

STEPDAUGHTER PERCEPTION OF STEPMOTHER CONFIRMATION AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG
LATE ADOLESCENT FEMALES (143 pp.)

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The study was designed to address the research questions: To what extent does a college freshman stepdaughter's (i.e., 18-and 19-year-old) perception of confirmation from her stepmother relate to the stepdaughter's self-esteem and to the stepdaughter's grade point average? All participants were freshman women (18- and 19- years old, with a stepmother) at a local Catholic University.

Literature on stepmother and stepdaughter relationships was examined and the concept of confirmation was defined. Two instruments were identified for use in this study, the *Coopermith Self-Esteem Inventory* (SEI) and the *Perceived Confirmation Behavior Indicator* (PCBI). These instruments along with a demographic form were administered to 32 participants. With the student's permission, GPA were retrieved from the registrar. A quantitative research design was used, integrating correlations and a stepwise regression.

Findings indicated that for stepdaughters, perceiving some level of confirmation from a stepmother contributed to low academic achievement, and that

perceiving some level of disconfirmation from a stepmother actually contributed to high academic achievement. It appeared that the more disconfirmation the adolescent stepdaughter perceived from the stepmother, the lower her levels of self-esteem and the *higher* her GPA.

However, issues about the adequacy of the *PCBI* in measuring confirmation raise serious questions about the validity of the instrument. Thus the focus should perhaps not be placed on the findings of the study but on the development of instrumentation in the area of stepfamily confirmation.