'm still basically the same type of person that I was when I was a high school student."

(CHECK one)

strongly agree ___ agree ___ uncertain ___ disagree ___
strongly disagree ___
22. "Most students in the high school in which I teach (or taught) tend to judge their teachers by many of the same major standards that they use to judge each other." (CHECK one)

strongly agree ___ agree ___ uncertain ___ disagree ___

strongly disagree ___

23. Suppose the concentric circles below represented the activities that went on in the high school you attended as a student. How far out from the center of things do you feel you were? (Indicate your answer by placing an X through one of the numbers.)

24. Now, in the concentric circles below, place an X where you would have liked to have been.
APPENDIX C

Letter Accompanying First Mailing of Questionnaire

Recently you received a letter asking your help in the study being conducted by Western Michigan University in cooperation with the ________ Public Schools. The purpose of this research is to determine factors which affect the job satisfactions of school teachers. The study will be used to provide summarized information to the ________ Public Schools. Your knowledge, views and opinions are invaluable in this. A frank expression of these by you and your colleagues is crucial.

Please answer the items in the questionnaire enclosed; since we may have missed something important, you may use the blank sides of the sheets for other views you think important. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

You will note that an identification number has been stamped on each sheet of the questionnaire. This number serves as a processing number for the computer management of the data, and furnishes the research worker with a means of knowing whether you have returned the questionnaire. The identification number also makes it possible to determine whether you are or will be still employed in the same school system.

All data collected is confidential. The questionnaires will be returned to Western Michigan University and will not be seen by public school personnel. All reports will deal with mass data. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to write to us, we will respond immediately. A summary of the research will be sent to you, after its completion, if you request it.

Return the completed questionnaire in the attached self-addressed envelope to

Anton J. Tomas, Research Associate
Center for Sociological Research
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Thank you for your help.
APPENDIX D

Letter Accompanying Second Mailing
of Questionnaire

We apologize for this additional request. But the data that we are collecting can come only from teachers whose recent education is augmented by actual "real life" experience in the classroom. You and your colleagues are the only sources of these insights.

The research in progress could be of considerable importance, not only to school systems but to individual teachers as well. This is our only justification for making requests on busy individuals.

Since we know that questionnaires get misplaced, we are enclosing another questionnaire and an additional stamped self-addressed envelope. Please be assured that all responses are confidential.

Many thanks for your assistance.
APPENDIX E

Final Letter

You were recently sent another questionnaire designed to get your views about the experiences of teachers. The need for such information is enormous; the source of this information can only be from selected teachers. These data, which speculation and guesswork cannot replace, are vital.

Please fill out the questionnaire and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided. If you have misplaced the questionnaire, we will be happy to send you another if you will contact the Research Center.

The results of this research will be available to you on request; the information you provide is confidential.

Please extend the help that only you can provide.
APPENDIX F

Measurement of Prestige in the Student-High School

Preliminary analysis of membership status distributions for the 12 student groups in Table A (p. 111) revealed that (1) nearly all respondents belonged to at least one of their first quartile groups, and (2) a majority of these belonged to their highest ranking group(s).

It was this finding that determined the exact procedure followed in the initial ranking of teachers according to ranks of their membership groups. (See p. 116, footnote 134.)

Since nearly all respondents indicated they were members of high ranking student groups, it might be concluded that nearly all respondents ranked high in peer prestige as high school students. However, because of the way these groups were constructed for this study, this conclusion is probably erroneous.

Each "group" listed in Table A was designed to represent a category of several related groups (sociological and/or categorical) rather than a single group. (See pp. 112-113.) Though respondents were able to rank only these categories on the questionnaire, it seems logical to assume they also implicitly (i.e., in their minds) ranked to some extent the more specific groups perceived within the categories. Thus, both high and low prestige groups may have been identified in both high and low prestige categories.
Assuming intercategorical comparisons occurred for these specific rankings as well as comparisons within categories, it is also possible that, in some respondents' minds, low prestige groups perceived within certain high ranking categories rated as low as, or lower than, low or high prestige groups perceived within certain lower ranking categories.

Since only the 12 categories appeared in the questionnaire, membership status could be indicated only for these. Assuming more specific groups were identified in these categories and perceived in some rank order, this inability to be more precise in indicating one's membership groups had the following consequence for the purpose of measuring prestige in the student-high school: It could not be determined whether respondents belonged to high or low prestige groups (or both) within their membership categories.

Thus, some respondents, seemingly of high prestige because they indicated belonging to their high ranking categories, may have actually belonged to only the lowest ranking groups within these categories. These teachers, then, may have achieved little or no peer prestige in their student-high school, especially if these lowest ranking groups of the high ranking categories conferred no more prestige than the lowest ranking groups of low ranking categories.
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