# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

The aims of Catholic schools have always been related to their influence in the development of the whole person: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, vocational, moral and religious. Catholic schools claim commitment in an **unique** way to the full human and personal development of their pupils:

> **The Catholic School is committed to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specific character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right..... has its origin in the person of Christ. (The Catholic School..Art.35.1977)**

The effectiveness of Catholic Schools in the development of the whole person is related to the more elusive term 'quality of education'. In general an 'effective' Catholic school will provide a 'quality' education for its pupils.

The purpose of this study is not to analyse the effectiveness of the Catholic school as an educational system but rather to assess the leader influence on the pupils in three schools within that system. The research is specifically concerned with:-

1 identifying teachers' influence on the level of pupil self-concept

2 identifying principals' influence on staff self-esteem

3 identifying how and to what extent children perceive the influence of principals and teachers on their own attitudes and behaviour.

4 establishing what kind of correlation exists between leaders' attitudes and behaviour and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils.

These aims provided the basis for investigation and comparison of the levels of self-esteem, in both pupils and staff, across three similar parish schools. From the findings guidelines for school leaders and principals in the development of self-esteem in parish schools were developed.

## 1.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

To address these matters it was necessary to collect and collate responses from surveys distributed to selected groups of pupils, teachers and principals of St Mary's Scone, St Joseph's Merriwa and St Joseph's Denman. These three primary schools were chosen because of similar economic and geographical conditions. How these schools were selected will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Surveys were directed to establishing:

i) teachers' perceptions of the way in which principals' attitudes and behaviour affect;
   * pupil attitude/behaviour
   * their own attitude/behaviour

ii) teachers' perceptions of the way in which teachers' attitudes and behaviour affect;
   * their pupils' attitudes/behaviour

iii) children's perceptions of;
    * how principals' attitudes and behaviour affects their own and
    * how teachers' attitude and behaviour affect their own

iv) principals' perceptions on how leaders' attitudes and behaviour should affect;
    * teachers' attitudes/behaviour
    * pupils' attitudes/behaviour.....

It was in this context that the research is conducted. Influences of the home on the self-concept of the pupils are considered only in so far as it is relevant-and only passing reference is made to the peer group.

Methodological consideration will be elaborated further in chapter 3.

## 1.3 THE NATURE OF THE PARISH SCHOOL AND ITS ROLE IN SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the Australian Catholic community has been the development of a system of schools based upon parishes, whereby the church claimed the responsibility for the complete education of the child, admitting to no separation of the spiritual and the temporal. The provision of Catholic schooling was seen as one of the greatest priorities of the Church and this decision has had a profound effect on Catholic life throughout the nation.

From early last century until the present day, demand for Catholic education has grown steadily,(from non-Catholic as well as Catholic families) and even though, especially in the past two decades, there has been a significant reduction in the number of parish schools,

something in the Catholic Education ethos has encouraged an increasing number of parents to choose it for their children. That "something" is, it can be argued, that which is seen to negate the disenchantment with the State system which apparently fails to develop the *self* in the *context of individual faith.*

Traditionally Catholic primary schools have been embedded in parishes. The concept of the parish is extremely important in Catholic life. Here children are introduced to a Christian community that extends beyond their own family home.

Until the 1960's, there was a fairly homogeneous Catholic subculture. Many parents who sent their children to Catholic schools were themselves affiliated with their local parish. The parish comprised Church, priest and regular worship for a group of Catholics within a flexibly defined geographical area. The Parish school, established by the Parents, expected the school to support and affirm the values which had been nurtured in the home. Parents saw the school as an extension of the home. Church community provided a sense of cohesion and identity. Church, family and school were inextricably linked in the one life-developing experience.

It was the task of the parish priest even until the late 1950's to build the Catholic school, raise the finance to pay for it, arrange for the religious to staff it and, finally, encourage his people to use it. Difficult as this task was, it was, as Selleck (1971) pointed out, one for which the parish priest was well equipped.

In the 1990's Catholic Primary schools remain parish schools. Although today, the staff of Catholic schools is very different to that of more than a decade ago (there are very few religious orders left in the schools, most teachers being lay teachers) and staffing arrangements are now the responsibility of The Catholic Education Office, the buildings, maintenance and expansion of these schools remain the responsibility of the parish community.

Each school has its own particular culture which expresses what is believed and valued- and as a Catholic community it has a strong religious belief which is evidenced, both in the caring atmosphere and in the value placed upon the child as an individual.

It is worth emphasising that schools were and are established for children. They remain the *raison d'etre* for the whole education structure-just as the sick are the *raison d'etre* for hospitals. Unlike the factory which emphasises production, or the hospital which exists for the care of the sick, the school has wider goals associated with the maintenance of society itself. Children, then, should remain the major focus of all the activity concerning the school - but this is not to say that children should be allowed to run the school.

> **God did not create man for life in isolation but for the formation of social unity ..... So from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as individuals but as members of a certain community....**
> Vatican II : The Church in the Modern World. Art. 32 1966.

As education, in the fullest sense, involves not merely the acquiring of certain knowledge and skills, but also initiation into activities which enable one to live, as well as to develop with confidence and optimism, its cultivation would seem to require a favourable environment or climate. Catholic education in the school setting involves both preparation for life in society as a whole and growth in faith in God. It gives an added dimension to Peter's (1965) "different view" of life and, to be successful, it seems to likewise require an environment of Christian community. Only in such a climate of supportive personal relationships, in the context of a living experience, is the growth of Christian persons possible, for growth in faith, as well as in knowledge and learning, rarely occurs in individualistic isolation.

Within the past twenty years, with education and psychology theory emphasising the development of the whole child, the N.S.W. Department of Education adopted the term "Pastoral Care", initially in the Wyndham Report, and again in the Thomas Report, (*Self-Discipline & Pastoral Care.* 1980) to describe a unifying principle for the personal, academic and social aspects of education. The need for such care is highlighted by the dramatic, social, economic and technological changes that have occurred in Australian society such as....high unemployment, introduction of computers, obsession with personal freedom and individualism, as well as the influences of consumerism and television. The lack of the presence of a strong and caring father in many homes has serious effects on family life.

Society in general has for some years increasingly asked the schools - *Catholic included* - to carry the burden of the cultural upheaval. Schools have increasingly picked up programs for drugs, alchohol, sex education, communication, relationships, self esteem, moral education and health.

It is being increasingly acknowledged that families and social institutions are part of the "ecology" which influences the development of children over time (Grothberg 1979). School based pastoral care refers to the total care of the child. According to the Thomas Report (1980) pastoral care places an emphasis on the development of the individual- of the **"whole child"**: personal, social and academic development are seen as one.

**Pastoral care** is an essential component of the climate and ethos of Catholic schools and finds its inspiration in the loving concern which God has shown to us through Jesus. In the words of St. John:

> **God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us..... since God has loved us so much, we too should love one another. (1 John 4: 9-11)**

Following Jesus' example, great attention has been given to the development and importance of pastoral care in Catholic schools for over 10 years.

If Catholic schools are actively concerned with **the development of the whole person**, then pastoral care is not an

'optional extra' added on to the education which these schools provide. Pastoral care is one of the processes through which this all-round development of persons takes place. In this, Catholic schools share the understanding of the N.S.W. Committee of Inquiry report, *Self-Discipline and Pastoral Care* (1981).

> **Pastoral care.....(assists) the child to develop a capacity for independence, initiative and mature judgement. Pastoral care places an emphasis on the development of the individual-of the 'whole child': personal, social and academic development are seen as one.**

Pastoral care is about **relationships in the school situation** and takes place when the interest and care shown to each pupil promotes his/her personal growth and development. A strong pastoral care program enhances opportunites for the development of high self-concept among pupils and staff.

**Pastoral Care** is a term used to describe both an attitude and a process. Self-esteem building is a major part of a pastoral care programme. Unless children feel good about themselves, unless they feel they can achieve and contribute to the class they will not reach their full potential academically and/or socially. Positive affirmation should be stressed daily as a means of building up self-esteem. Children's self-esteem is raised when they are recognised as being capable of being involved in worthy ventures.

> **Human beings and relationships - after all isn't that what school is all about anyway ?**
> **(McCurdy B. 1977)**

In the Thomas Report (1980) there are several references to the importance of relationships in schools, for example :

> **Pastoral care is about relationships in schools..... pastoral care system should facilitate the development of good relationships between pupils and teachers (Section 5 p.46)**

Twenty years ago there was little knowledge about the determinants of school effectiveness. Decades of classroom research and lessons analysis had failed to isolate the factors that consistently relate to achievement. The Coleman Report (1966) was widely interpreted to mean that "schools made no difference", and as late as 1972 "research found nothing that consistently and unambiguously makes a difference to student outcomes", (Averch, Carroll, Donaldson, Kiesling and Pincus, 1972 : 154). While home factors are undoubtedly related to school achievement, Coleman, in his study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, greatly overestimated the unique influence of the home when he wrote:

> **Schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context.....(1966)**

Later research disputed the claim that schools have little influence upon pupil achievement. Mortimore and Sammons (1987) found that much of the variation between schools can be accounted for by differences in school policies and practices within the control of the principal and teachers.

It is important to acknowledge that the climate created by the teachers for pupils and by the principal for teachers is an important aspect of the school's effectiveness. The key factors identified by Mortimore and Sammons (1987) depend upon specific behaviours and strategies employed by the principal and the teachers.

School based pastoral Care, as defined in the Thomas Report (1980) is the total climate of care which exists in the school. Pastoral care is the face of ethos and translates the words of the school's Mission statement into daily living. Pastoral care is the caring response of the members of the school community towards each other. Pastoral care integrates the academic, social, personal and religious dimensions of the school's educational endeavours and takes its name and inspiration from the model of Jesus as shepherd (John 10). Schools, especially Catholic schools, have been quietly modifying their discipline policies and developing pastoral care strategies for some time. Because of each school's uniqueness and individuality they should devise their own policies which should be subject to constant review and, when necessary, varied to meet the changing needs of the school. The policy should reflect the broad Christian ethos, with individuals caring for each other and respecting each other. It should include an expectation that teachers and other professionals are responsible for the emotional and spiritual well being of children and one another - and where strong relationships are established between teachers, pupils and their families.

The Catholic School is a place which seeks to develop the whole child - spiritual, moral, social, intellectual and phsychomotor. Pastoral care is the school's expression of concern for the total development of the child, the school's response to the various needs of the child. It implies an education which is holistic and centered on the humanity and personality of the child.

Most families need support to deal with issues of sexuality, authority, discipline, communication, self esteem, parenting style and roles as well as faith sharing. Family life is under enormous stress as the statistics on alchohol, drug abuse, child abuse and violence attest. The pressure from the economy, political decisions, peer groups and unemployment are putting severe pressures on marriage and families.

With this increasing stress on family life as explained by Paterson J.L. & Zill N. (1986) the school's social and integrating religious role assumes an even greater importance in the lives of many children.

The Church has always recognised the home as the prime educator and that the school should accept responsibility for the significant role it can play in the child's development. The school has the potential to be a positive force in imparting a sense of self worth to the child, of formation in living skills and values and of a sense of the Christian Spirit as an integrating life principle.

Jesus said : **I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full John 10:10**

The school community has many people, including staff and children, who are lost in some ways. For example lost through lack of self esteem, economic deprivation, family alienation, sense of failure, or a paucity of home environment. A school which exhibits a strong sense of belonging, helps the children who find dislocation in their lives and/or loss of a home. A school with such an identity offers its children a community which is welcoming and stable in a world of rapid and illogical change.

Bonding occurs when children experience an affinity for the school as a place where they are recognised as people of worth and feel linked with others. Bonding offers support and affirmation for each person in the school community. They come to know that their presence in the school community is significant to the group and that they have some real contribution to make to its growth.

Schools are directly concerned with the childrens' need to feel worthwhile. Knowledge and the ability to think are required to achieve a sense of worth. If a child goes to school and fails to gain knowledge, to learn to think and to solve problems, it is unlikely that his family or his environment will correct this failure. In addition,in learning to think and to solve problems (essential to attaining a feeling of self-worth), a child may gain enough self-confidence to learn to give and receive love.

Jesus saw the search for the lost ones as the criterion of the authenticity of Christian presence. Jesus

sought out the lost ones with love and understanding - love then is intended as the prevailing ethos of the Catholic School. A Catholic School without love is a shell of Christianity. St Paul spoke of love as the foundation of the Christian way

> **If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but I am without love, it will do me no good whatever (1 Corinthians 13:3)**

## 1.4 DEFINING SELF-CONCEPT.

Humankind has probably always sought to understand such questions as "Who am I? What am I? Why am I here? How have I become as I am?" The term ***self-concept*** encompasses possible answers to some of these questions.

The self-concept, or, perhaps **self-image** is what and how persons perceive themselves to be. It includes feelings of **self-confidence, self-worth, self-acceptance,** and **ability.** It is far more than a reflection one sees when looking in a mirror. It is a multifaceted entity which consciously and unconsciously guides behaviour and influences attitudes and relationships. We behave in ways congruent with our concept of self.

The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which school leadership influenced the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils within a school community and whether or not there was any direct bearing on the self-concept of those concerned.

For the purpose of this work, **behaviour** is defined as the way a pupil relates and responds to fellow pupils, teachers, parents and the physical environment. If we perceive people as liking us, we act differently than on those occasions when we are with people who we feel do not like us. If we believe that we are honest and kind, we are likely to behave in ways that will enhance that view such as trying to live up to our own image of ourselves. The child with a good self-concept, in the experience of parents and teachers, is more likely to develop and demonstrate self confidence, an ability to see him/herself realistically and demonstrate little defensive behaviour such as shyness.

The term "self-concept" is so widely used in education to-day that one assumes it is universily understood. Self-concept, as it is generally used in the literature, is a group of feelings and cognitive processes which are inferred from observed or manifest behaviour. As a formal definition self-concept is the person's total appraisal of his/her own appearance, background, origins, abilities resources, attitudes and feelings which culminate as a directing force of his/her behaviour.

> **Self-concept, one's ideas or perceptions about one self is one of the most important single factors affecting behaviour.**
> **(Combs & Avila 1985)**

It is commonly felt that a person's conscious awareness, what he thinks and feels, is that which primarily guides, controls and regulates his/her performance and action.

Jourard (1968 ) sums up the process:

> **I have a certain concept of my being of myself. This is my self concept. It is my belief about my own being. My being discloses itself to me in the form of my intentional experience of myself. I experience the feel of my body's existence. I experience my own action from the inside. I form a concept of myself ... what I am like ,how I react, what am I capable of and what I cannot do on the basis of this self experience.**

Combs and Snygg (1959) believed that conscious feelings, cognitions and perceptions were the predominant aspect of self-concept. As phenomenologists they believed that awareness is a cause of behaviour and that the way individuals think and feel determines what they will do. Those perceptions about self that seem most vital to the individual and are at the very core of personality, are organised into the self-concept. The self-concept is that part of the phenomenal or observable field that has been differentiated as being the definite and fairly stable characteristics of the self.

Self-concept, as defined in this research, includes conscious and unconscious feelings about self. The conscious reservations one makes about oneself provide only partial information of one's total true feelings. Consequently we must infer the unconscious feelings from the person's behaviour. The important dimensions of self-concept are body self, social self, cognitive self and self-esteem. In other words we put a value on our bodies, our intellectual ability and ourselves in the roles of pupil, friend, son and/or daughter and we use adjectives such as *good* and *bad* to describe ourselves in each of these dimensions.

## 1.5 INITIATION OF THE RESEARCH AND ITS OBJECTIVES.

In 1985 the writer accepted appointment as Senior Primary Teacher (essentially assistant principal) Holy Cross Primary School, Glendale - a western surburb of Newcastle near the north-west shore of Lake Macquarie and twenty-five kilometres from the city.

Glendale is in the local government area of Lake Macquarie City Council, located where two main roads intersect forming what is known as The Crossroads, a thoroughfare for Sydney bound traffic as well as for traffic to the areas of Maitland and Cessnock. These roads effectively divide the suburb into quadrants removing its identity as a suburb. The residents readily identify with the neighbouring suburbs of their quadrant ie Cardiff, Argenton, Edgeworth and Glendale East. At this stage there is no major shopping centre, but the suburb has one Catholic and two State Primary Schools, a State High School, a TAFE College and a Rudolf Steiner School.

The Catholic School, Holy Cross, is situated close to the crossroads, and was opened in 1957. An open plan building was opened in 1975 and in 1982 a disused building was converted to provide the school a library. In 1975 the school was classified by the Schools Commission on socio-economic grounds as Disadvantaged and annually received grants under this programme until 1985. The school is located on Parish grounds, along with the Church, Presbytery and Convent.

Holy Cross was built in an area where a large

percentage of homes were built by the Housing Commission. Homes in the newer estates of nearby suburbs such as Edgeworth are mainly middle class homes clad with hardiplank. The school had a pupil enrolment of approximately 150 and employed 5 teachers including the principal. The class to which the writer was appointed was Year 3 Primary. During the year many forms of pupil behaviour were encountered which evidenced attention-seeking, aggressive personalities, as well as a number of personality-centered groups which were constantly in conflict with one another.

Many of the children could not accept any responsibility for their own behaviour and when disciplined, or called to account, always blamed someone else for getting them into trouble. Sometimes they took great pains to "take it out" on the one they felt was responsible for getting them into trouble with the school executive.

All in all it was a difficult year. The discipline, or lack of it, was an insistent problem. It was a constant mental, emotional and physical strain to keep pupil behaviour under control. The children did not feel a part of the school community, have any feeling of school spirit, or have a sense of loyalty. A number of children lacked self-esteem, had very little respect for (and resented any symbol of) authority. There was no evidence of impact of any Spiritual influence in the overall pupil behaviour. Some children isolated themselves and appeared lonely, displaying attention seeking behaviour and signs of aggression. It was clearly evident that

many of the children had a poor self-image.

As suggested by Sammuels:

> **There is no question that the self-concept and self-esteem affects the emotional, physical,social and cognitive life of an individual.**
> **(Sammuels, S.C. 1977)**

It should be noted that Sammuels gives no apparent credit to and makes no suggestion that there is a spiritual dimension to the development of self-concept.

Over the next two years these attitudes deteriorated to the point where children in years 5/6 (the senior pupils) demonstrated, "little to no" school, class or learning commitment. More important the individual pupils displayed attitudes of aggression, dominated by lack of confidence and a poor self-image.

Most of these senior children had been pupils in the school since kindergarten and yet had developed no sense of belonging. On many occasions when there were assemblies in which they were expected to perform, e.g. Education Week, some of them preferred to stay at home rather than appear before an audience. They chose to let others down rather than be involved. It would seem that the poor self-image was cumulative had gone unchecked or perhaps even encouraged by the overall climate of the school - the responsibility and prerogative of the principal and staff. Staff confirmed the situation and expressed considerable concern that self-concept was the most significant deficiency in the vast majority of

their pupils:

> **Self-concept refers to the description we hold of ourselves based on the roles we play and on the personal attitudes we believe we possess.**
> **(Beane, J.A.1980)**

In 1988 there was a change of leadership. The new principal revealed a commitment to fostering interaction of all persons within the three major school groups, teachers, pupils and parents. The principal's perception of his own role (and hence one must presume his own self-concept) demanded that he be the leader of the total school operation, which was consistent with Beane's definition above. Leadership quickly became a force in each of the three main groups.

In no one feature of the school was this more evident than in discipline. Not only did the principal support the authority of the teachers, but he also involved them, as individuals and as a group, in the co-operative development of school policy relative to pupil behaviour and discipline. At last there was whole staff involvement! The principal himself became an instrument of implementing disciplinary measures-apparently unknown in this school, even in the memories of the longest serving staff member.

The scene had changed. The staff began to behave towards the whole school community as a totally committed group, all supporting one another and being consistent in their attitudes and their efforts. The pupils began to demonstrate respect for teachers, for casual employees, for

visitors and one for another. At first this was because it was demanded of them, but subsequently because they realised that respect was being given to them in return.

The whole school climate changed tangibly within a period of twelve months. Evidently there appeared to be a close relationship between attitudes, behaviour and self-concept of the leader, the teachers and the pupils. This school initiated the subsequent research undertaken by the writer but was not a subject of the research.

Subsequently the writer spent two years at St Patrick's Cessnock ( assistant principal) and was later appointed principal of a small country school in the township of Denman. She was soon to realise that the school climate, pupil self-concept and staff relations of the new school had already reached the level which was being achieved at Glendale at the time of her departure. It was also noticed that there was a marked difference in the behaviour and attitudes of the Denman children from those of her two former schools.

How had this small school already arrived at the level other schools were striving to achieve? What was so different? The writer was challenged to investigate the influence of *school leadership* upon pupil self-concept, the influence of *teachers* on pupil self-concept and the influence of *pupils* on the total school climate.

A number of questions were raised by this experience, among them being:

1) Was the change in pupil behaviour at Glendale merely a positive response to a new authority structure or did it represent a genuine change in the self-esteem of individual pupils?

2) Was the change in teacher attitude at Glendale positive response to the expectation of the new leadership or did it also represent a genuine change in teacher self-esteem.?

3) What was the relationship at Glendale between the change in teacher behaviour and the change in pupil behaviour. Did one preceed the other.?

Hence there was a perceived need to research the question,

**To what extent does school leadership influence the self-concept of pupils?**

If there was a link, as the writer's experience in Glendale and Denman had suggested, then it was natural to follow with a second question:

**How might that influence be maximised towards developing high self-esteem in pupils and teachers?**

Conclusive answers to these questions might never be obtained. However it appeared that change of attitudes and new expectations which were introduced by the school leadership and directed in the first instance at the pupils and in the second at the teachers, provided a pattern for consistency and support over the whole school community.

## 1.6 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The following chapter, Chapter 2 concentrates on examining the literature. It is appropriate at this stage to

review systematically other research of relevance to these questions. The researcher attempts to use the literature to examine the development of self-concept including a brief outline of the historical developments of previous research. The literature also examines leadership and its role in the development of self-concept.

The methodology used is contained within chaper 3. It explains how and why a phenomenological research method was used, the instrument chosen, and a step-by-step implementation of the research program. It also examines the schools which were used as samples in the research.

The results of the research are presented, analysed and discussed in chapter 4. Graphs and tables are used to illustrate the analysis of individual school responses, teacher responses and pupils' perceptions. Analysis of data of all schools surveyed is also presented. The final chapter (chapter 5) presents the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

# CHAPTER 2

# SELF-CONCEPT IN THE LITERATURE

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# SELF CONCEPT IN THE LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION

For many, leadership in the school will be conceptualised in terms of how the principal of the school treats the other members of the organisation in the process of being responsible for its day to day operations. Leadership is one of the most studied organisational behaviours and a concept that has produced literally hundreds of definitions in the literature. Among these definitions two things stand out. Leadership occurs only in the processes of two or more people interacting and that any concept of leadership deals with exercising influence on others through social interaction.

In the interaction process, one person might well be able to induce others to think and behave in certain ways. In this chapter the writer examines the relevant literature studies on leadership and how the pupil self-concept is formed or influenced by the attitudes and behaviour of the leaders particularly within the catholic school.

The writer also looks at the development of the self-concept along with some of the historical developments in self-concept research and ways of measuring the self-concept.

## 2.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-CONCEPT

Combs and Snygg (1959) noted that children develop perceptions about themselves in terms of their experience and the treatment they have received from those

responsible for their development. As a proponent of the phenomenological viewpoint, Rogers (1951) stressed that most of our unconscious experiences are capable of becoming conscious when the need arises. He accepted individuals as the best source of information about themselves.

While self-concept is one's picture of self and ideal self is the possible goal for which one is striving, self-esteem is a measure of personal worth or value. It reflects how important one feels him/herself to be in the world.

Self-esteem, like self-concept, is a reflection of others' opinions about and treatment of the child. Feelings of personal usefulness and/or unworthiness can be learned through continual criticism, failure and punishment. Wherever success is possible so is failure. Feelings of high esteem come from success, encouragement and praise.

In the literature it is common practice for *self-concept, self-esteem and self-image* to be used interchangeably in discussing one's feelings about oneself. In this thesis they are also used interchangeably.

Self-concept perceptions are formed through experience with and interpretations of one's environment. Self-concept is also influenced by:

* the evaluations of significant others (e.g. teachers, parents, friends).
* experiences of positive and negative reinforcement, and
* taking responsibility for one's own successes.

Positive self-concept is a necessary prerequisite for human happiness in any situation. There is no disagreement that the parent child relationship is a very important determinant of self-concept, but school and peer influences also affect the development of the self-concept.

The importance of the school is second only to the home in determining an individual's views on self acceptance and self rejection. Once a child becomes convinced that school is not the place for him/her, that it is a place of anxiety and threat to his/her identity - even if not accepted or understood consciously - it becomes extremely difficult to rescue both teachers and pupil from an almost alien and complex situation.

Teachers at all levels can have an enormous influence on a pupil's attitude to self particularly as these attitudes are almost always related to his/her feelings about being able to think, answer questions and to solve problems. Teachers are quickly established as significant persons in the lives of most pupils. Sometimes a teacher becomes significant to a pupil because he/she may be the only person who makes the pupil feel like an individual of worth and value. Other teachers are significant because they are perceived as having the ultimate responsibility of evaluating a pupil's ability to do schoolwork and to compete with other children. Even more important to the pupil is that a teacher has the ultimate responsibility for recording these evaluations for both parents and posterity. Teachers can

either help children recognise their strengths and possibilities, or they can keep reminding them of their shortcomings and weaknesses. No matter what, the teacher is an important factor in the interpersonal field of forces which influence a child's developing self. Even if a pupil's self has been nurtured in a supportive home atmosphere, a teacher who is cold, rejecting and emotionally distant, may interfere with the process of otherwise healthy development. With a distant teacher pupils can no longer be their natural selves, free to enquire and develop. Indeed they become defensive and reactive, concerned more with survival than with learning.

It may well be, as Morse (1964) indicated, that for some children the image of school grows more negative with time and communicates to them a learned and constantly reinforced sense of inadequacy (in Thomas, J.B. 1980).

Peer groups and interpersonal relationships do play their part in determining self-concept. Carlson (1958) found a positive correlation between self-concept and peer status. Silver (1958) concluded that the level of self-concept ratings of children was a measure of interpersonal attraction. Griffitt (1969) showed that attraction of undergraduates to each other was significantly affected by the similarity of their self-concepts, while a paper by Kipnis (1961) also proposed positive evaluation of friends as a major factor in self evaluation. Children's early experiences, including the feedback provided by teachers, appear to be significantly

related to the development of their self-concepts (Halpin, Halpin and Torrance 1974; Dudak 1973; Olson 1970; Brookover, Ericson, and Jainer 1967; Torrance 1965). Self-concept, in turn, has been reported to be related to children's academic achievement as well as to their non academic behaviour (Purkey and Smith 1982; Bloom 1977; Dean 1977; Purkey 1970; Parloff and Datta 1965; Hatcher, Felker and Treffinger 1974; Wattenberg and Clifford 1977).

Except for a study by Trickett (1969), (in Thomas, J.B.) little attention has been given in the literature to the relationship between the children's self-concept and their teachers' assessments of various aspects of their behaviour in school. Yet teachers' ratings of children's behaviour are probably the most important source of information about our children in school. Important, life influencing decisions are most often based on the evaluations and recommendations of teachers.

Conners (1969) noted that teachers are in a unique position not only to influence children, but to observe and assess them in a variety of situations. Teachers are uniquely placed to make observations about children's ability to cope with the social and academic demands of the school.

It is possible that when teachers assess children's behaviour and attitudes they may, to a very large extent, be assessing children's internalisations of their teachers' assessment of them. These internalisations become part of children's overall self-concept.

It is therefore important for schools, (ie the administrator/s) to promote realistic attitudes, self awareness, and high self-esteem in both staff and pupils. Self esteem is associated with behaviour designed to demonstrate capabilities and competencies which will maintain and enhance positive self-image together with behaviour which seeks to avoid failure and loss of face. Within school settings, pupils may meet this need through the school community's recognition of academic, service or sporting achievements; through their teachers, by the fulfilment of group tasks and acknowledgment of their contributions; and through other staff, by their approval for leadership, administrative skills, and achievements/successes. Self-esteem can be enhanced when teachers and executive staff, as well as pupils, are asked to demonstrate their special capabilties, creating conditions which enable their interests and talents to be used. (Conners 1983).

Teachers, like parents, need to be sensitive to the emotional, spiritual and intellectual components of the climate in which young people are learning and developing.

> **A realistic and extensive self-concept leads us to make appropriate choices in our lives - choices leading to using and extending our competencies and acting congruently with our feelings, needs, values and goals. (Germain R.B. 1978 )**

It would appear evident that self-concept is learned not inherited. From our earliest moments of life we begin to accumulate data about ourselves and our world. New impressions

continually flood in upon us. By the time a child reaches school age, self-concept is quite well formed and subsequent reactions to learning, to school failure or success, as well as to the physical, social and emotional climate of the school, will be influenced by their earlier formed beliefs and attitudes. Evidence to support this view is that of Wattenberg and Clifford (1967), who studied kindergarten youngsters in an attempt to see if self-concept was predictive of reading success two and a half years later. They concluded that it was. In fact it was a better predicter than IQ! Children with low (poor) self-concepts did not learn to read, or did not read as well as children with high (good) self-concepts.

If self-concept is learned, rather than acquired or inherited, the teacher must be aware of the significance of his/her impact on the learning process. In short, the teacher can and should directly encourage children in development of individual self-concept.

Jersild (1951) complained that the teaching of self understanding was evaded in schools and proposed that education should be

* to help the growing person while he/she is in the process of adjusting to conditions within him/herself
* to help him/her realise his/her capacities, abilities and to control his/her emotions
* to appreciate his/her strengths, weaknesses and to set him/herself realistic goals.

Probably the most important facts in a child's life

are his/her relationships with others and his/her relationship with him/herself. Jersild pleaded that learning which pertains to anything so crucial should properly be part of the child's education and indeed should be regarded as the most important of the educational programs.

Helen Nowlis (1980) when discussing drug education programmes accepted as her basic premise the fact that young people's daily experience in the social environment of the school and the community, is itself a learning experience of great significance.

## 2.2 LEADERSHIP

Before discussing who is leader in education, or what their function as leader should be, it needs to be asked what the purpose of an education institution should be, and what sort of culture it is trying to create. Indeed, the concepts of leadership and culture are closely bound together because the notion of culture helps to conjure with ultimate visions of education, and of the roles which people must play within them in order for such a culture to be created.

The culture of the school shapes and moulds how people think, feel, and behave (Owens 1991). It is communicated through its customs, traditions, expectations, common meanings, norms and habits. It is visible in words and behaviour of all kinds as people go about their daily activities for it is ordinary daily behaviour that reveals values beliefs and commitment.

Leadership through the development of an organisation's culture means building behavioural norms that exemplify the best that a school stands for. It means building an institution in which people believe strongly, with which they identify personally, and to which they gladly render their loyalty. All of this gives meaning to the work that they do, gives it significance, and is highly motivating.

Leadership may be viewed as a process through which others are influenced to achieve goals in a specific situation . Thus, the important elements of leadership are

**(1) the behaviour of the leader,**
**(2) the behaviour of the followers, and**
**(3) the environment of the situation (1991).**

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus reported in 1985 that they had located over 350 definitions of leadership. There is, however, considerable agreement that the essence of leadership is in the distinctive relationship between leaders and followers.

If leadership is about influencing a group to achieve its goals, then school leadership is an important aspect of good staff relationships. All staff members must be given the opportunities to discover their own leadership qualities and avenues to express their gifts to each other. The leadership role of the principal is to facilitate the various leadership talents of the group towards good Catholic education. (Beare,1989:p106-109).

The *situational model* stresses the relative nature

of leadership. Circumstances create leaders in that opportunities for leadership arise from an expressed need or demand and the availability of an individual relatively able to then meet that opportunity. Given the appropriate circumstances anybody can be a leader. The strength of the model can be stated in terms of its emphasis on the essential potential value of every person. Energies in organisations should be focussed on erecting a structure which gives all members a chance to find maximum motivation and committment through being in situations in which they can lead. Paisey (1984) stressed the relative and ubiquitous nature of leadership, suggesting that leadership was less about natural qualities as about the right person being in the right place at the right time.

Perhaps the strongest supporter of the situational approach to leadership is Hemphill (1949), who made extensive studies in this field. He expressed the opinion that the constellation of traits approach is based on the popular idea that leaders are born, not made, and stressed the importance of individual traits which make for a successful leadership but ignored equally important factors such as characteristics of the group to be led. In simple terms, a leader is one who best provides for the group.

The principal's instructional leadership role is seen as a combination of numerous job activities, processes and functions. "Functions are the substance of the principal's role" (Murphy, et. al. 1983). They consist of variables

commonly associated with school effectiveness research. The concept of instructional leadership encompasses those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others to promote growth in pupil learning. A recurring theme from the research is that principals of effective schools are strong instructional leaders who are perceived as playing a crucial role in influencing the school's achievements.

The concept of effectiveness in leadership has much to do with the motivation of followers (1991). Although successful leaders can undoubtedly move people, effective leaders motivate people to *want* to move in the desired ways because they find it rewarding and satisfying to do so. Success in leadership, then, refers to the way in which followers behave (Paisey 1984, Owens 1991).

In his writings on education management (1992) Mike Bottery, whilst acknowledging all the functions that schooling must perform emphasises nine criteria that education must achieve. Bottery suggests that they are:

1 Leadership must be critical
2 Leadership must be transformative
3 Leadership must be visionary
4 Leadership must be educative
5 Leadership must be empowering
6 Leadership must be liberating
7 Leadership must be personally ethical
8 Leadership must be organisationally ethical
9 Leadership must be responsible

According to Bottery, if schools are primarily concerned with the personal and social development of their inhabitants, then leadership must be centrally concerned with

these issues as well. Leadership must then be critical because it must aim to improve the lives and practices of those within the organisation, and it can only do this by looking at the status quo and seeing what needs changing. Thus it is necessarily transformative, educative and visionary, for it seeks to change for the better, and does this by presenting both an analysis of the present and a vision of the future. In doing so, it raises the consciousness of those within the organisation, so that they can see their own position, and what needs to be done. It then attempts to liberate itself and the other members of the organisation by treating people as ends in themselves, and not as means to organisational ends, and by keeping the focus on the realization of a just and democratic community, it is ethical at both a personal and organisational level.

In Leiberman and Miller's (1990) terms, a leader is a person whose power of expertise is used to achieve ends rather than control people. Leadership based on empowering others is often referred to as 'transformational'(eg. Burns, 1978, Bass,1985, Sergiovanni, 1990).

Whether research or political reality will continue to identify the principal as a pivotal force or not is debatable. However, current expectations are that principals will remain responsible for the quality of the instructional programmes within their schools.

Hoy and Deibert (1977) and Beane (1980), both found that "autocratic" schools had a debilitating effect on pupil

self-esteem, whilst those with a "democratic" climate had a facilitating effect. Beane summarises by saying

> **Schools can contribute to student self-esteem by creating a climate characterised by democratic procedures, student participation in decision-making, personalness, respect, fairness, self-discipline, interaction and flexibility**

Sprott (1963),said that children are the usual subjects for social investigation but that can't be substantiated in the N.S.W. context. It is the children of our schools, rather than our teachers, who in educational administration are the counterpart of the industrial workers and yet rarely are they the subject of similar investigation.

When children cannot fulfil their needs at home they must do so at school. To begin to be successful, children must develop a good relationship with other people, both children and adults. Our society cannot depend upon the home to correct failure in school. As Moira Eastman points out, governments allocate money to shore up the school network, rather than try to address the problems which might occur earlier in the home. She wrote:

> **In the area of education, there has been a slowness to respond to the evidence of the impact of families on children's learning in schools. The finding that the solution to the problem of children who did not benefit from schooling did not lie in devoting more resources to schools, but in doing something about the way the parents treat the child at home, has been virtually ignored.**
> **(Eastman 1989 p xvi:)**

Therefore the schools must provide the pathways for each child to fulfil the basic needs for a successful

identity. The Catholic school has the added resposibility of supporting the family in nurturing the child's christian development. Dermont Lane exlains:

> **the Catholic school should be experienced not as an institution where time is spent but as a Christian community where every pupil is valued equally and given a genuine experience of belonging. One of the hallmarks of this community will be the equality of its caring especially in times of crisis and bereavement (Lane 1991 p18, 21:).**

Lambert (1988) advocated that the way to school effectiveness and administrative sanity, is through the building of a healthy school climate. A school climate which is welcoming and positive, creates a bond among staff, pupils and parents. Students who attend a school with high morale and a confident belief in what the school is doing, will experience a sense of security and belonging (Balson:1982;14).

Leaders who would build strong organisational cultures in schools spend time articulating the purpose and the mission of the school; they socialize others to these values; they define and redefine the uniqueness of the school; they develop systems of symbols that reinforce this uniqueness and make sure and make sure that the symbols are highly visible; they reward those who accept and reflect the norms and values of the school (Beare and Slaughter,1993).

Recent research conducted by Charlotte Campo (1993) explored the role of the principal in fostering collaboration among teachers, the strategies used by principals, and the

affect of teachers' motivation and commitment on the ways in which collaboration was being fostered in school. In the studies Campo reviewes she found that administrators use the following broad categories of behaviour to influence culture:

* They strengthen the school's culture by, for example, emphasing shared goals.
* They promote collaborative decision making and reduce teacher isolation.
* They establish effective bureaucratic mechanisms to provide resources efficiently and to assist with planning and scheduling.
* They support staff development which acknowledges one can learn from one's colleagues.
* They share power and responsibilities.
* They promote the use of symbols and rituals by celebrating and recognising the work of staff and students.

Campo's research suggests that collaboration among teachers benefits students, teachers and the whole school community, and that the principal plays an important role in promoting and reinforcing collaboration.

## 2.3 SCHOOL LEADERS AND THE SELF-CONCEPT

Leadership in the context of a school helps bring meaning and a sense of purpose to the relationship between the leader, the staff, the pupils, the parents and the wider school community. Leadership is not only a matter of what a leader does but how a leader makes people feel about themselves in the work situation and about the organisation

itself.

The leader must be a member of the group and must share its objectives and aspirations. Leadership emerges as a working relationship among members of a group during which a leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying co-operative tasks through to completion. Leadership should always be in the interests of and be directed towards achieving some objective of the leader and followers. Leadership is an act whereby the leader's knowledge insight and strength are made accessible to others and the leader's power is shared collaboratively with all members. Leadership increases the power of the members and so increases the collective power of the organisation. Byrt (1978), stated:

> **A central tenet of the theory of leadership which I have been attempting to develop is that leadership arises from the led rather than from the leader. That is, followers look for something outside themselves that they cannot supply; it is something which must be supplied for them by some other person or persons. For example, they may look for security, direction or expertise. This theory is diametrically opposed to much of conventional theory which starts with the leaders. It may be said,then, that followers create leadership. This is not just a play on words, it is central to our understanding of leadership. (1978)**

By definition the principal of a school holds a key leadership position. A principal's position has vested authority, or the legitimate right to command, which relies upon those legal powers delegated by an official employing body. This does not make the person of the principal a

leader.

A leader is voluntarily granted considerable power by the members of a group who accept influence and direction by shared agreement (Owens 1991).

In an organisation as complex as a school it is neither possible nor desirable for only one person to demonstrate leadership. Because the majority of staff in a school are considered professionals, as a result of their training and experience, all teachers should display leadership qualities at different levels of the school. Classroom teachers certainly have important leadership roles for the pupils in their classes, being the link between the wider organisation and individuals within it.

Leaders are members of work groups. The way in which leaders perceive their role in relation to other members of the group plays an important part in their effectiveness as leaders (Owens 1991). Whether group members are seen as colleagues or as subordinates influences the way in which a leader interacts with them. A principal or any other person who provides leadership within a school, who regards other staff members, pupils, parents or members of the wider school community as subordinates, will be more likely to impose centralised decision making on them.

The concept of involving a number of persons in leadership roles within an organisation has been termed "leadership density". The greater the involvement of numerous members of the school staff in leadership roles, the greater

the likelihood of the school providing an effective educational program (Sergiovanni 1987). Catholic schools are generally led by an executive team and great value is placed on partnership, collaboration and the cultivation of leadership qualities as part of professional development.

It is an expectation of the Church that the leader in a Catholic school will lead the children under his/her charge to have and exhibit true love, respect, understanding and a positive concept of self in their growth in faith. Similarly Christian teachers are expected, through their involvement with the pupils, through their professional expertise as teachers and as administrators, as well as their personal behaviour within and outside the school,to manifest their love for life and Christian values. By their Christian commitment they witness to the importance of individual faith in God as the natural fulfilment of the self-concept.

> **Lay teachers are a major influence in the formation of the children .....Their Christian influence is by no means restricted to specifically catechetical work but permeates their whole teaching day and comes more from what they are than from what they teach .....**
> *(Renewal of the Education of Faith 1983)*

## 2.4 ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE AND SELF-CONCEPT

All concerned with the operation of schools - teachers and support personnel who staff them, pupils who attend them, parents, visitors, supervisors and consultants who enter them - are usually quick to detect how they differ markedly from one another in that "ethos", "spirit" or

"atmosphere" which we call school climate. Each school has what Halpin (1966) would term its *own distinctive personality.* The qualities of schools, their ethos, spirit or tone comprise what has come to be defined as organisational climate due largely to the work of Halpin and Croft (1963) in the United States of America.

Andrew Halpin wrote;

> **Anyone who visits more than a few schools notes quickly how schools differ from each other in their 'feel'.....And so, too as one moves to other schools one finds that each appears to have a 'personality' of its own. It is this 'personality' that we describe here as the 'Organisational Climate' of the school. Analogously, personality is to the individual what Organisational Climate is to the organisation.**

Halpin and Croft defined organisational climate in terms of the staff and the Principal's behaviour. Organisational climate arises from the quality of personal relationships existing amongst the staff, the relationships between the staff and the Principal as well as the attitudes of both towards their work.

This delineation of school climate is very close indeed to the commonsense view of school tone or spirit as the pervading climate of personal relations within the school.

School climate is the feel an individual gets from his/her experiences within a school's social system. This feel or "subtle spirit" is the global summation of the individual's perceptions of how school personnel and pupils behave and interact.

Some schools strike one as "good places to work", with teachers and pupils describing themselves as happy in their work. These expressions of the climate of a school sum up the total interacting patterns of communication, culture and life within.

It constantly surprises the writer that the contribution of the pupils (who surely justify the existence of schools) to the tone or climate of the school is often overlooked or even neglected.

Morale is an important component of school climate. It refers to that co-operative striving on the part of pupils and staff towards shared and vital purposes and goals. It implies a proper relatedness between oneself and ones environment and is a measure of human faith in the school's environment.

*Webster's New World Dictionary* provides a useful definition for the purpose of identifying morale:

> **morale or mental condition with respect to courage, discipline, confidence, enthusiasm, willingness to endure hardship, etc. within a group, in relation to a group, or within an individual.**

If staff morale clearly affects the life of the pupils and the school environment generally, then it is at least likely that the pupils morale will also influence the organisational climate of the school. In other words a two way association may well exist between staff and pupil morale.

The principal of a Catholic school plays a key role

in determining the overall effectiveness of the school environment in the transmission of the Christian message - not in the sense of being the key to the whole puzzle, but rather as the leading actor on a crowded stage ( Sugarman 1973)

## 2.5 MEASURING SELF-CONCEPT

For better or worse, the school is a major element in children's development. Children come to school to learn. Teachers engage the children in learning activities to enable them to develop life long interest in learning as well as an acquistion of skills, knowledge and values. In this learning process the writer believes that the development of a strong healthy self-concept is a very important element for the whole school environment.

A prevailing attitude of service towards pupils among staff members ensures that the energies of the school community are directed towards the best possible education for the pupils. Teachers must continually ask themselves, "are we doing the best for our pupils"? Staff must also be genuinely concerned with the whole teacher/community relations, teacher/teacher relations and teacher/pupil relations. To be able to have a critical perspective of our influence as teachers/leaders we must be able to evaluate the level of care within the school and the perceived level of self-concept of members of the school community.

How then can self-concept be measured? McCandless (1967) has written much about this topic basing his

conclusions on a series of American studies. Research has concentrated primarily on positive and negative measures of self-concept-whether the majority of personality components are considered **good** (a positive self-concept) or **bad** (a negative self-concept).

The fact that the self-concept is intangible and, does not readily lend itself to experimental method presents severe limitations in determining its level in an individual at any given point in time. How can it possibly be measured? Self-reporting or self-evaluation would appear to be the most obvious starting point.

In order to obtain more precise information psychometrists have developed a variety of tests to elicit the behaviour pattern of a given reference group. While the advantage of self-evaluation is the provision of an "inside view" based on the person's own perceptions, knowledge and experience about themselves, there are some definite limitations. Self-evaluation can unconsciously be mis-reported due to feelings of guilt, embarrassment and even secrecy. Some subjects cannot give accurate evaluations of themselves because of emotional blocks or defences. Results may also be affected by mood fluctuations, or by environmental conditions at the time and place of testing. In some extreme circumstances the subject may even be anxious enough to go to great lengths to please or to even frustrate the researcher. Rogers stated :

**The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual self**
**(1951 P494)**

When the self report distorts or camouflages the real beliefs and feelings about self held by the person, we have no accurate measure of the self-concept, nor do we really know whether or not the subject is lying. It is not merely what a person says about him/herself, but how they describe themselves that can be judged as reliable indicators of expected performance. It is the belief in self (or lack of it) and feelings that a person holds, that direct behaviour.

Test instruments can facilitate this kind of investigative study only to the extent that the subject is willing to report real feelings and beliefs about self.

Combs and Snygg (1959) suggested that self reporting may be distorted and that inference of the person's perceptions by use of such things as observations, interview and autobiography may be necessary to determine a phenomenological field.

The nature of the school climate influences the self-esteem of pupils. The school climate is often directly equated with morale. However while morale is of considerable significance in enhancing school climate we might also perceive of climate as inclusive of such morale-enhancing factors as attractive surroundings, courtesy, cheeriness, deportment, work neatness and accuracy. Climate is reputed to be that which gives to a school its own spark of

individuality.

Purky and Smith (1983 : 440-441) argue strongly that climate influences a range of school based activities and outcomes, proposing a theory of school improvement based on changing the climate of the school.

Rutter (1979) found that style and quality of teaching, types of teachers, child interactions in the classroom, the organisation of teaching groups, overall social climate and characteristics and qualities of the school as a social organisation, are the prime factors in determining level of behavioural as well as educational attainment.

Most instruments used to measure self-concept have no clearly articulated theoretical basis, and this makes the examination of their construct validity difficult (Marsh 1990). In development of the SDQ-1, which was eventually used as the measuring instrument in this study, it was reasoned that the determination of whether theoretically consistent and distinguishable facets of self-concept exist, along with the nature of their content and structure, should be a prerequisite to the study of how these facets or overall self-concept are related to other variables. In adopting such an approach, atheoretical and/or purely empirical approaches to developing and refining measurement instruments were rejected. Instead, an explicit theoretical model was taken to be the starting point for instrument construction, and empirical results were used to support, refute, or revise the instrument and the theory upon which it is based. In applying this

approach, the Shavelson model was judged to be the best theoretical model of self-concept and in this sense the SDQ-1 is based on a strong empirical foundation and a good theoretical model (Marsh 1990).

In the SDQ-1 extensive item pools were developed to measure each of the proposed factors. Items were tried out, and results were used to refine subsequent versions of the instrument. In addition, items were rewritten or excluded if they were difficult for children or adolescents to comprehend or respond to. On this basis the SDQ-1 was formulated (Marsh, Parker and Smith 1983). The seven originally hypothesized factors have been replicated across more than a dozen factor analytic studies of responses to the SDQ-1 by diverse populations of children and preadolescents (eg. Marsh, 1986, 1987; Marsh, Barnes, Cairns, & Tidman, 1984; Marsh, Relich, & Smith, 1983; Marsh, & Smith, 1987; Marsh, Smith, & Barnes, 1983, 1984, 1985).

It was because of this extensive testing already carried out useing the SDQ-1, the researcher decided that there was enough evidence to validate the use of SDQ-1 as a self-concept measuring instrument.

## 2.6 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SELF-CONCEPT RESEARCH

William W Purkey first called attention to the significance of the relationship between a pupil's self-concept and school achievement in a book of that title (1970) and later stressed the importance of the pupils self

perceptions in *Inviting School Success* (1978). Purkey suggested that four pupil self-concept factors are likely to lead to school success: *relating* (to others), *asserting* (or experiencing a sense of self control), *investing* (encouraging pupils to get involved with learning and with class mates) and *coping* (how well pupils meet school expectations). In the final chapter of *Inviting School Success* Purkey suggested that teachers try to establish an atmosphere of warmth and a co-operative spirit and to convey positive expectations. Throughout the book, Purkey recounts anecdotes revealing how a single instance of personal interest, encouragement or trust on the part of the teacher was reported to have changed a pupil's entire attitude towards self and towards the school.

An attitude, as used in this study, is seen by Kerlinger (1967) as:

> **.....an enduring structure of descriptive and evaluative beliefs that predisposes the individual to behave selectively toward the referents of an attitude.**

Humanistic education emerged as a recognisable force in the late 1960s and reached a peak of popularity in the early 1970s. Humanistic education emphasised the development of positive feelings about self and others, stress on subject matter was to be replaced by stress on understanding of feelings and teachers were to function as facilitators or friends.

At this point the writer suggests that "humanistic" in this context is an inappropriate term because the intent is

humanitarian. Humanism and humanitarianism are two entirely opposed philosophies. But this must be argued in another forum.

Maslow, Rogers and Combs were acknowledged leaders of the humanist movement. Maslow proposed that human needs are arranged in hierarchical order. *Deficiency needs* (physcological, safety, belongingness and love and esteem) must usually be satisfied before *growth needs* (self actualisation, knowing and understanding, aesthetic) exert an influence. When deficiency needs have been satisfied the growth motivated person seeks pleasurable tension and engages in self directed learning. Teachers are in a key position to satisfy the deficiency needs and they should remain aware that when the lower needs are not satisfied, children are likely to make *safety* choices or bad choices when they make decisions. Teachers can encourage pupils to make *growth* rather than safety choices by enhancing the attractiveness of learning situations likely to be beneficial and by minimising the dangers of possible failure. Maslow referred to need gratification as the most important single principle underlying all development adding that,

> **the single, holistic principle that binds together the multiplicity of human motives is the tendency for a new and higher need to emerge as the lower need fulfills itself by being sufficiently gratified (1968 p55).**

Combs believed that how a person perceives him/herself is of paramount importance and that a basic purpose of teaching is to help each pupil develop a positive

self-concept. He observed

> **the task of the teacher is not one of prescribing, making, moulding, forcing, coercing, coaxing or cajoling. It is one of ministering to a process already in being. The role required of the teacher is that of a facilitator, encourager, helper, assister, colleague and friend of his/her students (1965 p16).**

Combs elaborated on these points by listing these characteristics of good teachers :

> * **They are well informed about their subject and sensitive to the feelings of students and colleagues**
> * **they believe in helping all students to do their best and that students can learn**
> * **they have a positive self concept and use many different methods of instruction (1965 p20-23)**

Carl Rogers' contributions are likely to be more enduring and more amenable to empirical research. He greatly increased the respectability of the self as a psychological concept. His emphasis on client centered therapy and the analysis of person to person relationships has not only made his work widely known to practitioners in teaching and in the helping professions, but has placed self-concept as a central construct in personality theory.

Rogers (1951, 1962) was most interested in the clients of the school, in particular the pupils' self conception. He strongly believed in the self-realisation potential of an individual and that if a person can realistically accept the image of self, he/she will grow to greater emotional maturity and have no need of defence

mechanisms.

Carl Rogers proposed that all persons develop a self concept which serves to guide and maintain their adjustment to the external world. This image develops out of social experience and through social interaction which causes the individual to make harsh rejecting images of him/herself and produces doubts of worthiness and competence causing stress to self and others. Rogers argued extensively and consistently that a permissable atmosphere, where parents are willing to accept differences and are able to trust their children, will enable the individual to know and accept him/herself.

Taken together, the observations of Maslow, Rogers and Combs lead to a conception of education which stresses that teachers should trust pupils to make choices about their own learning. At the same time, teachers should be sensitive to the social and emotional needs of their pupils, empathise with and respond positively to them. Finally, teachers should be sincere, willing to show that they also have needs and experience positive feelings about themselves and what they are doing.

J W Staines, (1965 p404-23) demonstrated that pupils of a teacher who, under experimental conditions, gave the greatest number of positive comments and who planned class work to provide children with ample opportunity for choice, comment and work competence, tended to have a self-image that was favourable - much more favourable than that of the pupils

whose teacher gave many negative or ambivalent comments, and who did not plan work to give the children a feeling of certainty and competence. Staines concluded that the self-concept can be deliberately improved by suitable behaviour and attitudes, just as it can be impaired by unsuitable behaviour attitudes, on the part of the teacher.

Davidson (1965 p424-39) experimentally demonstrated that the more positively a child judges his teacher's opinion of him, the more favourable is the perception of self, the better his/her academic work and the more co-operative he/she is in class. When children already do well, teachers can further promote a mastery orientation and build a greater sense of security about pupil competencies by rewarding stable inner qualities such as ability as they encourage children's efforts. Davidson's findings have been confirmed in separate studies by Brookover (1965 p477-85).

How does the child arrive at a sense of worth ? William James, as far back as 1892, theorised that self-concept depends on the success one feels in areas in which one wants to be successful. Others have emphasised social and cognitive elements- self-concept originates in how we think others see us (Cooley 1902, Mead 1934)

Relationship between low self-concept and poor achievement in school is noted in Torshen (1971) while the relationship between more positive self-concept and higher academic achievement is seen in Caplin (1966). There is evidence from these and other studies (Morse 1963, Haarer

1964, Lamy 1965, Stenner and Katzenmeyer 1976) that reported self-concept of ability is a better predicter of academic success than is the intelligence quotient. (in Thomas, J.B. 1980).

The research suggests that the setting of realistic standards of excellence, elimination of successive failure, the creation of conditions that maximise success and intrinsic motivation, all contribute to developing a positive view of self and allow the pupil to profit from new learning experiences. This educational attainment gives the pupil a sense of individual competence in his/her ability to reach these goals and gain those rewards which are valued by his/her reference group. Studies have also indicated a positive correlation between poor self concept (Coopersmith 1959, Buck and Brown 1962, Piers and Harris 1964, Black 1974) and under-achievement. The evidence is not always clear cut however. Thomas (1971) found that correlation between self-concept and attainment was negligible, while Bledsoe (1964) found his correlations were low to moderately positive. Phillips (1964) found that the higher the achievement the higher the self images of his college students and Hishiki (1969) reported low and moderately positive correlations between self-concept and achievements.

Hargraves (1972) suggested that the teacher's conception of the ability of the pupil, the child's own conception about his/her ability and whether or not a pupil values that conception and holds the teacher in high regard,

all interact to bring about success. He also suggests that the pupils most likely to succeed are those seen as bright by teachers, who see themselves as bright and who perceive the teacher as a significant other person in their lives.

Thomas (1973) commented that though the teacher has an important influence on the child's self-concept, the self-concept of teachers themselves had received little attention and the only reference given was to Phillips (1961) in a study of the self-concepts of selected groups of training college students in relation to other variables in the teacher training situation.

Simpson (1966) devoted a chapter to the importance of self-concept of the teacher and emphasised that the teacher's self-perception is strongly influential in determining his/her classroom behaviour and attitudes but little in his analysis was based on empirical research directly related to self-concept. It contributed more to a philosophy of teaching rather than to a psychology of teachers' self-concept.

In the last decade there has been a growing interest in teacher self-concept in relation to such variables as motivation, adjustment to teaching, teaching style, teaching characteristics and choice of teaching as a profession.

Doherty and Parker (1977) argued persuasively that self-esteem is an important factor in teaching behaviour for the social context of the school and classroom demands

objective and realistic appreciation of the feelings and behaviour of other people. Self-concept would seem to be a major factor in influencing preferred teaching styles in that those with low self and other attitudes are more likely to adopt teaching methods which defend their vunerable personality structure. In view of the increasing evidence of stress in the teaching profession, the relationship between teacher self-concept and teacher health would be a worthwhile subject for further research.

It has been observed that teachers' satisfaction is undermined by stress in teaching. To-day people live in an increasingly stressful society and the public school "is a virtual hotbed of stress", (Williamson and Campbell 1987). Teaching is an increasingly demanding and stressful occupation making the principals' management of stress in the school an important undertaking. The challenge is for the principal to help create conditions through which staff and pupils may obtain satisfaction from their work while keeping the level of stress under reasonable control.

## 2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The assumption that leaders may influence the attitudes and behaviour of those who are involved, in the building of a school climate, provided the writer with the opportunity to conceptualize what was the desired leadership for schools. This was step 1 of the research which was to focus exclusively on principals, teachers and pupils.

The diagram below is used to illustrate the following

1-6 Are groups of researchers following a particular "school of thought" in the Leadership area.

7-12 In point form, the essential platform of each "school of thought".

13-18 The group upon which each "school of thought" basically impacts.

19 The principal deficiency area as indicated by the literature i.e. little or nothing of the influence of leadership upon pupil attitude and behaviour.

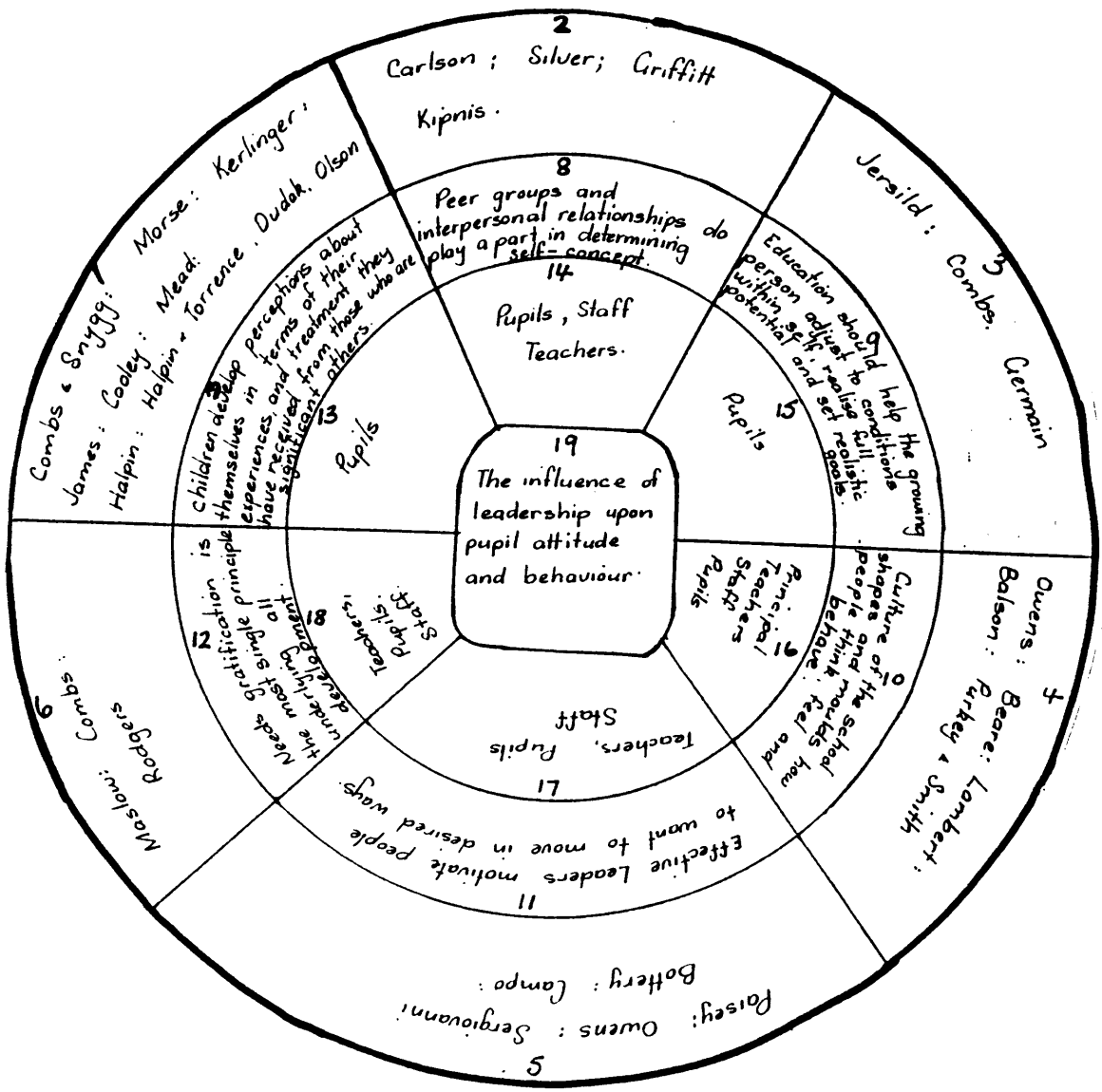


Fig. 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptually the leadership question is one of the most widely researched and documented in the whole literature on behaviour. However, what appears to be lacking is any foundational study of literature influences upon the attitudes and behaviours of primary pupils.

This deficiency has therefore become the initiator of this research, the focus being upon the primary pupils of Catholic Rural Schools.

It is, at most, an exploratory study, which should pave the way for more indepth and exhaustive studies over the full range of pre-school, primary school and secondary school pupils.

The methodology whereby that purpose was pursued is the subject of Chapter 3, which follows.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

Educational research employs a number of methods which, however, do not fall into any generally accepted scheme of classification (Verma and Beard, 1981; Best, 1975; Van Dalen, 1962;), because attempts at classifying the methods have been done from different perspectives (Verma and Beard). Best even adds that classification of research methods is important only in as far as it assists in the analysis of the research process, thereby conveying meaning to the process.

From the range of research methods available to the educational researcher, choice of the appropriate method/s, will be informed by the nature of the research problem (Baldridge, 1975; Stauss and Corbin, 1990).

The following sections of this chapter will attempt to show the relevence of the research methods which were chosen to address this study. It will deal with how the data were collected and why they were collected in that way. The chapter discusses survey research relevance along with some of the strengths and limitations involved in its use. The Shavelson method which formed the basis for the chosen instrument is dealt with along with the importance of interviews which when used in conjunction with the questionnaire can either support or reject findings of the survey. In the closing stages of the chapter the researcher

discusses the Self Description Questionnaire which was the chosen instrument and the schools which were involved in the research and explains how they were selected.

Although not originally intended the study took on the form of informal case studies which fitted with a qualitative approach.

## 3.1 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researcher chose a qualitative approach, utilizing questionnaires and interviews in close relationship. These methods fit well into the Survey Research Cycle described by Rosier (1985:4943) and shown in [fig 1], below.

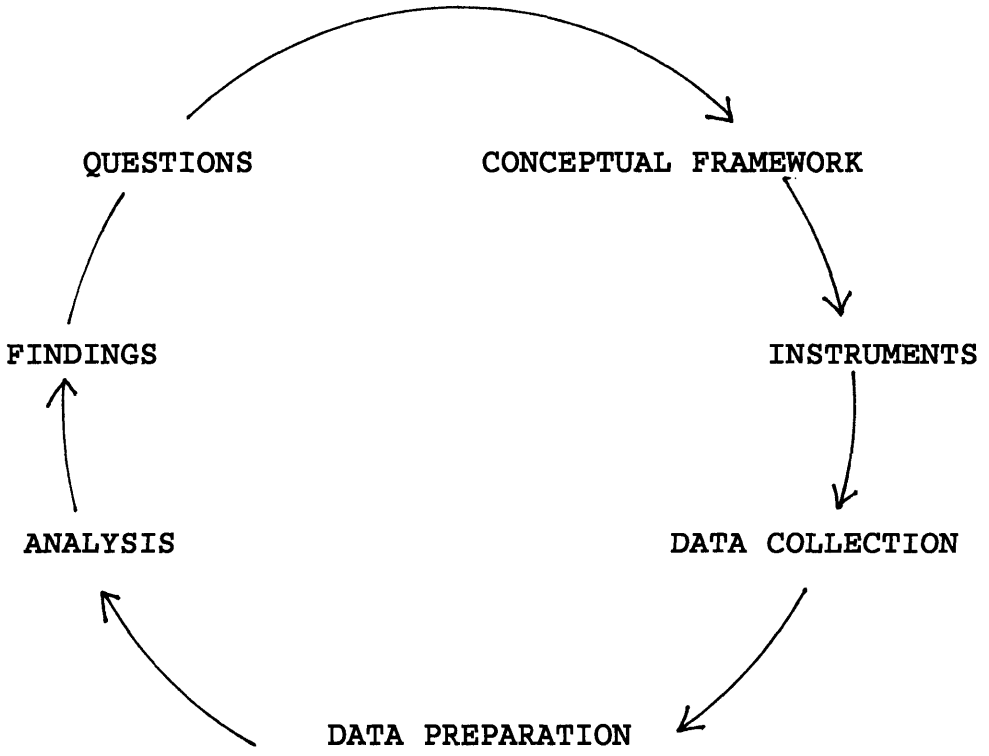


**Fig. 2: THE SURVEY RESEARCH CYCLE**

(Source: Rosier, M.J.,"Survey Research Methods" in Husen, T. and T.N. Postlethwaite, (eds.). *The International Encyclopaedia of Education.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985, vol. 8:4943

The diagram illustrated (pg59) is used to demonstate the survey research model in that it begins with the questions which were raised by the writer and which initiated the research project. Moving in a clockwise direction the process moves through the conceptual framework, instruments used, data collection, leading to the final stages of analysis and summarising the findings.

This is a logical sequence of events based on the desire to find answers to specific questions. Invariably, the findings lead to further questions and the cyclic nature of this methodology becomes apparent. This process also allowed for a direct initial response, yielding a large amount of relevant information over a short period or time and at relatively low cost. It also allowed for comparisons to be drawn between individuals, between groups and between schools.

The target population included all the children of years 5/6 of the selected 3 schools within The Upper Hunter Cluster of the Maitland Diocese of the Catholic Church. Teachers participating in the study were chosen because they were the ones involved on a caily basis with the target group of children. They were either classroom teacher or executive relief to the class and all had direct imput into the development of the children who were subjects of the study. The principals of each school were also involved.

As the survey is qualitative no random sampling is necessary as no statistical inferences are being made.

## 3.2 SURVEY RESEARCH

Although survey research implies almost by definition some sort of questionnaire to be administered to a sample of individuals, it is important to realise that the questionnaire is simply one instrument, a tool, to be employed in the collection of relevant data. As such it may or may not be the most suitable instrument for the task. In this instance the questionnaire chosen was the SDQ (self-descriptive questionnaire) designed by Herbert Marsh (a professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney (Macarthur) and based on the Shavelson method (page 63). At any rate, because of the inherent dangers in using it, eg. self-reports can be distorted or camouflage real beliefs and feelings, it was supplemented with face-to-face interviews, where the questionnaire could be used as the topical basis for the interview. The survey used is not explanatory in nature i.e. it is not quantitatively biased with causal or correlational aims/inferences and the follow up interviews although they were unstructured were by no means undirected.

Survey research in education involves the collection of information from members of a group of pupils, teachers, or other persons associated with the educational process, and the analysis of that information to reveal or illuminate important educational issues. Most surveys are based on samples of a specified target population- the total group of persons from

whom data are required.

The chief advantage of the survey using a questionnaire as the major instrument is its ability to collect specific information in a relatively short period of time at low cost.

**Strengths of the Survey Method**

A Survey:

* can gather a large amount of information inexpensively-cost is low
* requires less of the researcher's time to collect the information than interviewing although this time may be offset to develop the instrument
* includes items that tend to be structured and, therefore, simpler to collate, reduce and interpret

**Limitations**

A Survey is limited in that it:

* is open to statistical sampling error
* relies on the response rate for reliability
* relies on the design of the instrument
* a sample may not be representative even though random
* simplification of the replies
* relies on the honesty and perceptions of the respondents
* relies on a common semantic understanding by both questioner and respondent
* access to the necessary resources (human/time/ technical) to be able to collect data
* smaller samples or skewed response to variables may prevent the use of multi-variate analysis

* problems in the accurate interpretation of data: (Burns, 1990; Sherman and Webb, 1988).

The researcher must consider the complexity of the topic and demonstrate an understanding of all the relevant variables, while keeping the language and sequence of the questions within the reach and comprehension of the least-educated member of the sample.

A well designed questionnaire should:

(a) meet the objectives of the research

(b) obtain the most complete and accurate information possible; and

(c) do this in the limits of available time and resources.

(d) should be pre-tested for validity.

Additional help is available from many sources, of which one of the most obvious is the literature search. The researcher must know what work has been done on the same or similar problems in the past, what factors have not yet been investigated, and how the present survey can build on what has already been discovered.

Another source of help is discussion of the problem with friends and colleagues.... or even better, with the repondents to the questionnaire.

## 3.3 THE SHAVELSON MODEL

Reviews of self-concept research consistently identify shortcomings such as lack of a theoretical basis for defining and interpreting the construct and the poor quality

of instruments used to measure it. In an attempt to remedy this situation Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) reviewed existing research and self-concept instruments and developed a multifaceted, hierarchical model of self-concept. Self-concept broadly defined by Shavelson et.al.is a person's perceptions regarding themself. These perceptions are formed through experience with and interpretations of one's environment. They are especially influenced by evaluations by significant others, reinforcements and attributions of one's own behaviour. (Marsh 1990)

The Shavelson model served as a basis for the Self-Description Questionnaire-1 (SDQ-1) and its two companion instruments, the SDQ-11 and the SDQ-111, devised by H.W. Marsh (1982, 1990).

The SDQ was originally developed to measure self-concept in four nonacademic areas (Physical Ability, Physical Appearance, Peer Relations, and Parent Relations) and three academic areas (Reading, Mathematics, and General School) and was subsequently revised to include a General-Self scale. The SDQ was eventually revised to be known as the SDQ-1 ( Marsh & Shavelson, 1985 ; Shavelson & Marsh, 1986 ; Marsh, Byrne,& Shavelson, 1988;)

According to Marsh (1990), in the Shavelson model, self-concept is further defined by seven major factors :

* It is organised or structured in that people categorise the vast amount of information they have about themselves and relate these categories to one another.

* It is multifaceted and the particular facets reflect a self referent category system adopted by a particular individual and or shared by a group

* It is hierarchical with perceptions of personal behaviour at the base moving to inferences about self in superordinate areas and then to inference about oneself in general

* The hierarchical general self-concept, the apex of the model, is stable but as one descends the hierarchy self-concept becomes situation specific and as a consequence less stable

* Self-concept becomes increasingly multifaceted as the individual moves from infancy to adulthood

* It has both a descriptive and an evaluative aspect; individuals may describe themselves "I am happy" and evaluate themselves "I do well in mathematics"

* It can be differentiated from other constructs such as academic achievement

Even those that accept the multifaceted nature of self-concept do not agree on the identity of the specific dimensions that comprise self-concept and how they are structured. One purpose of the SDQ-1 was to provide a reliable and valid instrument to test the assumptions underlying the conceptual structure of self-concept posited by Shavelson. Byrne (1984), in her review of concept self-concept models, concluded that "Although no one model to date has been sufficently supported empirically so as to lay sole claim to the within-network structure of the construct, many recent studies, in particular those of Marsh and his colleagues, are providing increasingly stronger support for the hierarchical model".

## 3.4 THE INTERVIEW FORMAT

The interview is a highly specialized pattern of verbal and non-verbal interaction-made up of words, gestures, attitudes, behaviour, rapport and climate- in which each participant affects the other(s) (Gorden,1980). Drawing on Gorden's writings the writer saw the interview as a process of extracting information through conversation but also recognized that conversation is an "extremely complex" process in which topics, thoughts, beliefs and attitudes are consciously managed.

The interviewer should aim at maximising, through the appropriate wording of questions, the structure of the interview and the interpretation of the results. Smith (1954) summed up the essential mechanisms of an interview and the following outline is based on his model:

| **STIMULUS** | **PERCEPTUAL HABITS** | **RESPONSE** |
|---|---|---|
| (question) | (motives)<br>(beliefs)<br>(assumptions)<br>(ATTITUDES)<br>(feelings)<br>(emotions) | (answer) |

**Fig. 3 Mechanisims of an interview**

Source: Smith, G.H., *Motivation Research in Advertising and Marketing.* NY: McGraw-Hill, (1954)

The **setting** of the interview is very important to make sure it does not generate a negative perspective (Brown,1980). Children are particularly prone to negative

feelings in an interview and extra care had to be taken to build a rapport with the respondents which is of vital importance in an interview . The aim of creating rapport is to make the respondent feel completely at ease, with no feelings of threat, pressure or direction: the respondent must feel motivated and accepted. The writer had already built up a certain degree of rapport with the pupils during the questionnaire process. This made the climate of the interview much easier to establish, however it was not to be taken for granted.

Although the time taken for each interview was necessary to control it was not the most important aspect. It was more important to make sure that the respondents were relaxed and feeling at ease. Once this was achieved the discussion was able to flow smoothly and was easily directed to gain the required information with each respondent being asked the same questions.

The interview set out to investigate the attitudes of pupils in relation to school, principal and teacher, and their own feelings about self. Interviews were conducted along the lines of:

1) The general atmosphere of the school-whether friendly or otherwise, and the general feeling of life and enthusiasm present in the school.

2) The principal-his/her openness, his/her understanding pupils and his/her leadership of the school community.

3) The teachers-their friendliness and their interest in their pupils as individuals.

4) The pupils self-concept-their general image of themselves, happiness and enjoyment of school.

Although there was no strict time frame adhered to, the interview was drawn to a close when the researcher considered that she had sufficient information to do so. This prevented any unnecessary loss of time or any risk of de-valuing the information received.

## 3.5 CHOICE OF METHOD

"The nature of the problem.....plays the major role in determining what approaches are suitable" (Issac and Michael, 1978:41). The 'problem' in this project was the identfying of possible influences on attitudes and behaviour of specific groups of people. Certain factors emerged which guided the decision regarding choice of method/s, adaptation of existing methods or formulation of new ones. The factors which seemed to have the most significance for data collection were:

1. the information could only come from a particular group of people;
2. the research method ought to be such that it would allow additional data to be built into that which has already been collected;
3. the questionnaire would be open-ended so that there would be room to accommodate any issues of importance that the subjects might raise which the researcher had not anticipated or which the literature review has not addressed;
4. the research questions were such that the information would reveal the status quo- those factors that have proved influential to date;

Thus the method should be largely qualitative.

All scaling involves a stimulus, a subject (the respondent) and a response, and the researcher is left with the task of measuring the amount of an attribute (an attitude) in the respondent. The use of a scaling (quantitative) approach to the measurement of attitude cannot be used on its own, in that a complex notion such as attitude cannot be measured adequately and the quantified. Dawes (1972) emphasises the inadequacy of representing a complex entity such as attitude by a single attribute such as a scale.

The validity of the data will not rely on quantities and their statistical significance but on the quality of the information as provided by pupils involved in the study. A recognition of the human element of explaining and facilitating an understanding of the subjective and experiential world in which humans live and interact, among themselves and with other objects, some of which cannot be explained in terms of numbers and statistical significance, is a feature of qualitative research (Burns, 1990:8-9; Sherman and Webb, 1988:7: Walker and Evers, 1988:29-30: Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). The researcher will be the main data collection instrument and analysis tool as well.

The major determinant still seemed to be that the required information was available only from a particular group of people. Three ways of collecting information from people would be to observe such people at work, or to have them respond to a questionnaire and, ideally, to follow up these questionnaires with face-to-face interviews.

Consequently the most appropriate approach under the circumstances was the use of both questionnaires and interviews.

### 3.6 CHOSEN INSTRUMENT

The SDQ1 (Self Description Questionnaire) -see Appendix 1- can be administered individually or in groups and no special administrative training was required. Pre-testing was not considered to be essential as this instrument had already undergone extensive testing by Marsh in its development and experimential stage. All instructions were easy to follow and were contained in the S.D.Q. manual by Herbert Marsh (1990). Actual presentation of the test items required about eight to ten minutes with an additional five to ten minutes to read the instructions and answer the questions. Consequently testing time varied from fifteen to twenty minutes depending on the age and number of children being tested.

The SDQ1 was completed by all children in the sample groups. All teachers involved completed the SDQ111 questionnaire.

The SDQ1 measures eight components of self-concept based on Shavelson's hierarchical model (Shavelson 1976; Shavelson and Bolus 1982).

Item 76 of SDQ1 assesses four areas of non-academic self-concept derived from the Shalveson model and a general self scale derived from the Rosenberg self-esteem scale

(1965;1979). These eight scales reflect a child's self ratings in various areas of self-concept.

In completing the SDQ1 children were asked to respond to simple declarative sentences such as "I'm good at mathematics"; "I make friends easily". They selected one of five responses : false, mostly false, sometimes false/sometimes true, mostly true or true. Each of the eight SDQ1 scales contain eight positively worded items. An additional twelve items are negatively worded in order to disrupt positive response biases. These are not included in the self-concept score since research (Marsh 1988) has shown that young children do not give valid responses to these items.

**SDQ111**

The SDQ111 is one of a series of three instruments designed to measure the self-concept of pre-adolescents to adults. It was this questionnaire which was used to survey all teacher participants in the research. The 136 item questionnaire assesses 4 areas of academic self-concept, 8 areas of non-academic self-concept and a general self scale derived from the Rosenberg (1965;1979) self-esteem scale.

Each of the 13 SDQ111 scales is inferred on the basis of reponses to 10 or 12 items, half of which are negatively worded. (Marsh 1990).

## 3.7 SELECTION OF SCHOOLS FOR THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

There are 49 primary schools in the Diocese of Maitland. Five of these schools are infants only (K-2), 4 are primary only (3-6) and the remaining 40 are K-6. All schools cater for both boys and girls. The Maitland Diocese covers an area as far north as Taree, south to Swansea on the eastern side and to Morisset on the western side of Lake Macquarie, to the west out to Merriwa and to the north-west as far as Scone. By the very geographical nature of the Diocese most of the schools are inner-city, city or suburban. Although some of the outlying schools could be regarded as having a rural influence only 7 of the schools could be truely considered country.

The schools chosen represented similar geographical areas but similar economic conditions. Even they were also of different size they were all classed as counrty schools. Most of the community lived on the land whilst some worked in the mines. All areas could be considered isolated and suffered the similar disadvantages as a result eg. distances needed to be travelled to major cities, lack of public transport, cost of living more expensive, shortage of specialised services etc. On the other hand the dynamics of the community in which pupils and staff live can be very influencial because they carry their interactions out of school into their daily and weekly life of the community.

There were many reasons for chosing these three

schools over the other 46 and in particular the remaining 4 country schools. First, it was decided to concentrate on country schools because at the time it was this environment in which the writer was employed. Of the other 4 country schools available, 1 was ruled out because of the unrest in the school between the principal and the staff and in particular the principal and the parish priest. The principal was eventually transferred. It was considered that this situation would present an unrealistic picture and would reflect attitudes and emotions of the time which would not necessarily be the true picture.

The remaining 3 schools available although in the same cluster region as the schools chosen, were considered unsuitable because 1 was a primary school only, 1 was an infants only, and 1 was a much larger school with a population of over 350 pupils and teacher staffing of around 12. The dynamics of this size school as compared with the three that were eventually chosen would be considerably different and could perhaps be used in a further study comparing large schools with small schools. It could be argued then, that the 3 schools which were the subject of this research selected themselves as a result of the process of elimination. They were not necessarily chosen out the available 7 schools, but that the other 4 schools eliminated themselves.

Each of the schools chosen is under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Maitland forming part of the Upper Hunter School Region (Region 5)

**SAMPLE 1 - ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL DENMAN**

This sample consisted of 22 pupils attending one of three co-educational Catholic primary schools in the Upper Hunter Region of the Maitland Diocese. The sample consisted of 11 male and 3 female pupils in 5th grade as well as 6 male and 2 female pupils in 6th grade within St Josephs Denman.

The pupils age ranged from 10yrs to 12yrs and they tended to come from either high income earning families due to employment in the mines or very low income earning families who work the land. There does not appear to be a middle road- to the contrary, from the outside many families appear to be working class families on middle class incomes.
The fact that in 1994 this school was placed on the 1995 Disadvantaged Schools Program contradicts the suggested wealth of the area. The pupils' academic ability ranged from remedial to very high.

Two teachers formed part of the sample. Unlike other teachers on staff these two were in constant face-to-face interaction with the chilren from years 5/6. One had been associated with the children for a period of 2 years and the other (the principal) for a period of 8 years.

**SAMPLE 2 - ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY MERRIWA**

Merriwa is a small rural town whose main reason for being is as a service centre for the surrounding farming community. The children involved in the survey comprised 20 year 5/6 children from a total school population of 59. Out of

these 20, 17 of the pupils come from families where both parents are living with them. 2 children are living with one birth parent and a non-birth parent(both cases involved a previous divorce and the mother is the residing birth parent). The remaining child lives with mum after a recent accident in which dad was killed.

13 children's parents' main income is derived from farming, 2 of which are seasonally unemployed. 1 is involved in a farm related service whilst 5 are involved in service industries in town. 1 parent travels outside Merriwa for employment.

The children's extra-curricular activities are limited to mainly sport related hobbies. Most children play an organised sport out of school time tennis, swimming and karate being the most popular.

Nine pupils have had or are having piano lessons on a weekly basis provided on school grounds but independent of the school. One child is studying art externally on a weekly basis. Six have participated in weekly ballet classes in Merriwa one remaining in the class. Eight belong to Brownies/Girl Guides and one in the Scouts.

The two teachers involved in this sample were chosen for the same reasons used at Denman. One teacher was the principal and the second teacher was employed in an executive relief capacity on the same class (yr5/6.) as the principal. Both these teachers shared the responsibility for the class

and were constantly face-to-face with the children involved in the sample group.

**SAMPLE 3 - ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCONE**

Scone is situated 160km N.W. from Newcastle on the New England Highway. Scone is under the jurisdiction of the Scone Shire Council.St. Mary's School Scone provides educational facilities from K-6 for the children of the parishes of St. James Muswellbrook, Our Lady Queen of Peace Scone, and St. Thomas' Aberdeen.

Because of the geographical situation of the town of Scone all children, according to the principal of the school, could be classed as culturally disadvantaged.

The great majority of children come from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. Apart from this there are three children with a Chinese background and five of Aboriginal descent. Most children appear to have their basic needs satisfied and are mentally well adjusted.

Each child at St. Mary's is recognised as an individual and this is evident in the programmes implemented by the school which cater for the needs of children with learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

The children all coming from semi-rural backgrounds tend to favour sporting activities rather than cultural ones for general entertainment. This semi-rural background also breeds traditionalism which is particularly evident in the

children's overall values and attitudes.

The three teacher participants in this sample were chosen on the basis that one was the principal and the other two were the class teachers responsible for the children involved in the sample. One teacher taught yr 6/5, the second teacher taught yr5/4. All children (a total of 43) in the classes comprising yr6 and yr5 pupils were used in the sample.

## 3.8 IMPLEMENTING THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

The research was developed over a period of three years based on the administrative responsibilities of the researcher and the initial pattern unfolded in stages which were at first unplanned but were eventually organised as indicated below;

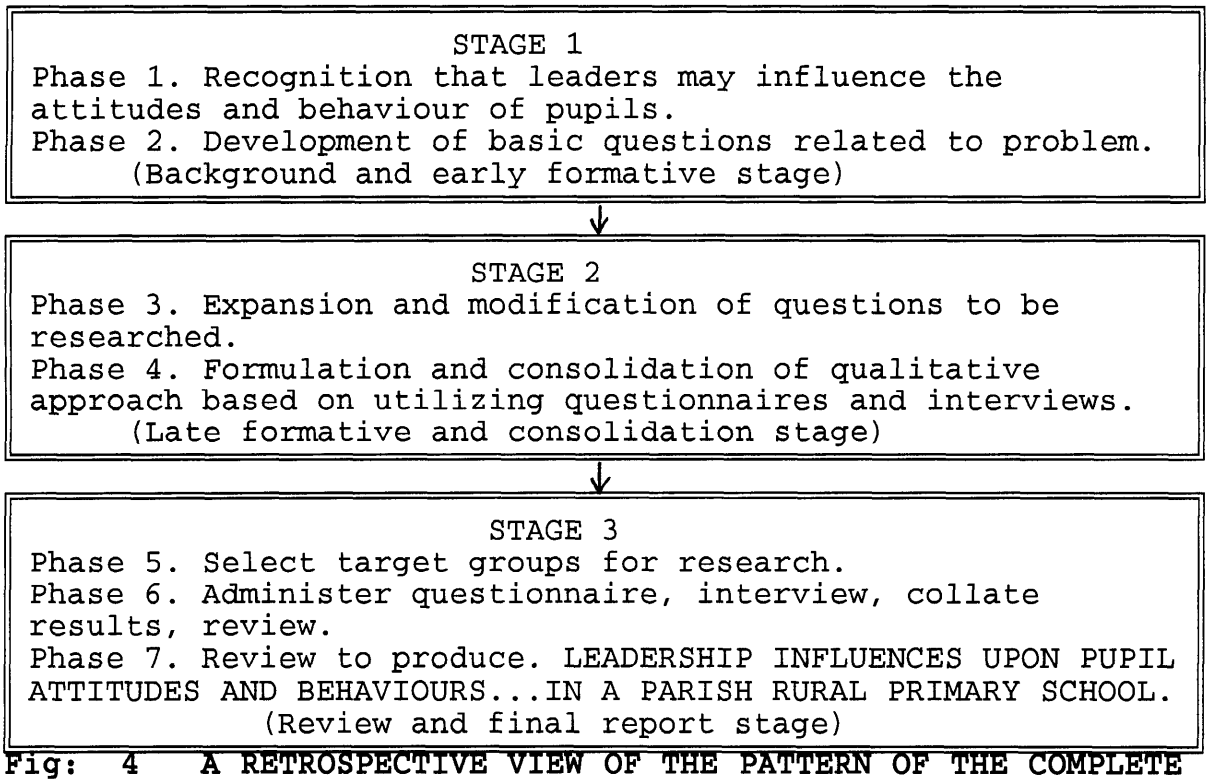


**Fig: 4 A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE PATTERN OF THE COMPLETE STUDY.**

The administrative procedures summarised below were used for the collection of SDQ1 data. It was important to make sure that the same procedures were followed in each of the sample groups. The researcher read the procedure aloud, assisted those children with limited reading skills and standardised the time taken, allowing everyone to finish together.

* Children were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and not made public

* A copy of the SDQ1 questionnaire together with pencil and rubber were given to each child. They were helped to complete the identifying background information at the top of the front page while ensuring that they did not open the booklet until requested.

* Children were asked to listen and to follow the words while the instructions on the front page were read aloud. Questions were not allowed until the first sample was read.

* After all children had responded to the sample questions and had completed all instructions they were asked to turn over the page to begin. They were instructed not to talk.

* Once children had turned the page to begin, sentences were read in a clear strong voice. The number of each sentence was read before the sentence and each sentence was read at a steady pace as well as being repeated. After pausing at the end of each sentence the next one was read.

This procedure was continued until the questionnaire was completed.

* If a child interrupted the procedure, he/she was asked to wait until all sentences had been read and that help would then be available. Children were encouraged to answer all questions

and were given time to do so.

* On completion of the questionnaire all papers were collected.

Instructions for completing the SDQ111 were printed on the front page of each instrument. These were self explanatory because the respondents were adults. No special training for administration of the instrument was needed.

Respondents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. Time taken varied because it was a self paced instrument, but most respondents completed the SDQ111 within twenty to thirty minutes.

At certain intervals it was necessary to authenticate the data on hand by following up the questionnaire with random interviews. The researcher needed to address the following:

A. Each pupil's concepts of him/herself in relation to the school in general and in relation to school achievement.
B. The pupil's concept of him/herself in relation to the teacher/s and the pupil's concept of the teacher/s
C. The pupil's concept of him/herself in relation to his peers and the pupil's concept of his peers

D. How does the researcher see the overall self concept ?

The diagram below summarizes the final stage of the research.

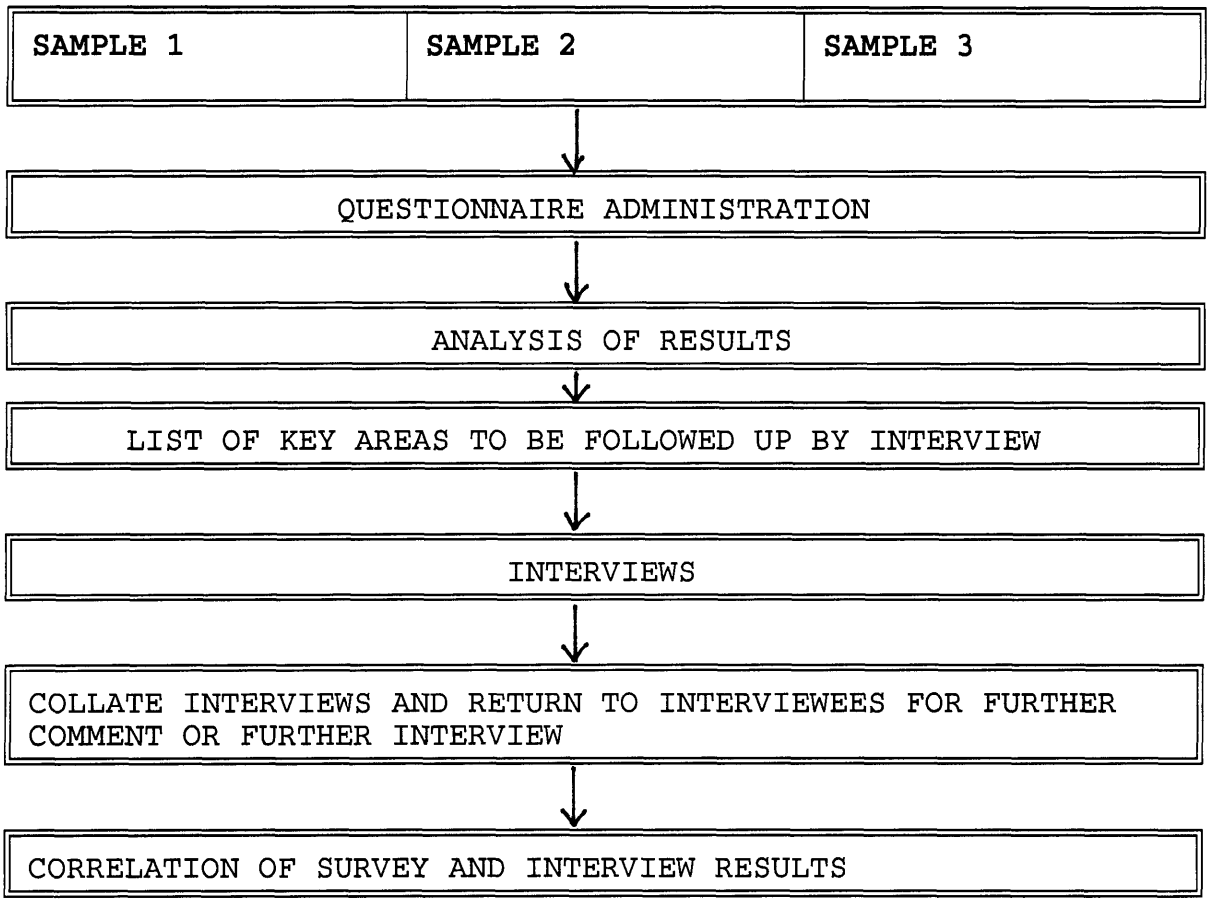


**Fig 5: A RETROSPECTIVE MODEL OF THE PATTERN OF INQUIRY DURING STAGE 3**

It was anticipated that the duration of this research project would not exceed eighteen months. Because the researcher adopted a survey research style, the financial demands would be minimal.

Apart from the normal instruments and technology of record keeping, no additional resources were necessary.

## ETHICAL ISSUES

Bennis (1966) argued that the fundamental problem associated with leadership is.....

> **to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and good of each associate, and in which each, while uniting him/herself with all, may still obey him/herself alone, and remain as free as before. (Bennis; 1966:64)**

Effective leadership depends primarily upon the ability to mediate between the individual and the organisation in such a way as to enable both to obtain maximum satisfaction. Cultural analysis for the purposes of enhancing the power of leadership alone will be greeted with objection. It may be viewed as a sophisticated means by which the pupils or other 'oppressed' groups are prevented from participation in educational affairs through the collection of 'intelligence' about their views, motivations, interpretations and even their 'sub-cultures' by those holding power. It is therefore necessary to be entirely open about the object of the project.

During the research it was necessary to maintain confidentiality and integrity, particularly if participants were expected to answer honestly the survey questionnaires. Anonymity must be provided where the participants feel it necessary, and in most cases it will not be relevant who believes or behaves in any particular fashion but rather what they believe, or how they behave that is important, along with the motivations for their behaviour.

The following chapter, Chapter 4, concentrates on the research results and their analysis. The writer analyses the responses of each individual school as well as across the three schools. Results of scores in all schools according to sex are also highlighted and the perceived ramifications of the study are examined.