

ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR OLDER SISTERS
AS FEMININE ROLE MODELS

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B. S., Our Lady of the Lake College, 1964

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gratitude is expressed to the author's major professor, Dr. Iva Lee McCord and her committee members, Dr. Marjorie Stith and Dr. Floyd Price for their assistance and recommendations in writing this thesis. A special thanks goes to Dr. Beverly Schmalzried for her help in setting up the design for this study and her warm support and encouragement during the writing. Without her assistance and her two children, Heather and Craig, the experience would not have been as profitable nor enjoyable.

Appreciation is also expressed to the research staff of the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District, Folsom, California, who gave their permission for this study.

And finally, without the eighty-six students of Folsom High and their teachers who so generously gave of their time, this research would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.	ii
LIST OF TABLES.	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.	4
Sex-role identification	
Measurement of role identification	
Significance of sibling relationships	
The factor of sex differences	
The factor of age differences	
The factor of class status	
The nature of the home situation	
III. PROCEDURE.	15
Hypotheses to be tested	
Choice of subjects	
The questionnaire	
Administration of the questionnaire	
Analysis of the data	
IV. RESULTS	21
Description of subjects	
Examination of the hypotheses	
V. DISCUSSION	46
VI. SUMMARY	51
APPENDIX	55
REFERENCES	61

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Description of Subjects	22
2. Femininity Scores on California Psychological Inventory	25
3. Perception of Sister's Influence	26
4. Subject's Rating of Self and Sister on Adjectives	27
5. Subject's Perception of Similarity of Self and Sister on all Traits . .	28
6. Subject's Perception of Similarity of Self and Sister on Feminine Traits	29
7. Comparison of Low Feminine and High Feminine Groups on the CPI.	32
8. Comparison of Low Feminine and High Feminine Groups to Ratings of Self and Sister	35
9. Comparison of Subject's Perception of Sister as Having Little or Much Influence	41
10. Comparison of Subject's Perception of Sister's Influence to Ratings of Self and Sister.	43
11. Chi-square Values Attained in Testing Relationships	44

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the important functions of the family is the socialization of its members. A socialized being has acquired a myriad of physical, mental and social skills that take their form and content from the culture in which they are found (Kenkel, 1966). Socialization can be considered role learning in which an individual is prepared to meet the requirements of society for his behavior in a variety of situations (Brim, 1958). A person learns his role through interaction with others. As a child, parents, siblings, peers and significant others assist in the role learning process.

The adolescent has as one of his developmental tasks the achievement of a satisfying and socially accepted masculine or feminine role (Havighurst, 1956). Differential identification with mother, father, parental surrogates, older siblings and peers determines the degree to which an individual regards himself as masculine or feminine (Kagan, 1964). It is generally assumed that parents serve as primary role models for their children. However, the extent to which siblings contribute to the identification process has not been clearly determined.

In a review paper Irish (1964) indicated that sibling interaction is a neglected aspect of family life research. Studies of the positive aspects of sibling relationships are rare; sibling rivalry has been researched more

frequently (Bossard and Boll, 1954).

Several factors have been responsible for the lack of research in this area. Because society traditionally has held parents responsible for the behavior, care, and nurture of children, attention has been focused primarily on the parent-child dimension. The significance of socialization influences later in childhood has been minimized or even ignored with the emphasis of Freud on infant socialization. Family sociologists who have been employed as college teachers and marriage counselors have been concerned with dating, courtship, and marriage research. Siblings as a family sub-group have not been universal to all households. As sibling groups, children are not as physically accessible or as socially amenable to study. Research involving siblings from large families is difficult because of the increased number of subjects (Irish, 1964).

All of these factors do not lessen the importance of research with siblings. During childhood and adolescence solidarity among siblings appears second only to the mother-child bond (Cummings and Schneider, 1961). Toman (1959) recognized the influence of interaction among siblings as important supplements to the parent-child relationship. As institutions assume traditional family functions, family members increasingly will be called upon to meet the emotional, social, and psychological needs of each other. Siblings as family members may serve as important role models in addition to meeting the affectional needs of each other. Particularly, the younger sibling may learn his sex role from the older sibling of the

same sex (Irish, 1964).

Studying the influence of an older female sibling on a younger female sibling could result in an increased awareness of the importance of the sister-sister bond in sex-role identification. An increased understanding of the role of the sibling in the socialization process could aid parents in their task of rearing children. Such information could make an important contribution to the field of adolescent psychology.

A review of the literature on sex role development and sibling interaction revealed little research, most of it limited to studies of young siblings in small families (Koch, 1956; Brim, 1958). Greater understanding of the importance of the older female sibling in the development of the younger female sibling's femininity could make an important contribution to the literature on sex role learning. Therefore, this research was designed to study adolescent girls' perception of their older sisters as feminine role models.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sex-role identification

The process of learning a role appropriate to one's sex involves interaction with significant others in one's environment. Symonds (1946) defined identification as "the modeling of oneself in thought, feeling, or action after another person." It has been the distinctive contribution of sociology to demonstrate that learning the role of others occurs through the person taking the role of other, i.e., trying to act as the other would act. While this role-taking of the other can be overt as in playing parental roles, it is commonly covert involving thought and feeling. The critical fact is to what extent the person makes use of the responses learned in role-taking in his own role performance (Brim, 1958).

The process of discrimination between what belongs to one's self and what belongs to others is aided by the guidance of others. Given two other persons with whom one interacts and who differ in power over the person, one would predict that the actor would adopt more of the characteristics of the powerful as contrasted to the less powerful (Brim, 1958). From observation, parents would be considered of greater influence in the role-learning process with peers, siblings and significant others of lesser importance.

Awareness of sex-appropriate conduct occurs early in life through

observation and imitation of models in the home. Not only does the family have the responsibility of providing the child with appropriate sex models, but also it provides him with his first tryout of his own sex role (Rabban, 1950). Parents who hold normative beliefs about what the child's role should be, reward and punish him for correct and incorrect actions (Brim, 1958). The assimilation of one's sex role is a continuous process and like other learnings continues throughout life.

Adolescence is the last and concluding stage of childhood. Davis (1941) concluded that adolescence is a crucial time for definition of a sex-appropriate role. This process involving identification is conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates. These new identifications are no longer characterized by the playfulness of childhood and the experimental zest of youth. Rather the young individual is forced into choices and decisions which will lead to a more final self-definition, to an irreversible role pattern, and thus to commitments "for life" (Erikson, 1959).

The final identity as fixed at the end of adolescence is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past. It includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them. The fate of childhood identifications depends on the child's satisfactory interaction with a trustworthy and

meaningful hierarchy of roles as provided by the generations living together in some form of family (Erikson, 1959).

Observation indicates that there is a direct relationship between girls' ages and their identification as members of the female sex. Brown (1957) suggested that sex role preference should be investigated for pubescent and adolescent girls after he found that at the fifth grade level girls expressed a stronger and increased preference for things that are feminine. Adolescent girls in their junior high school or early high school years begin to manifest interest in female sex-role symbols associated with their appearance and begin to become interested in boys. Burchinal (1958) used a short questionnaire measuring girls' use of symbols directly associated with female attractiveness in our society and their reported interest in boys and found that the median score was in direct relationship to the girls' ages. The level between 13 and 14 appeared to be the breaking point between a relatively "sexless" girlhood and subsequent role identification. He suggested further investigation of adolescent girls' practice of role behavior normally associated with her sex and their responses to role attitude questionnaires.

Measurement of role identification

Sex role behavior in children is one of the least explored areas of personality formation and development (Brown, 1956). Rabban (1950) sought to determine a young child's identification with his sex role by using toys appropriate to the sexes at a young age. After the age of 4 years, he found awareness of sex differences related to sex-appropriate toy choices.

Parental imitation in children aged 3 to 5 years was explored in a study by Hartup (1962) in which he correlated sex-role preference on the Brown "It Scale" with the degree to which the subject's doll play showed the child doll imitating the same-sex parental doll. The results suggested that girls become feminine partly as a result of a tendency to imitate their mothers more than their fathers whereas boys tend to imitate both parents.

Ferguson (1941) sought to determine some of the cultural origins of masculinity and femininity by administering the Terman-Miles "Attitude-Interest (M-F) Test" to 326 subjects, selecting high and low scorers on masculinity and femininity. His results were consistent with the hypothesis that pleasant and desirable childhood experiences enable a child to accept appropriate models and "normal" behavior patterns, among these being femininity in women and masculinity in men.

To measure identification, Sopchak (1952) had 108 college men and women complete questionnaires (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) for themselves as they thought their mothers would complete them and as they thought their fathers would complete them. He found that men are more likely to identify with their fathers and women with their mothers.

Significance of sibling relationships

Sibling relationships are special and significant parts of the complex of family relationships. Winch (1962) stated that in some respects and in some relationships the influence of siblings is more important than that of parents. Parsons (1943) in his study of the kinship system in the United

States concluded that during childhood and adolescence the degree of affection between siblings and, sometimes toward cousins, may be second only to mother-child ties.

Sibling relationships can perform several functions. Many hours are spent together and a number of activities are shared. Such contacts within the family tend to be intimate and inclusive in character and are characterized by frankness, informality, cohesiveness, intensity and extensity (Irish, 1964). Companionship, imitation, instruction, cooperation, and competition stand out as elements of the sibling relationship which facilitate socialization (Ritchie and Koller, 1964).

Siblings' contribution to each other is dependent upon the siblings, their nature and how they regard and affect each other. Each sibling has his own distinctive relation to and effect upon every other sibling. Yarrow and Campbell (1963) concluded from their study of person perception in children that children appraise others in interactional terms along lines of personal significance. Piaget (1951) found that imitative behavior occurs only when the models are esteemed and the behavior is both meaningful and related to the child's interest. Bronfenbrenner (1958) stated that "...resemblance between two persons cannot be taken as sufficient evidence of modeling; there must be in addition some indication of striving on the part of one person to resemble another." A review of the research on sibling relationships indicated that differences in age and sex of the siblings, the home situation and class status were variables affecting the influence of

siblings on each other.

The factor of sex differences

Some studies indicated that the effects of ordinal position and sibling sex status vary with age and with the nature of the variables being considered. Sex of sibling has been found to have stronger effects on adjustment, anxiety, and interest inventories while ordinal position had stronger effects on mental abilities (Sutton-Smith, Roberts and Rosenberg, 1964).

Koch (1955) did extensive research with siblings of two-child families and found that children from opposite-sex sibling pairs, as compared with those whose sibling was of the same sex, were judged to be more self-confident, inclined to recover more speedily from emotional upset, cheerful, kind, "healthful," curious, tenacious, friendly to adults and children and less wavering in decision. Koch (1956) hypothesized that a sibling of the same sex would be more threatening and less stimulating than one of the opposite sex. Children of the same sex have more overlapping and more competing interests, are thrown more into each other's company, are compared with each other more frequently and find it difficult to line up readily for support each with a different parent.

Koch (1956) further related sibling characteristics to "sissiness" and "tomboyishness" and found that boys with older sisters tended to be characterized by more "sissiness" (probably because women models were most available to him). Although the difference was not significant, a girl with an older brother tended to be more "tomboyish" than a girl with an older

sister. These findings were based primarily on teacher ratings.

Brim (1958) in his analysis of Koch's data assessed the 58 traits used by the teachers selecting 31 pertaining to masculinity and femininity. He concluded that younger girls with older brothers rated substantially higher on masculinity than counterparts with older sisters. Because the older siblings are more powerful and more able to differentiate their own from their sibling's role, the older sibling influenced the younger sibling more than the opposite. No support was found to substantiate his hypothesis than the influence of the older sibling is greater when siblings are closer in age.

Sutton-Smith, Roberts and Rosenberg (1964) found a tendency for girl dyads to have high feminine scores at all age levels and on all scales used in testing (Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale, Impulsivity Scale, Play and Game Scale). First-born girls appeared to prefer a power style, which together with their preference for the surrogate parent role strongly suggested the importance of nurturance of the first-born girl. In contrast, Fauls and Smith (1956) found that only children chose sex-appropriate activities more often than children with older like-sex siblings.

Cahn (1952) used sociometric experiments with groups of siblings and found the strongest affective attitudes developed between siblings of corresponding sex. Emergent patterns from a stratified random sampling of 220 adults between the ages of 50 and 80 indicated that the sister-sister bond seemed to override the spouse bond (Cummings and Schneider, 1961).

Kammeyer (1967) studied the relationships between the sibling position of college girls and their orientation toward feminine role behavior and beliefs about female personality traits. His expectation that girls with older brothers would be more likely to have a traditional orientation toward the feminine role was not supported by the data. The only sibling position which appeared to be at all related to feminine role orientation was the girl with an older sister.

The factor of age differences

A second factor that may account for the contributions siblings make to each other is age difference. Bossard and Boll (1960) in their extensive study of large families found that the range and extent of contacts between siblings varied inversely with the time span between the birth of siblings. Close companionship is more likely between siblings near in age; those separated by a longer period tend to grow apart in separate worlds.

However, in the sibling relationship involving children who are widely separated by age, the older child, especially the female, sometimes acts as parent substitute. Sometimes this role is rejected, but often the older child manifests a real interest and concern for his or her younger sibling. Ritchie and Köhler (1964) suggested that the sibling being cared for may profit by continued access to a role model; from the security of an ever-present protector or from the knowledge that someone who understands and cares is present.

It appeared to Koch (1960) that the wider the spacing between siblings

the more they tended to go their own way and the less influence the older sibling had in determining whom the younger sibling viewed with most favor. Davis (1941) indicated that children with siblings near them in age have constantly before them the goal of the older siblings' behavior to pace them in learning the appropriate age-sex behavior.

Printer (1935) gave 2 personality tests and a short intelligence test to 137 sibling pairs in grades 4 through 8. The sibling resemblance was about the same on all 3 tests. The sibling pairs were grouped according to their distance apart in chronological age; no consistent differences were found.

The effects of both sibling sex and age on intelligence, academic achievement, personality adjustment and social acceptability of high school girls were studied by Damrin (1949). Sibling sex apparently had no effect on any of the variables. Sibling age seemed to have a slight effect upon academic achievement, but negligible effect upon personality adjustment and social acceptability. None of the differences was significant.

The factor of class status

A child's social learning takes place chiefly in the environment of his family, his family's social clique and his own social clique. The instigations, goals, and sanctions of both the family and of the intimate clique are a function principally of their class ways, that is, of the status demands in their part of society. Class ways in child training as well as class motivating factors in the child's social learning, differ sharply even when the observer considers only the classes having low status (Davis, 1941).

Class as sub-culture can shape the social expression of a biological trait; it is a frame of reference within which habits, traditions, mores, evaluations, attitudes and opportunities for a set of experiences are structured and influence some modes of personality expression. The models parents and peers provide tend to have a social class character (Rabban, 1950).

Rabban (1950) concluded from his research with children of 2 diverse social groups that the boys were more clearly aware of sex-appropriate behavior than were the girls in both middle-class and working-class groups. Boys and girls of the working class group were earlier and more clearly aware of the sex-role pattern than were both boys and girls of the middle class group. This class difference was especially great between girls. Hartley (1964) stated that for females significant class-based differences in sex-role definition seemed to exist starting early in life.

The nature of the home situation

The child's learning of sex and age appropriate behavior is motivated not only by social instigations, but also by the emotional interaction between him and his parents and siblings. The history of these affective identifications and hostilities determines the ease with which the age-sex behavior and evaluations are acquired (Davis, 1941). The nature of the home situations may affect intersibling relations in many ways, i.e., living arrangements, favoritism on the part of parents (Bossard and Boll, 1960).

The number of children in the family may affect sibling relations since

every facet of family life tends to be different in the large family (Bossard and Boll, 1960). Hawkes, Burchinal and Gardner (1958) found that children from smaller families had more favorable relations with parents and siblings than did those from larger families. This finding is in contrast to Bossard and Boll's conclusion that the large family atmosphere is more favorable to personality adjustment. Brim (1958) suggested that there are other variables that come into play in larger families especially the variations in the type and amount of sex-role learning occurring on top of the parental base.

The character of family relationships, which are marked by deep and continuing emotional involvement, by close and highly personalized identification and socially expected and sanctioned solidarity, all give a qualitatively different character to the interactional content of the sibling relationship (Ritchie and Koller, 1964).

A review of the literature indicated that younger female siblings may utilize older female siblings as role models. The significance of the older sister is related to the younger sister's perception of her influence. The degree of influence may be related to the size of the family, ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the siblings and social status.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The purpose of this research was to study adolescent girls' perception of their older sisters as feminine role models. The femininity of the girls, the perceived influence of the older sister and the adolescent girls' perceived similarity to their older sisters were related to each other, to perceived characteristics of self and sister and to factors in the family situation.

Hypotheses to be tested

- I. The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to:
 - a. General factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.
 - b. Perceived characteristics of self.
 - c. Perceived characteristics of sister.
 - d. Perceived similarities of the sisters and perceived feminine similarities.
 - e. The degree of influence of the older sister.
- II. The adolescent girl's perceived influence of her older sister is related to:
 - a. General factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.
 - b. Perceived characteristics of self.

- c. Perceived characteristics of sister.
 - d. Perceived similarities of the sisters and perceived feminine similarities.
- III. The number of perceived similarities between the two sisters is related to:
- a. General factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.
 - b. Perceived feminine similarities.

Choice of subjects

The adolescent girls selected as subjects were ninth-grade students enrolled in Folsom High School, Folsom, California. The 86 students were administered the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), a personal data questionnaire, and an adjective check list. The CPI was administered during one day and the other two questionnaires on the following day. The 37 subjects with older sisters were selected for the study.

The ninth-grade age group was chosen because the beginning of adolescence is a time during which girls become more aware of their femininity (Burchinal, 1958). Little research which studied the influence of older sisters has been completed with girls at this age.

The questionnaire

The California Psychological Inventory was chosen because it includes a femininity scale and is appropriate for girls of this age group. The CPI was constructed to assess social and personal attitudes and interests. The

test includes eighteen scales intended to cover important facets of interpersonal psychology and to provide a comprehensive survey of an individual from this social interaction point of view (Gough, 1957).

Fifty-eight items measuring femininity and masculinity were validated and included in the CPI. The following factors were suggested as characteristic of psychological femininity:

1. Emphasis on clean, white collar work, an acceptance of certain conventionally feminine roles and a rejection of certain conventional masculine roles;
2. Feelings of sensitivity;
3. Feelings of social timidity and lack of confidence;
4. Sense of compassion and sympathy;
5. Lack of interest in larger, more abstract, political and social world;
6. Moderate pettiness and irritability in judgment;
7. "Niceness" and acquiescence (Gough, 1952).

A test of the masculine-feminine scale conducted by Webster (1953) revealed that the questionnaire responses achieved a more precise discrimination in comparison to the Thematic Apperception Test. Scores were obtained for each of the subjects on the Femininity (Fe) scale.

The second part of the questionnaire included a list of masculine and feminine traits based on those assessed by the CPI Femininity scale. These traits were chosen because they were validated in several studies with high school students (Cronbach, 1959). The degree of trait possession was indicated by providing 3 choices: "all of the time," "one-half of the time" and

"hardly ever." Two columns were provided: 1 for the younger sister and 1 for the older sister. Agreement scores were obtained by counting the number of times the younger sister checked the same column for herself and her older sister.

The age of the subject, sex and age of siblings, education and occupation of parents were included as part of the personal data questionnaire. Each subject was asked to rate the degree to which she felt her older sister had been an important influence in her life. A five-point continuum was used to determine the degree of influence.

The McGuire-White Index was chosen to measure social status. The status indices are based upon questions commonly asked when attempting to approximate someone's social position. A number of studies at the University of Texas have demonstrated that status classifications are useful in research and help clarify much that is involved in working with people. Occupation, source of income and education are weighted and the scores were totaled and then converted into upper, upper-middle, middle, upper lower and lower-lower class status (McGuire-White, 1955). A copy of the questionnaire developed for this study is included in the appendix.

Administration of the questionnaire

Folsom High School was chosen for this study because the school personnel were willing and cooperative. The research staff of the Folsom-Cordova Unified School District contacted the school administration and the physical education department; both granted permission for the researcher

to use students enrolled in the physical education classes which included all ninth-grade girls in the school. The California Psychological Inventory was administered to the girls during a 50 minute period. The personal data questionnaire and the adjective check list were administered on the following day.

Instructions for the CPI and the other parts of the questionnaire were read to the subjects. If a subject had more than one older sister, she was told to rate the older sister nearer to her in age on the adjective check list and the degree of influence question. In addition, the researcher told the girls she was attempting to learn more about adolescent girls and their families. It was emphasized that their names were not to be written on the questionnaire and that all information would be kept confidential.

Analysis of the data

The femininity score of each subject on the California Psychological Inventory was determined. The femininity scale consists of 35 items. Since the mean score was 21 the subjects with a score below 21 were considered as low in femininity and those with a score above 21 were considered as high in femininity. These 2 sub groups were used to test the hypotheses.

Agreement scores on the adjective check list were obtained by counting the number of times the subject rated herself and her older sister as possessing a trait to the same degree, i.e., most of the time, half of the time or hardly ever. The agreement scores were used to indicate the younger sibling's perception of her similarity to her older sibling.

The younger sister's perception of the influence of her older sister was obtained on a five-point continuum. A rating of 1 indicated the subject perceived her sister as having little influence and a rating of 5 as having great influence. Ratings from 1 to 3 were grouped into a low influence category and those from 4 to 5 in a high influence category to test the related hypotheses.

The relationship between the femininity scores, the agreement scores, influence ratings and other factors was analyzed using the Chi Square test. These other factors included: age of subject, age of older sister, age difference between the sisters, number of siblings, ordinal position of subject, characteristics of subject, perceived characteristics of older sister, source of family income, education of parents, occupation of father, employment of mother and social status.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of subjects

The subjects of the study were 37 ninth-grade girls between the ages of 14 and 17 who had at least 1 older sister. Ninety-one per cent of the subjects came from families of 3 to 8 children with a mean of 5 children. There were twice as many subjects in the middle child position as in the youngest child position. Eighty-seven per cent of the subjects had brothers and sisters in addition to the sister used in the study.

The older sisters of the subjects used to study sibling influence ranged in age from 15 to 28 years. The mean age difference between the sister pairs was 3.5 years with 84 per cent having a 1 to 5 year age difference.

All of the subjects had 2 parents in the home although a few indicated that they had step-parents. Thirty-eight per cent of the fathers and 30 per cent of the mothers had completed high school. Almost one-fourth of the fathers and mothers had some college work with 15 per cent of the fathers and 6 per cent of the mothers holding college degrees. Seven subjects did not know their father's educational level and 6 subjects did not know their mother's educational level. Slightly more than one-fourth of the mothers had not graduated from high school while only 14 per cent of the fathers had

not completed high school.

All of the fathers of the subjects were employed. Almost two-thirds of the fathers received a monthly salary while 27 per cent received hourly wages. A small percentage (10.8) received profits or fees from a business or profession. Examination of the McGuire-White rating of the occupations of the fathers indicated over one-half were employed in skilled or supervisory jobs. Only 12 were employed in professional positions or as Air Force officers. Only 32 per cent of the mothers were employed 40 hours or more a week with 43 per cent not employed at all and 25 per cent working less than 40 hours per week.

Using the McGuire-White conversion scale based on income, occupation and education of parents, one-half of the subjects were in the lower middle and upper middle social class while the other half were rated as upper lower class. A detailed description of the subjects is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECTS
N = 37

Variable	Number	Percentage
<u>Age</u>		
14	5	13.5
15	24	64.9
16	7	18.9
17	1	2.7

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Variable	Number	Percentage
<u>Number of siblings</u>		
1	2	5.4
2	9	24.3
3	6	16.2
4	8	21.6
5	3	8.1
6	4	10.8
7	4	10.8
9	1	2.7
<u>Family composition in addition to sister pairs</u>		
Other sister (s)	1	2.7
Other brother (s) and sister (s)	32	86.5
Other brother (s)	3	8.1
No other siblings	1	2.7
<u>Ordinal position</u>		
Middle child	25	67.6
Youngest child	12	32.4
<u>Age difference between sisters</u>		
1 year	9	24.3
2 years	7	18.9
3 years	7	18.9
4 years	4	10.8
5 years	4	10.8
6 years	1	2.7
7 years	1	2.7
8 years	1	2.7
9 years	3	8.1
<u>Source of family income</u>		
Weekly pay, hourly wages	10	27.0
Profits, fees from business or profession	4	10.8
Monthly salary	23	62.2

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Variable	Number	Percentage
<u>Father's education</u>		
Less than high school education	5	13.5
High school graduate	14	37.8
1 - 3 years college	5	13.5
College graduate	4	10.8
Graduate school	2	5.4
Unknown	7	18.9
<u>Mother's education</u>		
Less than high school education	10	27.0
High school graduate	11	29.7
1 - 3 years college	4	10.8
College graduate	6	16.2
Unknown	6	16.2
<u>Father's occupation</u>		
Teacher, department manager	5	13.5
Salesman, Air Force officer	7	18.9
Foreman, small business	9	24.3
Skilled	12	32.4
Semi-skilled	3	8.1
Unskilled	1	2.7
<u>Mother's employment</u>		
Not at all	16	43.2
Less than 40 hours	9	24.3
40 hours	7	18.9
More than 40 hours	5	13.5
<u>Social class</u>		
Upper middle	8	21.6
Lower middle	15	40.5
Upper lower	14	37.8

The possible range for the CPI Femininity scale as established by Gough (1957) was 0 - 35 with a mean score of 23. The femininity scores of the subjects in this study ranged from 11 to 29 with a mean score of 21.5. Thirty per cent of the subjects had a score of 22, 1 unit above the mean. The femininity scores of the subjects are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2
FEMININITY SCORES ON CALIFORNIA PSYCHOLOGICAL INVENTORY
N = 37

Score	Number	Percentage
11 - 12	5	13.5
16 - 21	11	28.7
22 - 26	16	43.2
27 - 29	5	13.5

The subjects were asked to indicate to what degree their older sister had been an important influence on their life. A continuum from "not at all" to "very much" was used with numbers 1 through 5. Two-thirds of the subjects gave their sisters a rating of 4 or 5 which indicated they felt their sisters were important influences on their lives. Only 2 of the 37 felt their sister had had no influence. The subjects' perception of their older sister's influence is indicated in Table 3.

TABLE 3
 PERCEPTION OF SISTER'S INFLUENCE
 N = 37

Degree of sister's influence	Number	Percentage
1 not at all	2	5.4
2	5	13.5
3	5	13.5
4	11	29.7
5 very much	14	37.8

The subjects were given a list of adjectives and asked to rate both themselves and their sisters as possessing the characteristics "most of the time," "about one-half of the time," or "hardly ever." Over half of the subjects rated themselves as understanding, success-oriented, active, gentle, sincere, sympathetic and respectful most of the time. Five of these 7 characteristics were feminine qualities. Most of the subjects rated themselves feminine more than masculine.

Over one-half of the sisters were rated as understanding, hard-headed, success-oriented, active, patient, helpful, calm, gentle, outgoing, sincere, sympathetic, respectful, persistent, and blunt and direct most of the time. Nine of these 13 traits were feminine characteristics. Most of the subjects rated their sisters as feminine more than masculine. Table 4 describes the subject's rating of themselves and their older sisters on the masculine and feminine traits.

TABLE 4

SUBJECT'S RATING OF SELF AND SISTER ON ADJECTIVES

	Rating of Self				Rating of Sister							
	I am like this.....		My sister is like this.....		Most of the time		One-half of the time		Hardly ever			
	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age	No. Percent- age		
Understanding*	22	59.5	13	35.1	2	5.4	20	54.1	11	29.7	6	16.2
Hard-headed	9	24.3	16	43.2	12	32.4	14	37.9	9	24.3	11	29.7
Desire success	21	56.7	13	35.1	3	8.1	18	48.7	15	40.5	4	10.8
Active	26	70.2	9	24.3	2	5.4	18	48.7	11	29.7	8	21.5
Patient*	7	18.9	22	59.5	7	18.9	13	35.1	16	43.2	8	21.6
Helpful*	14	37.8	22	59.5	1	2.7	22	59.5	12	32.4	2	5.4
Calm*	16	43.2	18	48.7	3	8.1	14	37.8	19	51.4	4	10.8
Restless	11	29.7	10	27.0	16	43.2	10	27.0	11	29.7	15	40.5
Gentle*	20	54.1	16	43.2	1	2.7	15	40.5	19	51.4	3	8.1
Outgoing	17	46.0	12	32.4	8	21.6	20	54.1	14	37.8	3	8.1
Masculine	4	10.8	8	21.6	25	67.6	7	18.9	6	16.2	24	54.9
Strong	12	32.4	19	51.4	6	16.2	11	29.7	15	40.5	11	29.7
Sincere*	21	56.8	16	43.2	--	---	21	56.8	15	40.5	1	2.7
Sympathetic*	22	59.5	14	37.9	1	2.7	20	54.1	13	35.1	4	10.8
Respectful*	24	64.9	13	35.1	--	---	18	48.7	16	43.2	2	5.4
Persistent*	10	27.1	21	56.8	6	16.2	13	35.1	17	46.0	7	18.9
Blunt and direct	7	18.9	13	35.1	17	46.0	13	35.1	13	35.1	11	39.7
Impatient with delay and indecision	9	24.3	14	37.8	13	35.1	10	27.0	16	43.2	10	27.0

*Feminine traits

Perceived similarity was calculated by counting the number of times the subject gave herself and her sister the same rating. A high number of agreements on the adjective check list indicated a greater perceived similarity between the two sisters. Fifty per cent of the subjects saw themselves as similar to their older sisters on at least 10 of the 18 characteristics. One subject rated herself and her sibling as alike on all traits. For the 9 feminine traits included on the list, 50 per cent of the subjects saw themselves as similar to their sister on at least 5 of the traits. The total number of perceived similarities on all traits and the number of perceived similarities on the feminine traits are indicated in Tables 5 and 6, respectively.

TABLE 5
 SUBJECT'S PERCEPTION OF SIMILARITY OF SELF
 AND SISTER ON ALL TRAITS
 N = 37

Number of agreements	Number	Percentage
4 - 6	7	18.9
7 - 9	9	24.3
10 - 12	11	29.7
13 - 18	10	27.0

TABLE 6
 SUBJECT'S PERCEPTION OF SIMILARITY OF SELF
 AND SISTER ON FEMININE TRAITS
 N = 37

Number of agreements	Number	Percentage
1	2	5.4
2	3	8.1
3	3	8.1
4	7	18.9
5	6	16.2
6	7	18.9
7	5	13.5
9	4	10.8

Examination of the hypotheses

The relationships between the femininity scores, the influence ratings, agreement scores and other factors were analyzed using the chi square method of analysis. Results that were significant or showed significant trends are listed in Table 11 at the end of this chapter.

Hypothesis 1a: The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to general factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.

There was not a significant relationship between the femininity score of the subject on the California Psychological Inventory and the general factors. However, there did seem to be a relationship between the femininity

score of the subject and her age although it was not significant. Ninety per cent of the subjects who had high femininity scores were either 14 or 15 years of age while 63 per cent of the low scorers on femininity were of this same age. Fourteen and 15 year old subjects tended to have higher femininity scores than those 16 and 17 years of age.

Of the subjects with high femininity scores, 52 per cent had sisters 1 or 2 years older, 19 per cent had sisters 3 to 4 years older and 29 per cent had sisters 5 to 9 years older. Those subjects with sisters close to them in age tended to have higher femininity scores. The femininity scores of the subjects were not significantly related to general factors, therefore Hypothesis I (a) was not accepted.

Hypothesis I b: The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to perceived characteristics of herself.

The femininity scores of the subjects on the CPI were not significantly related to the subject's rating of herself on the adjective check list of masculine and feminine traits. Subjects rated themselves as possessing the trait "most of the time," "one-half of the time," or "hardly ever." The traits that could be tested included: understanding, success-oriented, active, helpful, calm, restless, gentle, outgoing, strong, sincere, sympathetic, and respectful. Hypothesis I (b) was not accepted.

Hypothesis I c: The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to her perceived characteristics of her sister.

There was a significant relationship at the .025 level between the femininity score of the subject on the CPI and her rating of her sister as

outgoing. Eighty-one per cent of the low feminine group rated their sisters as outgoing most of the time while only 33 per cent of the high feminine group rated their sister as outgoing most of the time. Adolescents with low femininity scores rated their sisters as outgoing, a masculine trait.

There was a tendency for a relationship between the femininity scores of the subjects and their rating of their older sister as understanding, patient, and blunt and direct. Sixty-two per cent of the subjects with high femininity scores rated their sisters as understanding one-half of the time or hardly ever while 75 per cent of the low scorers on femininity rated their sisters as understanding most of the time. Subjects with high femininity scores tended not to perceive their sisters as understanding.

Forty-eight per cent of the subjects with high femininity scores tended to rate their sisters as patient most of the time while 81 per cent of the subjects with low femininity scores rated their sisters as patient one-half of the time or hardly ever. Subjects who scored high on femininity tended to rate their sisters as patient.

Seventy-six per cent of the subjects with high femininity scores rated their sisters as blunt and direct one-half of the time or hardly ever while only 50 per cent of the low femininity scorers rated their sister in this way. The subjects with high femininity scores tended not to rate their sisters as blunt and direct, a masculine trait.

There was not a significant relationship between the femininity scores of the subjects and their perception of their older sister's characteristics

except for their perception of their sister as outgoing. Therefore, Hypothesis I (c) was not accepted.

Hypothesis I d: The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to the total number of perceived similarities and number of perceived feminine similarities between the two sisters.

There was not a significant relationship between the femininity scores of the subjects and the total number of perceived similarities and number of perceived feminine similarities on the adjective check list. Hypothesis I (d) was not accepted.

Hypothesis I e: The femininity of the adolescent girl is related to the degree of influence of the older sister as perceived by the subject.

There was not a significant relationship between the femininity scores of the subjects and the subject's perception of the influence of her older sister. Therefore, Hypothesis I (e) was not accepted. Tables 7 and 8 present a detailed comparison of the groups scoring above and below the mean of 21.5 on the femininity scale of the California Psychological Inventory. Only those traits which could be tested were included in Table 8.

TABLE 7

COMPARISON OF LOW FEMININE AND HIGH FEMININE GROUPS
ON THE CPI

<u>Age</u>	<u>Low Femininity</u>		<u>High Femininity</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
14 and 15	10	62.5	19	90.5
16 and 17	6	37.5	2	9.5

TABLE 7 (Continued)

	Low Femininity		High Femininity	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Number of siblings</u>				
1 - 3	8	50.0	9	42.9
4 - 9	8	50.0	12	57.1
<u>Age of older sibling</u>				
15 - 18	8	50.0	14	66.7
19 - 28	8	50.0	7	33.3
<u>Age difference between siblings</u>				
1 - 2	5	31.3	11	52.4
3 - 4	7	43.8	4	19.0
5 - 9	4	25.0	6	28.6
<u>Main source of income</u>				
Weekly pay, fees	8	50.0	6	28.6
Monthly salary	8	50.0	15	71.4
<u>Father's education</u>				
High school graduate	10	71.4	9	56.3
College graduate	4	28.6	7	43.8
<u>Mother's education</u>				
High school graduate	11	78.6	10	58.8
College graduate	3	21.4	7	41.2
<u>Mother's employment</u>				
Employed	8	50.0	8	38.1
Not employed	8	50.0	13	61.9
<u>McGuire-White Index</u>				
Middle class	9	56.3	14	66.7
Lower class	14	66.7	7	33.3

TABLE 7 (Continued)

	Low Femininity		High Femininity	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Ordinal position</u>				
Middle child	11	68.8	12	63.2
Youngest child	12	63.2	7	36.8
<u>Sister's influence</u>				
Little influence	4	25.0	8	38.1
Much influence	12	75.0	13	61.9
<u>Number of agreements</u>				
4 - 10	8	50.0	10	47.6
11 - 18	8	50.0	11	52.4
<u>Feminine agreements</u>				
1 - 4	7	43.8	8	38.1
5 - 9	9	56.3	13	61.9

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF LOW FEMININE AND HIGH FEMININE GROUPS
TO RATINGS OF SELF AND SISTER

	Low Femininity				High Femininity			
	Most No.	Percent- age	$\frac{1}{2}$ or Hardly No.	Percent- age	Most No.	Percent- age	$\frac{1}{2}$ or Hardly No.	Percent- age
<u>Self rating</u>								
Understanding	10	62.5	6	37.5	12	57.1	9	42.9
Desire success	7	43.8	9	56.3	14	66.7	7	33.3
Active	10	62.5	6	37.5	16	76.2	5	23.8
Helpful	7	43.8	9	56.3	7	33.3	14	66.7
Calm	9	56.3	7	43.8	7	33.3	14	66.7
Restless	3	18.8	13	81.3	8	38.1	13	61.9
Gentle	8	50.0	8	50.0	12	57.1	9	42.9
Outgoing	8	50.0	8	50.0	9	42.9	12	57.1
Strong	6	37.5	10	62.5	6	28.6	15	71.4
Sincere	8	50.0	8	50.0	8	38.1	13	61.9
Sympathetic	8	50.0	8	50.0	14	66.7	7	33.3
Respectful	4	25.0	12	75.0	9	42.9	12	57.1
<u>Sister's rating</u>								
Understanding	12	75.0	4	25.0	8	38.1	13	61.9
Hard-headed	7	50.0	7	50.0	7	35.0	13	65.0
Desire success	7	43.8	9	56.3	11	52.4	10	47.6
Active	8	50.0	8	50.0	10	47.6	11	52.4
Patient	3	18.8	13	81.3	10	47.6	11	52.4
Helpful	11	68.8	5	31.3	11	55.5	9	45.5
Calm	7	43.8	9	56.3	7	33.3	14	66.7
Gentle	5	31.3	11	68.8	10	47.6	11	52.4
Outgoing	13	81.3	3	18.8	7	33.3	14	66.7
Strong	4	25.0	12	75.0	7	33.3	14	66.7
Sincere	9	56.3	7	43.8	12	57.1	9	42.9
Sympathetic	8	50.0	8	50.0	12	57.1	9	42.9
Respectful	6	37.5	10	62.5	12	60.0	8	40.0
Persistent	7	43.8	9	56.3	6	28.6	15	71.4
Blunt and direct	8	50.0	8	50.0	5	23.8	16	76.2

Hypothesis II (a): The adolescent girl's perceived influence of her older sister is related to general factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.

The subject's perceived influence of her older sister was not significantly related to general factors therefore Hypothesis II (a) was not accepted. However, there was a slight relationship between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and the age of the sister. Eighty-three per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had little influence on them had sisters between the ages of 15 and 18 while 52 per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had much influence on them had sisters between the ages of 19 and 28. The subjects with older sisters tended to feel their sisters were a more important influence on their lives.

There was a tendency for a relationship between the sister's influence as perceived by the subject and age difference between the sisters. Ninety per cent of the subjects whose sisters were from 5 to 9 years older and 54 per cent of those with sisters from 3 to 4 years older perceived their sisters as having much influence on their lives. Adolescent girls with sisters more than 3 years older tended to perceive their sisters as an important influence on their lives.

Hypothesis II (b): The adolescent girl's perceived influence of her older sister is related to her perceived characteristics of herself.

The relationship between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and her perceived characteristics of herself was not significant.

Therefore, Hypothesis II (b) was not supported by the data. There was a slight relationship between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and her rating of herself as sympathetic. Sixty-eight per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences rated themselves as sympathetic most of the time, while 58 per cent of the subjects who felt their sister had had little influence on their lives rated themselves as sympathetic one-half of the time or hardly ever. Most of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences rated themselves as sympathetic.

Hypothesis II (c): The adolescent girl's perceived influence of her older sister is related to her perceived characteristics of her sister.

There was a significant relationship beyond the .01 level between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and her rating of her sister as sincere and sympathetic. Seventy-six per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences on their lives rated their sisters as sincere most of the time, while 83 per cent who felt they had little influence on their lives rated their sisters as sincere one-half of the time or hardly ever.

Seventy-two per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences on their lives rated their sisters as sympathetic most of the time while 83 per cent who felt their sisters had little influence rated their sisters as sympathetic one-half of the time or hardly ever. The subjects who felt their sisters were important influences on their lives rated their

sisters as both sincere and sympathetic.

There was a significant relationship at the .025 level between the perceived influence of the older sister and the subject's rating of her sister as helpful. Seventy-six per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences rated their sisters as helpful most of the time, while 73 per cent who felt their sisters had little influence rated their sisters as helpful one-half of the time or hardly ever. Those subjects who felt their sisters were important influences on their lives rated their sisters as helpful most of the time.

There was a tendency for a significant relationship between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and the rating of her sister as understanding and gentle. Sixty-four per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences on their lives rated their sisters as understanding most of the time while 66 per cent who felt their sisters had little influence rated their sisters as understanding one-half of the time or hardly ever. Fifty-two per cent of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences on their lives tended to rate their sisters as gentle most of the time while 83 per cent who felt their sisters had little influence rated their sisters as gentle one-half of the time or hardly ever. Subjects who rated their sisters as understanding and gentle felt their sisters had much influence on their lives.

Although the perceived influence of the older sister was significantly related to the subject's rating of her sister as sincere and sympathetic, Hypothesis II (c), in general, was not supported by the data in this study.

Hypothesis II (d): The adolescent girl's perceived influence of her older sister is related to the subject's perceived similarities and perceived feminine similarities.

There was a tendency for a relationship between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and the number of perceived similarities on the adjective check list. The number of perceived similarities indicated the frequency with which the subject gave herself and her older sister identical ratings. Of the subjects who felt their sisters had been important influences on their lives, 40 per cent had 4 to 10 agreements on the adjective check list, while 60 per cent had from 11 to 18 agreements. There was a tendency for those subjects who felt their sisters had much influence on them to rate themselves and their older sisters as possessing similar characteristics.

There was not a significant relationship between the perceived influence of the older sister and the subject's perception of her own and her older sister's feminine traits. Hypothesis II (d) was not accepted although there was a tendency for the subject's perception of her similarity to her older sister to be related to her perception of her sister's influence. Tables 9 and 10 present a detailed analysis of those subjects who indicated their sisters had little influence and those who indicated their sisters had much influence. Only those traits tested were included on Table 10.

Hypothesis III (a): The number of perceived similarities between the two sisters is related to general factors: age and ordinal position of subject, age of older sister, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family and social class factors.

There was not a significant relationship between the subject's perceived

similarity to her older sister (number of agreements on adjective check list) and general factors. There was a tendency for a relationship between the subject's perceived similarity to her older sister and the McGuire-White Index for Social Status. Seventy-eight per cent of the subjects in the upper middle and lower middle social classes rated themselves and their older sisters as similar on at least 11 of the 18 traits on the adjective check list while 21 per cent who were in the upper-lower social class rated themselves and their sisters as similar on at least 11 of the 18 traits. Subjects in the middle class perceived their sisters as more similar to themselves than subjects in the lower class. Although there was a tendency for the number of perceived similarities between the two sisters to be related to social class, there was not enough support for it and the other general factors to support Hypothesis III (a).

Hypothesis III (b): The number of perceived similarities between the two sisters is related to the number of perceived feminine similarities.

There was a significant relationship between the subject's perceived similarity to her sister on all of the traits and her perceived similarity to her sister on the feminine traits at the .01 level of significance. Those subjects who rated themselves as similar on at least 11 of the 18 traits likewise rated themselves as similar on the 9 feminine traits. Those subjects who perceived themselves as similar to their older sisters on all traits perceived themselves as similar on the feminine traits. Hypothesis III (b) was accepted.

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF SUBJECT'S PERCEPTION OF SISTER AS HAVING
LITTLE OR MUCH INFLUENCE

	Little Influence		Much Influence	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Age</u>				
14 - 15	8	66.7	21	84.0
16 - 17	4	33.3	4	16.0
<u>Number of siblings</u>				
1 - 3	4	33.3	13	52.0
4 - 9	8	66.7	12	48.0
<u>Age of older sibling</u>				
15 - 18	10	83.3	12	48.0
19 - 28	2	16.7	13	52.0
<u>Age difference between siblings</u>				
1 - 2 years	6	50.0	10	40.0
3 - 4 years	5	41.7	6	24.0
5 - 9 years	1	8.3	9	36.0
<u>Ordinal position</u>				
Middle child	8	72.7	15	62.5
Youngest child	3	27.3	9	37.5
<u>Main source of family income</u>				
Weekly pay, fees	6	50.0	8	32.0
Monthly salary	6	50.0	17	68.0
<u>Mother's employment</u>				
Not employed	7	58.3	14	56.0
Employed	5	41.7	11	44.0

TABLE 9 (Continued)

	Little Influence		Much Influence	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<u>Father's education</u>				
High school graduate	5	55.6	14	66.7
College graduate	4	44.4	7	33.3
<u>Mother's education</u>				
High school graduate	7	70.0	14	66.7
College graduate	3	30.0	7	33.3
<u>McGuire-White Index</u>				
Middle class	7	58.3	16	64.0
Lower class	5	41.7	9	36.0
<u>Number of agreements</u>				
4 - 10	8	66.7	10	40.0
11 - 18	4	33.3	15	60.0
<u>Number of feminine agreements</u>				
1 - 4	5	41.7	10	40.0
5 - 9	7	58.3	15	60.0

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF SUBJECT'S PERCEPTION OF SISTER'S INFLUENCE
TO RATINGS OF SELF AND SISTER

	Little Influence				Much Influence			
	Most		$\frac{1}{2}$ or Hardly		Most		$\frac{1}{2}$ or Hardly	
	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age	No.	Percent- age
<u>Rating of Self</u>								
Understanding	7	58.3	5	41.7	15	60.0	10	40.0
Desire success	7	58.3	5	41.7	14	56.0	11	44.0
Active	9	75.0	3	25.0	17	68.0	8	32.0
Helpful	5	41.7	7	58.3	9	36.0	16	64.0
Calm	4	33.3	8	66.7	12	48.0	13	52.0
Restless	3	25.0	9	75.0	8	32.0	17	68.0
Gentle	6	50.0	6	50.0	14	56.0	11	44.0
Outgoing	4	33.3	8	66.7	13	52.0	12	48.0
Strong	5	41.7	7	58.3	7	28.0	18	72.0
Sincere	5	41.7	7	58.3	11	44.0	14	56.0
Sympathetic	5	41.7	7	58.3	17	68.0	8	32.0
Respectful	3	25.0	9	75.0	10	40.0	15	60.0
<u>Rating of Sister</u>								
Understanding	4	33.3	8	66.7	16	64.0	9	36.0
Hard-headed	4	44.4	5	55.6	10	40.0	15	60.0
Desire success	5	41.7	7	58.3	13	52.0	12	48.0
Active	5	41.7	7	58.3	13	52.0	12	48.0
Patient	4	33.3	8	66.7	9	36.0	16	64.0
Helpful	3	27.3	8	72.7	19	76.0	6	24.0
Calm	4	33.3	8	66.7	10	40.0	15	60.0
Gentle	2	16.7	10	83.3	13	52.0	12	48.0
Outgoing	6	50.0	6	50.0	14	56.0	11	44.0
Strong	5	41.7	7	58.3	6	24.0	19	76.0
Sincere	2	16.7	10	83.3	19	76.0	6	24.0
Sympathetic	2	16.7	10	83.3	18	72.0	7	28.0
Respectful	6	50.0	6	50.0	12	50.0	12	50.0
Persistent	4	33.3	8	66.7	9	36.0	16	64.0
Blunt and direct	5	41.7	7	58.3	9	36.0	16	64.0

TABLE 11

CHI SQUARE VALUES ATTAINED IN TESTING RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship	Chi Square Value	df	Level of Significance
Sister's influence and rating of sister as sincere	9.34	1	.005
Sister's influence and rating of sister as sympathetic	7.89	1	.005
Number of agreements and number of feminine agreements	12.14	1	.005
Femininity score of subject and her rating of sister as outgoing	6.57	1	.025
Sister's influence and subject's rating of sister as helpful	5.71	1	.025
Femininity score of subject and her age	2.7	1	.10
Femininity score of subject and age difference between siblings	2.8	2	.10
Femininity score of subject and rating of sister as understanding	3.6	1	.10
Sister's influence and sister's age	2.86	1	.10
Sister's influence and subject's rating of sister as gentle	2.86	1	.10
Number of agreements and McGuire-White Index	3.32	1	.10
Femininity score of subject and her rating of her sister as patient	2.17	1	ns
Femininity score of subject and her rating of her sister as seldom blunt and direct	1.70	1	ns

TABLE 11 (Continued)

Relationship	Chi Square Value	df	Level of Significance
Sister's influence and age difference between the sisters	3.33	2	ns
Sister's influence and number of agreements on adjective check list	1.36	1	ns
Sister's influence and rating of self as sympathetic	1.36	1	ns
Sister's influence and rating of sister as seldom understanding	1.95	1	ns

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Results of this study were not generally consistent with previous research on sibling relationships. Family background factors including social class were not significantly related to the femininity scores of the subject, the perceived influence of the older sister, the rated characteristics of the sisters, and the similarities between the two sisters, nor were these factors significantly related to each other. Although it was found that these adolescent girls view their sisters as having an important influence on their lives, the nature of the influence was not indicated in this study.

Subjects who were 14 and 15 years of age and 1 to 2 years younger than their older sisters tended to have higher scores on the California Psychological Inventory. It would seem that younger adolescent girls might be more feminine because they have just recently entered adolescence and are more conscious of their femininity than girls 15 and 16. Perhaps the changes in the role of women in our society are resulting in increased pressure for older female adolescents to assume more masculine attitudes. Adolescent girls with older sisters closer to them in age might be more feminine because siblings closer in age generally have more contact with each other (Koch, 1960; Davis, 1941). Therefore, they may have a clearer definition of femininity.

The femininity scores of the subjects were not related to other general factors. Perhaps the sample tested was not large enough to give enough variance on the CPI since most of the scores tended to cluster around the median score of 21.5 and 11 of the 37 subjects had a score of 22. By the time adolescent girls have reached this stage in their development, their ideas of femininity and appropriate behavior may not be affected by social class status, or social class factors may not ever have a significant influence on the development of femininity.

However there were relationships between the femininity scores of the subjects and some characteristics of their sisters as perceived by the subjects. Only 1 of the characteristics, outgoing, reached the .02 level of significance. This trait is considered masculine rather than feminine. These girls may have developed femininity as their style in the family interaction to contrast their outgoing, aggressive sisters. It is probable the adolescent uses her sister as a role model for both feminine and masculine traits.

There were other interesting trends which failed to reach the level of significance. Subjects who were rated as feminine tended to perceive their sisters as very patient but seldom understanding or blunt and direct. There was no consistent relationship between the subjects' femininity scores and their perception of their sisters as possessing feminine traits; again maybe the sister is a model for behavior, attitudes and ideas but not for feminine traits.

Whether an older sister has influence on a younger sister would depend on the perception of the younger sister of her sister's influence on her. The models used must be held in esteem by the imitator (Piaget, 1951). Sixty-eight per cent of the subjects in this study felt their sisters were important influences on their lives. Although there was little evidence to support the hypothesis that adolescent girls' perceive their sisters as feminine role models, it is significant that they feel their sisters were important influences on their lives. This finding supports the thesis that siblings' relationships are important in understanding the development of the individual child.

Winch (1960) stated that in some respects and in some relationships, the influence of siblings may be more important than that of parents. Perhaps today with the decrease in importance of the parent-child relationship as mothers work and children spend more time outside the home, siblings will become parental substitutes especially fulfilling the functions of companionship and communication.

Another finding that reached a significance beyond the .01 level was that adolescents who felt their sisters were important influences considered their sisters as very sincere and sympathetic. Their perceptions of their sisters as helpful and gentle were slightly related to their perception of their sisters as important influences. These traits are characteristics of a helping relationship; therefore, sisters possessing them can certainly be considered facilitators for personal growth and development. Parents and educators

could help older siblings in being supportive members of their families by increasing their awareness of the important role they play in the lives of their brothers and sisters.

The younger sisters who felt their older sisters important influences rated themselves as sympathetic, too. If an older sister were sympathetic to a younger sister, it would seem the younger sister would reciprocate with similar feelings especially if she held the sister in high esteem.

There was no statistically significant relationship between the influence of the older sister and her age or the age differential. However, the adolescent girls who thought their sisters had much influence tended to have older sisters rather than younger sisters. Sisters from 19 to 28 years of age are probably no longer in the home, and the adolescents may have more positive feelings toward them since they are no longer competitors. Koch (1956) hypothesized that sometimes siblings of the same sex have more overlapping and competing interests and are compared more frequently. Sisters close in age may be vying for parental favor and parents may compare them, thus their feelings toward each other may not be as positive.

In this same regard, adolescents tended to consider their sisters as having an important influence when the age span between them was larger. This finding is not in accord with Koch's study (1960) which indicated that siblings separated by a larger age span tend to go their own way. It may be that the younger sister sees the older sibling as a parent surrogate since she is several years older rather than a competitor. If the older sister

is viewed as a competitor, the younger sister may reject her as an important influence. The sibling several years older may be perceived as more powerful than one close in age and, therefore, more influential.

There was a tendency for subjects from the middle class to perceive their sisters as more similar to themselves than subjects from the lower class. Bossard and Boll (1960) concluded that the home situation may affect intersibling relations in many ways. Perhaps subjects in the middle class are treated more similarly by parents and participate in more family activities, thereby receiving similar socializing influences. Sisters in the lower class may tend to go their own way and others, especially the peer group, may become more important as socializers.

Social class factors were not significantly related to the femininity of the subject and the subject's perceived influence of her older sister. Perhaps, again, the sample was too small to note enough variance in class differences. It might be expected that subjects in the lower class would perceive their sisters as important influences since they often fulfill surrogate parent roles. In this sample, however, both parents were in the home and many of the mothers did not work, so the importance of the older sister as a surrogate parent and role model might be of lesser importance.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to study adolescent girls' perception of their older sisters as feminine role models. The femininity of the girls, the perceived influence of their older sisters, and their perceived similarity to their sisters were related to each other, to perceived characteristics of self and sister and to factors in the family situation.

The data were collected using the California Psychological Inventory, a personal data questionnaire and an adjective check list. The instruments were administered to 86 freshmen girls attending Folsom High School, Folsom, California. From this group, 37 adolescent girls with older female siblings were selected for the study.

The responses of the subjects were placed on data processing cards in order to use Kansas State University's computer for statistical analysis. Frequency distributions, percentages, means and Chi-square values were obtained.

The major hypotheses examined were: (1) the femininity scores of the subjects on the CPI are related to the general factors of age and ordinal position of subject, age differences between the sisters, number of siblings in the family, social class factors; to the subject's rating of her sister's

influence and to the subject's perception of her similarity to her older sister and their masculine and feminine characteristics; (2) the degree of influence of the older sister is related to the general factors and to the subject's perception of her similarity to her older sister and their characteristics and (3) the subject's perception of their similarities is related to the general factors.

Results indicated the majority (67.5 per cent) of the subjects in the study felt their sister had been an important or very important influence on their life. Only two of the 37 perceived their sister as having had no influence. Both of these subjects had other sisters as well as the one described in the study and had comparatively low femininity scores (12 and 18).

Significant relationships beyond the .01 level were observed between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and her rating of her sister as sincere and sympathetic. The relationship between the number of perceived similarities on the adjective check list and the number of perceived feminine similarities on that list was significant at the .01 level.

Relationships at the .025 level of significance were observed between the femininity scores of the subjects and the subject's rating of her sister as outgoing. The relationship between the subject's perception of her older sister as an important influence and her perception of her sister as helpful was significant at the .025 level.

Relationships were observed between the femininity scores of the subjects on the CPI and the age of the subject, age differences between the subject and her older sister and the subject's rating of her sister as under-

standing. A relationship was observed between the subject's perceived influence of her older sister and her sister's age and her rating of her sister as gentle. The number of perceived similarities on the adjective check list was related to the McGuire-White Social Status Index score. However, none of the above reached the required level of significance.

There was a relationship between the femininity scores of the subjects on the CPI and the subject's perception of her sister as patient and blunt and direct; the subject's perceived influence of her older sister; the age difference between the siblings; the number of perceived similarities on the adjective check list, the subject's rating of herself as sympathetic and her rating of her sister as understanding.

The majority of the subjects felt their older sisters had been important influences on their lives, yet the hypotheses were not supported that the girls perceive their older sisters as feminine role models. Subjects who indicated their sisters had been important influences on their lives perceived their sisters as sincere, sympathetic, helpful, and gentle. These subjects were more likely to have sisters at least three years older and to perceive themselves as similar to their sisters on the adjective check list.

Subjects with high femininity scores generally rated their older sisters as outgoing and patient, but seldom blunt and direct or understanding. These subjects were from 14 to 15 years of age and were more likely to be close to their sisters in age.

Subjects who perceived themselves as similar to their older sisters on

all traits also perceived themselves as similar on the feminine traits and were more likely to be of the middle class.

Since the results of this study did not reach a level of significance in most of the areas tested, it might be assumed that younger sisters do not perceive their older sisters as feminine role models. However, the significant finding that the girls felt their sisters had important influence on their lives indicates a relationship with potential for further study. Although this study focused on possible positive influences, it is possible that during adolescence the influence of an older sibling might have negative effects depending on the nature of the relationship. To explore this relationship in depth, the adolescents could be asked how their older sisters have influenced them.

The older sisters in this study evidently do not affect the femininity of the subjects, but there is indication they might affect them in other ways. However, before completely rejecting the femininity of the subjects as an indication of influence, a larger sample of subjects with older sisters might be studied. Instead of the CPI, the shorter and more recent Adjective Check List developed by Heilbrun and Gough, could be used to assess femininity. Although it may be difficult, research with older sisters and their perception of themselves as feminine role models might add another dimension to the sister-sister relationship.

APPENDIX

DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions. Underline the multiple choice questions.

1. My age is: (give age of nearest birthday) _____
2. The other children who are members of my family are:
(give the age and sex only)

Age (years and months)	Sex
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. The main source of family income is:
- Wages; hourly wages, piece work (weekly pay check)
 - Profits and fees from a business or profession
 - Salary paid on a monthly basis
 - Social security or unemployment
4. My mother works outside the home:
- Not at all
 - Less than 40 hours per week
 - Forty hours per week
 - More than 40 hours per week
5. My father's work is: (Explain what work your father does)

6. If your mother works for pay outside your home, explain the kind of work she does: _____
- _____
- _____

7. If you live on a farm, rate your father's occupation:
- Sharecropper or farm laborer who doesn't own his land
 - Manager or foreman who is hired to oversee on a farm
 - Owens his own farm on a small piece of land
 - Owens his own farm and also hires others to help, due to large size of farm
 - Migrant worker who hires out for seasonal work

Use the following information to indicate how far your parents went in school (questions 8 and 9).

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) None | g) Finished 11th grade |
| b) 1st through 4th grade | h) Graduate from high school |
| c) 5th through 7th grade | i) 1 - 3 years of college |
| d) Finished 8th grade | j) College graduate |
| e) Finished 9th grade | k) Graduate school after college |
| f) Finished 10th grade | l) Don't know |

8. Father (give letter which applies from above list) _____

9. Mother (give letter which applies from above list) _____

10. If you have an older sister, to what degree has she been an important influence in your life?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very much

Directions:

On the next page you will find a list of adjectives. Next to the adjectives are two columns headed: I AM LIKE THIS and MY SISTER IS LIKE THIS. Place a check mark in the column which best describes the adjectives as it applies to you. If you have an older sister, check the column which best describes her. If you have more than one older sister, select the one nearest in age to you.

For example: You might check yourself and an older sister like this.

Column I		Column II	
I AM LIKE THIS		MY SISTER IS LIKE THIS	
Most of the time	About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time	Most of the time	About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time
	Hardly ever		Hardly ever

1. Neat.....

Be sure to fill in both columns before going on to the next word (if you have an older sister).

	COLUMN I			COLUMN II		
	I AM LIKE THIS			MY SISTER IS LIKE THIS		
	Most of the time	About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time	Hardly ever	Most of the time	About $\frac{1}{2}$ of the time	Hardly ever
1. Understanding						
2. Hard-headed						
3. Desire success						
4. Active						
5. Patient						
6. Helpful						
7. Calm						
8. Restless						
9. Gentle						
10. Outgoing						
11. Masculine						
12. Strong						
13. Sincere						
14. Sympathetic						
15. Respectful						
16. Persistent						

17. Blunt and direct

18. Impatient with
delay and inde-
cision

(2)

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ADOLESCENT GIRLS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR OLDER SISTERS
AS FEMININE ROLE MODELS

by

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B. S. , Our Lady of the Lake College, 1964

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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1969

The purpose of this research was to study adolescent girls' perception of their older sisters as feminine role models. The femininity of the girls, the perceived influence of their older sister, and the adolescent girls' perceived similarity to their older sister were related to each other, to perceived characteristics of self and sister and to factors in the family situation. The Chi-square method of statistical analysis was used to test these relationships.

The California Psychological Inventory, a short questionnaire assessing background information, and an adjective check list of masculine and feminine traits were administered to adolescent girls enrolled as freshmen at Folsom High School, Folsom, California.

Results indicated that 68 per cent of the subjects felt their sisters had been an important influence on their lives. Significant relationships at the .01 level were found between the subjects' rating of the importance of their sisters in their lives and their rating of their sisters as sincere and sympathetic. These subjects were likely to have sisters three years older than themselves.

The relationship between the subjects' high femininity scores and their rating of their sisters as outgoing most of the time was significant at the .025 level. Other variables compared with the femininity scores were not significant. There was a tendency for younger subjects with older sisters near them in age to have higher femininity scores.

The subject's perceived similarity to her older sister on all of the traits was related to her perceived similarity on the feminine traits at the .01

level of significance. The general factors were not significantly related to the subject's perception of her similarity to her older sister. A trend for subjects who perceived themselves as similar to their older sisters to be from the middle class was observed.

The findings indicate that adolescent girls felt their older sisters were important influences on their lives especially if the sisters are sincere and sympathetic. However, younger sisters' perception of their older sisters as feminine role models was not supported by the data, possibly because the majority of the subjects' femininity scores were near the median (21.5) and the sample was small. The sister-sister relationship and the effect of an older sister on an adolescent girl definitely needs more research.