INTRODUCTION

Self-concept, or the total private collection attitudes which an individual has with respect to his worth as a person, is of vital importance in one's success and happiness in life. Some psychologists believe that the self has two aspects: concepts and feelings of worth, and therefore distinguish between 'self-concept' and 'self-esteem'. Self-esteem or the value a person places on himself and his behaviour (Coopersmith, 1967), is considered an important aspect of self-description. Whatever the distinction, a person's view of himself has an important influence on his behaviour (McCandless, 1967), and subsequently on his success and failures.

It is quite reasonable to suppose that a person who is short of a positive view of himself, lacks confidence in himself and is unlikely to achieve much success in whatever he may attempt to accomplish. Indeed, it is revealing that positive perceptions of one's self, and one's capabilities, are highly related to success both in school (Purkey, 1970) and in interpersonal affairs (Coopersmith, 1967), and is one of the most important factors of affective behaviour (Hamachek, 1971).

In Fiji, there appear to be clear differences between the major ethnic groups, Fijians and Fiji-Indians, in their achievement behaviours, particularly in education and business. Previous psychological research reports ethnic group differences in personally variables such as locus of control (Kishor, 1983), belief in trustworthiness of other people (Stewart, Mulipola-Lui & Laidlaw, 1980), and occupational values (Bennet and Tiy, 1976). Therefore, data on how the individuals in each ethnic group view themselves, would be of interest with respect to the achievement discrepancies between the two groups.

The two investigations reported here were designed to describe and compare how adolescents in the two ethnic groups viewed themselves. Self-concept was investigated in one study and self-esteem in the other. No significant difference between the ethnic groups, Fijians and Fiji-Indians, was expected, in their self-concepts and self-esteem.
METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS OF STUDY 1: SELF-ESTEEM

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 114 Fiji-Indians (62 males and 52 females) and 110 Fijians (49 males and 61 females) from two uni-ethnic high schools in Suva. As the subjects came from the fifth forms of two private secondary schools, it is highly likely that they were from middle or upper socio-economic backgrounds. The mean age of the subjects was 17.8 years and 17.6 years for Fijians and Fiji-Indians, respectively.

Data Collection

Self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith’s (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI). The CSEI was judged a suitable scale for use in the study in terms of communication and the nature of items. Corrected split-half reliability of the CSEI computed from the data in this study was 0.83.

The instrument was administered to the students in their regular classrooms by the investigator. They were asked to remain anonymous and so encouraged to respond honestly.

Results

The Fiji-Indians reported more positive self-esteem than the Fijians. The difference between the ethnic groups was highly significant ($t = 5.48$, $p < .001$). The difference between male and female self-esteem scores in both ethnic groups was not statistically significant. From the statistics in Table 1 it can be seen that the highest self-esteem was expressed by the Indians male group followed by Indian female, Fijian female and Fijian male.

Table 1: Ethnic and Sex Comparisons on Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Fijians</th>
<th></th>
<th>Fiji-Indians</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30.28</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>37.08</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32.52</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>35.83</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>31.53</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>36.51</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS OF STUDY 2: SELF-CONCEPT

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 272 Fijians (137 males and 135 females) and 273 Fiji-Indians (141 males and 132 females) students from third forms of six secondary schools in Suva and Nausori. All third form students from two predominantly Fijian, two pre-dominantly Indian and two racially integrated schools made up the sample. The schools were typical of their kind in the country.

The ethnic sub-samples were comparable in mean age (Fijians 14.5 years; Fiji-Indians 14.6 years) but the Fijians showed a higher socio-economic background (p<.01) as indexed by the occupational and educational level of parents.

Data Collection

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-concept Scale (Piers, 1969) was used to measure the self-concept of the subjects. The inventory measures "the way children feel about themselves."

As self-concept inventories are developed for use with different age groups, the PHSCS suited the subjects in this study. Additionally, it was a suitable measure in terms of language difficulty and sound psychometric qualities. In this study the inventory had a split-half reliability of 0.82 and 0.84 for Fijians and Fiji-Indians, respectively.

The PHSCS was administered to individual classes by the investigator. In order to encourage subjects to respond to the items honestly, the inventories were pre-coded and students' names with socio-economic status of parents was attached to the PHSCS.

Results

Analyses of variance procedures were used to analyse the self-concept data and a significant difference was found between the ethnic groups. The Fiji-Indians expressed higher self-concepts than the Fijians \[F(1,545) = 55.71, p < 0.001\]. The difference between male and female self-concept scores in both ethnic groups was not statistically significant. The statistics in Table 2 shows that the highest self-concept was expressed by the Indian male group, followed by Indian female, Fijian female and Fijian male.
Table 2: Ethnic and Sex Comparisons and Self-Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fijians</th>
<th></th>
<th>Fiji-Indians</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.34</td>
<td>11.68</td>
<td>62.06</td>
<td>11.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.82</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>59.94</td>
<td>11.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>53.07</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>61.03</td>
<td>11.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It was found that Fijians and Fiji-Indians differed significantly in their self-concept and self-esteem. The Fiji-Indians viewed and evaluated themselves more positively than the Fijians. The two studies reported here were conducted using different instruments with different age groups and the findings are in the same directions. Even the better socio-economic background of the Fijians reported in the second study was not of any advantage to them. The results here are also consistent with those of other empirical studies (Basow, 1980) and observational accounts (Davis, 1980).

The interactionist theories of self, view the formation of self-concept as a result of social interaction. The evaluation of a person's behaviour by "significant others" plays an important role in the formation of one's self view. Therefore, the discrepancy in the self views of the Fiji-Indians and Fijians may be partly explained in terms of their respective socio-cultural interactions and can only be demonstrated through further research.

It has long been emphasized in psychological, sociological and educational theory that a person's beliefs about himself strongly influence behaviour. This means that the findings here are instructive, in that they suggest some reasons for the discrepancy between the ethnic groups in their behaviour patterns, particularly in achievement behaviours.

REFERENCES

Basow, S.A. (1980) *Achievement Motivation in Fiji Students*. Unpublished manuscript, the University of the South Pacific, School of Education.


