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The Effects of Small Growth Groups on Self-Concept as Measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale

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Blythe,

Bruce T.

1974
THE EFFECTS OF SMALL GROWTH GROUPS ON SELF-CONCEPT AS MEASURED BY THE TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Bruce T. Blythe
September 1974
THE EFFECTS OF SMALL GROWTH GROUPS ON SELF-CONCEPT AS MEASURED BY THE TENNESSEE SELF CONCEPT SCALE

Recommended (Date)

Director of Thesis

Approved March 25, 1975 (Date)

Dean of the Graduate College
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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Small Groups On Self-Concept As Measured By The Tennessee Self Concept Scale

The specific problem investigated in the study was to determine the effects that small growth groups would have on the self-concepts of the participants. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale was used as a measure. The experimental group (N=30) and the control group (N=30) were comprised of college students enrolled in Introductory Psychology classes at Western Kentucky University. The group members participated in ten sessions over a five week period. An analysis of variance of the split plot design was conducted to measure the hypothesized change in self due to the treatment. The conclusion of this study is that participants in the group sessions did not significantly enhance their self-concepts as a result of treatment as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.
CHAPTER I
Introduction

The development of affective techniques for improving self-concept has been a constant problem facing psychologists, educators and other working in the helping professions. Attempts at explaining various interpersonal experiences in regard to their effects on self-concept have resulted in varied conclusions. Such inconclusive findings coupled with the growing popularity of group techniques, indicate a need for more research (Wylie, 1961). The helping relationship fields could benefit if it were shown that small group experiences were related to significant change in self-perception for the participating group members.

The present study examined aspects of self-concept, as measured and defined by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and studied the effects that small growth group experiences had on the group members' concept of self.

The Problem.

Statement of the problem. This study was designed to determine the effects of participation in low-structured developmental groups on the self-concepts of college freshman at Western Kentucky University.
Justification of the problem. Brook (1968) and Fadale (1969) have summarized studies that dealt with self-concept and involvement in various types of group experiences. They report varied findings regarding the effects of group experiences on the self-concept. In general, nearly every researcher who has studied the effects of groups upon the self has recognized the general disagreement among theorists and researchers of this area.

Growth groups tend to focus on developing a more realistic view of self and others through both direct and indirect encounters with self and others. Group encounters have been proposed as effective ways of improving self-attitudes to the point that groups have developed into widespread popularity, although research findings are mixed. Thus, a need for additional research in the area of groups and their effects on self has resulted. Carl Rogers (1970) in a call for further research on encounter groups has stated:

"An exciting question for the future is the challenge posed by the encounter group to science . . . Thus far I feel that the research - hard as individuals have worked on it - represents only feeble and essentially outdated attempts . . . The challenge is to develop a phenomenological human science which will be realistic and illuminating for this field of human activity (p. 165)."
Hypothesis to be Tested.

It was hypothesized that participation in dynamic growth groups at Western Kentucky University would have significant positive effects upon the self-concept as measured by the group members' Total Positive scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale - Clinical and Research Form.

Definitions of Terms Employed.

The following definitions of terms were employed for the purpose of the present study.

**Self-concept.** Self-concept has been studied and defined in numerous ways, basically as an attempt to understand and predict behavior. Self-concept, for purposes of the present study, was defined as the multidimensional awarenesses that an individual subjectively has of himself. In this study, self-concept is considered to be a combination of both positive and negative attitudes and opinions of self which are subject to change through environmental experiences.

**Positive self-concept.** For the purpose of the present study, a person was considered to have moved toward a more positive self-concept when he obtained higher post-test scores than pre-test scores on the Total Positive scale of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Fitts (1965) stated:
"Persons with high (Total Positive) scores tend to like themselves, feel that they are persons of value and worth, have confidence in themselves, and act accordingly (p.2)."

**Dynamic growth group.** Dynamic growth group was defined as a group of not more than ten individuals interacting on a low-structured basis for the purpose of self-growth and understanding in ten intensified bi-weekly sessions. The groups used in this study, although low-structured for the most part, were structured in that the facilitator's role was to focus on the present (here and now) and on expressing and clarifying personal feelings.

**Limitations of the Study.**

The results and conclusions of the present study were based on changes in **Tennessee Self-Concept Scale** scores of college freshmen. Therefore, the conclusions made may not be readily applied to the general population. Secondly, the fact that the members were receiving extra credit in their Introductory Psychology courses for participation in groups may have served as a motivating factor and affected the amount of self-concept change to an unknown degree. A third limitation of the present study would involve effects that a two-way mirror, present in the group room, might have had on the members' behavior in the group setting. The limited amount of time allowed to complete the group
experiences may also have affected the degree of self-concept change in the members. Fifth, the self-concept appeared to change in both positive and negative directions due to unknown and uncontrolled factors between pre- and post-testing. Thus, the significance of the results may have been nullified due to the uncontrolled factors apparently taking place over time. Lastly, self-report inventories, such as the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS), may not reflect an accurate assessment of an individual's personality traits due to possible malingering or faking by the subject.

Due to the high inter-correlations between the individual scales of the TSCS, there appears to be a need for a more specific measure of self-concept. Many important changes in self may not have been properly assessed by the general measurement of the TSCS.

The above limitations and extraneous variables may have affected the results of the present study. The conclusions may also have been affected to an unknown degree by the above limitations and extraneous variables.
CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Interest in self has developed from the early days of William James (1890) into a present school of self-theory (Rogers, 1951; Snygg & Combs, 1959; Wylie, 1961). Early theorists believed that an individual's self-perception was contingent upon how that individual felt that others viewed him (Mead, 1934). The study of self has presently developed into an increasing interest in social interaction and its effects upon an individual's self-perception (Fitts, 1970; Kinch, 1963). Researchers tend to agree that self-concept is a complex, but modifiable, phenomenon with a personal as well as a social multidimensional nature (Fitts, 1971).

Although there is much interest in the area of self, it has been studied in a disorganized manner resulting in contradiction among findings, ambiguous results, and varied techniques of assessment (Strupp, 1966). Furthermore, many researchers of self have utilized biased groups, a lack of objectivity, over generalizations, and methodological approaches which have been unclear to readers (Wylie, 1961). Carkhuff
(1966), Frank (1967), and Schmidt and Pepinsky (1956) have also voiced the opinion that the results of self-concept studies are contradictory, misleading, and inconclusive. These particular theorists felt that the task facing researchers now is to identify previous errors as a preventative measure in obtaining consistency and uniformity in present studies. Although there has been general confusion and inconsistency in studies relating to self-concept, the findings have shown promising trends which merit further study (McGee, 1969; Terleski, 1970; Wylie, 1961).

Change in Self Through Individual Therapy.

There is evidence that the self-concept tends to be enhanced by a positive experience in individual therapy. Rogers (1961) concluded that many times self-esteem tended to be more healthy following individual psychotherapy when compared to members of non-therapy control groups. He stated that a more realistic self-awareness would tend to result in an enhanced acceptance of self:

"We have established the fact that in successful psycho-therapy, negative attitudes toward the self decrease and positive attitudes increase. We have measured the gradual increase in self-acceptance and have studied the correlated increase in acceptance of others. But as I examine these statements and compare them with our more recent cases, I feel they fall short of the truth. The client not only accepts himself - a phrase which may carry the connotation of a grudging and reluctant acceptance
of the inevitable - he actually comes to like himself. This is not a bragging or self-assertive liking; it is rather a quiet pleasure in being one's self (p. 87)."

Similar conclusions were cited by Ashcraft and Fitts (1964) in a study designed to measure change in self-concept as a result of individual psychotherapy. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale was used to measure differences in the self-concepts of the experimental and control groups. While the change was judged significant (p = .05) for the experimental group on most of the scales, the control group displayed little significant change in self-perception on the test results. Many researchers have found that individual therapy tends to alter the self-perception in a positive manner (Rogers, 1961; Snygg & Combs, 1959).

Group Therapy and Change in Self.

While there is support that individual therapy may have a positive effect on self, there is also evidence that small group encounters tend to alter one's self in a positive manner (Gordon, 1950; Purkey, 1968; Rogers, 1961).

Until recently, many universities would not support research on group processes, despite its rapid movement across the country (Rogers, 1970). Since research related to groups is now becoming accepted in universities after a long period of ambivalence, groups have now developed into what may become one of the most
significant movements in the social sciences today (Rogers, 1968). The effective therapeutic progress made with "normals" and emotional deviants has led to the widespread acceptance of the group movement. Lazarus (1971) has concluded from his clinical and research experience that:

"As a participant, participant observer, and leader of numerous groups since 1955, I am completely confident that certain types of groups have definite value for some individuals. In the majority of instances . . . gains which accrued to the people who participated in personalistic groups have been impressive. . . We need evidence that changes observed during group encounters transfer to the individuals' daily encounters outside of the group, that the participants become generally freer, more authentic, more expressive, less defensive, and less vulnerable human beings (p. 186-200)."

Purkey (1968) agreed that groups make significant changes in the self which tend to alter the behavior patterns of the participating group members. Purkey further believed that proper assessment of behavior could be determined only after an accurate understanding of self was made.

Grater (1959) found that group experiences which are non-psychotherapeutic in nature could result in enhanced attitudes toward the self and others. The subjects consisted of 30 students enrolled in a leadership training course at Michigan State University. The climate in the group was geared to be non-threatening and spontaneous. A significant improvement in the real
self of the participants resulted due to group participation.

Burke and Bennis (1961) conducted a study designed to measure the hypothesized increase in congruity between perceived actual self and perceived ideal self through the course of therapy in groups. Six training groups were conducted at the National Training Laboratory at Bethel, Maine in 1958. An analysis of pre- and post-tests indicated an increased similarity between perceived actual self and perceived ideal self as measured by the Group Semantic Differential (Burke and Bennis, 1961).

Kimball and Gelso (1974) found that self-actualization was enhanced for the group members of a weekend growth group. Four weeks following the group encounter, the group members were found to be more self-actualized than prior to their group participation. Fitts (1971) stated that self-concept and self-actualization studies, such as the above study by Kimball and Gelso, appear to be applicable to the area of self-concept.

The above studies suggest that groups as well as individual therapy may have enhancing effects on the self-concepts of the participants. Studies such as those cited above serve as support for further study since group participation appears to enhance the
self-concepts of many participating individuals.

Negative Findings.

Fitts (1969) stated that many studies have not established a significant change in self-concept. There is evidence that self-concept is resistant to significant change though not impossible to alter. Fitts (1969) stated in a review of research on self-concept changes that:

"We are not implying that the self concept is so stable that it cannot be changed. On the contrary, numerous studies show that experiences which are meaningful and significant to the individual do generate self concept changes. Often, however, with a stable measure like the TSCS, the effects of experiences, treatment procedures, etc. do not produce an immediate change in self concept. It appears that some intervening time may be required for the self concept to be reorganized, for new behavior and new feedback from such behavior to be incorporated into self-perception. The pertinent point here is that, since the self-concept does not change very readily, studies ... which do demonstrate appreciable change are even more significant (p. 27-38)."

Brook (1968) studied self-concept changes as a function of participation in group sensitivity training. The hypothesized increase in self-esteem was not supported by this study. Likewise, the hypothesized reduction of defensiveness in the group members was not accepted when the Tennessee Self Concept Scale was used as a measure. The general conclusion of Brook's study was that the self-perceptions of the group
participants were not significantly altered as a result of treatment.

In a number of studies researchers have shown no significant change in self due to group participation (Brook, 1968). On the other hand, Schutz (1973) supported encounter groups in spite of varied conclusions in the area of group effectiveness. He stated that:

"... there are several studies of the effectiveness of encounter groups with generally positive but highly qualified results. Given the large number of people who appear to have been helped by encounter, it would be folly to stop exploration of the method on the basis of some negative research which seems of questionable validity (p. 433)."

In summary, encounter groups tend to be affective in bringing about change in self in many instances. There is also evidence, through research, that groups may be of little value for some participants. However, almost every study of self enhancement and group participation recognizes the potential of groups for self-improvement. A call for further research has been almost universal in previous studies of group encounters and self.

Theoretical Basis for Change.

Two dimensions of the self-concept according to Coller (1971) are the conscious and unconscious aspects. The unconscious aspect may be one reason that research has failed to consistently support self-concept changes
through group interactions. If Coller's assumptions are correct, then self-awareness may be influenced by unknown factors. This could theoretically explain inconsistent findings in the research of self.

Coller (1971) also mentioned some evaluative and descriptive aspects of self-concept. Self-awareness may not necessarily denote "positive" or enhanced self-concept changes. While an individual's self-concept may be enhanced in one area, it may be diminished in another. Therefore, global or general measures of self-concept may be nullifying important specific changes by varied movements of this multidimensional concept.

The Jo-Hari Window (Luft, 1970) has attempted to illustrate the specific changes of an individual's self in intergroup relations as shown in Figure 1. The "public area" of the Jo-Hari Window should expand for any given individual of that group. This expansion, through feedback and self-disclosure, should in turn diminish the blind and hidden areas of one's life-awareness which were unknown either to the individual or others prior to the group experience.

English and English (1958) defined self-awareness as the "... knowledge of one's own traits or qualities; insight into, and understanding of, one's own behavior and motives (p. 486)." In terms of the Jo-Hari Window,
FIGURE I
Jo-Hari Window

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Known to</th>
<th>Unknown to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disclosure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Known to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |
| Public           |
| Area             |
| Blind            |
| Area             |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>unknown to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  |
| Hidden           |
| Area             |
| Unknown          |
| Area             |

Note.— Adopted from J. Luft (1970).
this would include the public and hidden areas. The public area of the Jo-Hari Window would be expected to become larger for each individual as a result of group participation. Thus, if the blind and hidden areas of self-awareness diminish in size through self-disclosure and group feedback, then the increased "openness and self-awareness" of the public area would hopefully result in a more accurate and enhanced self-concept.

Summary.

The present review of literature has attempted to demonstrate the need for further research involving self-concept and small growth group experiences. Research on group techniques has shown an increasing interest in self change through participation in group encounters even though previous studies have yielded contradictory results. Further support for study of self and group encounters has been evident in the writings of researchers. Theoretically, the self-concept appears to be amenable to change through group encounters. The present study was designed to add empirical evidence in the area of small growth group experiences and determine the resulting effects on the participating group members' self-concepts.
Subjects

Group members were randomly selected from a pool of college freshmen who volunteered for the present study. These volunteers were solicited from Introductory Psychology courses at Western Kentucky University during the Spring semester of 1973. The students volunteered to participate in the growth groups after a short presentation (See Appendix A) made to each individual psychology class by one of the four graduate students who served as a group leader. From a population of 121 volunteers, 40 Ss were randomly assigned to the experimental group and 40 Ss were randomly assigned to the control group by use of a random numbers table (Downie & Heath, 1959). Ten Ss from the experimental group and ten Ss from the control group dropped out of the study. Thus, both the experimental and control groups contained 30 Ss consisting of 17 females and 13 males in each group.

Instrument.

The Total Positive scale of the TSCS - Clinical and Research Form (Pitts, 1965) was used as a pre- and post-test measure of self-concept. The scale consists
of 100 self-descriptive statements which the S uses to portray his self-concept. The scale is self-administering for either individuals or groups and can be used with Ss age 12 or older and having at least a sixth grade reading level. The instrument also can be used with a wide range of Ss from healthy, well-adjusted persons to psychotic patients.

Reliability for the TSCS was based on test-retest data with 60 college students over a two-week period. A reliability coefficient of .92 was obtained for the Total Positive scale (Fitts, 1965).

The validation procedures for the TSCS consisted of content validity, group discrimination, correlations with other personality inventories, and personality changes under specific conditions. Content validity included items that were unanimously judged to be logically meaningful. Group discrimination validity was measured between such groups as patient vs/ non-patient and delinquent vs/ non-delinquents. Validity was further measured by comparisons with other inventories such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. Changes in self-concept, under specific conditions which would be expected to result in either enhancement or lowering of self-esteem, were also conducted to help establish the validity of the Tennessee Self Concept.
Scale. Results of psychotherapy and other positive experiences were measured to determine if the Tennessee Self Concept Scale reflected an anticipated enhancement of self. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale was also used with stress and failure type experiences to see if an expected lowered self-esteem resulted in lowered scores on the appropriate scales (Fitts, 1965).

Fitts (1965) stated that the TSCS was logically meaningful, tended to discriminate between some groups, correlated with some of the other personality inventories and tended to measure self-concept change due to significant experiences. Thus, the validity of the TSCS was marginally established through the above techniques.

Design.

An analysis of variance of the split-plot design was conducted in the present study. The dependent variable in the present study was defined as the scores on the Total Positive scale of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. The independent variable was defined as the small group experience conducted to produce the proposed change in self-concept and time.

Procedure.

Two male and two female fourth semester graduate students served as group facilitators. The graduate
students who served as facilitators were students in the Clinical Psychology program at Western Kentucky University. Each of the four groups facilitators were assigned the responsibility for one of the four experimental groups. Each group facilitator was supervised by a faculty member from whom he received feedback following each group session.

The group sessions were low-structured in that the facilitator's role was to focus the attention of the members on the present (here and now) and on expressing and clarifying personal feelings. Broad goals were established in each group to answer the questions of "Who am I, where am I, and where am I going?"

The group structure consisted of seven or eight members in each group plus the facilitator. Each group session was located in the same room of the Psychological Clinic which was equipped with a one-way mirror in plain view of the group members. Large pillows were provided for sitting on the floor in the group room. The Ss were informed that a faculty member would be observing the sessions on the opposite side of the mirror for purposes of aiding the facilitator in group leadership. The ten sessions met bi-weekly for five weeks and each lasted one hour and a half.
At the beginning, and again at the completion of the ten group sessions, the experimental and control groups were administered the TSCS, along with objective inventories administered by two other researchers using the same Ss. The Ss were administered the same tests on both pre- and post-testing in randomly selected orders.

**Scoring and Analysis.**

The Total Positive scale and Rows One, Two and Three of the TSCS were hand scored. Row One is the Identity scale which is considered to be the "what am I" items and measures the perceived self. Row Two is the Self Satisfaction scale which measures the self-acceptance of the individual. Row Three is the Behavior scale which measures the perception that the individual has of his own behavior. The Total Positive scale was scored to measure the overall level of individual self-esteem (Fitts, 1965).

A correlation matrix (Fitts, 1965) was used to determine the extent that Rows One, Two, and Three were positively correlated with the Total Positive scale on the TSCS. The scales were found to be highly correlated with the Total Positive scale and dropped from the analysis. The Total Positive scale, thus, is assumed to be reflective of Rows One, Two, and Three of the TSCS (See Table 1). A correlation between Rows One, Two and Three and Total Positive Scale
TABLE 1

Intercorrelations of Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Row 2</th>
<th>Row 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Positive</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 1</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was run for the experimental group on the pre- and post-test. Table 2 illustrates the correlations for these Rows in the present study.
### TABLE 2

**CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ROWS**

**FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Row II</th>
<th>Row III</th>
<th>Total P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row I</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row II</td>
<td></td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row I</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row II</td>
<td></td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row III</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV

Results

Although group participants tended to verbally express enhanced self-concepts, the Total Positive Scores on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale indicated few significant changes in self. An analysis of variance of the split plot design was conducted to measure the hypothesized change in self due to the treatment and is summarized in Table 3.

The hypothesis that participation in small growth groups would have significant positive effects on the group members' Total Positive scores on the TSCS was not supported by findings, \( F(1,58) = p > .05 \). The findings as depicted in Table 4 indicated that a slight movement toward an enhanced self-concept was brought about due to undetermined factors during the time between pre- and post-testing, \( F(1,58) = 10.78, p < .01 \). However, there was a weak trend that indicated a movement toward an enhanced self-concept for the experimental group in contrast to the control group (See Table 4).

Table 5 illustrates the movement of the individuals in both the experimental and control groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatments</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (a)</td>
<td>10679.28</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>184.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>170.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>170.41</td>
<td>10.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatments</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (b)</td>
<td>916.70</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11778.99</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4
Mean Scores on TSCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>46.97</td>
<td>49.63</td>
<td>48.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>46.87</td>
<td>48.23</td>
<td>47.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>46.91</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pre-test scores were subtracted from the post-test scores, thus showing the amount and direction of change for each individual. The experimental group, when compared to the control group, illustrates the general movement toward a more enhanced self-concept for the members of the experimental group (See Table 5).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental and Control Movement</th>
<th>Pre-Test Scores Minus Post-Test Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S's with enhanced self-concept</td>
<td>S's with a lack of enhancement of self-concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E  20</td>
<td>10  30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  16</td>
<td>14  30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36  24  60</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER V
Discussion

The present findings indicated enhancement of self for those individuals involved in the study. While some of the self-concept change may have been due to undetermined factors over time, there was also an indication that group participation had a slight effect on the experimental group that was not apparent in the control group. The findings of the present study have thus indicated trends which appear to merit further investigation in the area of small group participation and self-concept. Specific aspects of the self-concept may need to be studied to determine the direction and amount of change rather than using a global "positive" measure like the Tennessee Self Concept Scale.

In the present study, a number of variables may not have been optimal for group change and thus affected the findings. The combined short group time and the lack of experience of each facilitator apparently was not conducive to significant self change for the experimental group as a whole. Other variables such as the one way mirror, faculty supervision, college setting and testing itself could have caused defensive-
ness and a resulting lack of change in the members as a whole. All or some of the above variables may have threatened the group members to an unknown degree and thus resulted in a lack of "openness and/or risk taking" within the groups.

The post-testing was conducted within a few days after the termination of the groups. Harrison (1966) found that change in group members tended to be more significant three months after the group experience was completed than immediately following the group. Thus, the time of the testing itself may have been a factor lending to the lack of significant results in the present study. More time for consolidation of the group experience for each individual group member may be implied.

There appears to be another factor which may have affected the total outcome of the present study. The small group experience was effective in enhancing the self for some members of the groups, while other members decreased or remained relatively the same in self-awareness and self-concept as measured by the TSCS. Possible significant change could have been "balanced out" due to movement in both positive and negative directions by individuals within each group.

The use of four different group facilitators may also have had a confounding affect on the statistical
significance of the present study by producing varied results within the different groups. There is a possibility that important changes in self occurred which were not adequately assessed by the TSCS. Furthermore, the administration of other inventories on the pre- and post-testing may have also caused a "fatigue" factor, thus affecting the results. Therefore, the inventory used and the testing procedure may have affected the conclusions of the present study.

A pronounced conclusion that can be made from the present study and review of previous studies is that the effects of small growth groups upon the self are still largely undetermined. More research in groups and self is suggested with special emphasis placed on adequate means of measuring specific changes in self.

Other factors which were not examined in the present study appear to need further exploration. The use of experienced group leaders, more frequent sessions, longer duration for exposure to the group experience, follow up testing at future dates after the termination of the group experience, and settings that are not potentially threatening to the group participants need to be investigated. There appears to be a general need to establish the circumstances that tend to be
detrimental to the group process before the potential of groups can be adequately assessed.

The reliability of the TSCS is questioned due to the wide variety of change scores in the control group as shown in Table 5. The apparent instability of the self-concept may actually be reflective of a tendency toward unreliability in the TSCS. Pitts (1965) reported a test-retest reliability of .92 for the Total Positive scale on 60 college students. However, only a two week period was used between the initial testing period and the retest. Thus, further data is needed to establish the reliability of the TSCS over longer periods of time and in conjunction with various treatment effects.

An important concept implied in the present study is the need for a control group in measuring the effects of treatments on self. The change in self-concept scores of the control group could reflect the influence that uncontrolled factors had on the population of the study. This is an important consideration since all or part of the self-concept change of the experimental group may have been due to uncontrolled factors as opposed to the treatment effect. By comparing the control group to the experimental group, an approximation of the effects that uncontrolled factors had on the study could be determined. In
the present study, the change in self-concept of both the experimental and control groups over time may have been due to factors such as individual experiences in a college setting, exposure to Introductory Psychology classes or other extraneous variables. Again, the reliability of the TSCS may also be questioned since there was movement of both the control and experimental groups from pre- to post-testing.

In summary, the hypothesis stating that the self-concept would be enhanced as a function of small group participation was not accepted. A conclusion of the present study was that the members did not significantly enhance their self-concepts as a result of participation in the groups as measured by the TSCS. A tendency toward self-enhancement was observed over time for both the experimental and control groups. The enhancement of self over time appeared to be unattributable to the treatment and was apparently due to uncontrolled factors. Many unanswered questions involving both group processes and self-concept need further intensive and systematic study before the potential of groups on the self can be understood. In future research, specific attention may need to be directed toward assessing individual changes in self
rather than attempting to obtain general tendencies within a defined population.
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APPENDIX A

Points used in presentations made to solicit volunteers:

(1) Each solicitor is to identify himself as a graduate student in clinical psychology.

(2) "Developmental growth" groups which are similar to "encounter" groups will be conducted this semester in the Psychology Department.

(3) The groups are called "developmental growth" groups which are similar to groups you may have heard of called "encounter" or "sensitivity" groups. Briefly the aims and content of the groups are:
   (a) To get to know yourself better.
   (b) To get feedback about yourself from others.
   (c) A chance to vent your feelings.

(4) The groups are not for people with major adjustment problems.

(5) The sessions will be kept on a positive basis, they are not designed to harm anyone, but to help each of the members become more aware of himself and others.

(6) The groups are open to all freshman who are enrolled in Psychology 100 courses this semester.
(7) The groups will take place in the Psychological Clinic.

(8) There will be four groups that will meet two times a week for five weeks.

(9) The groups will meet in the afternoons on Mondays through Thursdays at four different times.

(10) There will be two testing periods, one before and one after the group experience.

(11) The tests that will be given during the testing periods will measure aspects of human functioning which may be affected by group experiences. The results will be kept confidential; the tests will not be evaluated individually.

(12) Each volunteer for this project will receive extra credit in his psychology course for participation in a psychological experiment.

(13) There will be 20 males and 20 females randomly selected from the volunteers to participate in the groups. Those who take the tests but are not selected will receive experimental credit and their names will be kept on file and will be notified for the opportunity to participate in future groups.

(14) If a student volunteers and is randomly selected as a group member, he will be expected to attend every session. The progress of the group will be
highly dependent upon everyone participating in every session.

(15) The time for testing and group meetings are listed on the sheets that will be circulated in class. If you would like to participate, enter your name and phone number in a time slot in which you will be available twice a week for the next five weeks.