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**The Relationship Between Self-Concept and Others-  
Concept in Mental Retardates with I.Q.'s  
Between 50 and 75<sup>1</sup>**

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Fey (1955), Phillips (1951), Sheerer (1949), and Stock (1949) have shown that self-concepts and others-concepts are positively correlated in normals. Ewing (1954) and Rogers and Dymond (1954) have shown that the self-concept becomes more like the ideal self as the subject improves under therapy while Sheerer (1949) showed that therapy affects the self-concept. These studies indicate the usefulness of self-concept and others-concept scales as measures of adjustment and improvement under therapy.

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The study to be reported represents an attempt to do two things: (1) to develop self-concept and others-concept scales suitable for use with mental retardates with I.Q.'s between 50 and 75, with no visible physical anomalies, with chronological ages ranging between 14 and 28, and with at least one year of institutionalization and (2) to find the relation between the self- and others-concept in the same population.

#### Procedure and Results

Fey (1955) and Amatora (1951) had developed and used questionnaires which seemed suitable as starting material. Selected questions from these questionnaires were modified into a form thought to be suitable for mental retardates. Forty-three self-concept questions resulted, of which the following are characteristic: "Do you think you are good-looking?" and "Are you satisfied with the way you are?" The others-concept test was developed by substituting "most other people" for the word "you" in the self-concept questions. Forty-one questions resulted, two self-concept questions not being suitable for such modification.

The two sets of questions were distributed randomly and combined into one questionnaire. The questionnaire was then administered to 27 suitable retardates of the Parsons State Training School. It was administered to each subject separately, the administrator reading the questions, recording the answers, and otherwise noting the reactions to the questions.

The answers were subjected to an item discrimination using the Lawshe and Baker Nomograph (1950). Questions which discriminated between the high and low groups at the .05 level or less were retained. Thirty-two questions met this test. Oddly enough, sixteen of these were self-concept questions and sixteen were others-concept questions. Only seven questions were common to the two sets (matched questions); i.e. while the question "Are you very friendly?" discriminated at the .01 level and was retained, the question "Do you think most people are very friendly?" did not discriminate at the .10 level and was discarded.<sup>2</sup>

At this point the questionnaire was subjected to a validity check. Along with the questionnaire by Fey, it was given to a college class of 36 students. Half the class answered Fey's test first, half answered the newly-developed test first. The two self-concept tests correlated .69. The two others-concept tests correlated .51. Both correlations were significant at the .01 level.

The test was now given to a suitable group of 34 inmates of the Enid State School using the same procedure which was used at the Parsons school. The reliabilities of the self- and others-concept questionnaires were .54 and .57 respectively. The correlation between the two questionnaires was .24, not significant at the .05 level. The correlation between the seven matched questions was .42, significant at the .05 level of confidence.

#### Discussion and Conclusions

The significant correlation between only seven matched questions on the two tests suggests that retardates are like normals in seeing the world in their own image. On the other hand the rather startling drop in correlation when the unmatched questions were added indicates strongly that previous tests are not unidimensional and almost dictates a factor analytic study. The same phenomenon militates against a simple combination of the two questionnaires into a single questionnaire.

It is believed that the questionnaires have shown sufficient promise

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaires appear in Appendix A.

that additional work is justified. At present their reliability is too low to permit their use in making decisions about people but, in the light of the absence of instruments in this area which are suitable for the retarded population, the use of the questionnaires as a screening device may be justified.

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## Appendix A

## Self-Concept Questionnaire

Directions: I would like to ask you some questions and I would like you to answer them yes or no.

- \*1. Are you sure of yourself when you do something.
- \*2. Do you feel at ease with other people.
3. Are you very friendly.
4. Do you think people like you.
5. Do you think you are as smart as most people.
- \*6. Are you well satisfied with yourself.
- \*7. Do you think you have the most fun when you are alone.
8. Do you think you are polite.
- \*9. Do you think you are honest.
- \*10. Do most people pay attention to what you say.
11. Are you satisfied with the way you are.
12. Do you think your body is in good shape.
13. Are you easy to make happy.
14. Do you respect yourself.
15. Do other people think there is something wrong with you.
- \*16. Do you like to laugh.

## Others-Concept Questionnaire

1. Do you think most people try to hurt others.
- \*2. Do you think most people are at ease when they are with others.
3. Do you think most people waste a lot of time.
- \*4. Do you think most people are honest.
5. Do you think most people worry about what others think of them.
6. Do you think most people are afraid to say anything when they are with others.
7. Do you think most people work well together.
8. Do you think most people are teased a lot.
- \*9. Do you think most people like to laugh.
- \*10. Do you think most people are satisfied with the way they are.
- \*11. Do you think most people are sure of themselves.
- \*12. Do you think most people pay attention to what others say.
13. Do you think most people are neat and clean.
- \*14. Do you think most people have the most fun when they are alone.
15. Do you think most people are good natured.
16. Do you think most people share things with others.

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•Matched questions

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