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SELF-CONCEPT OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH-SPEAKING HIGH SCHOOL CANADIANS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY*

Psychologists, educational psychologists, and learning theorists tend to agree that aspiration, motivation, and other important aspects of human behavior are functions of the self-concept. To the extent that this contention is tenable, a knowledge of the self-concept becomes of paramount importance to psychologists, educators, social workers, and counselors. Of equal importance is the effect environment has on the development of the self-concept.

This study then, was designed to investigate the self-concept of four adolescent groups, differentiated from each other in terms of their ethnic origin and in terms of their geographical location.

The social psychologist and the scientists of related disciplines have studied various factors underlying personality differences. These scientists discovered that sociological factors for instance, such as class structure, are important dimensions in the study of human differences.

Shibutani and Kwan (1965) elaborate on the developmental differences or social distance that exist among people in any stratified society because of ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

Language is an important part of culture and at the same time, it is the instrument through which all aspects of a culture are organized. To the extent that members of different ethnic groups speak different languages then, they develop different perspectives. It is because of such language differences that people who live in the same community may react to identical events quite differently. On the other hand, people with common ethnic backgrounds, similar cultural values, and common language, tend to form segregated ethnic islands within a larger community. Members of each group, whether they are part of the minority or majority group, tend to congregate in areas where they can speak their own language and follow their own mores.

Differences in achievement test scores among various ethnic groups may be accounted for partially on the basis of differential language skill. Cultural traditions undoubtedly also play a major role in producing these group differences in intellectual development.

In Jewish families, for instance, there is a marked emphasis upon the formal aspects of education and upon abstract thinking to the detriment of mechanical and manual dexterity skills. Italians, on the other hand, have a traditional admiration for the manipulative arts and crafts, while they place

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relatively less emphasis upon more abstract types of behavior. This variability in emphasis cannot but produce differential scores on achievement tests administered in North American schools.

In the past two decades, personality differences among cultural groups have been a common subject of research. Students of cultural and personality have frequently employed the term national character (Anastasi, 1964), which represents the norm, or most frequent personality pattern within a culture. Regional differences may also be pronounced within certain cultures. In fact, the extent of heterogeneity of personality pattern within a culture may itself be regarded as an important aspect of national character. It should also be realized that national character is subject to change as cultural conditions change.

Limited research has been done on the subject of effects of cultural conditions among Canadian ethnic groups. Personality differences between English- and French-speaking Ontarians are discussed by Wade (1960). The English-speaking, Wade claims, are more readily attracted by practical than hypothetical speculation. By temperament, Wade (1960) finds the French-speaking are much more inclined to think than act. No research, to the writer's knowledge, has ever been conducted in the area of the self-concept of adolescents and Canadian ethnic groups.

Haggstrom (1963) however, did investigate the self-esteem of desegregated Negroes in the United States. The central purpose of his study was to test a hypothesis that the Negro community is a cause of Negro inferiority, that is, it depresses the self-esteem of its members. Haggstrom's (1963) study gave evidence that the primary personality characteristic which distinguishes Negro from white persons in the United States is lower self-esteem.

Partly from Haggstrom's (1963) findings, the present author assumed that insofar as the Alberta French-speaking individual, as well as the English-speaking individual in Quebec, sees himself as belonging to a minority group, then he sees himself as inferior.

Review of the literature uncovered no pertinent empirical evidence as to the effects of environment on the self-concept of adolescent groups exposed to the effects of more than one culture. The findings of the current study do not therefore confirm or deny any of the data reported in the literature reviewed, but simply add another facet to it.

METHOD

The chief tool of the study was the *Q-Tags Test of Personality*: both English and French Forms. The Q-Tags was devised by Storey (1967, 1968) and translated by Masson and Gough (1968). The instrument comprises 54 cards each containing MMPI-type statements distributed equally among six personality factors: affectiveness, assertiveness, effectiveness, hostility, reverie, and sociability. Although the Q-Tags has four forms, only the "i" (I am) and the "w" (I wish I were) forms were used in the present study.

The Q-Tags instrument was considered as appropriate for the purpose of this study since it is available in equivalent French and English versions. Also, this test measures and discriminates between various aspects of personality, as has already been shown by Storey (1967, 1968) and Masson and Gough (1968). With this instrument, the writer was in a position to investigate the extent to which milieu affects self-development.

THE SAMPLE

Four groups of Grade XI boys and girls from two Canadian provinces comprised the independent samples for this study. All students in the samples were attending Composite High Schools at the time of testing. Care was taken to select subjects who met the description of the ethnic groups sought by the study. That is, both minority groups, Alberta French-speaking (AFS) and Quebec English-speaking (QES), groups sought by the study. That is, both minority groups, comprised an ethnic island surrounded by a dominant ethnic group. Care was taken to insure that the majority groups, were minimally exposed to other ethnic groups. All subjects were similar in age, ability (as determined by their program) and academic achievement. The total sample was 230.

The 75 Grade XI Alberta English-speaking (AES) students attending Bishop Grandin High School, Calgary, Alberta, were subjected to the English version ("i" and "w" forms) of the *Q-Tag Test of Personality*. The 59 Grade XI French-speaking (AFS) northeastern Albertans from St. Paul and Notre Dame (Bonnyville) High Schools, were subjected to the French version of the *Q-Tags*.

Similarly, from the province of Quebec, two Grade XI student samples, one from an English-speaking High School (QES), the other from a French-speaking High School (QFS), both in the region of St. Agathe des Monts, were subjected to the English and French Forms respectively of the *Q-Tags Test of Personality*. The size of these two samples was 43 and 53 respectively.

RESULTS

The means and standard deviations of the six factors for the four samples (AES, AFS, QES, and QFS) for forms "i" and "w" of the test were calculated.

TABLE 1
Test of Differences in Personality Factors Among the Four Groups

Groups	Affectiveness	Assertiveness	Effectiveness	Hostility	Reverie	Socialibility
AES	← NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AES/QES →					
AFS		†than QES	†than QES			†than QES
QES	†than AFS				†than AFS	
QFS	†than AFS	†than AES	†than AES		†than AFS	†than AES

† indicates group sees itself as higher in factor indicated by arrow.

↓ indicates group sees itself as lower in factor indicated by arrow.

Note: Abbreviated: AES = Alberta English-speaking; AFS = Alberta French-speaking; QES = Quebec English-speaking; QFS = Quebec French-speaking.

Table 1 shows that the AES subjects described themselves as not being different from their QES counterparts. AFS describe themselves as more assertive, more effective, and more sociable than QES. QES describe themselves as more affective and more prone to reverie than AFS. QFS describe themselves as more affective, more assertive, more effective, more sociable than AES, and more prone to reverie than AFS. Thus, significant differences were found to exist between the two cultural groups under study.

A comparison of the "i" and "w" forms of the *Q-Tags Test* yields data relating to the similarity of the expressed self-concept and ideal self-concept for each of the groups. Table 2 shows a summary of such comparisons.

TABLE 2
Comparison of the "I Am" and "I Wish I Were" Forms
in Each Personality Factor Within Each Group

Group	Affectiveness	Assertiveness	Effectiveness	Hostility	Reverie	Sociability
AES			↑		↓	↓
AFS	↑	↑	↑			↓
QES		↑	↑		↓	↓
QFS			↑		↓	↓

↑ indicates wish for significant increase in factor indicated by arrow.

↓ indicates wish for significant decrease in factor indicated by arrow.

Due to the desire for an increase in effectiveness by all groups, it may be assumed (Storey & Sainty, 1967), that the groups will move in the directions indicated by the arrows in Table 2. That is, besides becoming more effective the:

- (1) AES will become less sociable and less prone to reverie;
- (2) AFS will become more affective and assertive and less socially inclined;
- (3) QES will become more assertive and less prone to reverie and sociability;
- (4) QFS will become less prone to reverie and sociability.

Significant differences were found to exist between the "I am" and "I wish I were" selves.

The mean coefficient of correlation between the "i" and "w" forms of the *Q-Tags* was calculated for each group, and the *t*-values were calculated to test the difference between all groups. Table 3 gives the results.

It is apparent from Table 3 that the coefficient of correlation, or overlap between the "I am" and the "I wish I were" selves for the AFS group was found to be significantly greater than for any other group.

TABLE 3
t-Values for the Significance-tests of the Correlation Coefficients
 Between "I Am" and "I Wish I Were" Selves in Each Group

Group	AES	AFS	QES	QFS
AES	—			
AFS	4.08*	—	4.55*	2.99*
QES	.40		—	1.27
QFS	.87			—

**p* < .01.

DISCUSSION

In general, there do not seem to be many differences in the expressed self-concept between AES and QES groups. However, the AES group wishes to increase in effectiveness and wish to decrease in reverie and sociability.

There are differences in the expressed self-concept between the two minorities AFS and QES. The Alberta French see themselves as more assertive, effective, and more sociable than the Quebec minority. The AFS wish for more affectiveness, assertiveness, and effectiveness, while at the same time wishing to decrease their sociability.

There are differences in the expressed self-concept between the same minorities QES and AFS. The QES see themselves as more prone to reverie and affectiveness; however, they wish for more assertiveness and effectiveness, whereas they wish for less proneness to reverie and sociability.

There are differences in the expressed self-concept between the two majorities QFS and AES. The QFS see themselves as more affective, assertive, effective, sociable and more prone to reverie. The same group wish for more effectiveness and less sociability and reverie.

The AFS minority is the only ethnic group which shows no significant discrepancy between the self and the ideal self-concept. It is safe to assume that the AF have a more self-actualized self-concept; an assumption borne out by the fact that their self-ideal-self correlation is significantly higher than for any other group.

Possible explanations for the differences found in the AFS might include achievement motivation which may be one cause of the AFS being more self-actualized. This achievement motivation could well be a function of:

- (1) Migration—that is, the most highly motivated migrated to Alberta;
- (2) Environment—that is, the AFS found themselves in such educational, economic, and social conditions where they were compelled to cooperate with various ethnic groups in their milieu.

Certain factors provided the AFS with sufficient cultural support to help them maintain their cultural and linguistic identity. Some such factors may include:

- (1) The French Radio (CHFA, Edmonton) and the French Press (*La Survivance*), initiated and supported by the French element of Alberta;
- (2) French culture-oriented organization such as the L'Association des Educateurs Bilingues de l'Alberta (AEBA) and L'Association Canadienne Française de l'Alberta (ACFA), established in Alberta to strengthen the educational rights and responsibilities of the AFS.
- (3) A French junior college (College St. Jean, Edmonton), where Alberta French-speaking can receive secondary and post-secondary education in their French language.

Also, the AFS is exposed to various other cultural groups in Alberta. Some of these groups have formed ethnic islands which have become dysfunctional economically, educationally, and socially. It is perhaps this reality factor that motivated the French-speaking Albertan to adjust to his heterogeneous environment. As shown by the data in the study, the AFS's strong desire to be more assertive and more effective, matched with his high score on the social factor, could have motivated him to cooperate with and borrow from members of other cultural groups while at the same time taking the necessary means to maintain his ethnic identity. This briefly, could be possible explanations for the AFS being more self-actualized. Further research would either confirm or reject the above postulates.

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LA CONCEPTION DU COURS SECONDAIRE
CHEZ LES CANADIENS DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE
ET DE LANGUE ANGLAISE
UNE ÉTUDE COMPARATIVE

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Le but de cette étude était de faire une recherche auprès de quatre groupes culturels. Ces groupes comprenaient des Canadiens-anglais et des Canadiens-français de l'Alberta, des Canadiens-anglais et des Canadiens-français du Québec. L'échantillon de 230 sujets comptait 75 Albertains de langue anglaise et 59 de langue française, 43 québécois de langue anglaise et 53 de langue française. Tous ces sujets venaient de différentes écoles secondaires et se situaient au niveau de 11^e année.

L'étude révéla un degré plus élevé de participation chez les Canadiens-français de l'Alberta que chez les trois autres groupes.

Une constante chez les trois groupes: un souci marqué pour un meilleur rendement.

Tous les groupes, sauf celui des Canadiens-français de l'Alberta, ont affiché des désaccords entre ce qui existe et l'idéal qu'ils se font du cours secondaire.

